

PRINCETON

THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

Vol. 22, No. 1 • Spring 2019



Faith Beyond the Sanctuary
Christianity and the Public Sphere

Princeton Theological Review

Vol. 22, No. 1 | Spring 2019

CO-EXECUTIVE EDITORS

Heidi Biermann, Katherine Ellis,
& Patrick Haley
Princeton Theological Seminary

CO-GENERAL EDITORS

Madeline Gold, Olivia Patterson,
& Bailey Simpson
Princeton Theological Seminary

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Casey Aldridge
Princeton Theological Seminary

Jennifer Lewis
Boston University

Holly Bailey
Princeton Theological Seminary

Elliott May
Princeton Theological Seminary

Michelle Bostic
Princeton Theological Seminary

Davis Meadors
University of St. Andrews

Andrew Bridgeman*
Princeton Theological Seminary

Matthew Neumann
Princeton Theological Seminary

Micah Cronin
Princeton Theological Seminary

Michael Nichols
Princeton Theological Seminary

Stephen DiTrollo Coakley
Princeton Theological Seminary

Christopher Palmer
Princeton Theological Seminary

Rachel Douglass
Princeton Theological Seminary

Matthew Smith
The University of Tennessee

Laura Ellis
Boston University

Kyle Sorkness*
Princeton Theological Seminary

Leslie Giboyeaux
Princeton Theological Seminary

Samuel Stephens*
Princeton Theological Seminary

Naomi Ketchens*
Princeton Theological Seminary

Lindsey Trozzo
Princeton Theological Seminary

Garrett Lane
Princeton Theological Seminary

*indicates copy editors

Princeton Theological Review

Vol. 22, No. 1 | Spring 2019

Editors' Note	5
HEIDI BIERMANN, KATHERINE ELLIS, & PATRICK HALEY	
Foreword	9
DIRK J. SMIT	
The Militant and the Void	13
<i>The Communist Christologies of Ernst Bloch, Alain Badiou, and Pier Paolo Pasolini</i>	
CASEY J. ALDRIDGE	
<i>Evangélicos y Argentinos</i>	27
<i>A Case Study of Evangelicals in the Political Sphere in Argentina 1990–2018</i>	
STEPHEN R. DiTROLIO COAKLEY	
Maximus the Confessor, The Lateran Synod of 649, and the Problem of Religious Authority	41
MATTHEW FREDERICK NEUMANN	
“The God to Whom I Belong and Worship”	55
<i>Inversions of Imperial Power in Acts 27:9–25</i>	
CHRISTOPHER G. PALMER	
God's Simple Knowledge and Disagreement	65
ERIC TUTTLE	
An Oppressed People in a Groaning Creation	77
<i>Toward an Eco-Public Theology of Undocumented Farmworkers</i>	
EMILY WILKES	
Book Reviews	95
Call for Papers	105
IDENTITY, LAND, AND PLACE: INTERSECTIONS OF THEOLOGICAL EMBODIMENT	
About the <i>Princeton Theological Review</i>	107

Editors' Note

HEIDI BIERMANN, KATHERINE ELLIS, & PATRICK HALEY

Co-Executive Editors, Princeton Theological Review

"If justice is left out, what are kingdoms except great robber bands?"¹ In *The City of God*, Augustine expresses concerns about justice, love, and sin in the earthly city. Echoes of his anxieties can be heard today in conversations surrounding faith and the public sphere. Varying voices fear that Christians' political engagement may inflame polarization, scapegoat or succumb to secularization, provide irrelevant platitudes, falter to postmodern fragmentation, taint theological conviction, or contribute to hegemonic injustices. Wariness and weariness proliferate.

Yet, this publication maintains that given God's free act of creation and Christ's incarnation, Christians are to faithfully engage in the world. Instructed by the stories of the faithful in Scripture, the church persists in its quest to listen and learn from the lives of past and present saints. At times the church exposes wrongdoing in the wake of sinfulness and injustice. In other instances, the church is called to confess its own fallibility and participation in societal evils. Amidst these moments, the church reforms both itself and the public sphere through loving forbearance, sacrificial witnessing, and prophetic discipleship.

This issue seeks to explore the often fraught, but also rich, relationship between Christianity and the public sphere. In collating the following essays, this issue provides a democratization of conviction, correction, and construction. Representing diverse claims, disciplines, and contexts, the essays in this publication provide various vignettes of previous, present, and awaited Christian engagement in the public sphere. Such diversity anticipates the reader's practice of listening. Across the pages of this issue, faith stretches beyond the confines of the sanctuary.

The person and natures of Christ are perennial considerations for Christian theology, but Christology is perhaps a surprising place to begin a publication relating faith to the public sphere. Nevertheless, Casey J. Aldridge opens this issue by carefully weighing the competing Christologies offered by inheritors of Karl Marx. Between Ernst Bloch's internally-divided Son of Man and Alain Badiou's Christ as void, Aldridge offers Pier Paolo Pasolini's cinematic depiction of Jesus as the serene horizon of history, who inspires others toward militant fervor. In so doing, Aldridge points to the two-nature problem that characterizes not just traditional Christology, but also Christians' robust engagement with the public sphere. In each case, that which is not of the world enters the world, in order to direct the world beyond itself.

¹ Augustine, *City of God, Volume II: Books 4–7*, trans. William M. Green, Loeb Classical Library 412 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 4.4.

Such robust engagement was recently displayed in Argentinian evangelicalism, and Stephen R. DiTrollo Coakley offers a compelling history of that exchange. Following the prolonged dominance of Roman Catholicism in Argentina, democratization and secularization have opened the public sphere to evangelical Christians. In the context of recent public debates over abortion rights, DiTrollo Coakley recounts how evangelicals gradually shifted alliances between Catholic and pro-choice groups, according to political opportunities. As the relationship between faith and Argentinian politics continues to rapidly evolve, DiTrollo Coakley suggests that evangelicals will continue to recast that faith and solidify their voice in the public sphere.

Faith's struggle to find its voice amid competing political pressures long antedates the modern era. The trials of Maximus the Confessor, as retold by Matthew Frederick Neumann, paint a vivid picture of one man trapped by the competing conciliar decisions and imperial edicts which demanded his allegiance. Caught between the pope in Rome and the emperor in Constantinople, and after initially trying to reconcile the two, Maximus ultimately concluded that keeping the faith means defying the emperor. Yet even in Maximus's eventual decision to reject subjection to the powers of this world, Neumann shows how Maximus remained true to what he had preached throughout his trials.

According to Christopher G. Palmer, the decision to undercut oppressive power dates back to the biblical witness itself, including the shipwreck narrative in Acts 27. Set aboard a trading vessel during Rome's golden age, the story ought to embody the empire's military, economic, and masculine prowess. Instead, Palmer persuasively argues that the biblical author uses the imprisoned Paul to subvert common cultural conceptions of imperial and gendered virtues. Deploying a variety of rhetorical images, the biblical author moves the reader toward Christianity's revaluation of all values. In making this case, Palmer demonstrates the liberative potential of faith's rhetoric.

Rhetoric, however, can also come at a cost, whenever disagreement motivates harm against another. That worry underlies Eric Tuttle's contribution to this issue. To move beyond violent disagreement, Tuttle begins with Thomas Aquinas's and Georg W. F. Hegel's conceptions of divine simplicity, itself an unlikely source of agreement. According to Tuttle, God's simple existence evades any attempts at conclusive truth statements. God always remains more than we can know. Yet God's immensity also encompasses the knower, such that she should not feel herself trapped in epistemic deficiency, but rather graced by God in that which she can understand. When both she and her fellow knower can see in each other the same historicized movement toward God's final reconciliation in Godself, then public rhetoric and public disagreement can transcend violence.

Where Tuttle's article derives reconciliation from God's life in eternity, Emily Wilkes's eco-public theology arises out of the lived experience of undocumented farmworkers. Wilkes begins by prophetically calling public figures to account for their harmful rhetoric concerning agricultural laborers. With Wendell Berry as her hermeneutical guide, Wilkes then deconstructs the logic of modern agribusiness. Fortunately, Wilkes does not leave the pieces disassembled. Rather, she constructively reimagines theological rhetoric, symbols, and practices that restore dignity to those whose labor supplies tables and feeds children. Wilkes's article concludes this issue as a poignant reminder of both the

winnowing confrontation and the nourishing hope that ought to attend Christianity's engagement with the public sphere.

Both this publication and the public sphere would be impoverished without the contributions of two additional individuals. We would like to thank Dr. Dirk J. Smit, the Rimmer and Ruth deVries Professor of Reformed Theology and Public Life at Princeton Theological Seminary, for his thoughtful foreword. His influential theological contributions in South Africa, eminent repudiation of apartheid, and critical contributions to the creation of Belhar Confession provide lasting implications for the church's witness. We are also grateful for the generosity of visual theologian Carmelle Beaugelin, Program Coordinator for the Log College Project at the Institute for Youth Ministry, for allowing her artwork to be featured on the cover of this issue. *Our Lady of Peace and Justice* is one of seven Lenten installations and explores the church's commendable and condemnable responses to police violence that disproportionately affects black lives. We are thankful for Dr. Smit's and Ms. Beaugelin's gracious contributions to this publication and their prophetic witness in the public sphere.

The term *public sphere* implies a physical situatedness. In the Gospels, Christ's puzzling parables, problematic personal associations, and persistent care for the overlooked remind the church that God's care for creation is incarnational and thus embodied. Christian engagement in the public sphere is social and invites involvement. Regardless of whether Augustine in *The City of God* envisions the faithful to be citizens or resident aliens in the earthly city, the church is called to offer robust hope by dwelling in the public sphere.

Conversations surrounding theological engagement with the political and social should not provoke despair, cynicism, or suspicion. Rather, the iterations of biblical, historical, contemporary, and proposed involvement demonstrate opportunities to speak and to listen. The public sphere is intended to be a platform for generous receptivity. As Christianity seeks to extend beyond the sanctuary, we hope that this publication provides a public space for faithful listening and re-imagination.

March 28, 2019
Princeton, NJ

Foreword

DIRK J. SMIT¹

Princeton Theological Seminary

There seems to be something in the gospel that calls for embodiment in everyday life—suggestions for life together with others, consequences for relationships, families, friendships, communities, societies, life in God’s world. It seems almost obvious that faith in the gospel has implications for life beyond the sanctuary. It seems almost self-evident that worship flows over into work, liturgy inspires life, prayer and public life belong together, the astonishing mercies of God call for newness of life (Rom. 12:1–2).

It seems difficult to deny that faith matters for public life together. Some find this in the ministry, words, and works of Jesus, some in the call to costly discipleship, some in the prophetic nature of his cross, some in the transformative power of his resurrection, some in the inspiring promises of his reign, some in the radical nature of grace, some in the surprising welcome expected of his church, some in other motifs, from law to freedom to justice to compassion to reconciliation to peace-making. Some find this in doctrines and convictions, some in values and ideals, some in virtues and lifestyles, some in practices and institutions that seem to embody this faith. Faith, hope, and love all seem to belong together—and together they matter for life.

In its mission statement, Princeton Theological Seminary, for example, explains in this spirit that it “seeks to engage Christian faith with intellectual, political, and economic life in pursuit of truth, justice, compassion, and peace.”

Sometimes, the conviction is based on personal experience—some have seen it with their own eyes. Archbishop Desmond Tutu—sometimes called the best-known public theologian of our time—movingly witnessed to this experience in his autobiographical account of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, called *No Future Without Forgiveness*. It has been his growing experience, he writes, how much faith matters for life—sometimes in radical ways.

Of course, all these claims have been deeply contested—for legitimate reasons. Some have been skeptical, even cynical, about ways in which the gospel has been used and abused to justify so-called implications and consequences—and for very good reasons. Some have always disagreed about ways in which the gospel “matters”—and such disagreements still shamefully divide believers and churches today, almost everywhere. Even worse, some have always suffered the terrible consequences of ways in which the gospel has “mattered”—and many still suffer today. Through history, the gospel has often also mattered for public life in destructive and life-denying ways—and it is still abused like

¹ Since July 2017, Dirk J. Smit has served as Rimmer and Ruth deVries Professor of Reformed Theology and Public Life at Princeton Theological Seminary. Before that, he taught in Stellenbosch, South Africa, and served as the first Chair of the Board of the Beyers Naude Center for Public Theology (2002–2016).

this today. Christianity, church, theology, believers have all been involved, implicated, complicit in these terrifying histories. It is thus impossible to speak about ways in which faith flows beyond the sanctuary and in which the gospel matters for public life without longing to be sensitive to how the gospel has also served exclusion and injustice and oppression and violence and violations of dignity—all of them with so many faces.

In recent years, the term *public theology* has become increasingly popular, worldwide. This probably also has to do with dramatic ways in which so-called public spheres have been changing in our time, worldwide. To be sure, the nature of public life has always been changing, through the centuries, yet it cannot be denied that in recent decades some of these “transformations of the public sphere”—in the classic description of the German social thinker Jürgen Habermas—have been dramatic, and are still taking place. Another leading German sociologist, Hans Joas, recently argued that probably the single most characteristic development of our times is its globalizing nature. Our world has become one, smaller, more interrelated and thus more aware of difference and otherness than ever before. For him, this means that our world has become one of options. Optionality describes our world as never before.

For Joas, this again has at least two important implications for faith and public life. This optionality means that those who exercise the option of faith—which is for him a serious and meaningful and life-giving option—should be deeply aware that our public life together also knows many other serious and legitimate options, often secular, which means based on other forms of faith. In addition, this optionality means that those who exercise the option of faith should also be deeply aware that others in our contemporary world who share this option—who believe the same gospel, worship the same God, celebrate the same worship, follow the same calling—may hear and embody this gospel in fundamentally different ways. The former so-called centers of our common world and our shared faith have been radically de-centered. Our public sphere today is actually a web of diverse and complex public spheres—in the plural. That is the reason why public theology can only be thoroughly contextual and in fact intercontextual. Our shared faith takes many options and many forms and therefore also flows beyond the sanctuary in many and diverse ways.

Joas makes this argument in his *Kirche als Moralagentur?* The question mark is the key. He wants to warn against all easy attempts to regard the “church as moral agent” that can contribute to public discourse and participate in public life as if the implications of the gospel for our life together are self-evident, obvious, and clear. He critiques many contemporary attempts by churches, church leaders, and church theologians to be public churches and do public theology as if they know the answers, as if the consequences which they draw from the gospel are the only possible ones. In a world of optionality, in a global public sphere consisting of intricate webs of multiple public spheres, these questions may be much more complicated than many may think. He does not deny that the gospel has implications for public life and that faith has consequences beyond the sanctuary. He does argue, however, that our task in claiming that may be much harder and in listening to one another much more difficult—and necessary—than we may assume.

Perhaps this explains why public theology has become so popular—still to search, like the church of the centuries, for the consequences of faith beyond the sanctuary, but to do this with much greater awareness of contextuality, intercontextuality, and optionality than ever before.

Public theology has been described as the search for “theology that matters” in Sebastian Kim and Katie Day’s recent *A Companion to Public Theology*. If that is the case, and if we are indeed searching together *For the Life of the World*, for *Theology that Makes a Difference*, for faith that matters because it serves as “A Vision of Flourishing Life”—the title, subtitle, and final chapter, respectively, of a recent study by Miroslav Volf and Matthew Croasmun—then public theology needs the wisdom of all possible voices and also from all theological disciplines—from biblical studies to history, from doctrine to ethics to practical theology.

The Militant and the Void

The Communist Christologies of Ernst Bloch, Alain Badiou, and Pier Paolo Pasolini

CASEY J. ALDRIDGE¹

Princeton Theological Seminary

INTRODUCTION: A FORK IN THE ROAD

At the young age of twenty-five, and at the very beginning of his philosophical career, Karl Marx briefly corresponded with fellow Young Hegelian Arnold Ruge. In September 1843, in his final letter to Ruge, Marx articulated the rigorous spirit that would animate his work for the next forty years as a spirit of “the *ruthless criticism of the existing order*, ruthless in that it will shrink neither from its own discoveries, nor from conflict with the powers that be.”² Marx claimed to resolutely oppose every “dogmatic banner”;³ for the Marxist, then, nothing on earth or in heaven is beyond scrutiny. This does not mean that the Marxist rejects or relativizes “truth.” It means only that the Marxist dismisses the uncritical adoption of all a priori truths.⁴ In this sense, the *pattern* of conventionally Marxist thought runs against the grain of apologetic theologies.⁵ Marx (and the tradition

¹ Casey J. Aldridge is a second-year MDiv student at Princeton Theological Seminary. Casey is interested in political theologies of time and history and hopes that his scholarship might contribute in some way to the decoupling of Christianity from heteropatriarchy, anti-Black racism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia. He hopes to pursue ordination in the Presbyterian Church (USA) as well as doctoral studies, with a particular focus on historical and theoretical encounters between Christian theology and Marxist thought.

² Karl Marx, “Letter from Marx to Arnold Ruge,” in *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (Paris, 1844), https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/letters/43_09-alt.htm.

³ Marx, “Letter from Marx.”

⁴ Silas Morgan notes that Denys Turner, Roland Boer, and Albert Toscano have compellingly repudiated “the idea that an a priori rejection of religion should be associated with and interpreted as properly Marxist.” Morgan, Turner, Boer, and Toscano are right: the a priori rejection of religion is improperly associated with Marx. Yet this particular understanding of a more nuanced Marx, and a Marxism capable of dancing with theology, is one that took more than a century of Marxist tradition and thought to develop. In its materialist grounding, Marxism still runs (or attempts to run) in the opposite direction of apologetic theology. See Silas Morgan, “Is Liberation Theology a Political Theology?: Marcella Althaus-Reid’s Critical Hermeneutics and the Queer Messianic Question of Marxism,” *Perspectivas* 14 (2017): 95.

⁵ See, for example, the crude materialism and orthodox Marxism of Karl Kautsky, *Foundations of Christianity: A Study in Christian Origins*, trans. Harry Mins (New York: Russell and Russell, 1953), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1908/christ/index.htm>. Kautsky, whom Lenin denounced as a renegade and who in no way represents the best of the Marxist tradition or method, treated Jesus and the early Christian movement

of thought that bears his name) was uninterested in defending God; much less was he interested in defending abstract theological affirmations about God. On the contrary, Marx called for “the abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people,” which, he maintained, was simultaneously “the demand for their *real* happiness.”⁶

Through his “ruthless criticism” of political economy, Marx was convinced that the real happiness of the people depended upon the eradication of capitalist exploitation and alienation. Subsequent generations of socialists and communists did not abandon this conviction; rather, a great deal of Marxist-discourse-since-Marx is expressed in Lenin’s question: “What is to be done?”⁷ What is to be done in order to abolish private property, build the power of the working class, and create socialism? The Marxist disavowal of dogma may in fact be irreconcilable with Christian apologetics, which set out to “defend” an already-existing doctrine by attempting “to show that a faith is either provable by reason, or at least consistent with reason.”⁸ Nevertheless, this question—what is to be done?—resembles core concerns of Christological theology. What symbol is capable of mediating between the contradictions of our world? What vessel, or figure, can carry us from this broken present into a reconciled and radically transformed future?

Marx’s contempt for the church, which he saw as the spiritual smokescreen for the ruling class’s subjugation of the proletariat, informed his estimation of Christ. Marx preferred the Greek titan Prometheus (who in Aeschylus’s tragedy is imprisoned and tortured by Zeus for stealing from the fires of Mount Olympus) as “the most eminent saint and martyr in the calendar of philosophy.”⁹ For Roger Garaudy, Marxism was “the Promethean enterprise of taking control of the process of development and of deliberately building up the future.”¹⁰ Marx’s aversion to Christ, however, is not universally shared among Marxists; many socialists have appropriated Jesus for the revolutionary pantheon. Hugo Chávez called Jesus “the greatest socialist in history,” and his sentiment is shared by a good number of liberation theologians across Latin America and around the world.¹¹ This paper will focus on the communist Christologies of atheist philosophers Ernst Bloch and Alain Badiou, and will attempt to mediate their Christologies by briefly considering the work of Italian Catholic-Marxist filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini.

through traditionally materialist categories and methods, working in a different direction than Christological theology, which tends to begin with a doctrine of Jesus and then develop outward from that doctrine.

⁶ Karl Marx, introduction to “A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right,” in *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (Paris, 1844), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm>.

⁷ Vladimir I. Lenin, “What Is to Be Done?: Burning Questions of Our Movement (1902),” in *Selected Works*, vol. 1, trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna (New York: International Publishers, 1967), 97.

⁸ Simon Blackburn, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 25.

⁹ Karl Marx, “The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature (1841)” in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 1, trans. Richard Dixon (PhD diss., University of Jena, 1841 [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975]). <http://marxists.anu.edu.au/archive/marx/works/1841/dr-theses/index.htm>.

¹⁰ James Bentley, *Between Marx and Christ: The Dialogue in German-Speaking Europe, 1870-1970* (London: Verso Books, 1982), 101.

¹¹ BBC News, “Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez Sworn In,” January 10, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6248787.stm>.

Why Bloch and Badiou? Mostly because communist Christologies—particularly ones developed by prominent widely-read Marxist philosophers—are few and far between. There are Slavoj Žižek's debates with John Milbank, but Žižek's relationship to contemporary social movements has been dubious at best and counter-productive or even reactionary at worst.¹² There is liberation theology, but the commitment of liberation theology is to Christ first and to Marx only secondarily, as a tool of social analysis or as a framework for the critique of religion.¹³ There is the truly Marxist Christianity of Dorothee Sölle, but Sölle, unlike Bloch or Badiou or the great majority of Marxists, is at home in theology, and in her Christological writings “did not attempt to maintain that Jesus sketched out political objectives for present-day Christians to follow.”¹⁴ Terry Eagleton asks whether Jesus was more or less radical than Lenin or Trotsky: “Less, certainly, in that he did not advocate the overthrow of the power-structure that he confronted. But this was, among other reasons, because he expected it to be soon swept away by a form of existence more perfected in its justice, peace, comradeship and exuberance of spirit than Lenin and Trotsky could have imagined.”¹⁵ Still, while Eagleton's Marxism often defends Christian faith against “new Atheism,” Eagleton has hardly developed anything resembling a systematic Christology. Bloch and Badiou have particular value here because both are Marxist atheists who elected to study Jesus and Paul, respectively, for philosophical and practical purposes having to do with socialist revolution, and in the process *have* developed Christological systems.¹⁶

In Bloch's work, we encounter an explicitly insurrectionary Jesus, who takes after Prometheus as the unequivocal partisan of the proletariat. Badiou's Christ, meanwhile, is more subtle and subjective—Christ is, for Badiou, an *event* which radically reconstitutes the basic subjectivity of the apostle Paul. Between these, this paper will argue that Pasolini's adaptations of Matthew's Gospel and Paul's epistles function as a bridge between these two Marxist Jesuses, synthesizing Bloch's themes of struggle and the “Son of Man” with Badiou's emphasis on the radically subjective power of the Christ-event.

Neither Bloch nor Badiou is interested in Christology for its own sake. In an exchange with Jürgen Moltmann, Bloch “asked what was so special about the crucifixion of Jesus. ‘One can find numberless crosses,’ he observed, ‘without going to Golgotha.’”¹⁷ Badiou,

¹² Slavoj Žižek and John Milbank, *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?*, ed. Creston Davis (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 24–306; Mike Crumplar, “Slipping Slavoj,” *Jacobite*, May 2, 2018, <https://jacobitemag.com/2018/05/02/slipping-slavoj/>.

¹³ Jon Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin American Approach*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1978), 27.

¹⁴ Bentley, *Between Marx and Christ*, 119; see Dorothee Sölle, *Christ the Representative: An Essay in Theology After the ‘Death of God,’* trans. David Lewis (London: SCM, 1967).

¹⁵ Terry Eagleton, introduction to *The Gospels*, NRSV, ed. Giles Fraser (London: Verso Books, 2007), xxx.

¹⁶ Additionally, both Bloch (a humanist) and Badiou (an anti-humanist) belong to what has been referred to as the “messianic turn” in continental Marxist philosophy. See Wayne Hudson, *The Marxist Philosophy of Ernst Bloch* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 16; Christopher Pawling, “Badiou and the Search for an Anti-Humanist Aesthetic,” in *Critical Theory and Political Engagement: From May 1968 to the Arab Spring* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); John Marsden, “Bloch's Messianic Marxism,” *New Blackfriars* 70, no. 823 (1989); Thomas Rudman, “A Reading of Alain Badiou in the Light of Saint Paul: Communism and Theology Today,” *Socialist Theory and Movements Research Network*, video, 1:41:18, October 2016, <https://vimeo.com/191866677>.

¹⁷ Bentley, *Between Marx and Christ*, 115–6.

meanwhile, is unapologetically apathetic toward “the Good News [Paul] declares.”¹⁸ Both Bloch and Badiou are concerned with Christology only insofar as it points toward something beyond: the classless and stateless “communist horizon,” according to Jodi Dean and Bruno Bosteels.¹⁹ Andrew Bradstock goes further, declaring that “every revolutionary project needs a guiding utopia, an overarching vision of the new order it desires to create from the rubble of the old.”²⁰ Bloch’s exegesis of Exodus suggests that in *that* revolutionary project, Moses turned “an idol of thunder and oppression [Mt. Sinai] into a source of leadership through time [Yahweh].”²¹ According to Bloch, Moses invented God as a “Sign-post out of Bondage,” the mountain on “the horizon of his people’s expectations.”²² Similarly, the Marxist Christologies of Bloch and Badiou are guided by an ultimate commitment to an egalitarian signpost on the communist horizon. The question for communist appropriations of Jesus is not a question of the destination but of the road one must take to that destination. Bloch imagines an ascendant, Promethean Jesus who throws off death from below, not unlike the resurrected Jesus on the road to Emmaus.²³ Meanwhile, Badiou posits an event which takes hold of and reorients the subject, imitating Paul’s life-altering experience of Christ on the road to Damascus. On the question of revolutionary subjectivity in the Christologies of Bloch and Badiou, Marxism comes to a fork in the road, and yet the horizon—toward which both Bloch and Badiou aim—never wavers.

FORBIDDEN FOREST OF FABLE: BLOCH, BADIOU, AND PASOLINI ON MYTH

This Marxist horizon, according to Bloch, is a “concrete Utopia.”²⁴ Against the idealism of abstract utopianism, Bloch theorizes that concrete Utopias are “related to historically situated struggles” and therefore “the firmest of handholds.”²⁵ Concrete Utopia, far from being myth, is the real horizon that the sojourner relentlessly pursues. Nevertheless, for the Marxist philosopher entering into Christological debates, the pursuit of this concrete Utopia invariably involves the forbidden forest of fable. The first obstacle to Marxist

¹⁸ Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 1.

¹⁹ Jodi Dean, *The Communist Horizon* (London: Verso Books, 2012), 2.

²⁰ Andrew Bradstock, *Faith in the Revolution: The Political Theologies of Müntzer and Winstanley* (London: SPCK, 1997), x.

²¹ Ernst Bloch, *Atheism in Christianity: The Religion of the Exodus and the Kingdom*, trans. J.T. Swann (London: Verso Books, 2009), 81.

²² Bloch, *Atheism in Christianity*, 81.

²³ See Hal Draper, “The Principle of Self-Emancipation in Marx and Engels,” *Socialist Register* 8 (1971), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/draper/1971/xx/emancipation.html>. The Trotskyist slogan of “socialism from below,” as articulated by Draper, closely resembles the humanistic and anti-authoritarian impulses of Bloch’s work after 1956. Prometheus features prominently in Draper’s essay and in Bloch’s *Atheism in Christianity*, and in many ways Prometheus is the template for Bloch’s reading of the Old and New Testaments.

²⁴ Bloch, *Atheism in Christianity*, 253.

²⁵ José Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 3; Bloch, *Atheism in Christianity*, 253.

Christology is this: how are atheists and those committed to the thought-process of dialectical materialism to engage religious myth?²⁶

Marx himself was inimical toward anything mystifying, which in his view could provide cover for exploitation. Nevertheless, his dialectical materialism was not without imagination; it was not the purely negative materialism of Ludwig Feuerbach or the rigid empiricism of ancient Greek wisdom.²⁷ In recent years, as the market economy has refused to loosen its grip on the secularizing West, Marxist criticisms of religion and myth have become increasingly measured.²⁸ Bloch's analysis of myth seems to prefigure this later, more sympathetic Marxism, which Bloch calls a revival of the tradition's "warm current."²⁹ In a move that is characteristically Blochian, he resolves the problem of myth by dividing the genre into saga and fairy-tale:

Fairy tales are concerned with the people, sagas with their rulers; fairy tales tell of children and poverty, sagas of witches and Goliaths. There is all the difference in the world between the brave little tailor who goes out to seek his fortune, and the giant who bars his path—he stands for the great lords who breathe eternal fire and brimstone over eternal underlings. . . . It is clear, of course, that both fairy tales and sagas are full of pre-scientific ideas; but how differently these ideas are used.³⁰

By focusing on the utility of the text rather than its historicity, Bloch preserves Marx's rejection of every myth that serves to reify the status quo, and yet he also retains the subversive motifs of the fairy-tale. Bloch dives head-first into the myth, unafraid of engaging the text, in order to conserve that which is revolutionary and jettison that which is oppressive.

Badiou takes a different approach, calling himself "irreligious by heredity" and asserting that he "care[s] nothing for the Good News [Paul] declares."³¹ His interest in Paul is as a "poet-thinker of the event," not as Christianity's first theologian.³² Badiou sees Paul as

²⁶ Marx's dialectical materialism goes beyond the materialism of Ludwig Feuerbach (see Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, trans. W. Lough. [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969], <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.htm>), and is the "direct opposite" of Hegel's dialectical method, in that for "Hegel, the life process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking... is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea.' With [Marx], on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought" (Karl Marx, "Preface to the Second Edition [1873]," in *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, ed. Tom Griffith, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling [Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions, 2013], 15). Dialectical materialism begins in the material world (or "base"), which is then expressed in our philosophical, artistic, political, and theological "superstructures."

²⁷ See Denys Turner's "Marxism, Liberation Theology, and the Way of Negation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, 2nd ed., ed. Christopher Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 238, for how Marx's dialectical materialism opposed and sought to transcend the negations of Ludwig Feuerbach. See José Miranda's *Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression*, trans. John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974), 261–62, for how dialectical Marxist materialism is capable of dreaming, resisting the reification of the status quo that Miranda finds in ancient Greek philosophy.

²⁸ Terry Eagleton, *Reason, Faith, and Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

²⁹ Bloch, *Atheism in Christianity*, 252–53.

³⁰ Bloch, 25.

³¹ Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 1.

³² Badiou, 2.

unique in the world of theology. Without a fully-developed tradition to draw from, the “event” that Paul insists upon is the singular “fable” of resurrection.³³ For Badiou,

A ‘fable’ is that part of a narrative that, so far as we are concerned, fails to touch on any Real, unless it be by virtue of that invisible and indirectly accessible residue sticking to every obvious imaginary. In this regard, it is to its element of fabulation . . . alone that Paul reduces the Christian narrative, with the strength of one who knows that in holding fast to this point as real, one is unburdened of all the imaginary that surrounds it.³⁴

Badiou clarifies that “it is rigorously impossible to believe in the resurrection of the crucified,” and yet he commends Paul for clinging to this *point fabuleux*.³⁵ In it, Paul (and by extension, Badiou) effectively declares his indifference toward every other fable attributed to Jesus: “all the rest, birth, teachings, death, *might* after all be upheld.”³⁶ Badiou’s interpretation of Christ should be seen as neither historical nor ahistorical; on the contrary, he sees Christ as a mathematical *event* and therefore as timeless, unrestricted by Albert Schweitzer’s “quest for the historical Jesus.”³⁷ As Roland Boer observes, Badiou recognizes that Paul’s radical new subjectivity is grounded in resurrection, a “fable” which has emancipated Paul from the demands of myth and historical veracity, and which is therefore a structurally “necessary fable.”³⁸

Neither Bloch nor Badiou are accountable to the church and its creeds, and one senses that both struggle to find a place for myth in their (a)theologies. Pasolini is another story. Though he was not afraid of conflict with the church, saying that “every blasphemy is a sacred word,” his general disposition was far more open to fable.³⁹ Pasolini observed that “for [him], every object is a miracle.”⁴⁰ As a gay man, a Catholic, and a Gramscian Marxist, Pasolini’s life is sometimes seen as a wrestling match of disparate identities, but we should not entirely reduce Pasolini’s “religious” view of the world to his intersectional configuration. It was equally a political choice, embraced against a backdrop of twentieth-century consumerism and bourgeois disenchantment. It was in this cultural context that Pasolini developed a “literary strategy of *affabulazione* (fable-making)” for the purpose of political critique.⁴¹ Pasolini’s position on myth anticipates the psychoanalytic Marxism of Slavoj Žižek’s defense of Christianity, where certain myths “are in a way more real than reality: they are ‘true,’ although, of course, they ‘didn’t really take place.’”⁴² The

³³ Badiou, 4.

³⁴ Badiou, 4–5.

³⁵ Badiou, 4.

³⁶ Badiou, 4.

³⁷ Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, trans. William Montgomery (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1911).

³⁸ Roland Boer, *Criticism of Religion: On Marxism and Theology, II* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011), 175. “Structurally” necessary in that the fable is necessary to the structure or narrative that Badiou is establishing between the *event* and the *conversion* it produces in its subject (Paul).

³⁹ Elizabeth Castelli, “Introduction: Translating Pasolini Translating Paul,” in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *St. Paul: A Screenplay*, trans. Elizabeth A. Castelli (London: Verso Books, 2014), xv.

⁴⁰ “Pier Paolo Pasolini Speaks,” criterioncollection, video, 2:47, November 16, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IA1bS1MRzw>.

⁴¹ Castelli, “Introduction,” xxix.

⁴² Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute, or, why is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?* (London: Verso Books, 2000), 58.

secularization of European capitalism, the exchange between psychoanalysis and Marxist theory, and the proliferation of liberation theologies in the global South have—for Pasolini, Žižek, Bloch, and Badiou—opened up new possibilities for Marxists to traverse the forest of fable, engaging Christology on its own terms in the arduous pursuit of concrete Utopia.

BLOCH'S FIREBRAND JESUS: SON OF MAN AGAINST SON OF GOD

Bloch's Christological method imitates his strategy for separating fairy-tale from saga. In *Atheism in Christianity*—Bloch's 1968 experiment with Christian theology—he interprets Jesus, the Bible, and all history through a particular binary between the force for exodus on one hand and the force that seeks to maintain the current order of things on the other: "there is always an exodus in the world, an exodus from the particular *status quo*."⁴³ His favorite biblical protagonist is a rebellious, indignant caricature of Job, who breaks away "from the Caesar-like concept of God."⁴⁴ In an exegetical move that is as sophisticated as it is unorthodox, Bloch argues that Job's exodus "*is not one away from Exodus itself*. Far from it: it is precisely the rebel who has trust in God, without believing in him. That is: he has trust in the specific Yahweh of the *Exodus from Egypt*, even when he has seen through every concretization of myth."⁴⁵ The figure who denies and oppresses Job is not, for Bloch, the God of Exodus, but "a mere Pharaoh from heaven."⁴⁶ In Bloch's estimation, "Job is pious precisely because he does *not* believe. Except in Exodus, and in the fact that the last human word has not yet been said . . . the word that will come from the Son of Man himself, and not from any mighty lord."⁴⁷ Bloch remarkably refers to Jesus's lament on the cross as "Job-like"; with Promethean elegance, "the Son of Man summons up the last sources of his courage to reject God and bring him down along with himself."⁴⁸ Jesus's revolt, however, is far more intimate than Job's. It is not simply directed at the distant heavens, but is also a reflexive rebellion aimed at Jesus's own "second nature": the Son of God.

The idea of hypostatic union adopted at Chalcedon in 451 CE seemed to reconcile two of Jesus's somewhat dissonant titles: Son of Man and Son of God. Here, however, Bloch revives the tension between the two. Consistent with the dualism that Bloch imposes on history, myth, and God, Jesus too becomes a divided self. The eschatological revolutionary (Son of Man) does not simply sit uneasily alongside the "wholly-cultic" Christ;⁴⁹ rather, the two are engaged in a grand cosmic struggle *against one another*. The Son of Man shakes off the forces of death from below, while Bloch's Son of God stands in his way, legitimating an unjust social order from up on-high. With the finest precision, Bloch's typology of the force from below ("exodus") and the voice on-high ("*status quo*") divides the Christ-figure into irreconcilable spheres. These spheres appear to reflect Bloch's own disillusionment with the Soviet project following the violent suppression of

⁴³ Bloch, *Atheism in Christianity*, 107.

⁴⁴ Bloch, 107.

⁴⁵ Bloch, 107.

⁴⁶ Bloch, 107.

⁴⁷ Bloch, 107–8.

⁴⁸ Bloch, 241.

⁴⁹ Bloch, 145.

the 1956 Hungarian uprising, after which Bloch's already humanistic Marxism took an increasingly anti-authoritarian turn.⁵⁰ Over and against the Son of God (which at this point in Bloch's career represents for him not only capitalism but also the authoritarian state apparatus), Bloch's "Son-of-Man Messiah did not claim to be a fighting preservationist, or a romantic restorer of some Davidic kingdom with its lordly God. No; he proclaimed himself as the new eschatological Exodus, overthrowing all things from their beginning to their end: the *Exodus into God as man*."⁵¹

BADIOU'S EVENTAL CHRIST: PAULINE UNIVERSALISM AND THE EDGE OF THE VOID

In contrast to Bloch's Promethean-firebrand Jesus, Badiou's Christology is subtler, and requires closer attention. Badiou is not, after all, concerned with any historical or theological Jesus. In Badiou's work, "Christ" is only discernible indirectly, through the apostle Paul. Badiou regards Paul as a "militant figure . . . [who] brings forth the entirely human connection . . . between the general idea of a rupture, an overturning, and that of a thought-practice that is the rupture's subjective materiality."⁵² This is all to say that Paul becomes the subject of an *event*, a recurring motif across Badiou's philosophy, which takes hold of and reinvents the individual subject. The event which seizes and remakes Paul, of course, is Christ's resurrection on the road to Damascus.

To examine Badiou's Christology, then, is to interrogate his theory of the decisive event. Boer provides an overview of this theory as it appears throughout Badiou's work: typically "in the four realms of politics, art, love, or science, an entirely chance, incalculable and unexpected Event smashes its way into the status quo."⁵³ In characteristically mathematical terms, Badiou views the event as "a supplement to or excess of a situation, or . . . a subtraction from the 'there is.'"⁵⁴ Boer observes that this supplement or subtraction "can never be apprehended directly."⁵⁵ Peter Hallward puts it this way: "an event has no objective or verifiable content. Its 'happening' cannot be proved, only affirmed and proclaimed."⁵⁶ Hallward's articulation is especially helpful for thinking about how Badiou is able to reconcile the unverifiable resurrection of Christ with Paul's proclamation of the resurrection *as an event*.

Paul's preaching of the event is the visible and verifiable aftermath of the event itself.⁵⁷ In his *Ethics*, Badiou writes of this aftermath as a truth-process. Specifically, "truth [is] the real process of a fidelity to an event."⁵⁸ Daniel Bell, Jr. brings this fidelity back to Paul: "In

⁵⁰ Hudson, *Marxist Philosophy*, 16.

⁵¹ Bloch, *Atheism in Christianity*, 123.

⁵² Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 2. Readers interested in pursuing Badiou's argument on the relationship between communist subjectivity and an encounter with Christ might also be interested in Milan Machovec, *A Marxist Looks at Jesus* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1976).

⁵³ Roland Boer, *Criticism of Earth: On Marx, Engels and Theology*, IV (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013), 161.

⁵⁴ Boer, *Criticism of Earth*, 161.

⁵⁵ Boer, 161.

⁵⁶ Peter Hallward, "Translator's Introduction," in Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* (London: Verso Books, 2012), ix.

⁵⁷ A Marxist reformulation, if you will, of the traditionally Protestant view of the sacraments as an "outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace."

⁵⁸ Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (London: Verso Books, 2012), 42.

the face of countless obstacles and objections, Paul endures and remains faithful to the event. Fidelity is the subjective conviction to ‘keep going’ in the face of all that would oppose or block the eventual becoming of a truth.”⁵⁹ Paul perseveres in steadfast loyalty to the truth that has convicted him, and in this way Paul becomes a subject. Badiou insists that “the subject in no way pre-exists the process. . . . We might say that the process of truth *induces* a subject.”⁶⁰ Christ, and specifically Christ’s resurrection, is the truth-event that defines Paul.⁶¹ Christ is therefore an unverifiable addition to or subtraction from a pre-existing situation. To be precise, Christ injects into Paul’s ancient world the possibility of an emancipatory universalism, at the same time as he subtracts “truth from the communitarian grasp, be it that of a people, a city, an empire, a territory, or a social class.”⁶² It is this addition and subtraction (the insertion of universalism and the invalidation of nationalisms) that Paul found so valuable in the first century, and which Badiou is so keen to recover.

Bell suggests, however, that this interest in Paul “mirrors the turn in Badiou’s politics in recent years, which, Peter Hallward notes, has been marked by a relinquishing of the historical realization of communist ideals in favor of subjective commitment.”⁶³ Bell’s treatment of Badiou compares the philosopher’s recent turn to “the motto of the East Timorese resistance: ‘to resist is to win,’ which is admirable and perhaps sustainable for a time between the times, but is not likely to be maintained indefinitely,” nor is it exceedingly helpful for Badiou and Bell’s shared aspiration of “overcoming capital.”⁶⁴ We are not particularly interested in Badiou’s Paul here, except insofar as he allows us to catch an indirect, refracted glimpse of Badiou’s Christ-event. Paul is easily located in Badiou’s philosophy. Our question is closer to the question of Kenneth Reynhout: “Where is God hidden in Badiou’s ontology?”⁶⁵

Where is *Christ* hidden in Badiou’s ontology? Eleanor Kaufman offers one solution. In a study of the idea of “messianic time” in the thought of Giorgio Agamben and Badiou, Kaufman addresses the “three terms” or categories typically attributed to Pauline theology: Jew, Greek, and “Christian.”⁶⁶ In dialectical fashion, scholars have proposed that the tension between the first two (which for Badiou refer not to ethnic groups but to “subjective positions” and “regimes of discourse”⁶⁷) compels Paul to develop the third. As

⁵⁹ Daniel Bell, Jr., “Badiou’s Faith and Paul’s Gospel: The Politics of Indifference and the Overcoming of Capital,” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 12, no. 1 (2007): 98–99.

⁶⁰ Badiou, *Ethics*, 43.

⁶¹ L. L. Welborn (“‘Extraction from the Mortal Site’: Badiou on the Resurrection in Paul,” *New Testament Studies* 55.3, no. 3 [2009]: 312) criticizes Badiou’s de-linking of death and resurrection. Desiring to do away with the valorization of suffering, however, Badiou (*Saint Paul*, 66) insists upon a “de-dialectization of the Christ-event” which allows resurrection alone to be the source of eventual grace.

⁶² Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 5.

⁶³ Bell, “Badiou’s Faith,” 102.

⁶⁴ Bell, 98, 102.

⁶⁵ Kenneth Reynhout, “Alain Badiou: Hidden Theologian of the Void?” *Heythrop Journal* 52, no. 2 (2011): 219–20.

⁶⁶ Eleanor Kaufman, “The Saturday of Messianic Time (Agamben and Badiou on the Apostle Paul),” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107, no. 1 (2008): 51.

⁶⁷ Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 41.

Kaufman shows, however, Badiou thinks of *three* as only the subtraction of *one* from *four*.⁶⁸ Badiou therefore searches for a “fourth term” or “fourth discourse” concealed *behind* the classical Hegelian dialectic, and he finds it in Paul.⁶⁹ This “fourth discourse” is neither the thesis nor the antithesis (Jewish and Greek discourses), nor the new synthesis (the “evental declaration” of Christianity), but the wholly unspeakable other, the “mute supplement,” the “discourse of nondiscourse” which lurks *behind* the dialectic and *behind* the event itself.⁷⁰ It is this fourth category that Kaufman links to Agamben’s “Saturday of messianic time”⁷¹—it is the *locus* or position of Christ for Badiou.

Reynhout reaches a similar conclusion, though he approaches Badiou’s ontology from another angle. Reynhout examines how Badiou is indebted to Cantorian set theory, which claims “that an actually infinite totality could be considered . . . a ‘transfinite’ number.”⁷² For Badiou, only Cantorian mathematics “can speak of the infinite.”⁷³ Against what he sees as the theistic hypothesis (that “God is infinite; everything else is finite”), Badiou extends set theory to argue that “all being . . . is infinite, not just a supreme being. Moreover, there cannot be a supreme being.”⁷⁴ Reynhout outlines three theological responses to Badiou’s mathematical atheism, the third of which is to accept Badiou’s ontological rejection of “God” and to use the occasion to rethink God entirely. God is not a *fourth* term, per se, since “God escapes the operation of the count . . . The sign of Badiou’s hidden God is \emptyset , the sign of the void.”⁷⁵ However, Reynhout’s void closely resembles the hidden “fourth term” that Kaufman finds behind Badiou’s dialectic. Badiou writes of a “discourse of nondiscourse”;⁷⁶ likewise, for Reynhout, “this God is not a being alongside other beings. As such, God does not exist, yet God is. . . . The void exists, but its existence is singular and unique as a multiple of nothing.”⁷⁷

God is the no-thing, the fourth term, or the void that lies behind Badiou’s Paul. Therefore “an event is an unexpected encounter with the void of a situation. It is a disruption, something that invades a situation, yet evades the count as one and therefore threatens the tranquil unity of the situation.”⁷⁸ According to Reynhout, such “events occur at an evental site, which is located at the ‘edge of the void’ of a given situation.”⁷⁹ Badiou’s Christ, then, is the event which seizes the subject at the edge of the void. Christ is the mute supplement to the ancient Roman world of the Pharisee Saul of Tarsus, who on the road to Damascus took hold of Saul and transformed him into a militant of the

⁶⁸ Kaufman, “Saturday,” 50–51.

⁶⁹ Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 41.

⁷⁰ Badiou, 51.

⁷¹ Kaufman, “Saturday,” 51.

⁷² Reynhout, “Alain Badiou,” 221.

⁷³ Reynhout, 226.

⁷⁴ Reynhout, 227.

⁷⁵ Reynhout, 231.

⁷⁶ Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 51.

⁷⁷ Reynhout, “Alain Badiou,” 231.

⁷⁸ Reynhout, 231.

⁷⁹ Reynhout, 232.

church he had once persecuted, into a poet-thinker of the universal event that expels all xenophobia and nationalism.⁸⁰

CONCLUSION: PASOLINI BETWEEN BLOCH AND BADIOU

Whereas Bloch's Jesus was a fiery revolutionary, woven into the history of class struggle, Badiou's Christ is hardly a *character* at all. Badiou's Christ stands outside of time, in the void, until that moment when he pierces into history and lays claim to Paul's allegiance on the road to Damascus. Can the two be reconciled? Is there any communist Christology to discover between Bloch's deeply personal Jesus and Badiou's profoundly impersonal Christ?

In his 1964 adaptation of *Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo* to film, Pasolini remains faithful to the Matthean source while accentuating the text's subversive, anti-wealth themes. Pasolini's Marxist Christology is uniquely situated between Bloch's humanism and Badiou's distant Christ.⁸¹ Pasolini's Jesus shows moments of passion, among them his very human scream as his hands are nailed to the cross, and his loud cry at the point of death. Occasionally, Jesus's admonitions against the scribes and Pharisees are marked by elevated intensity, yet there is an astonishing consistency to Jesus's demeanor across Pasolini's film. In one of the film's more captivating sequences, the camera centers actor Enrique Irazoqui for six minutes as he calmly recites the Sermon on the Mount amid a violently erratic environment. Jesus rarely raises his voice, and (with the notable exception of seeing the children in the temple) he rarely smiles. On the whole, Jesus seems unmoved by the world around him.

The same cannot be said, however, for those who encounter Jesus. Much of Pasolini's film focuses on the eyes of those who witness Jesus. When Jesus tells the rich young man to "sell that thou hast and give to the poor," Pasolini's camera passes over the spellbound faces of the man's servants and the children around Jesus.⁸² The teaching is not a private transaction between Jesus and the rich man; it is a public *event*, an effectively communist addition to a situation of misallocated power and wealth. In the unfinished screenplay of Pasolini's *St. Paul*, Paul is passionate and volatile in a way that Pasolini's Jesus never was: at times "radiant and triumphant," at others "terrifying and almost livid."⁸³ Pasolini's screenplay "transposes" Paul's ministry into Pasolini's own epoch, an age of fascism and capitalist decadence.⁸⁴ Pasolini's Paul is the "split" militant (torn, according to Elizabeth Castelli, between the revolutionary mystic persecuted by Roman authorities and the "ruthless organization man whose mission is institutionalization"⁸⁵) that Pasolini's Jesus never was, indeed never could be.

Between his militancy and his divided nature, this Paul bears a striking resemblance to Bloch's Son of Man. Bloch's rebel is therefore not dismissed, but rather transferred onto Paul. The Marxist Christology that emerges from Bloch and Badiou, then, has two poles:

⁸⁰ Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 2, 51.

⁸¹ Maurizio Viano, *A Certain Realism: Making Use of Pasolini's Film Theory and Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 4.

⁸² *Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo*, dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini, prod. Alfredo Bini (Rome: Arco Film, 1964).

⁸³ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *St. Paul: A Screenplay*, trans. Elizabeth Castelli (London: Verso Books, 2014), 38, 42.

⁸⁴ Pasolini, *St. Paul*, 3.

⁸⁵ Castelli, "Introduction," xl-xli.

the militant and the void. The *militant* (Badiou's Paul, Bloch's Job) becomes a revolutionary figure in the precise moment that the singular *void* (Badiou's Christ, Bloch's concrete Utopia) breaks into the present with all the universalism of the Christ-event. A Marxist Christology situated between Badiou and Bloch reminds us that Christ is the void, the otherworldly "fourth term," and Paul is his militant-apostle. Political theology therefore misses the point in its search for a pure political origin, whether in Jesus or in the early church. Ultimately, as Schweitzer shows, such pure political origins are almost always mere reflections of our epoch or our own political priorities.⁸⁶ Bloch's revolutionary Son of Man is not Christ, nor even a Palestinian Prometheus, but a twentieth century anti-fascist guerrilla fighter somewhat out of place in the New Testament. Nevertheless, for the militant, the issue is not whether or not Jesus was a Marxist revolutionary himself. Eighteen centuries before Marx, how could he have been? Rather, Christ's power is evident in that he reorients and reconstitutes us as he did Paul, and in doing so makes communist revolutionaries *out of us*. From at once within and outside of history, Christ gives us a glimpse of an egalitarian horizon—the kingdom of God—after which we can no longer put up with the obscene and violent inequality of our capitalist society.⁸⁷ Compelled by the void, we must make for the horizon.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Badiou, Alain. *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*. Translated by Ray Brassier. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- . *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*. Translated and introduced by Peter Hallward. London: Verso Books, 2012.
- BBC News. "Venezuela's Hugo Chávez sworn in." January 10, 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6248787.stm>.
- Bell, Jr., Daniel. "Badiou's Faith and Paul's Gospel: The Politics of Indifference and the Overcoming of Capital." *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 12, no. 1 (2007): 97–111.
- Bentley, James. *Between Marx and Christ: The Dialogue in German-Speaking Europe, 1870–1970*. London: Verso Books, 1982.
- Blackburn, Simon, editor. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Bloch, Ernst. *Atheism in Christianity: The Religion of the Exodus and the Kingdom*. Translated by J. T. Swann. London: Verso Books, 2009.
- Boer, Roland. *Criticism of Religion: On Marxism and Theology, II*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011.
- . *Criticism of Earth: On Marx, Engels and Theology, IV*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013.
- Bradstock, Andrew. *Faith in the Revolution: The Political Theologies of Müntzer and Winstanley*. London: SPCK, 1997.

⁸⁶ Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 10.

⁸⁷ See Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, trans. James W. Leitch (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 21.

- Crumplar, Mike. "Slipping Slavoj." *Jacobite*. May 2, 2018. <https://jacobitemag.com/2018/05/02/slipping-slavoj/>.
- Dean, Jodi. *The Communist Horizon*. London: Verso Books, 2012.
- Draper, Hal. "The Principle of Self-Emancipation in Marx and Engels." *Socialist Register* 8 (1971): 81–109. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/draper/1971/xx/emancipation.html>.
- Eagleton, Terry. "Introduction." In *The Gospels*. Edited by Giles Fraser. London: Verso Books, 2007.
- . *Reason, Faith, and Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Hudson, Wayne. *The Marxist Philosophy of Ernst Bloch*. London: Macmillan, 1982.
- Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo*. Directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini. Produced by Alfredo Bini. Rome: Arco Film, 1964.
- Kaufman, Eleanor. "The Saturday of Messianic Time (Agamben and Badiou on the Apostle Paul)." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107, no. 1 (2008): 37–54.
- Kautsky, Karl. *Foundations of Christianity: A Study in Christian Origins*. Translated by Harry Mins. New York: Russell and Russell, 1953. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1908/christ/index.htm>.
- Lenin, Vladimir I. "What Is to Be Done?: Burning Questions of Our Movement (1902)." In *Selected Works*, vol. 1, translated by Joe Fineberg and George Hanna, 97–255. New York: International Publishers, 1967.
- Machovec, Milan. *A Marxist Looks at Jesus*. London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1976.
- Marsden, John. "Bloch's Messianic Marxism." *New Blackfriars* 70, no. 823 (1989): 32–44.
- Marx, Karl. "The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature (1841)." PhD diss., University of Jena, 1841. In *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 1. Translated by Richard Dixon. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975. <http://marxists.anu.edu.au/archive/marx/works/1841/dr-theses/index.htm>.
- . Introduction to "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right." In *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. Paris, 1844. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm>.
- . "Letters from Marx to Ruge." In *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. Paris, 1844. https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/letters/43_09-alt.htm.
- . "Preface to the Second Edition (1873)." In vol. 1 of *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*. Edited by Tom Griffith. Translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions, 2013.
- . "Theses on Feuerbach." In *Marx/Engels Selected Works*. Translated by W. Lough. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.htm>.
- Miranda, José. *Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression*. Translated by John Eagleson. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*. Translated by James W. Leitch. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- Morgan, Silas. "Is Liberation Theology a Political Theology?: Marcella Althaus-Reid's Critical Hermeneutics and the Queer Messianic Question of Marxism." *Perspectivas* 14 (2017): 93–108.

- Muñoz, José. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York: New York University Press, 2009.
- Pasolini, Pier Paolo. *St. Paul: A Screenplay*. Translated and introduced by Elizabeth Castelli. London: Verso Books, 2014.
- Pawling, Christopher. "Badiou and the Search for an Anti-Humanist Aesthetic." In *Critical Theory and Political Engagement: From May 1968 to the Arab Spring*, 125–40. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- "Pier Paolo Pasolini Speaks." criterioncollection. Video, 2:47, November 16, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IA1bS1MRzw>.
- Reynhout, Kenneth. "Alain Badiou: Hidden Theologian of the Void?" *Heythrop Journal* 52, no. 2 (2011): 219–33.
- Rudman, Thomas. "A Reading of Alain Badiou in the Light of Saint Paul: Communism and Theology Today." Socialist Theory and Movements Research Network. Video, 1:41:18, October 2016, <https://vimeo.com/191866677>.
- Schweitzer, Albert. *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. Translated by William Montgomery. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1911.
- Sobrino, Jon. *Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin American Approach*. Translated by John Drury. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1978.
- Sölle, Dorothee. *Christ the Representative: An Essay in Theology After the 'Death of God.'* Translated by David Lewis. London: SCM, 1967.
- Turner, Denys. "Marxism, Liberation Theology, and the Way of Negation." In *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, 2nd ed. Edited by Christopher Rowland, 229–47. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Viano, Maurizio. *A Certain Realism: Making Use of Pasolini's Film Theory and Practice*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Welborn, L. L. "'Extraction from the Mortal Site': Badiou on the Resurrection in Paul." *New Testament Studies* 55, no. 3 (2009): 295–314.
- Žižek, Slavoj. *The Fragile Absolute, or, Why is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?* London: Verso Books, 2000.
- Žižek, Slavoj, and John Milbank. *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?* Edited by Creston Davis. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009.

Evangélicos y Argentinos

A Case Study of Evangelicals in the Political Sphere in Argentina 1990–2018

STEPHEN R. DITROLIO COAKLEY¹

Princeton Theological Seminary

The Argentine political climate of 2018 was marked by intense marches and protests. The possible legalization and decriminalization of abortion for all women functioned as lightning rod issue that convened thousands of peoples on both sides of the argument.² This debate on abortion would lead to renewed conversations about church and state separation. At the center of both debates and conversations, evangelicals, who have only recently begun to move into the political realm, have found themselves in the limelight. This paper will try to delineate the historical setting of church and state relations in Argentina, a short history of evangelical Christians and their means of moving into the political realm in the last twenty years. Through two interrelated case studies on abortion rights and the push for a secular state, we will try to exemplify the current climate of evangelical involvement in the political realm and try to determine the future of evangelicals in the political arena.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY: *EVANGÉLICOS*

In the literature cited and in much of the work done, *evangélico*, “evangelical,” is used to broadly describe the Protestant contingent in Argentina. Eric Patterson, in his study on faith and politics in Argentina and Chile, states that a term such as *evangelical* “does not carry the political connotations that it does in the United States.”³ In the Argentine context, these terms, *Protestant* and *evangelical*, are used interchangeably while they still exclude new religious movements such as “Mormons, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Jehovah’s Witnesses.”⁴ We will then use the term *evangelicals* as the catchword that Protestants use as a point of self-reference, even though we understand there are differences and nuances in their denominational belonging. While not all Protestants are

¹ Stephen R. DiTrolío Coakley is a first-year MDiv student at Princeton Theological Seminary. He recently completed graduate coursework in sociology of culture at the Universidad Nacional De San Martín in Buenos Aires, Argentina. His interests include Latin American Christianity and the convergence of faith and politics.

² Mar Centenera, “La marcha de #NiUnaMenos en Argentina se tiñe de verde a favor del aborto legal,” *EL PAÍS*, June 5, 2018, https://www.elpais.com/internacional/2018/06/04/argentina/1528131219_651354.html.

³ Eric Patterson, “Different Religions, Different Politics? Religion and Political Attitudes in Argentina and Chile,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43, no. 3 (2004): 360, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2004.00239.x>.

⁴ Patterson, “Different Religions, Different Politics?,” 360.

evangelicals in Argentina, every evangelical is identified as belonging to the Protestant movement. It is worthwhile to mention that in the press and in all the sociological studies consulted, Protestants are typically denominated as *evangélicos*.⁵ Theologically, we can say that evangelicals in Argentina stress the importance of a “personal encounter with Jesus” as the primary characteristic of their evangelistic praxis.⁶

THE PUBLIC SPHERE AS AN INTERPRETATIVE KEY

At the outset of this investigation, we must explain how we mean to use the term *public sphere* or the concept of *political sphere*. German social theorist Jürgen Habermas, who first popularized the term, defined the *public sphere* as a place of negotiation between individuals and groups in the construction of the state. The public sphere had been divided and separated from the general population; through the advent of new forms of media and communication, it would be a place of access and interchange of ideas.⁷ Additionally, this concept posits “a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgment.”⁸ This theoretical framework will help us understand how evangelicals in Argentina have utilized political means and media tactics to insert themselves into a hostile public sphere. In the next section, we will introduce the political history of Argentina and its relationship with the Roman Catholic Church in order to understand the current state of affairs.⁹

A TENSE HISTORY: ARGENTINA, CATHOLICISM, AND EVANGELICALS

The relationship in Argentina between church and state began with the advent of Christopher Columbus’s expedition. This violent incursion into the Americas would eventually lead to brutal Spanish colonization of the Río de la Plata region. In its relationship with these new foreign lands, the mission of Spain was two-fold: conquest and conversion. Known as “bellicose evangelism,” the conquistadors spread Catholicism through the systematic murder of indigenous peoples.¹⁰ In order to accomplish these dual goals, they were aided by the spiritual assistance of friars, monks, and other emissaries of the church. Historians Roberto DiStefano and Loris Zanatta have studied the topic of Christianity in Argentina and the role of the state. They posit a dual conquest of Latin

⁵ “Los evangélicos anunciaron que no apoyarán a ‘ningún candidato que promueva el aborto,’” *Infobae*, August 3, 2018, <https://www.infobae.com/sociedad/2018/08/03/los-evangelicos-anunciaron-que-no-apoyaran-a-ningun-candidato-que-promueva-el-aborto/>; Marcos Andrés Carbonelli, “Evangélicos, globalización y política en Argentina: Intervenciones públicas y misión divina,” *Civitas: Revista De Ciências Sociais* 14, no. 3 (2014): 507, <https://doi.org/10.15448/1984-7289.2014.3.16472>.

⁶ Pablo Semán and Nicolás Viotti, “Todo lo que usted quiere saber sobre los evangélicos y le contaron mal,” *Anfibia*, accessed March 22, 2018, <https://www.revistaanfibia.com/ensayo/todo-lo-que-quiere-saber-de-los-evangelicos-le-contaron-mal/>.

⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 19.

⁸ Gerard A. Hauser, “Vernacular Dialogue and the Rhetorically of Public Opinion,” *Communication Monographs* 65, no. 2 (1998): 86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637759809376439>.

⁹ All translations are my own, as many primary and secondary sources utilized are in Spanish.

¹⁰ John A Mackay, *The Other Spanish Christ* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 33.

America, both material and spiritual.¹¹ The usurpation of lands and resources was not sufficient; additionally, the native communities were forced into conversions at the hand of militant ideologies of evangelism. It is this collaboration between military colonizing forces and spiritual propagation that sets the background to the dynamic of church and state in Argentina.

We can divide the history of the relationship between church and state in Argentina into three loose stages: 1810–1930, 1930–1983, and from 1983 to the present.¹² The first period began with the independence of Argentina from Spain as a sovereign nation and its nascent development through political turmoil. The Catholic Church here established a hegemonic relationship over religious domain in the new state as the spiritual wing of the government. To further illustrate the inextricable relationship between church and state, since the constitution of Argentina was approved in 1853,¹³ the second article has read, “El gobierno federal sostiene el culto católico apostólico romano” (The federal government holds the apostolic Roman Catholic practice).¹⁴

The second period, from 1930–1983, was marked by the perpetuation of the “myth of the Catholic nation” and identitarian negotiation with the new waves of immigration.¹⁵ In this second period of intermittent democracies and military juntas, Catholicism was deeply connected to nationalist sentiments. During this period, elements of the Argentine Catholic Church supported various military dictatorships, further cementing their influence in the country. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, both evangelicals and Jews were suspected of being foreign agents and trying to disintegrate “national identity.”¹⁶ During the period of dictatorship in the 1970s, a new secretariat was established which would regulate and administer any non-Catholic faiths, which still functions to this day.¹⁷ Due to suspicions of “non-Catholic” groups during this period, the state raided confessional schools and closed evangelical radio stations.¹⁸ It was an era in which political uncertainty was coupled with the tight grip of the Catholic Church over the country.

The third stage, beginning in 1983, saw the initial stages of democratization and an expansion of religious pluralism. During this period, Protestantism grew at unparalleled rates to become the second-most practiced religion in the country after Catholicism. It was a time characterized by a widespread evangelical presence in the media and the

¹¹ Roberto DiStefano and Loris Zanatta, *Historia de la Iglesia Argentina: Desde La Conquista hasta fines del siglo XX*. (Buenos Aires: Grijalbo Mondadori, 2000), 22.

¹² DiStefano and Zanatta, *Historia de la Iglesia Argentina*, 22.

¹³ Though this article of the constitution was incorporated into Argentina’s first constitution in 1853, this second article naming the states as “Roman Catholic” still remains in the current form of the constitution.

¹⁴ Hilario Wynarczyk, “Argentina: ¿Vino Nuevo en Odres Viejos? Evangélicos y Política,” in *Evangélicos y Poder En América Latina*, ed. José Luis Pérez Guadalupe and Sebastian Grundberger (Lima: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2018), 108.

¹⁵ Marcos Andrés Carbonelli and Mariela A. Mosqueira, “Minorías religiosas en Argentina: Posicionamientos frente a lo político y al estado,” *Nómadas. Revista Crítica De Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas* 28, no. 4 (2010): 7, <http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/NOMA/article/view/NOMA1010440333A/25747>.

¹⁶ Carbonelli and Mosqueira, “Minorías religiosas en Argentina,” 5.

¹⁷ Carbonelli and Mosqueira, 7.

¹⁸ Carbonelli and Mosqueira, 2.

explosive growth of Pentecostalism.¹⁹ During this time, the relationship between the Catholic Church and state in Argentina began to deteriorate. The decade of the 1990s was met by a confluence of reestablished democracy and continued rapid growth of evangelicals in the country. This created a new political playing field in which these new contenders, namely the evangelical and Pentecostal contingents, began to jockey for wider exposure. We begin this next section by briefly recounting the arrival of Protestants in Argentina to establish a historical context to better grasp the breadth of the topic at hand.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PROTESTANTISM IN ARGENTINA

In trying to formulate a history of Protestantism in Argentina, we can posit three waves: first, the arrival of *ethnic Protestantism*; second, the wave of evangelicalism; and third, the most recent wave of Pentecostalism. The first wave of ethnic Protestantism began with the arrival of immigrants from European nations with a Protestant presence. These churches came to be known as “foreign churches”: German Lutheran, Italian Waldensian, Scottish Presbyterian, and English Anglican congregations.²⁰ British immigrants who arrived in the newly independent country celebrated a Protestant service as early as 1820.²¹ Subsequently, these immigrants organized their churches and established relationships with the ecclesiastical polity of their home countries. Many of these expatriate churches came under suspicion at various points in the history of Argentina due to their linkage with foreign nations.²²

The second wave would be characterized by the growth of evangelicalism. As noted previously, Protestantism and evangelicalism are used interchangeably in Argentina. The rise of evangelicalism can be traced to the year 1950 with the arrival of evangelist Tommy Hicks from the United States.²³ Hicks was the first preacher to hold revival-style preaching campaigns in soccer stadiums. Hicks had been granted permission to do this after he had prayed and healed the president of the nation, Juan Domingo Peron.²⁴ This campaign was fundamental in bringing evangelical presence in a primarily Catholic country to the limelight and establishing a paradigm of large outdoor evangelistic campaigns.

The third phase began concurrently with the newfound democracy at the end of the 1980s, after a lengthy military dictatorship that killed over 30,000 people.²⁵ Pentecostal

¹⁹ Fortunato Mallimaci et al., “Primera Encuesta Sobre Creencias y Actitudes Religiosas en Argentina” (Buenos Aires: CONICET, 2008), 6, <http://www.ceil-conicet.gov.ar/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/encuesta1.pdf>.

²⁰ William H. Swatos, “On Latin American Protestantism,” *Sociology of Religion* 55, no. 2 (1994): 197, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3711857>.

²¹ Ondina E. González and Justo L. González, *Christianity in Latin America: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 191.

²² Wynarczyk, “Argentina: ¿Vino Nuevo en Odres Viejos?,” 111.

²³ Hilario Wynarczyk, *Ciudadanos de dos mundos: El movimiento evangélico en la vida pública Argentina 1980-2001* (Buenos Aires: UNSAM Edita, 2009), 64.

²⁴ Tony Cauchi, “Tommy Hicks,” *The Voice of Healing*, Revival Library, January 2012, <http://www.voiceofhealing.info/05otherministries/hicks.html>.

²⁵ Martín Mendi, “Los desaparecidos de la dictadura argentina son una cuarta parte de lo que se creía,” *El Español*, February 28, 2018, https://www.elspanol.com/mundo/america/20161116/171233534_0.html.

fervor and missionary zeal spread this movement incredibly fast. Rising from the margins of Argentine society, by 1991, 43 percent of all churches in the federal capital were Pentecostal and 63 percent of all Christians identified as Pentecostal.²⁶ The conditions were right for this new growth based on what Hilario Wynarczyk calls the “deregulation of the religious field.”²⁷ This deregulation refers to the cracking of the Catholic Church’s religious hegemony over the public sphere.²⁸ Within this historical framework, we find evangelicals trying to break into the public sphere through the means of political action.

In conclusion, one aspect that may assist this investigation is to understand that evangelicals have found themselves bound by a “radical alterity” in the history of Argentina.²⁹ The idea that evangelical identity was “not authentic” in the national imagination created a history of clashes within the society of Argentina.³⁰ Evangelicals then entered the public sphere constantly as “others” trying to join the discussion on civil liberties and right to exercise their faith. This “otherness” frames the evangelical situation in Argentina as a minority trying to construct a national identity where there is a state-sponsored religion. The narrative of evangelical as a counter-identity is important to understand in that it helps construct a matrix of meaning for their involvement with and in opposition of the state. We mention this piece as fundamental to the *raison d’être* of Argentine evangelical political praxis.

THE METHODOLOGIES OF DISRUPTION: EVANGELICALS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

We will look at three ways in which evangelicals have tried to claim a place in the public sphere by their involvement in political spaces from the 1990s until now. The first method of disruption was via the formation of political parties as a way to create political legislation “based on Scriptures” and public protests.³¹ The first example of this was the *Movimiento Cristiano Independiente* (Christian Independent Movement), a political party started in 1991 that had a brief presence in the political scene.³² Their greatest success was winning 0.7 percent of the votes tallied in the province of Buenos Aires in 1993. Despite limited success, the party did not last many years and dissolved in 1995. The next foray into the political realm was the creation of the *Movimiento Reformador* (Reformer Movement) and its various iterations through strategic alliances, but not to much success.³³ These groups were trying to create a linkage between their religious beliefs and involvement in the public sphere. Despite the fact that these political groups did not garner much clout or impact, they were successful in forming a place of consensus against the dominant culture. Wynarczyk states, “The trans-denominational evangelical leadership, which functioned through federations, was able to assume an interpretative

²⁶ Mendi, “Los desaparecidos de la dictadura,” 63.

²⁷ Wynarczyk, *Ciudadanos de dos mundos*, 95.

²⁸ Wynarczyk, 95.

²⁹ Carbonelli and Mosqueira, “Minorías religiosas en Argentina,” 8.

³⁰ Marcos Andrés Carbonelli, “Evangélicos y política en Argentina: Entre la institucionalización y la autonomía,” *Mitológicas* 23 (2008): 51, <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=14614481001>.

³¹ Hilario Wynarczyk, “Los evangélicos y la política en la Argentina,” *Boletín De Lecturas Sociales y Económicas* 7, no. 31 (2000): 61, <http://200.16.86.50/digital/33/revistas/blse/wynarczyk1-1.pdf>.

³² Wynarczyk, “Los evangélicos y la política,” 62.

³³ Wynarczyk, 29.

framework against injustice (on behalf of the state and the judicial system toward religious minorities) and was capable of producing out of this various social *protests* of the civic sort.”³⁴

These parties did not succeed at first, yet they formulated a methodology to combat assumed and real threats. Public demonstrations would turn out to be a key means of participation for evangelicals in Argentina. Marcos Carbonelli states that the Evangelical Church in the political space “continues to manifest itself, in the political sphere, as an inherent evangelical mission of the churches.”³⁵ Though these political projects failed in the 1990s, there began to be renewed concern for “participating in politics” through protests and public demonstrations.

The second manner in which the evangelicals tried to position themselves was through questioning the state and trying to position itself against the status quo, especially in playing an important role in the social realm. In 2003, the Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias (Latin American Council of Churches) met in Buenos Aires. During the conference, the topic of conversation was based around the negative effect of neoliberal policies, and the Argentine contingent was especially critical of the way in which western democracies favored big business.³⁶ Horacio Verbistky, an Argentine journalist, posits that evangelicals function as defenders of the economically marginalized and critics of the socioeconomic reality of Argentina.³⁷ Thus, evangelicals, finding themselves in a minority position, were actively critical of the state and especially of economic practices of marginalization and neoliberalism promoted by the state. In an interview conducted with a group of pastors from various sectors of evangelicalism in Argentina (Presbyterian, Baptist, and Pentecostal), there was a strong critique of the current government’s economic plan.³⁸ What is even more interesting is the critical posture taken toward both the current right-wing government and the previous left-wing populist administration. In Argentina, evangelicals propose alternatives to capitalism and a criticism toward neoliberalism while remaining staunchly against abortion and same-sex marriage.

In forming an economic critique of the state, evangelical churches in many of the poorest neighborhoods of the country have set up parallel systems of economic aid and social work, whether it is daily food distributions, drug rehabilitation, or educational assistance. Evangelical churches in the most marginalized areas have assumed the role of the state. A political leader from one of the principal counties of the province of Buenos Aires went so far as to say that the evangelical social work “had been vital in the worst

³⁴ Hilario Wynarczyk, “Partidos políticos evangélicos conservadores bíblicos en la Argentina: Formación y Ocaso 1991-2001,” *Civitas: Revista De Ciências Sociais* 6, no. 2 (2007): 11, 35, <https://doi.org/10.15448/1984-7289.2006.2.54>. Italics added.

³⁵ Marcos Andrés Carbonelli, “Desde el barrio: Perspectivas acerca de la actividad política de pastores evangélicos en el Conurbano Bonaerense,” *Ciencias Sociales y Religión/Ciências Sociais e Religião* 11, no. 11 (September 2009): 11, <https://seer.ufrgs.br/CienciasSociaisReligiao/article/viewFile/8368/6741>.

³⁶ Hans Geir Aasmundsen, *Pentecostalism, Globalisation and Society in Contemporary Argentina* (Stockholm: Södertörns Högskola, 2013), 193.

³⁷ Aasmundsen, *Pentecostalism, Globalisation and Society*, 195.

³⁸ Evangelical pastors in conversation with the author in Buenos Aires, Argentina, June 9, 2016.

moments of the country.”³⁹ As early as 2002, the state has extended invitations to evangelical churches to help in the implementation of social programs for the economically marginalized in the country.⁴⁰ Carbonelli notes that having evangelical pastors act as dispensers of social aid is a radical change from the past; “historically, this format of religious-political interaction has been monopolized by Catholicism, but the growing demographic and territory of the evangelical world has made this participation possible.”⁴¹

The third way in which evangelicals have participated in the public sphere is via the promotion of traditional values. This term, *traditional values*, is meant to connote ideas of a morality that are universally rooted in the evangelical understanding of what the Bible teaches. This movement toward Christian values was consolidated and spearheaded by the first elected evangelical Congresswoman Cynthia Hotton, who founded the political party Valores Para Mi País (Values For My Country). The values she promoted were family, honesty, and solidarity, in addition to being a vocal proponent of pro-life stances and against same-sex marriage. Evangelical denominational alliances that have also been a factor in the promotion of values were various. The Alianza Cristiana de Iglesias Evangélicas de la República Argentina (Alliance of Christian Evangelical Churches of Argentina), or ACIERA, has been fundamental in promoting traditional values such as defending the sanctity of life, opposing same-sex marriage, and mobilizing churches to defend pro-life stances.⁴² This is significant when one considers that ACIERA represents 12,000 congregations in the country and is supported by the major denominations. Through *communiqués*, ACIERA has called for rallies to mobilize large-scale demonstrations to pray for the nation or protest pro-choice platforms, thus mobilizing its political base and making its presence known in the public sphere. In 2010, along with Hotton’s party, ACIERA and a variety of other leaders hosted a conference called “ExpoValores” (ValuesExpo), where they invited evangelical pastors in the country to speak on challenging topics “that only a united church can deal with.”⁴³ In the previous three sections, we have established a brief history of Protestantism, highlighting the mechanisms by which evangelicals have participated in the political sphere. We will now move to look at two interrelated case studies (abortion rights and separation of church and state) that underline the ongoing relationship between evangelicals and the political sphere and highlight the complexities of these social issues.

MIX BLUE AND GREEN TO MAKE ORANGE: ABORTION RIGHTS AND THE UNLIKELY ALLIES IN THE CHURCH AND STATE DEBATE

One way we can interpret the Argentine evangelical push for “traditional values” is by understanding the macroculture of Argentina, where leading up to the 1990s evangelicals

³⁹ Marcos Carbonelli, “Pan y Palabras. La inserción evangélica en la gestión pública en Argentina,” *Religião & Sociedade* 35, no. 2 (2015): 78, <https://doi.org/10.1590/0100-85872015v35n2cap03>.

⁴⁰ Carbonelli, “Pan y Palabras,” 76.

⁴¹ Carbonelli, 89.

⁴² ACIERA, “Historia y declaraciones,” accessed March 22, 2019, <http://www.aciera.org/aciera-nosotros/historia-y-declaraciones/>.

⁴³ Hans Geir Aasmundsen, “Pentecostals and Politics in Argentina: A Question of Compatibility?,” *Iberoamericana: Nordic Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 42, no. 1-2 (2012): 103, <https://doi.org/10.16993/ibero.35>.

were considered a sect, cult, and victims of suspicion and persecution. Under the banner of traditional values, evangelicals now attempted to co-opt the conservative moral identity of Catholicism, thus making it possible to reposition themselves in the public sphere as the new standard bearers of normative morality. Additionally, they have portrayed themselves as a nonthreatening presence on the scene by trying to show the similarities between their moral ideals and those of the Catholic Church. These traditional values promoted by evangelicals can be seen as a way of legitimizing their Argentine nationality and native status, crystalizing a new autochthonous religious expression. This new evangelical faith expression and newfound place in the political sphere led Argentine Christians to transcend the prejudice that they were merely agents of North American Protestantism.⁴⁴ Hotton said publicly, “our message is peace and hope and to transmit our values and break certain prejudices . . . showing that we are committed *Argentines and with its society*.”⁴⁵ We can see how this affirmation of national identity is a strategy to challenge the idea of being an excluded minority in the country.

One contemporary case of this newfound evangelical strength in the public arena was exemplified in mid-2018 on the eve of the vote for the right to have an abortion. In a large public demonstration with thousands of participants, flanks of evangelicals promoting pro-life values were joined by a multitude of Catholic pro-life demonstrators. The title of a main newspaper read, “Evangelicals and Catholics fill the 9 de Julio [street] against legal abortion.”⁴⁶ The pictures from the demonstration show crowds of people holding signs condemning abortion, wearing light blue handkerchiefs, and waving Argentine flags. The symbolic light blue handkerchiefs had imprinted on them, “*Salvemos las dos vidas*” (Save both lives).⁴⁷ These handkerchiefs were a response to the popularization of the green handkerchiefs used by the pro-choice movement. The green pro-choice handkerchiefs had emblazoned on them, “*Educación sexual para decidir, anticonceptivos para no abortar, aborto legal para no morir*” (Sexual education so we can decide, contraceptives so we do not have to abort, legal abortion to not die).⁴⁸ Both the green and the light blue handkerchiefs became symbolic visual representations of each group’s stance and thus wearing it designated you to each position. This public debate around abortion rights turned out to be an interesting overlap between evangelicals and Catholics. Both groups have had a fraught political relationship in Argentina, yet now find themselves united against abortion rights. The unification of both Catholics and evangelicals under the light blue flags of the pro-life movement in August represented not only an unprecedented and historic ecumenical encounter but has also now shifted into a new level of complexity.

⁴⁴ Hilario Wynarczyk, “Argentina,” 117.

⁴⁵ Carbonelli, “Evangélicos y política en Argentina,” 52. Italics added.

⁴⁶ Vanesa López, “Evangélicos y católicos llenaron la 9 de Julio contra el aborto legal.” *Clarín*, August 4, 2018, https://www.clarin.com/sociedad/gran-cantidad-gente-llega-obelisco-manifestarse-vidas_0-BJ9DDv7BQ.html.

⁴⁷ López, “Evangélicos y católicos.”

⁴⁸ CNN Chile, “La historia detrás del pañuelo verde, el nuevo símbolo feminista que llegó a Chile,” July 23, 2018, https://www.cnnchile.com/tendencias/la-historia-detras-del-panuelo-verde-el-nuevo-simbolo-feminista-que-llego-a-chile_20180723/.

On August 9, the news broke that the eighth attempt to pass this bill had failed.⁴⁹ This decision was met by two different reactions: rioting and celebration. Protests broke out among those wanting the legalization and decriminalization of abortion, in counter position to celebrations held by the pro-life supporters in the evangelical movement and the Catholic Church.⁵⁰ In the weeks that followed, many pro-choice advocates formed lines in front of the Archdioceses of Buenos Aires and other locations across the city to apostatize.⁵¹ Argentines could apostatize by filling out a form and thus rescinding their baptism and affiliation to the Catholic Church of Argentina. Many blamed the Catholic Church as the main culprit for influencing the vote against abortion.⁵² This anti-Catholic sentiment was directly linked to the fact that, though Argentina still remains a Catholic nation legally, the Roman Catholic Church in Argentina currently receives subsidies and privileges by the state that other religions do not receive.⁵³ This brought on waves of a new type of protest: the desire to establish a secular state.⁵⁴ Various groups began to form as allies in this push for *laïcité*,⁵⁵ from Pentecostal pastors to atheists.⁵⁶

Many in the pro-choice movements blamed the Catholic Church and its privileged relationship to the state as the main reason why the proposal was voted down. Now the political geography had shifted and the pro-choice movement joined with elements of the pro-life evangelicals on a new contentious issue: church and state separation. Many in the evangelical and pro-choice groups propose a secular state that would remove the hegemonic relationship which the Catholic Church has historically held. Now the light blue flags of the evangelicals and the green ones of the pro-choice movement have been left behind and the new color emerged: orange. This call for church and state separation was emblazoned on orange handkerchief that read, “Iglesia y Estado, asuntos separados” (Church and State, separate issues).⁵⁷

⁴⁹ “Rechazo al aborto legal: Cómo votó cada senador,” Infographic, *Clarín*, August 8, 2018, https://www.clarin.com/politica/voto-voto-ahora-definicion-aborto-legal-senado_0_rk93at_HX.html.

⁵⁰ Daniel Politi and Ernesto Londoño, “El Senado argentino rechazó el proyecto para legalizar el aborto,” *New York Times*, August 9, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/es/2018/08/09/argentina-aborto-senado/>.

⁵¹ *Deutsche Welle*, “Adiós a la Iglesia: Miles de argentinos se suman a una ‘apostasía colectiva,’” August 20, 2018, <https://p.dw.com/p/33OnS>; Mariana Iglesias, “Separación de Iglesia y Estado: Se multiplican las consultas por el trámite de apostasía,” *Clarín*, August 17, 2018, https://www.clarin.com/sociedad/separacion-iglesia-multiplican-consultas-tramite-apostasias_0_HyDA_hE8X.html.

⁵² Federico Acosta Rainis, “Apostasía colectiva: Cientos de bautizados renuncian a la Iglesia Católica,” *LA NACION*, August 18, 2018, <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/2163705-apostasias-colectiva-iglesia>.

⁵³ “La riqueza de la Iglesia la pagamos todos,” *La Izquierda Diario*, March 15, 2018, YouTube video, 2:51, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXULlp4bKs>.

⁵⁴ Sergio Carreras, “Preparan lanzamiento de campaña por la separación entre Iglesia y Estado,” *La Voz Del Interior*, June 21, 2018, <https://www.lavoz.com.ar/politica/preparan-lanzamiento-de-campana-por-la-separacion-entre-iglesia-y-estado>.

⁵⁵ Pablo Semán, Nicolás Viotti, and Mari-Sol García Somoza state that *laïcité* “includes the separation of church and state—we use the French term here to differentiate this judicial-political process from socio-cultural secularisation.” “Secularism and Liberalism in Contemporary Argentina: Neoliberal Responses, Initiatives, and Criticisms of Pope Francis,” *Social Compass* 65, no. 4 (October 2018): 529, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0037768618792809>.

⁵⁶ For statements from different groups and individuals supporting separation of church and state, see “Documentos,” Coalición Argentina Por Un Estado Laico, accessed March 22, 2019, <https://www.coalicionlaica.org.ar/cael/documentos/>.

⁵⁷ Mariana Iglesias, “Separación de Iglesia y Estado.”

ARGENTINE EVANGELICALS: AGENTS OF RECOGNITION? SECULARIZATION? SEPARATION?

This current political climate has raised a question of how evangelicals are agglomerating around this vision of separation of church and state. Many times evangelicals have tried to modify their legal status before the state in hope to make Protestantism a “public religion.”⁵⁸ In 1999 and 2001, evangelical alliances such as ACIERA called for mass demonstrations in favor of a new law that would grant them legal standing equal to that of the Catholic Church.⁵⁹ Due to the economic crisis, this would be put on a waiting list only to reemerge in 2009, when Hotton tried to promote a new law allowing for evangelical churches to have legal agency before the judicial system. This, in effect, would grant evangelical churches equal standing before the law as another alternative state-sponsored religion. This attempt was met with a high level of opposition and did not pass. This law was problematic because it still did not recognize other religions and did not establish a clear separation between Catholicism and the state. Evangelical leaders such as Guillermo Prein, a well-known Pentecostal pastor, and Alexis Kalczynski, the president of the Observatory of Religious Equality, offered new alternative proposals. Both of them recommended a clear separation between the Catholic Church and any other religion with the Argentine state. The payment of church clergy salaries is one element that Kalczynski finds especially contradictory by a democratic state. These evangelicals are calling not only for the state to abandon Catholicism but also for a completely secular state with equal rights for all religious expressions.⁶⁰ The secularization process promoted by this brand of evangelicals is trying to garner support from non-evangelicals. Marcos Carbonelli and Mariela Mosquera suggest that the separation between church and state will not happen without a concerted effort by evangelicals with a unified proposal, rather than disparate opinions on the issue even within the evangelical political base. They illustrate this conflict of opinions between the group led by Hotton, which seeks recognition by the state, and the more radical separatist group led by Prein and Kalczynski.⁶¹ Here we can see that both groups’ underlying objective is to rethink the relationship between the state and religious organizations. The debate for a secular state has gained steam where evangelicals and pro-choice groups are uniting in calling for *laïcité*, even though they are driven by different reasons.

ON (UN)LEVEL GROUND: THE NEW VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS HEGEMONY

As we have seen, Argentina is amidst a moment of radical religious and political transformation in the public sphere. The evangelicals in the country have launched a

⁵⁸ Marcos Andrés Carbonelli, “Los rostros políticos de los evangélicos en la Argentina reciente,” *Revista Rupturas* 9, no. 1 (January 2019): 76, <https://investiga.uned.ac.cr/revistas/index.php/rupturas/article/view/2229/2637>.

⁵⁹ Marcos Andrés Carbonelli and Mariela A Mosquera, “Evangélicos y política: Tensiones en torno a la libertad e igualdad religiosa en Argentina,” *Revista Guillermo De Ockham* 10, no. 1 (January 2012): 43, https://www.academia.edu/38380354/Evang%C3%A9licos_y_pol%C3%ADtica_tensiones_en_torno_a_la_libertad_e_igualdad_religiosa_en_Argentina.

⁶⁰ Alexis Román Kalczynski, “¿Separación, libertad o igualdad? Laicidad desde un marco legal,” accessed March 22, 2019, <http://www.gemrip.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Articulo-Alexis-Dossier.pdf>.

⁶¹ Carbonelli and Mosquera, “Evangélicos y política,” 53.

double pincer, which is highlighted in the case studies above. In terms of the debate on abortion, they have tried to reify themselves as the new moral conscious of the country's growing Christian population over and against the Catholic hegemony in this field. On the other hand, by promoting a secular state, the evangelicals would make the Catholic Church merely one more group in the religious political field, rather than maintaining its historically privileged position. The debate around both abortion rights and separation of church and state in Argentina is pushing the country slowly toward a "post-Catholic" nation.⁶² I suggest, in light of this situation, evangelicals are trying to position themselves as the new hegemony in the religious political sphere. With growing numbers amongst evangelical churches and declining Catholic participation, evangelicals are becoming more and more visible in the public sphere. Through sustained direct and indirect political action, it seems that evangelicals are trying to carve a significant place for themselves in the years to come. One way in which they can establish greater influence would be to succeed in making Argentina a secular state. The secularization of the state would curtail the Catholic influence on the government, creating a vacuum which evangelicals are more than willing to occupy. Social scientists have especially brought the lens of analysis onto the current and future role of evangelical voters in national politics. Politicians have been wooing evangelical voters in Argentina in light of the case of the evangelical vote in Brazil which launched the now President Jair Bolsonaro ahead to win.⁶³ The evangelical vote and political parties seeking evangelicals out as a potential voter base could change the political landscape in years to come.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we began by trying to delineate our theoretical framework around Habermas's term *public sphere* and its possible usages methodologically in reference to how evangelicals have tried to negotiate their identity in the Argentine political sphere. We then turned to looking at the historical context of Argentina and its relationship to the church—from the arrival of Catholicism at the hand of the *Conquistadores* to the formation of the constitution that privileged the Catholic Church. After this we looked at the stages of the Protestants-turned-evangelicals in the country, especially in their formation of a vocal and visible evangelicalism in Argentine society. We have seen how evangelicals have tried to participate and disrupt the public sphere through the means of political participation, practices of social aid, and the promotion of values. Additionally, we analyzed a series of current case studies, both abortion rights and desire for a secular state, as sites of conflict and involvement by evangelicals. These issues have had two different consequences, one of convergence on their moral agendas with the Catholic Church and one of divergences due to the evangelical position on the separation of church and state. Ultimately, the future of the political sphere around the separation of church and state remains uncertain, seeing as it is continuing to unfold and will likely continue to evolve. In future studies, we need to see how the current movement of

⁶² Semán, Viotti, and Somoza, "Secularism and Liberalism in Contemporary Argentina," 529.

⁶³ Marcos Andrés Carbonelli and Pablo Semán, "¿A quiénes votan los evangélicos? El poder real del voto confesional," *Anfibia*, accessed March 22, 2018, <https://www.revistaanfibia.com/ensayo/poder-real-del-voto-confesional/>.

church and state separation develops and how evangelicals try to assume more political clout in a possible future secular state.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ACIERA. "Historia y declaraciones." Accessed March 22, 2019. <http://www.aciera.org/aciera-nosotros/historia-y-declaraciones/>.
- Aasmundsen, Hans Geir. *Pentecostalism, Globalisation and Society in Contemporary Argentina*. Stockholm: Södertörns Högskola, 2013.
- . "Pentecostals and Politics in Argentina: A Question of Compatibility?" *Iberoamericana: Nordic Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 42, no. 1-2 (2012): 85–107. <https://doi.org/10.16993/ibero.35>.
- Carbonelli, Marcos Andrés. "Desde el barrio: Perspectivas acerca de la actividad política de pastores evangélicos en el Conurbano Bonaerense." *Ciencias Sociales y Religión/Ciências Sociais e Religião* 11, no. 11 (September 2009): 107–29. <https://seer.ufrgs.br/CienciasSociaisReligiao/article/viewFile/8368/6741>.
- . "Evangélicos, globalización y política en Argentina: Intervenciones públicas y misión divina." *Civitas: Revista De Ciências Sociais* 14, no. 3 (2014): 507. <https://doi.org/10.15448/1984-7289.2014.3.16472>.
- . "Evangélicos y política en Argentina: Entre la institucionalización y la autonomía." *Mitológicas* 23 (2008): 47–65. <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=14614481001>.
- . "Los rostros políticos de los evangélicos en la Argentina reciente." *Revista Rupturas* 9, no. 1 (January 2019): 61–83. <https://investiga.uned.ac.cr/revistas/index.php/rupturas/article/view/2229/2637>.
- . "Pan y palabras. La inserción evangélica en la gestión pública en Argentina." *Religião & Sociedade* 35, no. 2 (2015): 73–95. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0100-85872015v35n2cap03>.
- Carbonelli, Marcos Andrés, and Mariela A Mosqueira. "Evangélicos y política: Tensiones en torno a la libertad e igualdad religiosa en Argentina." *Revista Guillermo De Ockham* 10, no. 1 (January 2012): 41–54. https://www.academia.edu/38380354/Evang%C3%A9licos_y_pol%C3%ADtica_tensiones_en_torno_a_la_libertad_e_igualdad_religiosa_en_Argentina.
- . "Minorías religiosas en Argentina: Posicionamientos frente a lo político y al estado." *Nómaditas. Revista Crítica De Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas* 28, no. 4 (2010): 333–45. <http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/NOMA/article/view/NOMA1010440333A/25747>.
- Carbonelli, Marcos Andrés, and Pablo Semán. "¿A quiénes votan los evangélicos? El poder real del voto confesional." *Anfibia*. Accessed March 22, 2019. <https://www.revistaanfibia.com/ensayo/poder-real-del-voto-confesional/>.
- Carreras, Sergio. "Preparan lanzamiento de campaña por la separación entre Iglesia y Estado." *La Voz Del Interior*, June 21, 2018, <https://www.lavoz.com.ar/politica/preparan-lanzamiento-de-campana-por-la-separacion-entre-iglesia-y-estado>.
- Cauchi, Tony. "Tommy Hicks." *The Voice of Healing*, Revival Library, January 2012. <http://www.voiceofhealing.info/05otherministries/hicks.html>.

- Centenera, Mar. "La marcha de #NiUnaMenos en Argentina se tiñe de verde a favor del aborto legal." *EL PAÍS*, June 5, 2018, https://www.elpais.com/internacional/2018/06/04/argentina/1528131219_651354.html.
- CNN Chile. "La historia detrás del pañuelo verde, el nuevo símbolo feminista que llegó a Chile." July 23, 2018. https://www.cnnchile.com/tendencias/la-historia-detras-del-panuelo-verde-el-nuevo-simbolo-feminista-que-llego-a-chile_20180723/.
- Deutsche Welle. "Adiós a la Iglesia: Miles de Argentinos se suman a una 'apostasía colectiva,'" August 20, 2018, <https://p.dw.com/p/33OnS>.
- "La riqueza de la Iglesia la pagamos todos." *La Izquierda Diario*, March 15, 2018. YouTube video, 2:51. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXULlp4bKs>.
- DiStefano, Roberto, and Loris Zanatta. *Historia de la Iglesia Argentina: Desde La Conquista hasta fines del siglo XX*. Buenos Aires: Grijalbo Mondadori, 2000.
- "Documentos." Coalición Argentina Por Un Estado Laico. Accessed March 22, 2019. <https://www.coalicionlaica.org.ar/cael/documentos/>.
- González, Ondina E. and Justo L. González, *Christianity in Latin America: A History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991.
- Hauser, Gerard A. "Vernacular Dialogue and the Rhetorically of Public Opinion." *Communication Monographs* 65, no. 2 (1998): 83–107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637759809376439>.
- Iglesias, Mariana. "Separación de Iglesia y Estado: Se multiplican las consultas por el trámite de apostasía." *Clarín*, August 17, 2018. https://www.clarin.com/sociedad/separacion-iglesia-multiplican-consultas-tramite-apostasias_0_HyDA_hE8X.html.
- Kalczyński, Alexis Román. "¿Separación, libertad o igualdad? Laicidad desde un marco legal." Accessed March 22, 2019. <http://www.gemrip.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Articulo-Alexis-Dossier-.pdf>.
- "Los evangélicos anunciaron que no apoyarán a 'ningún candidato que promueva el aborto.'" *Infobae*, August 3, 2018. <https://www.infobae.com/sociedad/2018/08/03/los-evangelicos-anunciaron-que-no-apoyaran-a-ningun-candidato-que-promueva-el-aborto/>.
- López, Vanesa. "Evangélicos y católicos llenaron la 9 de Julio contra el aborto legal." *Clarín*, August 4, 2018, https://www.clarin.com/sociedad/gran-cantidad-gente-llega-obelisco-manifestarse-vidas_0_BJ9DDv7BQ.html.
- Mackay, John A. *The Other Spanish Christ: A Study in the Spiritual History of Spain and South America*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001.
- Mallimaci, Fortunato et al. "Primera Encuesta sobre Creencias y Actitudes Religiosas en Argentina." Buenos Aires: CONICET, 2008. <http://www.ceil-conicet.gov.ar/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/encuesta1.pdf>.
- Mendi, Martín. "Los desaparecidos de la dictadura argentina son una cuarta parte de lo que se creía." *El Español*, February 28, 2018, https://www.lespanol.com/mundo/america/20161116/171233534_0.html.
- Patterson, Eric. "Different Religions, Different Politics? Religion and Political Attitudes in Argentina and Chile." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43, no. 3 (September 2004): 345–62., <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2004.00239.x>.

- Politi, Daniel and Ernesto Londoño. "El Senado argentino rechazó el proyecto para legalizar el aborto." *New York Times*, August 9, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/es/2018/08/09/argentina-aborto-senado/>.
- Rainis, Federico Acosta. "Apostasía colectiva: Cientos de bautizados renuncian a la Iglesia Católica." *LA NACION*, August 18, 2018, <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/2163705-apostasia-colectiva-iglesia>.
- "Rechazo al aborto legal: Cómo votó cada senador." Infographic. *Clarín*, August 11, 2018. https://www.clarin.com/politica/voto-voto-ahora-definicion-aborto-legal-senado_0_rk93at_HX.html.
- Semán, Pablo, and Nicolás Viotti. "Todo lo que usted quiere saber sobre los evangélicos y le contaron mal." *Anfibia*. Accessed March 22, 2019. <https://www.revistaanfibia.com/ensayo/todo-lo-que-quiere-saber-de-los-evangelicos-le-contaron-mal>.
- Semán, Pablo, Nicolás Viotti, and Mari-Sol García Somoza. "Secularism and Liberalism in Contemporary Argentina: Neoliberal Responses, Initiatives, and Criticisms of Pope Francis." *Social Compass*. 65, no. 4 (October 2018): 516–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0037768618792809>.
- Swatos, William H. "On Latin American Protestantism." *Sociology of Religion* 55, no. 2 (1994): 197–205. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3711857>.
- Wynarczyk, Hilario. "Argentina: ¿Vino Nuevo en Odres Viejos? Evangélicos y Política." In *Evangélicos y Poder En América Latina*, edited by José Luis Pérez Guadalupe and Sebastian Grundberger Lima: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2018.
- . "Los evangélicos y la política en la Argentina." *Boletín de Lecturas Sociales y Económicas* 7, no. 31. (2000): 52–66. <http://200.16.86.50/digital/33/revistas/blse/wynarczyk1-1.pdf>.
- . "Partidos políticos evangélicos conservadores bíblicos en la Argentina: Formación y ocaso 1991-2001." *Civitas: Revista De Ciências Sociais* 6, no. 2 (2006): 11–41. <https://doi.org/10.15448/1984-7289.2006.2.54>.
- . *Ciudadanos de dos mundos: El movimiento evangélico en la vida pública Argentina 1980-2001*. Buenos Aires: UNSAM Edita, 2009.

Maximus the Confessor, The Lateran Synod of 649, and the Problem of Religious Authority

MATTHEW FREDERICK NEUMANN¹

Princeton Theological Seminary

Maximus the Confessor is one of the most well-known church fathers. However, his complex relationship with the state, a relationship that would lead to the mutilation that earned him the title of “Confessor,” has been studied less than his theology. This paper examines the recent anthology of primary sources on Maximus’s exile by Allen and Neil, focusing on the authorities with which Maximus aligns himself in order to justify his refusal to subscribe to the imperial *Typos* and enter into communion with Constantinople.² Despite the various shifts in his arguments, Maximus remains consistent in his appeal to the Lateran Synod of 649, even as he relativizes the authority of the bishop of Rome.

Maximus would undergo three major trials. The first was recorded in the *Record of the Trial (Record)*, an eyewitness account whose authorship is disputed but can likely be attributed to a disciple of Maximus.³ The second and third were recorded in the *Dispute between Maximus and Theodosius, Bishop of Caesarea Bithynia (DB)*, which dates to either 656 or 657, except for its last part, which had to be written after Maximus’s final trial in 662. The authorship of this document is also uncertain.⁴

¹ Matthew Frederick Neumann is a third-year MDiv student at Princeton Theological Seminary, concentrating in church history. His interests include Trinitarian theology, Christology, and the relationship between the Greek East and Latin West. Following his time at Princeton Theological Seminary, he hopes to pursue doctoral work in historical theology/history of Christianity.

² Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, ed. and trans., *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions: Documents from Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³ “No more precise date for this trial than the year 655 can be given. Various authors have been suggested for the document, ranging from both Anastasii to Theodore Spudaeus and Theodosius of Gangra, but the question must remain open.” Pauline Allen, “Life and Times of Maximus the Confessor,” in Allen and Neil, *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*, 12. For a more elaborate discussion of the date and authorship of the document, see Allen and Neil, introduction to *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 35–36.

⁴ Allen, “Life and Times,” 12.

Other documents in the anthology include Maximus's *Letter of Maximus to Anastasius the Monk, His Disciple*, which dates to April 658; the *Letter of Anastasius to the Monks of Cagliari*, which dates to sometime after Maximus's letter; the *Letter of Anastasius the Apocrisiarius to Theodosius of Gangra*, dating to 666; and the *Commemoration*, which dates to 668 or 669 and records the exiles of Maximus, Martin, and some of Maximus's associates.⁵ While the historicity of many texts written about Maximus's life is disputed, these documents are considered historically reliable.⁶

MAXIMUS'S FIRST TRIAL

Several scholars believe that at least the first trial of Maximus was a "show trial," meant to bolster the emperor's authority so that he could gain the empire's confidence against the growing Muslim threat.⁷ More specifically, Maximus's trial was held in direct response to the Lateran Synod of 649, which had been called by Pope Martin I (r. 649–53). The synod not only approved Martin's election to the papacy without approval from the Byzantine Emperor, but also anathematized the patriarchs who supported Emperor Heraclius's *Ektthesis* (638) and Emperor Constans II's *Typos* (647/48).⁸ It thus threatened the authority of both the emperor and the church in the imperial capital.

⁵ Allen, 12.

⁶ See Allen, 10–14, for a detailed assessment of the reliability of several works on Maximus's life. "These documents are indispensable for examining Maximus' final years, his exiles, and death, as well as the fates of his companions, and give us a much surer historical footing than do any of the *Lives* or epitomes." Allen, 12. Phil Booth questions the historicity of the *Record* but nonetheless sees it as valuable: "It . . . affords us an invaluable window not only onto the perceived transgressions of Maximus and his allies but also onto the conceptual framework within which that same circle constructed and legitimized its dissidence." *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 307–8.

⁷ "The trials were designed by the senate to shift the blame for the general crisis onto their dyothelite opponents and to present them as criminals. . . . Once Maximus, in particular, was out of the way, the imperial government could turn its attention to thwarting the influence of the eastern monks in the West, a process that was aided by the re-establishment of communion between the patriarchates of Constantinople and Rome." Allen, "Life and Times," 7. See also Allen and Neil, introduction to *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 22; John F. Haldon, "Ideology and the Byzantine State in the Seventh Century: The 'Trial' of Maximus the Confessor," in *From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium: Proceedings of the Byzantinological Symposium in the 16th Eirene Conference*, ed. Vladimír Vavřínek, 87–91 (Prague: Academia, 1985); Wolfram Brandes, "'Juristische' Krisenbewältigung im 7. Jahrhundert? Die Prozesse gegen Papst Martin I. und Maximus Homologetes," *Fontes Minores* 10:141–212, esp. 212; Booth, *Crisis of Empire*, 278; Walter Kaegi, "Byzantium in the Seventh Century," in Allen and Neil, *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*, 96–97.

⁸ Allen and Neil, introduction to *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 6, 8, 18. See also Allen: "It has been suggested that Maximus was the author of the proceedings of the synod, and that they had been composed in Greek beforehand and were then translated into Latin by the Byzantine monks who came to Rome with him after being displaced by the troubles in the East. . . . Maximus' name appears in the subscriptions to the *libellus* included in the proceedings of the council, as well as the names of two monks called Anastasius, perhaps the disciple and the apocrisiarius, although we cannot be sure that any of the trio was present." "Life and Times," 6–7. See further Allen and Neil: "Although we have no conclusive proof that he was in attendance, it is likely that he would have wished to keep a low profile, given the hostility that had been engendered against him in the Byzantine court since his vocal protest against the *Typos* of 647/8." Introduction to *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 19. Allen and Neil also discuss the theory of Rudolf Reidinger that the proceedings of the Lateran Synod of 649 were written originally in Greek by Maximus earlier and then only translated into Latin by monks who came with Maximus. The whole synod of 649 was thus staged, and Martin had merely waited until he became pope to bring out the documents. Allen and Neil argue that this argument has been largely refuted by Alexander Alexakis, who points out that Martin is not

The *Ekthesis* and the *Typos* demanded “peace through silence” concerning the monenergist and monothelite controversies, respectively.⁹ It was during the latter controversy that Maximus had risen to prominence beginning in 640, and in 645 he had convinced Pyrrhus, the former patriarch of Constantinople, to move to the dyothelite, or two-will, position, albeit only temporarily.¹⁰ These political victories, as well as the fact that he was able to participate in the Lateran Synod of 649, showed that he was a real threat to the emperor’s policies.

The crucial charge presented against Maximus in his first trial was his refusal to acknowledge the *Typos* and enter into communion with Constantinople. Before this twofold charge was presented, however, several other more explicitly political charges were directed at Maximus, such as the charge that he hated the emperor.¹¹ Maximus quickly dismantled this and other political charges, and one of the officials agreed with him that they seemed illegitimate, supporting Allen and Neil’s claim that such charges were “trumped up.”¹²

When discussion moved to the matter of the *Typos*, Maximus argued that the document annulled the teachings of the fathers and the Creed of Nicaea, that silence was the same as annulment, and that any “arrangement” that abrogated the teaching of Nicaea led to separation from God for the sake of a superficial ecclesiastical union.¹³ Maximus then went on the offensive, saying that the emperor had overstepped his bounds in issuing the *Typos*. Maximus uses his own interpretation of Constantine I to support his position, arguing that at the first Council of Nicaea the emperor merely concurred with the decision already made by the fathers. Maximus argues further that it is the priest’s role, and not the emperor’s, to make decisions on theology. The emperor is not a priest, as he performs none of the sacraments and does not wear priestly attire.¹⁴ In the Byzantine Empire, the liturgy was the sphere in which the emperor’s role was most

accused of staging the synod. Introduction to *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 19–20. See Rudolf Reidinger, “Die Lateransynode von 649 und Maximus der Bekenner,” in *Maximus Confessor*, Actes du Symposium sur Maximus le Confesseur, Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980, ed. Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn, 111–22 (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1982), 119–20; Alexander Alexakis, *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and Its Archetype* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1996), 18–21; Booth, *Crisis of Empire*, 293–94.

⁹ *Record of the Trial*, in *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, §§ 4, 7 (hereafter cited as *Record*).

¹⁰ Allen and Neil, introduction to *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 6, 12, 15, 17; Allen, “Life and Times,” 6. “His c. fifty letters (CPG 7699), most of which cannot be dated with certainty, demonstrate how well connected he was: his addressees include bishops, clergy, abbots, monks, imperial officials like *cubicularii* and *sacellarii*, in various locations, to whom Maximus writes, also from various locations.” Allen, 9.

¹¹ *Record*, §§ 1–2, lays out several charges against Maximus, to which Maximus responds by pointing out how convenient it is that none of the relevant parties that could support the accusations are still alive. For an analysis of these preliminary charges, see Booth, *Crisis of Empire*, 307–9.

¹² Allen and Neil, introduction to *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 2. Another charge that would appear to be “trumped up” is the charge of Origenism, which is immediately dismissed after Maximus condemns Origenism in *Record*, § 4.

¹³ *Record*, § 4.

¹⁴ *Record*, § 4. Maximus also appeals to liturgical practice, saying that “the emperors are remembered with the laity when the deacon says: *And the lay-people who have fallen asleep in faith, Constantine, Constans, and the others.*” Thus he remembers the living emperors as well, after all the clergy.” *Record*, § 4.

ambiguous and thus the place where Maximus could challenge his authority most effectively.¹⁵

In Maximus's first trial, the problem of the *Typos* was closely related to the issue of communion with Constantinople. One of the officials at the trial lays this out clearly: "There's only one point on which you distress everyone, namely that you're causing many people to be separated from the communion of the church here [Constantinople]."¹⁶ Such a charge implied that Maximus carried considerable influence but also reflected his continued belief that he had the power of Rome and the Lateran Synod on his side. He did not have to be in communion with Constantinople to still be connected to the fathers. Maximus goes on to explain that the *Typos* was condemned at Rome and that he rejected communion with Constantinople because it had rejected the synods. It is not clear whether Maximus includes the Lateran Synod among these synods, but even if he did not, the *Typos* went against other uncontested councils of the church.¹⁷

Because of his condemnation of the *Typos*, Maximus was accused of being the reason that the emperor was anathematized "throughout the entire West."¹⁸ Maximus responded to this charge by making a careful distinction, saying that "the ecclesiastical officials caused" the emperor to enact the *Typos*, "and the state officials allowed it."¹⁹ Maximus thus attempted to distance the emperor from the document. He urged Emperor Constans II to remove the emperor's name from the *Typos* and thus avoid condemnation by the West, citing as precedent a supposed letter of Emperor Heraclius to Pope John IV, in which the emperor stated that he had not written the *Ekthesis* of 638 but that it had been written by Patriarch Sergius.²⁰

One scholar, Alexander Alexakis, confirms that such a letter may have existed but states that it likely contained the opposite of what Maximus argued for: the letter actually contained Heraclius's plea to John IV asking him to accept the *Ekthesis*.²¹ When addressing why Maximus would spread misinformation on this matter, Alexakis asserts that Maximus sought to set a good precedent for the emperor to serve Maximus's own interests but also comments that "farther behind this level, Maximus' action was related to the long standing tradition of the Church Councils and especially of the Ecumenical Councils not to condemn any Emperor on the grounds of heresy. In this aspect Maximus was in accordance with what we can read in the Acts of the Lateran Council of 649, where Sergios already appears to be the author of the *Ekthesis* and Herakleios is silently but explicitly exonerated."²² Maximus was seeking to preserve religious honor for the

¹⁵ Booth, *Crisis of Empire*, 281. See also Adam G. Cooper, "St. Maximus the Confessor on Priesthood, Hierarchy, and Rome," *Pro Ecclesia* 10, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 355.

¹⁶ *Record*, § 9.

¹⁷ *Record*, § 11.

¹⁸ *Record*, § 9.

¹⁹ *Record*, § 9.

²⁰ *Record*, § 9.

²¹ Alexander Alexakis, "Before the Lateran Council of 649: The Last Days of Herakleios the Emperor and Monotheletism," in *Synodus: Beiträge zur Konzilien- und allgemeinen Kirchengeschichte: Festschrift für Walter Brandmüller*, ed. Remigius Bäumer and Walter Brandmüller, 93–101 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1997), 100.

²² Alexakis, "Before the Lateran Council of 649," 101.

emperor and hoping that the emperor would not make him stand directly against him. (When he was charged again, he stated that he had not “anathematized the emperor, but a document alien to the faith of the church.”²³) Maximus urges the emperor to conform to his predecessors by supporting the Lateran Synod of 649, which Maximus appeals to as supporting his own position. In *Opusculum 11*, which Jankowiak and Booth date to between 649 and 653,²⁴ and which is considered less authentically Maximian, the author claims that Lateran 649 was “one of the ‘six holy councils,’” despite its not having imperial sanction.²⁵ In the *Record*, however, Maximus does not include the synod among the “four holy Synods.”²⁶ Still, this may simply be because of the logic of Maximus’s argument, as he mentions the Lateran Synod only a few lines below, stating that it had just as much authority as those other councils to strip clergy of the priesthood.²⁷

When the Lateran Synod was challenged by one of the officials present because Pope Martin had been deposed, Maximus corrected his challenger, saying that Martin was “not deposed, but banished.”²⁸ Maximus goes on: “even if he *were* canonically deposed, this does not prejudice what was ratified in an orthodox manner through the sacred canon.”²⁹ Maximus thus did not base his position on the authority of the bishop of Rome as much as on canonical authority, referring to the Lateran Synod itself upon its being ratified. Even if a future bishop of Rome did decide to accept the *Typos*, Maximus would not.³⁰

This passage is especially crucial when evaluating the claims that scholars make concerning the role of the bishop of Rome in Maximus’s arguments. Maximus would have a close relationship with Rome for most of his life.³¹ Although scholars argue that Maximus’s thought regarding the bishop of Rome evolved in light of his circumstances, this passage seems consistent with Maximus’s previous and later positions. In 640, several years before his trials, Maximus wrote his *Letter to Thalassius*, in which he described the see of Rome as “Ecclesiarum princeps mater et urbs” (chief mother and city of the

²³ *Record*, § 11.

²⁴ Marek Jankowiak and Phil Booth, “A New Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor,” in Allen and Neil, *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*, 67.

²⁵ Allen, “Life and Times,” 6. For a discussion of the authenticity of *Opusculum 11*, especially in relation to this quote, see Cooper, “St. Maximus,” 361–63.

²⁶ *Record*, § 6.

²⁷ Notably, Allen and Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, do not comment on the fact that the Second Council of Constantinople (553) is not mentioned. Theodore Spudaeus in his *Commemoration* will include this council in his statement concerning Pope Martin I: “[He fell asleep] after he had brought illumination to the one and only holy catholic and apostolic, glorious church of our God, by the all-holy and the true teachings of the synods, I mean the one in Nicaea, and Constantinople, both Ephesus I and Chalcedon, and again in Constantinople at the time of the emperor Justinian, and the sacred and all-pious teachings of all the holy Fathers who are both full of divine wisdom and approved, and our true teachers, as those who wish to read reverently will find in the sacred acts of the holy and apostolic and all-pious synod which was convened by him in Rome.” *Commemoration*, in *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, § 8 (brackets in the original).

²⁸ *Record*, § 12. Alexakis, *Codex Parisinus*, 21n88 translates ἐδιώθη as “persecuted” rather than “banished,” in order to make the point that Martin is not being accused of staging a council as Reidinger, “Die Lateransynode,” 119–20, would have it.

²⁹ *Record*, § 12.

³⁰ *Record*, § 7.

³¹ Booth, *Crisis of Empire*, 272–73.

churches).³² Shortly after, in *Opusculum* 12, dated to between 643 and 645, Maximus said that to anathematize the church in Rome was to anathematize the catholic church and that Rome “has received and holds the rule, the authority, and the power of binding and loosing of the universal holy Churches of God throughout the entire world, through and in all things.”³³ Even here, however, as Booth points out, “Maximus . . . emphasizes three distinct bases for the Roman Church’s preeminence: its status as the guardian of the orthodox faith; its inheritance through the promise of Christ to Saint Peter [Matt. 16:18–19]; and its recognition through conciliar and canonical decree.”³⁴ Perhaps the promise of Matthew 16 can be considered inherent to the office of the bishop of Rome, but the bishop’s status seems even here to be dependent both on orthodoxy and on councils. Thus the Lateran Synod could be used over and against a particular pope.

Opusculum 11, mentioned above, also gives insights into Maximus’s views on the bishop of Rome at this time. In that document, the author, presumably Maximus, refers to both the promise to the bishop of Rome and the relationship of the see to orthodox faith, speaking of the see of Rome as “the sole base and foundation, since, according to the very promise of the Saviour, it will never be overpowered by the gates of hell, but rather has the keys of the orthodox faith and confession in him, and to those who approach it with reverence it opens the genuine and unique piety, but shuts and stops every heretical mouth that speaks utter wickedness.”³⁵ Here it seems that Maximus gives the see of Rome some sense of possession over orthodoxy because of the promise of Matthew 16,³⁶ and Cooper seems right that Maximus here sees the bishop of Rome as important for ecclesiastical unity.³⁷ Louth is right, however, in pointing out that these words “cannot be claimed as support for any notion of papal authority that seeks to detach the pope from the faithful experience of the Church” and that they are better seen as “words about the Church of Rome, not the papacy as such, and they are also words written by Maximus in the glow of gratitude he must have felt, following the Lateran synod, for the support he had found in Rome.”³⁸ This would seem to align even with Maximus’s language of a “seed of piety”³⁹ in his letter to Anastasius many years later.

This first trial lays the groundwork for the issues that will plague Maximus and his followers throughout his trials and exiles. The trial confronts Maximus with the issues of the *Typos* and communion with Constantinople, and the authority of the bishop of Rome

³² Maximus, *Letter to Thalassius*, quoted in Booth, *Crisis of Empire*, 270–71.

³³ Maximus, *Opusculum* 12, translated in Booth, 271.

³⁴ Booth, *Crisis of Empire*, 271.

³⁵ Maximus, *Opusculum* 11, translated in Andrew Louth, “The Ecclesiology of Saint Maximus the Confessor,” *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 4, no. 2 (2004): 116.

³⁶ That “Rome’s pre-eminence is not seen exclusively as conditional upon the orthodoxy of its confession, but is also bound up with the promise of Christ, his bestowal of the keys to the church in the person of Peter, and the succession of Peter’s episcopacy located in Rome.” Cooper, “St. Maximus,” 361.

³⁷ “It appears that Maximus also accepts communion with the Roman See as a critical factor, properly inseparable from ‘the right confession of the faith,’ in the realization of unity in the church.” Cooper, 361. Cooper cites *DB*, § 4, as evidence of Maximus’s claim that Theodosius must submit to Rome for his “orthodoxy” to mean anything.

³⁸ Louth, “Ecclesiology,” 116.

³⁹ Maximus, *Letter of Maximus to Anastasius the Monk, His Disciple*, in *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions* (hereafter cited as *Ep. Max.*).

and the Lateran Synod is disputed. Even here, though, Maximus relativizes the offices of both the bishop of Rome and the emperor if they will not conform to orthodox faith.

THE DISPUTE AT BIZYA AND MAXIMUS'S SECOND TRIAL

Following his first trial, Maximus was sent into exile in Bizya.⁴⁰ Approximately a year later, in August of 656, bishop Theodosius of Caesarea Bithynia and two consuls representing the emperor came to debate with him. They asked why he was not in communion with Constantinople,⁴¹ further indicating that this was the central issue.⁴² Theodosius went so far as to say that the *Typos* was an “evil event” but was necessary because of “the altercation between orthodox parties over the wills and activities.”⁴³ He thus assumed that both parties were orthodox, implicitly rejecting the Lateran Synod. Theodosius offered to have the emperor cancel the *Typos* if Maximus would agree to be in communion with Constantinople. Maximus in response stated that he was not in communion, because of “innovations” introduced by the bishops of Constantinople. He refused Theodosius’s offer, asserting that he would enter into communion with Constantinople only when “the offending innovations proposed by the men I have mentioned [are] removed, together with those same men who proposed them” in line with the Lateran Synod of 649.⁴⁴ He would rather die than accept the “peace” the *Typos* offered.⁴⁵

Theodosius then questions the Lateran Synod, not because of the supposed deposition of the pope,⁴⁶ but because it was not ratified by the emperor.⁴⁷ Maximus rebuts that it is orthodox faith, and not emperors, that affirms synods.⁴⁸ He mentions several synods endorsed by emperors that were eventually condemned “on account of the godlessness of the impious teachings that were confirmed by them.”⁴⁹ Maximus again appeals to the “devout canon” as recognizing “those synods as holy and approved which the correctness of their teaching approved,” saying that there is no canon that “declares that only those synods are approved which are convened on the order of emperors, or that generally speaking synods are convened at all on the order of an emperor.”⁵⁰ This likely connects with Maximus’s prior argument that the emperor was a lay person and his claim that the emperor can only assent to, but not determine, conciliar decisions.⁵¹

⁴⁰ *Record*, § 13.

⁴¹ *Dispute between Maximus and Theodosius, Bishop of Caesarea Bithynia*, in *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, § 2 (hereafter cited as *DB*).

⁴² During Maximus’s third exile, Anastasius the Apocrisiarius wrote his *Letter of Anastasius the Apocrisiarius to Theodosius of Gangra* in 666, in which he affirms that the refusal to enter into communion was the basis of the charges. See Allen and Neil, introduction to *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 12.

⁴³ *DB*, § 3.

⁴⁴ *DB*, § 2.

⁴⁵ *DB*, § 3.

⁴⁶ *Record*, § 12.

⁴⁷ *DB*, § 4.

⁴⁸ *DB*, § 4.

⁴⁹ *DB*, § 4.

⁵⁰ *DB*, § 4.

⁵¹ *Record*, § 4. Allen and Neil make no mention of a specific canon that Maximus is citing, although they do say that he cites a specific canon, Canon 5 of Nicaea. *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 181n23. Maximus says that canon “declares that synods be held twice each year in every province, making no mention

It seems strange that Maximus does not mention specific legislation apart from this one minor canon in support of his case, unless he is referring again to the Lateran Synod. For orthodox faith to determine whether a teaching is true, orthodox faith must be already determined; but once it had been ratified at the Lateran Synod, that synod had the authority of orthodox doctrine. When Maximus presents the documents of the synod to Theodosius for inspection, Theodosius agrees with Maximus that “it is the correctness of the teachings which approves synods.”⁵² After reading the Lateran Synod’s florilegia, Theodosius further says that he could agree to Maximus’s theology in writing but could not support the synod, since it anathematized several bishops of Constantinople. Maximus counters Theodosius by saying that, if Theodosius feels he must accept teaching that is consistent with a council, he must write to the bishop of Rome in line with previous councils.⁵³ Maximus himself could not sign a document that went against the anathemas of the Lateran Synod, as that would place him in danger of being anathematized by Rome. He urges that Theodosius have the emperor write to the bishop of Rome, and Maximus says that there is “ecclesiastical precedent” for such an action.⁵⁴ He is likely referring to the same move he made in his first trial: the idea of the emperor writing to the pope to distance himself from a document written by a patriarch.⁵⁵ Again, Maximus appeals most directly to a council but also attempts to not condemn the emperor.⁵⁶

When Theodosius and the others return with the emperor’s decision, Maximus could no longer claim that the emperor may be on his side: “may God compel you to enter into communion with us on the terms of the *Typos* which was published by us.”⁵⁷ The emperor identified himself as an author of the *Typos*, undercutting Maximus’s hope to not go against him. In response, Maximus wept, saying that he could not deny what has already been decided concerning these theological matters.⁵⁸

One of the officials present, Epiphanius, claimed that the monothelites are “in reality . . . more Christian and orthodox than you,” connecting orthodoxy with the emperor’s decree.⁵⁹ He says that Maximus, in anathematizing the *Typos*, “anathematize[d] those

of imperial order, with the purpose of preserving our saving faith and correcting all points which do not conform to the divine law of the church.” *DB*, § 4. See also Booth: “Like the *Record of the Trial*, therefore, the *Dispute at Bizya* has Maximus refuse the emperor a role in the definition of doctrine, but we notice a subtle transformation in emphasis. For where the *Record* denies the imperial right to discuss and define dogma on the basis that this is a clerical privilege, here it is not so much clerical debate and definition that determines doctrine as the righteousness of doctrine itself.” *Crisis of Empire*, 314.

⁵² *DB*, § 4.

⁵³ *DB*, § 4. “In 381 the First Council of Constantinople referred to the ‘gospel faith established by the 318 fathers at Nicaea’ (Tanner, 28*). The Council of Ephesus in 431 endorsed this view (Tanner, 65*). More generally canon 1 of the Council of Chalcedon decreed that ‘the canons hitherto agreed by the saintly fathers at each and every synod should remain in force’ (Tanner, 87*).” Allen and Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 182n30.

⁵⁴ *DB*, § 4.

⁵⁵ *Record*, § 9.

⁵⁶ Maximus says in reference to the emperor “that whatever he orders of me concerning any matter whatsoever which will be destroyed and brought to nothing with this age, I will do readily,” meaning that his loyalty was to the emperor concerning matters not related to this problem. *DB*, § 10.

⁵⁷ *DB*, § 9. Italics added.

⁵⁸ *DB*, § 11.

⁵⁹ *DB*, § 12.

who confess and believe as rational natures and the catholic church do.”⁶⁰ He thus thought that the emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople were capable of making a “catholic” decision apart from the bishop of Rome or the Lateran Synod.⁶¹ He added that being “too subtle” would hurt the laity.⁶² Epiphanius threatened anyone who would ally themselves with Maximus, even claiming that he would remove the present pope if he did not agree to go along with the *Typos*: “we will put all of you to the test by fire, each in his own place, as [Pope] Martin was put to the test by fire.”⁶³ Maximus makes a unique counterclaim, saying that it is “by scrupulous confession of the faith” that “each person is sanctified” and that this is undone through the *Typos*.⁶⁴ Silence is thus taking away something necessary for Christian faith.⁶⁵ The Lateran Synod confessed the faith scrupulously and thus should be considered orthodox and authoritative. Despite his claims, Maximus was sentenced to exile in Perberis.⁶⁶

There is here a clash of views of authority between Maximus and Epiphanius. Maximus still believes that orthodox faith is the ultimate criterion for authority, seeming to anticipate Epiphanius’s threat to force Roman submission. Epiphanius subscribes to the emperor’s full authority in matters of doctrine and also seems to appeal to catholicity. Maximus can no longer appeal to the emperor, but the bishop of Rome is still on his side. This last ally, however, would abandon him in the years after his second trial.

BETWEEN MAXIMUS’S SECOND AND THIRD TRIALS

While in Perberis, Maximus wrote to his disciple Anastasius in 658. In this letter he mentions a message he received from Peter, the new patriarch of Constantinople (r. 654–66), which claimed that the *Typos* now truly had all the major sees behind it, including Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem⁶⁷—although Rome was of much more significance than the others.⁶⁸ Pope Vitalian, it appears, had accepted a compromise issued by Peter, and thus he could also be said to agree with the *Typos*.⁶⁹ Maximus still refused to agree to such a “catholic” faith without hearing it. Upon hearing the compromise, he once again refused to conform. Peter’s representatives again appealed to the authority of the emperor and the pope, saying that the emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople ordered Maximus to conform “following an instruction from the pope of

⁶⁰ DB, § 12.

⁶¹ DB, § 12.

⁶² DB, § 12.

⁶³ DB, § 13.

⁶⁴ DB, § 12.

⁶⁵ DB, § 12.

⁶⁶ DB, § 14. Haldon says that a full pardon was offered to Maximus, as it was for Martin, if he would submit. That he did not, and the threats that Epiphanius made show for Haldon “the extent to which the state was prepared to go in order publicly to humiliate and, more important, to discredit, its opponents. The real issues were not North Africa and slanders against the Virgin, but imperial authority and its denial.” “Trial,” 89–90. The charge that Maximus blasphemed against the virgin is mentioned in DB, § 14.

⁶⁷ *Ep. Max.*

⁶⁸ Allen and Neil mention the lack of significance of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, since they were no longer under imperial jurisdiction and thus “The force of the emperor’s claim that all five churches have been united is thus more rhetorical than anything else.” *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 185n4.

⁶⁹ Allen and Neil, introduction to *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 24–25.

Rome.”⁷⁰ Maximus was faced with the pope’s anathematization and was threatened with death.⁷¹ No mention is made of the Lateran Synod, although it would seem strange that the pope would condemn that synod. Maximus responds not with further arguments but with resignation. He concludes his letter by asking that Anastasius pray for “our common mother, that is the catholic church” and states that God leaves “the seed of piety at least in older Rome.”⁷² Here Maximus may be implicitly referring to the Lateran Synod or the office of the bishop of Rome, as he is clearly not referring to Pope Vitalian.

Anastasius would write his own letter soon after Maximus’s,⁷³ in which he continued the discussion of the role of Rome, claiming that those in Rome who conformed to the monothelite position were forced to do so.⁷⁴ He urges these monks to go to Rome and try to convince those in Rome to repent of their position and save “the orthodox faith.”⁷⁵ He wants Rome to support only that which is declared by the fathers and the councils, and do so against his “Arian” opponents.⁷⁶ The Lateran Synod of 649 is thus given authority equal to the fathers and the councils and authority even over the current bishop of Rome.

In light of these documents, Cooper claims that, after his second trial, Maximus narrowed his ecclesiastical vision, and that in his letter to Anastasius, “the Catholic Church is specifically equated with the orthodox confession of faith.”⁷⁷ Louth seems to agree with Cooper, saying that in this letter “the Petrine foundation of the Church is Peter’s faith, which even his successor can abandon, as Maximus had just learnt.”⁷⁸ Booth concurs: Maximus “reinterprets the promise of Christ to Saint Peter so as to guarantee not Roman power or preeminence but rather the permanence of the orthodox faith, irrespective of a particular place or institution.”⁷⁹ Booth goes further than this, however, saying that “the eventual defection of Rome under Pope Vitalian marked the effective end of Maximus’s resistance. That defection meant more to Maximus than his political and doctrinal isolation: it meant a fundamental challenge to the ideological basis on which he had constructed his dissidence.”⁸⁰

The discontinuity in Maximus, however, is not as extreme as these authors argue. For example, the equation of the see of Rome with orthodoxy goes back to *Opusculum* 12, if one assumes that it is authentically Maximian. It appears that Maximus has reversed it, as orthodoxy determines catholicity over against the pope, but the idea is still present. The issue of the historical papacy versus some ideal papacy is addressed in *Record*, § 7, where

⁷⁰ *Ep. Max.*

⁷¹ *Ep. Max.*

⁷² *Ep. Max.*

⁷³ Allen, “Life and Times,” 12; Allen and Neil, introduction to *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 21.

⁷⁴ Anastasius, *Letter of Anastasius to the Monks of Cagliari*, in *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, § 4 (hereafter cited as *Ep. Cal.*).

⁷⁵ *Ep. Cal.*, § 5. He goes on to say that “the affairs of almost the whole church of God, which has been established as catholic and apostolic, are in great danger on account of these things.” *Ep. Cal.*, § 5.

⁷⁶ *Ep. Cal.*, § 5.

⁷⁷ Cooper, “St. Maximus,” 364–65.

⁷⁸ Louth, “Ecclesiology,” 118.

⁷⁹ Booth, *Crisis of Empire*, 274, referring to *Ep. Max.*

⁸⁰ Booth, 341–42.

Maximus says that, regardless of the status of the current pope, the Lateran Synod of 649 and its standard of orthodoxy are legitimate. While the possibility of some modification of this text in Maximus's favor cannot be ruled out, it does seem that that passage in particular would indicate more consistency in Maximus than many authors give him credit for.

MAXIMUS'S THIRD TRIAL AND FINAL EXILE⁸¹

The brief account of Maximus's third trial at the end of *DB* mentions a synod at Constantinople that claims canonical authority in punishing him, even as it acknowledges that "a just penalty does not exist for the kinds of trespasses and blasphemies you have committed."⁸² No mention is made of what exactly these crimes are. All that is stated is that Maximus's life and those of his disciples will be spared, but they would be mutilated. They are then to be sent to exile a third time in Lazica.⁸³ Nor is there mention of Maximus's response, but he would likely have challenged the canonicity of the synod based on the Lateran Synod of 649. The current pope's apparent agreement with the *Typos* is also not mentioned, although Allen and Neil point out that the document does not seem to be aware of what happened to Pope Martin and thus may not have been familiar with the circumstances surrounding the pope at that time.⁸⁴

It was during this exile that Anastasius the Apocrisiarius wrote to Theodosius of Gangra in 666. In his letter, Anastasius recounts his and the others' mutilations and says that such mutilations occurred "simply on account of the word of truth, and because they did not want, or even—as may be said more truthfully—were not able to communicate with them in their very public perfidy and obvious impiety."⁸⁵ If this can be trusted, it was once again the refusal to enter into communion that was the basis of the charges. Anastasius requests that the records of the Lateran Synod of 649 be sent to him so that he could use them to convince more people that "those who persecute God and us unjustly" were indeed wrong.⁸⁶ He claims that more and more people are turning against these "heretics" through those who are exiled and "suffering hardships."⁸⁷ The Lateran Synod thus seems to still be "in play" among Maximus's disciples, although its power in Rome itself seems inconsequential.

This letter further refutes claims of inconsistency in Maximus, since it speaks of efforts in Rome to restore it to orthodox faith and claims that the heretical faith was forced upon Rome.⁸⁸ The claims of inconsistency also neglect Maximus's prior comment about the

⁸¹ See Booth, 326, for the context of Maximus's third trial.

⁸² *DB*, § 17.

⁸³ *DB*, § 17.

⁸⁴ "This passage and *The Third Sentence against them* seem to be later additions to the text, and do not appear in the Latin translation of Anastasius Bibliothecarius. In Brandes, 156, and *PMBZ* 176, it is pointed out that this third sentence shows remarkably little knowledge of the earlier trials against Martin, and must stem from shortly after 662." Allen and Neil, *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, 184n57.

⁸⁵ Anastasius the Apocrisiarius, *Letter of Anastasius the Apocrisiarius to Theodosius of Gangra*, in *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, § 1.

⁸⁶ Anastasius the Apocrisiarius, § 10.

⁸⁷ Anastasius the Apocrisiarius, § 10.

⁸⁸ Anastasius the Apocrisiarius, § 1.

“seed of piety” still in Rome.⁸⁹ These passages seem to indicate some level of consistency, or at least enough to bring into question Booth’s notion that it is a “fundamental challenge” to Maximus.⁹⁰

The last of the exile documents in Allen and Neil’s anthology, Theodore Spoudaeus’s *Commemoration*, states that emperor Constans condemned Maximus because of his condemnation of the *Typos* and because he “remained true to the orthodox faith.”⁹¹ Maximus’s disciples are also mentioned as having been condemned because of their refusal to accept “the all-profane and completely godless imperial *Typos*, which came about at the suggestion of those from the church in Constantinople.”⁹² The *Typos* is once again condemned, but it seems that Theodore is trying to distance the emperor from the decree as Maximus had done. Theodore greatly respects Martin I, saying that he “brought illumination to the one and holy catholic and apostolic church of our God” by leading the Lateran Synod in continuity with the first five ecumenical councils.⁹³

CONCLUSION

The dyothelites tried to the greatest extent possible not to condemn the emperor in their arguments against monothelites and even sought to make these arguments after the emperor fully endorsed the *Typos*. The *Typos* was identified fully with the emperor, and this led to Maximus’s rejection of it being equated with treason, even as other political charges against him were seemingly dropped from the various proceedings. In the end, appeal to Rome became and remained the strategy used by the dyothelites; but it was an appeal to a Rome of the Lateran Synod or the office of the papacy in relation to the synod rather than appeal to the current pope. While this does indicate some level of development in Maximus’s thought, he remained more consistent than is commonly suggested, especially if one pays attention to the broad range of claims he makes on the subject.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexakis, Alexander. “Before the Lateran Council of 649: The Last Days of Herakleios the Emperor and Monothelitism.” In *Synodus: Beiträge zur Konzilien- und allgemeinen Kirchengeschichte: Festschrift für Walter Brandmüller*. Edited by Remigius Bäumer and Walter Brandmüller, 93–101. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1997.
- . *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and Its Archetype*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1996.
- Allen, Pauline. “Life and Times of Maximus the Confessor.” In Allen and Neil, *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*, 3–18.
- Allen, Pauline and Bronwen Neil, eds. and trans. *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions: Documents from Exile*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- , eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*. Oxford Handbooks. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

⁸⁹ Ep. Max.

⁹⁰ Booth, *Crisis of Empire*, 341.

⁹¹ Theodore Spoudaeus, *Commemoration*, in *Maximus the Confessor and His Companions*, § 3.

⁹² Theodore Spoudaeus, § 6.

⁹³ Theodore Spoudaeus, § 8.

- Booth, Phil. *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.
- Brandes, Wolfram. "‘Juristische’ Krisenbewältigung im 7. Jahrhundert? Die Prozesse gegen Papst Martin I. und Maximus Homologetes." *Fontes Minores* 10:141–212.
- Cooper, Adam G. "St. Maximus the Confessor on Priesthood, Hierarchy, and Rome." *Pro Ecclesia* 10, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 346–67.
- Haldon, John F. "Ideology and the Byzantine State in the Seventh Century: The ‘Trial’ of Maximus the Confessor." In *From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium: Proceedings of the Byzantinological Symposium in the 16th Eirene Conference*. Edited by Vladimir Vavřínek, 87–91. Prague: Academia, 1985.
- Jankowiak, Marek and Phil Booth. "A New Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor," In Allen and Neil, *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*, 19–83.
- Kaegi, Walter. "Byzantium in the Seventh Century." In Allen and Neil, *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*, 84–105.
- Louth, Andrew. "The Ecclesiology of Saint Maximus the Confessor." *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 4, no. 2 (2004): 109–20.
- Reidinger, Rudolf. "Die Lateransynode von 649 und Maximus der Bekenner." In *Maximus Confessor, Actes du Symposium sur Maximus le Confesseur*, Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980. Edited by Felix Heinzer and Christoph Schönborn, 111–22. Fribourg: Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1982.

"The God to Whom I Belong and Worship"

Inversions of Imperial Power in Acts 27:9–25

CHRISTOPHER G. PALMER¹

Princeton Theological Seminary

INTRODUCTION

Scholars have noted the similarities between the shipwreck scene presented in Acts 27 and classical Greco-Roman narratives circulating around the same time.² Although they have drawn attention to such similarities, fewer have sought to recognize the way that this nautical scene participates in the political economy of image and text. This paper argues that the shipwreck scene is best understood by the nature of its functioning in that larger political economy. Taken as such, the events depicted in Acts 27 are a kind of political allegory—that is, a rhetorical representation that undercuts entrenched forms of political power. Though Luke adopts many of the normative images present in the larger culture, he problematizes them in such a way that leads to the reconfiguration of ethical norms. The shipwreck scene constructs Paul as an ethical subject in order to disrupt the rhetorical circulation of images that guaranteed Roman political authority. Acts 27 challenges the cultural hegemony of Roman *imperium* by undercutting associations between image and text that helped secure Rome's imperial power. Specifically, Paul, a reoriented ethical subject, is meant to disrupt the pre-existing conceptions of masculinity

¹ Christopher G. Palmer is a third-year MDiv student at Princeton Theological Seminary. Before moving back to the US, he took a first class in philosophy and theological studies at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. His academic interests are varied, but generally lie at the intersection of rhetorical studies, musicology, and theological aesthetics. He is a candidate for ordination in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

² For examples, see Warren Carter, "Navigating the Roman Imperial World in Acts 27," *New Testament Studies* 62, no. 1 (2016): 79–96; Dennis R. MacDonald, "The Shipwrecks of Odysseus and Paul," *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999): 88–107; Gary Miles and Garry Trompf, "Luke and Antiphon: The Theology of Acts 27–28 in Light of Pagan Beliefs about Divine Retribution, Pollution, and Shipwreck," *Harvard Theology Bulletin* 69, no. 3–4 (1976): 359–67; Susan M. Prader, "Acts 27:1–28:16: Sea Voyages in Ancient Literature and the Theology of Luke-Acts," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (1982): 683–706; Troy M. Troftgruben, "Slow Sailing in Acts: Suspense in the Final Sea Journey (Acts 27:1–28:15)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136, no. 4 (2017): 949–68. Such a proliferation of scholarly work makes sense considering how Beverly Roberts Gaventa notes that ancient audiences appreciated literary shipwreck scenes as readily "as contemporary moviegoers expect and enjoy car chase scenes in an action adventure movie." *The Acts of the Apostles*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 349.

and virtue present in Greco-Roman culture. Moreover, by broadening these categories of virtue and masculinity, Luke uses this scene to wedge open the imaginations of their readers to new possibilities of what it might mean to live “virtuously” within the kingdom of God.

PAUL AS ETHICAL SUBJECT IN ACTS 27

Luke continually locates Paul within positions of Roman control only to have God intervene, showing that God, not Rome, is the true sovereign of the cosmos. In this sense, the Almighty is constantly dislocating the center of Roman power. Here again in Acts 27, Paul is located within the nexus of Rome’s imperial power. He is accompanied by the centurion Julius, a military leader said to be of the highest order (Acts 27:1), while sailing on a vessel from the city of Myra (v. 5), known to be a center of Rome’s grain trade.³ The literary space created by the merchant vessel and the Roman centurion is charged with political and economic meaning. Even before he reaches Rome, Luke depicts the prisoner Paul as captive within the bosom of the Roman occupational program.

Paul, still in bondage, is worth “nothing more than cargo” as he awaits his hearing with the emperor.⁴ Regarded as a prisoner, Paul’s agency recedes through the first few verses of the chapter, until he utters a vague warning about the dangers of sailing during the winter.⁵ Still, the authorities on the ship refuse to listen to the voice of a prisoner. Although he warns of the coming storm, the centurion is persuaded by the captain and the ship owner (vv. 10–11).⁶ The economic and military figures in the scene collaborate to endanger the life of the apostle and others aboard the ship. Despite their association with Rome’s military and economic power, their lives will eventually be at the mercy of the sea.

After the crew sets sail, ignoring Paul’s prophecies of danger, a great tempest arises (ἐβαλεν κατ’ αὐτῆς ἄνεμος τυφωνικός) that brings the ship into submission. The ship and its crew are rendered powerless in the face of such a storm, as they are “unable to face toward the wind” (v. 15).⁷ Ultimately, just as Paul is held prisoner by the Roman guard, so too this ship is “seized violently” (συναρπασθέντος [v. 15]). Eventually the powerlessness of the crew culminates in the ship being given over (ἐπιδόντες [v. 15]) to the storm. This presentation of the fallibility of Roman crewman undercuts the pride that was at the bedrock of Roman nautical power. As Luke Timothy Johnson notes, “Greek and Roman prosperity, culture, and empire alike were rooted in the ability to transverse the waters of the Mediterranean.”⁸ As noted, Luke paints this vessel as being a crossroads of military and economic power. However, due to the storm, the crew is forced to begin throwing the cargo overboard (ἐκβολὴν ἐποιοῦντο [v. 18]). The inability of the vessel to

³ Richard Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 656.

⁴ Willie James Jennings, *Acts, Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2017), 233.

⁵ Carter, “Navigating the Roman Imperial World,” 90.

⁶ Pervo notes that the thought of Paul, a prisoner, being left to mosey about the deck of a ship offering unsolicited advice should indicate to the reader that Luke is not striving for any kind of realism. Realistically, prisoners would have been “secured below in shackles.” Pervo, *Acts*, 657.

⁷ All biblical translations are the author’s.

⁸ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1992), 450.

traverse the waters, despite Rome's dependency on the sea for its economic and military ventures, alludes to a larger instability at the heart of the Roman imperial project.

One might respond, as indeed Pervo does, by claiming that "[l]oss of control is near the top of the crescendo of difficulties in storm and shipwreck stories."⁹ Maybe there is nothing unique about this piece of the narratives, and it was just borrowed from lingering cultural motifs. The potency of the scene painted in Acts 27, however, derives not from the storm but from Paul's response to the storm. Having receded in earlier verses, Paul's agency comes to the fore in verse 21 as he chastises those on board for not listening to his earlier warnings. Though Paul remains imprisoned, he offers words of encouragement to those who are on board. Despite his being identified as a prisoner, subject to the rule of the authorities, Paul confidently declares that no loss of life will come from the storm (v. 22).

In this passage, Paul's agency is held in creative tension with his submission to power. Where Warren Carter argues that Paul's sense of agency grows throughout this passage, the entirety of this passage conceptualizes Paul's agency from within the ambit of submission.¹⁰ The climax of the scene is Paul's claiming that the sovereign of the sea is the God "to whom [Paul] belong[s] and worship[s]" (v. 23). Gaventa is right to argue that "Paul is no more the hero of this event than he is the subject of witnessing earlier."¹¹ In verse 24, the verb *κεχάρισται* ("has granted, has graciously given") implies that Paul and his cohort of seafarers are now subject to the same fate. Where the sailors initially trusted their own expertise to cross sea, their well-being is now contingent on their submission to the God who is sovereign over the waters. The broad movement in this pericope shifts from emphasizing the ambition and prowess of the crew to revealing their deep impotence in the face of God's power.

Moreover, this shift from agency to impotence is reflected in the pericope's concurrent shift from quarrel to mutuality. The text begins by depicting Paul and the crew at odds with one another. Paul encourages the men of this vessel to heed his warning about the dangers of sailing in this season; however, the centurion, being more attuned to the interests to the captain and ship's owner, decides to sail anyway (v. 11). The passage depicts the centurion and ship owners as only acting out of self-interest: the centurion is concerned about delivering Paul to the authorities and the sailors are economically interested in delivering their goods on time. As Justo González reminds the reader, the characters in this scene who make the wrong decision are the ones who are considered "experts."¹² By the end of the pericope, Paul, despite his lack of seafaring ability, is depicted as the one who correctly identifies the future plight of these sailors. He chastises the sailors for their lack of hearing—"you should have obeyed me" (v. 21). Yet, his chastisement is really a form of witness, relaying the angel's words that promise God's provision and safe arrival (v. 22).

Paul's ability to speak on the matter of seafaring, to witness to the crew about God's provision, is tethered to the others on the ship now being "graciously given" to him by

⁹ Pervo, *Acts*, 659.

¹⁰ Warren Carter, "Navigating the Roman Imperial World in Acts 27," 91.

¹¹ Gaventa, *Acts of the Apostles*, 349.

¹² Justo L. González, *Acts: The Gospel of the Spirit* (New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 271.

God (v. 24). The question might be articulated as one of authority; real authority, the passage implies, does not come from individual expertise but from a submissive conformity to God’s purposes. God supplies individuals with right speech, not out of their own merit, but as a divine gift. As a correlate of this, the passage presents authority as introducing a mutuality between characters: whereas early on the passage links those who speak with self-interest, Paul’s proclamation about God’s provision holds all these travelers as being co-dependent on God’s provision.

THE REORIENTATION OF MASCULINITY

How is one to make sense of Paul’s submissive posture in the passage? As Drew Billings notes, the Greco-Roman world that birthed the Acts was saturated with manufactured images and narratives all “competing for status” by means of “public representation and self-advertisement.”¹³ Due to low literacy rates, visual displays played a dominant role in communicating socio-political ideals. Billings goes as far to say that the first-century Greco-Roman world was “visually mediated.”¹⁴ The question at hand is not “Did the sea voyage literally happen?” but “How is Luke encouraging the reader to conceptualize Paul amidst these competing narratives?” Luke, Billings notes, is interested in “shaping the memory of the apostles.”¹⁵ Overall, the text “constructs a public image of its protagonist,” one whose depiction is “in accordance with the moral, aesthetic, social, and cultural imperatives of a society”—namely, the early Christian church.¹⁶

While using the similar methodology, Luke depicts Paul in the sea voyage in a way that subverts other competing narratives that were floating around the Greco-Roman world. For example, Pliny the Younger’s (61–113 CE) depiction of Trajan in the *Panegyricus* uses certain rhetorical techniques to emphasize and reify themes that were commonly associated with masculinity.¹⁷ The *Panegyricus* (100 CE) is also a work of political allegory written to secure the transfer of power between the reign of the Domitian (81–96 CE) and Trajan (98–117 CE). As Eleni Manolaraki notes, it constructs “a portrait of Trajan that is as positive as it is original, unique to him, and unsullied by the hypocritical and fearful fawning on emperors past.”¹⁸ It catalogues certain virtues that construct Trajan as an ideal candidate to lead the *imperium*.

Like the Apostle Paul in Acts 27, the sea is the ethical space in which Trajan’s character is developed. Often the Roman *imperium* is depicted as a sort of ship with the emperor at

¹³ Drew W. Billings, *Acts of the Apostles and the Rhetoric of Roman Imperialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 26.

¹⁴ Billings, *Acts of the Apostles*, 24.

¹⁵ Billings, 40.

¹⁶ Billings, 51.

¹⁷ Pliny’s *Panegyricus* is considered because it is a work of political allegory that is contemporary with Acts. As Eleni Manolaraki has argued, the *Panegyricus* is a work that presents a “political and rhetorical seascape” that “uses maritime iconography to fuse [Pliny’s] political and rhetorical goals.” It is helpful to contrast both of these narratives, as both use an aquatic frame to develop the ethical structure of the protagonist. See Eleni Manolaraki, “Political and Rhetorical Seascapes in Pliny’s *Panegyricus*,” *Classical Philology* 103, no. 4 (2008): 375.

¹⁸ Manolaraki, “Political and Rhetorical Seascapes,” 384.

the helm.¹⁹ Pliny comes to display Trajan as having nautical prowess, making him better equipped to lead Rome through tumultuous conflict and to peace. Contrasting the newly appointed emperor with his predecessor, Pliny laments the “disgraceful scene” of seeing “[Domitian] follow behind with another to steer his course and direct his helm, as if held prisoner in his own ship!”²⁰ Pliny implies that Domitian, like the sailors in Acts 27 who were unable to steer their ship in the storm, “let the wind carry [him] away” (v. 23). For Pliny, the downfall of Domitian as a civic and political leader is conceptualized and depicted as his inability to master the seas. Instead, Pliny’s Trajan is one who, embodying certain masculinized Roman virtues, is able to nimbly and effortlessly master the sea. Pliny insists that Trajan is one who is able to conquer the waters. He does not rely on the strength of others. Instead, he “matches the sturdiest of his comrades in mastering the waves.”²¹ In juxtaposition to the Apostle Paul, Emperor Trajan is applauded by Pliny for his masculinized command over the sea. Pliny suggests that the virtues necessary for strong leadership are a commanding agency over one’s surroundings. However, such a description of power and agency is held in tension with the submissive sort of agency that Paul displays on the sea in Acts 27.

Pliny’s description of Trajan is congruent with larger themes of masculinity that were circulating through Greco-Roman culture. Craig Williams helpfully notes that Romans often conceptualized “of masculinity as being embodied restraint and control, over others and oneself.”²² To be manly implied that one was capable of “self-control or self-mastery, and to abandon this principle [was] to act like a slave or a woman.”²³ In the *Panegyricus*, Pliny attributes similar virtues of masculinity to Trajan through nautical depictions of seafaring. These passages contrast with the Apostle Paul presented in the above pericope. If one accepts Billing’s claim that Acts is crafting Paul as an ethical protagonist, then one must admit a difference in the way that the Apostle Paul manifests that masculinity. Where Trajan is depicted as master, Paul is a servant through whom God is revealing the divine plan. Gaventa brings our attention to the emphasis on the divine plan in this passage. Three times the passage uses the familiar *δεῖ*, noting how, despite the tumult of the storm, everything sits under a “larger context within the divine plan.”²⁴ Paul’s mission, to “stand before Caesar” (v. 24), will not be completed by his own doing but by the God who is sovereign. As stated above, Paul’s authority to speak is not grounded in his own seafaring ability, but in his reliance on God to supply him with the words to say.

These concepts of reliance and dependency have drastic implications for questions surrounding the presentation of masculinity in Acts. Brittany Wilson has argued that earlier scenes in the book emphasize how Paul’s dependency would have been

¹⁹ In Acts 27, the centurion decides to look to the helm of the ship instead of trusting Paul (v. 11). As it was common in Greco-Roman literature for Rome to be presented as a ship with the emperor as its captain, there may be an echo of the centurion trusting in the sovereignty of the emperor over and above Paul’s God.

²⁰ Pliny the Younger, *Letters, Volume II: Books 8–10. Panegyricus*, trans. Betty Radice, Loeb Classical Library 59 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 515.

²¹ Pliny, *Letters, Volume II*, 513.

²² Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 132.

²³ Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 135.

²⁴ Gaventa, *Acts of the Apostles*, 354.

recognized as distinctly feminine. For example, in the conversion scene where Paul loses his sight, she writes that Paul is "unmanned"—that is, presented in ways antithetical to Greco-Roman conceptions of masculinity.²⁵ Part and parcel of this process of "unmanning" is the way in which Paul loses all self-control and is left under the control of others.²⁶ Wilson's argument that Paul's ethical stature implicitly challenges Roman conceptions of masculinity is corroborated by the manner in which Pliny constructs Trajan in the *Panegyricus*. In Acts 27, there is an echo of this similar processing of "unmanning" that takes place between Paul and the sailors. Whereas Williams has argued that masculinity is marked by one's propensity toward self-control and self-mastery, Luke problematizes the sailors' efforts toward these qualities. Instead of mastering their craft, Luke presents them as vulnerable and dependent on God's assistance. Though they are expert sailors, their salvation comes in an act of divine benevolence (v. 24). Their impotence and ignorance have been supplanted by Paul's faithful obedience. These sailors, powerless upon the waters, begin to emulate the same characteristic dependency that Paul, on Wilson's account, emulates in his conversion. Instead of self-mastery and self-control, Luke depicts virtue as a yielding to God's ultimate control of one's life and well-being.

THE AESTHETIC MEANS OF POWER

This paper argues that such a presentation of Paul is political and rhetorical in that it creates a distinct image to communicate socio-political ideals. Rhetoric in the Greco-Roman world was not only concerned with the self-fulfillment of individuals but with communicative practices that formed citizens to sustain and empower the *polis*. As Joy Connolly argues, "[v]irtue is fully incarnated not in the individual's mastery of selfhood in isolation but in interactive communicative performances in the civic context."²⁷ Rhetoric was a technology of power that perpetuated the formation of these distinctly civic ideals. By emulating certain virtues, rhetorical texts presented a politically expedient picture of the emperor's power and what it meant to civically comply with the emperor. Rhetorical eloquence, Connolly argues, was not only the ability to persuade but instead a "vocabulary of governance" that framed how people envisioned the Roman *polis* and their relationship to the *polis*.²⁸ In the picture of Paul presented in Acts 27, Luke introduces a new standard for what it means to live virtuously in light of the gospel. Whereas Pliny depicts Trajan as haughty and self-controlled, Luke presents Paul and his compatriots as vulnerable and dependent. In these opposed narratives, divine favor is bestowed upon each in regard to their relative virtue. For Trajan, this divine favor is granted due, in part, to his ability to rule and expand the Roman *imperium*. For Luke, Paul's virtue is tethered to his obedient trudging toward Rome to stand before Caesar. This chapter in Acts, taken in conversation with Pliny's rhetorical texts, is a similar presentation of virtue that seeks to reorient one's account of what it is to be virtuous.

²⁵ Brittany Wilson, "Destabilizing Masculinity: Paul in the Book of Acts and Beyond," *Journal of the Bible and Its Reception* 2, no. 2 (2015): 243.

²⁶ Wilson, "Destabilizing Masculinity," 244.

²⁷ Joy Connolly, *The State of Speech, Rhetoric and Political Thought in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 10–11.

²⁸ Connolly, *State of Speech*, 6.

Roman rhetoric, however, encompassed all media—art, architecture, sculpture, narrative, etc.—that made certain political statements about the nature of the citizenship and empire. “All Roman art—all art indeed—has something to do with power,” Peter Stewart contends.²⁹ For Stewart, Roman art did not make “statements,” but it presented “facts” about the nature of the Roman imperial cult.³⁰ In other words, pieces of rhetorical art posited a representation of reality that was not to be questioned. By cementing certain narratives and images into the psyche of conquered peoples, the Roman *imperium* sought to set the discursive limits, not just on matters of law and governance, but on all matters of civic life.³¹ The purpose of Acts playing a role in the economy of text is that it undercuts the “facts” presented by Roman rhetorical text. By adopting similar themes to that of other rhetorical works in the region at that time, Acts challenges the authority of the Roman *imperium*. Those who heard these stories would have made implicit associations between certain images and certain values—for example, between water and Roman power, agency and masculinity, etc. Acts problematizes these associations. By constructing an alternative ethical picture of Paul, Luke takes up an iconoclastic exercise that deconstructs the unfettered cycle of images that helped secure Rome’s political dominance.

By problematizing these associations, Luke’s iconoclastic project comes to the fore. As a rhetorical narrative, Acts is meant to disrupt the hegemonic distribution of imperial images that aid in Roman domination. Michel Foucault helpfully anticipates some of these questions about power and rhetorical text. Rhetoric, for Foucault, is a technology of governance. He uses the term *governance*, not merely as a regime’s ability to enforce law, but as the mechanism by which the “conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed.”³² Just as Rome needed to monopolize the sea to secure its military and economic strength, so too it needed to monopolize rhetorical forms and technologies that would conform the lives of a citizenry toward the good of the empire. “To govern,” Foucault describes, “is to structure the possible field of action of others.”³³ These technologies of governance form an ethical subject to have distinct desires. They help the ethical subject perceive of herself as being in certain relationships that are constitutive of her moral life (i.e., being submissive to a sovereign emperor). Thus, by challenging this myopic field of vision, Luke urges Christians to see the Gospel as a challenge to Roman political allegiances.

This pericope in Acts 27 wedges open the possibility that there is a new set of virtues that undergird the Christian life. Luke, by circulating this text into the already existing economy of rhetorical texts, is challenging the hegemonic forms of the Roman *imperium*. To live a life of divine favor, a life marked by participation in the life of the Spirit, one

²⁹ Peter Stewart, *The Social History of Roman Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 108.

³⁰ Stewart, *Social History of Roman Art*, 117.

³¹ Connolly uses a helpful metaphor. She says that “politics exists in a space that is framed, not filled, by law.” In order for the empire to retain imperial rule, it must collapse the space between the personal self and the civic self. That is, an individual’s personal and political aims must be made one in the same. *State of Speech*, 12.

³² Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 221.

³³ Foucault, “Subject and Power,” 221.

should exemplify virtues of vulnerability, mutuality, and collegiality. Through the narration of Acts 27, Luke continuously creates an ethical image of Paul where these virtues are displayed in Paul's relationship to his travel companions. By showing how these virtues are intimately linked with one's ability to live rightly under the Gospel, Luke seeks to disrupt the power of the Romans to, as Foucault said, "structure the possible field for action."³⁴ Instead of the future being a monotonous return to old allegiances and images of power, Luke disrupts the controlled field of vision, subtly suggesting that, because of the gospel, imaginative possibilities are on the horizon.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Billings, Drew W. *Acts of the Apostles and the Rhetoric of Roman Imperialism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Carter, Warren. "Navigating the Roman Imperial World in Acts 27." *New Testament Studies* 62, no. 1 (2016): 79–96.
- Connolly, Joy. *The State of Speech, Rhetoric and Political Thought in Ancient Rome*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Foucault, Michel. "The Subject and Power." *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, edited by H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, 208–29. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- Gaventa, Beverly Roberts. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003.
- González, Justo L. *Acts: The Gospel of the Spirit*. New York: Orbis Books, 2001.
- Jennings, Willie James. *Acts. Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2017.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Acts of the Apostles*. Sacra Pagina. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992.
- MacDonald, Dennis R. "The Shipwrecks of Odysseus and Paul." *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999): 88–107.
- Miles, Gary B. and Garry Trompf. "Luke and Antiphon: The Theology of Acts 27–28 in Light of Pagan Beliefs about Divine Retribution, Pollution, and Shipwreck." *Harvard Theology Bulletin* 69, no. 3–4 (1976): 359–67.
- Manolaraki, Eleni. "Political and Rhetorical Seascapes in Pliny's *Panegyricus*." *Classical Philology* 103, no. 4 (2008): 374–94.
- Pervo, Richard. *Acts: A Commentary*. Hermenia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009.
- Pliny the Younger. *Letters, Volume II: Books 8–10. Panegyricus*. Translated by Betty Radice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969.
- Prader, Susan M. "Acts 27:1–28:16: Sea Voyages in Ancient Literature and the Theology of Luke-Acts." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (1982): 683–706.
- Stewart, Peter. *The Social History of Roman Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Troftgruben, Troy M. "Slow Sailing in Acts: Suspense in the Final Sea Journey (Acts 27:1–28:15)." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136, no. 4 (2017): 949–68.

³⁴ Foucault, 221.

- Williams, Craig A. *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Wilson, Brittany. "Destabilizing Masculinity: Paul in the Book of Acts and Beyond." *Journal of the Bible and Its Reception* 2, no. 2 (2015): 241–61.

God's Simple Knowledge and Disagreement

ERIC TUTTLE¹

Princeton Theological Seminary

Disagreement, complexity, and conflict have become facts of our modern political and social world. Whether because of increased technology or more sophisticated social structures, we are now more keenly aware that for every claim we make, there are people who disagree with us. Conceptual frameworks for thinking about disagreement could be generalized as falling somewhere between two extremes. On one extreme, if one side's views are absolutized as exhausting all possible truth, there is the temptation to coerce the other side into adopting that point of view. Because ideas are not inert abstractions but are also always material and concrete, in this way of thinking, a group will try to employ whatever resources are available to them within a given power dynamic to make reality match their own point of view. Given this framework, then, if we disagree, the best way for me to ensure the materiality of my own view is through exploiting the power dynamic between us through violently repressing your views or through practices of social exclusion (e.g., exclusion from a community, slandering someone's reputation, or denouncing on Twitter). On the other extreme, if our views are made a function of some social discourse that holds no relation to any larger reality or truth, our actions become just as coercive and violent because they are no longer subject to reality.² The best way for me to ensure the materiality of my beliefs in this framework is through ignoring all opposing ideas and asserting a sort of "non-historical freedom"—that is, a freedom that does not account for one's place in history or any larger reality or truth.³

Ever since Kant locked the divine reality away into the realm of the *noumena*—making all talk about God secondary to our primary practical judgements—the human reality has been given the primary axiomatic position in political theory.⁴ In this context, the divine

¹ Eric Tuttle is a third-year MDiv student at Princeton Theological Seminary, where his studies have focused on Christian theology. His current research explores points of connection between classical and modern doctrines of God, with an emphasis given to the political and ethical dimensions of these doctrines. Eric is currently in the ordination process in the Episcopal Church.

² For the violent and coercive tendencies of postmodern theory, see Gillian Rose, *Dialectic of Nihilism: Post-Structuralism and Law* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

³ On the idea of "non-historical" freedom, see Rowan Williams, "Between Politics and Metaphysics: Reflections in the Wake of Gillian Rose," in *Wrestling with Angels: Conversations in Modern Theology*, ed. Mike Higton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

⁴ For a good assessment of this problem, see Gillian Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology* (London: Humanities Press, 1981).

reality either gets a short appendix at the end of an already worked-out system or it gets no mention at all. If the mission of the church is to narrate the world in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ,⁵ the fact that the church's proclamation is missing from political theory is a major loss for both the church and for the world. As an example of this, in the previous paragraph, both frameworks for disagreement suffer from overemphasizing the human aspect of disagreement; either we have the whole truth or no truth, but either way it is our possession or lack thereof that ultimately matters.

This paper, then, is an attempt to begin addressing both of these issues. Rather than formulating a framework for disagreement primarily from anthropological considerations, this paper will narrate disagreement starting primarily from a Christian doctrine of God. More specifically, this paper will argue that if God knows all things simply (building on the classical doctrine of God's omniscience), we are given the freedom to grow as moral subjects in our disagreements with each other.⁶ That is, God's simple knowledge provides a theological framework in which disagreement need not devolve into violence, coercion, or exclusion. Of course, the framework articulated in this paper will be coherent only for those already inside the church, so the point of this paper can only be to reframe how *Christians* should engage the problem of disagreement in light of the church's proclamation. In the first section (I), a doctrine of God's simple knowledge will be articulated through examining the theologies of two unlikely conversation partners, Thomas Aquinas and Georg W. F. Hegel. The next two sections (II and III) will use this doctrine to develop a two-part theological framework for disagreement: the disputed truth in any disagreement is elusive because of who God is, and the reconciliation of any disagreement has already taken place in God's being.

I. GOD'S SIMPLE KNOWLEDGE

Thomas on God's Simple Knowledge

God's perfect knowledge or omniscience is simple. In short, this means that God knows all things because She is Herself knowledge and truth.⁷ Thomas begins his section on God's omniscience not with God's knowledge of all things but with God's self-knowledge. For Thomas, God's being has no potentiality but is *actus purus*, "pure act." This means that God cannot possess the faculty to know all things yet exist without an object for that faculty. God's pure act of knowing, then, must have God's own being as its object. Or to use Thomas's wording, God "understands Himself through Himself."⁸

⁵ Robert W. Jenson, "How the World Lost Its Story," *First Things*, no. 201 (March 2010): 31–37.

⁶ The second part of this argument is greatly indebted to Rowan Williams's thesis: "the self is free to grow ethically (that is, to assimilate what is strange, to be formed into intelligibility) only when it is not under obligation to defend itself above all else—or to *create* itself, to carve out its place in a potentially hostile environment." "Interiority and Epiphany: A Reading in New Testament Ethics," in *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 250.

⁷ This paper will switch between using gendered pronouns (She/He) and non-gendered language for God (They). Pronouns will always be capitalized when referring to God. This is to stylistically reinforce the paper's point that we always refer to the simple God through composite language. If this seems stylistically difficult, that is actually the point.

⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Complete English ed. (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981), I.14.2 (hereafter cited as ST).

In other words, God is the faculty, mode, and object of Their knowledge. Or to put it another way, God is simply knowledge.

Clearly, for Thomas, God's knowing is closely tied to his doctrine of divine simplicity.⁹ Thomas presents this doctrine largely through negations. "Because we cannot know what God is," Thomas says that we must start with "what He is not."¹⁰ However, quite importantly for later in this paper, Thomas only *presents* God's simplicity through *via negativa*; throughout the rest of his theology, it *functions* more as an apophatic term.¹¹ God is more than our concepts can grasp, but these concepts set the contours for our theological discourse.¹² In his initial negative presentation, however, Thomas says that because God is not a composite being, is not a member of a genus, nor has any accidental properties, She is absolutely simple.¹³ God cannot be one instantiation of a genus or species and therefore must be identical with Her own existence; God's essence is God's existence and life.¹⁴ God is *ipsum esse subsistens*, "subsisting being itself." Or in biblical terms, God simply is who God is (Exod. 3:14).

If God simply is Their knowledge, then for Thomas it follows that God is truth itself. Thomas thinks that truth resides primarily in the intellect of the knower and only secondarily in the thing known. Whereas the appetite is drawn towards some good in the object desired, the *terminus cognitionis*, "term of the intellect," which is truth, is in the intellect itself. An object "is related essentially to an intellect on which it depends as regards its essence."¹⁵ Things are therefore said to be true in relation to the intellect that holds their essential truth.¹⁶ This relation between truth and the object known reaches a

⁹ This doctrine, to say the least, has become quite unpopular in modern theology. For a litany of critiques, see Gavin Ortlund, "Divine Simplicity in Historical Perspective: Resourcing a Contemporary Discussion," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 16, no. 4 (October 1, 2014): 436–53. See also Alvin Plantinga, *Does God Have a Nature?*, The Aquinas Lecture 44 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980). For one of the best modern defenses, see James E. Dolezal, *God without Parts: Divine Simplicity and the Metaphysics of God's Absoluteness* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011).

¹⁰ ST I.3.1.

¹¹ Kevin Hector rightly points out that the *via negativa* is only one step in Thomas's methodology in the first twelve questions of the *prima pars*. However, by equating an apophatic methodology with use of the *via negativa* full stop, Hector seems to miss the overall function of these first twelve questions for the rest of the *Summa*. See "Apophaticism in Thomas Aquinas: A Re-Reformulation and Recommendation," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60, no. 4 (November 1, 2007): 377–93. For a good response and defense of an "apophatic" reading of Thomas, see Adam Eitel, "Making Motions in a Language We Do Not Understand: The Apophaticism of Thomas Aquinas and Victor Preller," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 65, no. 1 (February 1, 2012): 17–33. The difference between *via negativa* and apophaticism is discussed below.

¹² My reading of Thomas at this point parallels that of David Burrell: Thomas's axiomatic doctrines—simplicity, immutability, and eternity—function as "grammatical priorities" or "rules of discourse" for talking about God. See *Aquinas: God and Action* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016). See also, Victor Preller, *Divine Science and the Science of God: A Reformulation of Thomas Aquinas* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967).

¹³ ST I.3.3–7. See Brian Davies, *Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae: A Guide and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 51–53.

¹⁴ ST I.3.4.

¹⁵ ST I.16.1.

¹⁶ Truth is also properly in the human intellect but only *secondarily*: "Again, truth is primarily in a thing because of its relation to the divine intellect, not to the human intellect, because it is related to the divine intellect as to its cause, but to the human intellect as to its effect in the sense that the latter receives its knowledge from things. For this reason, a thing is said to be true principally because of its order to the truth of

perfection in God's self-knowledge, since God's being "is the very act of His intellect."¹⁷ In other words, because God is both the knower and the known, God is truth itself (John 14:6).

This act of God's intellect, God's being who God is as Truth, becomes the measure for every other being and intellect that is not God. This is how Thomas makes the move from God primarily knowing Herself to also knowing Her creation. Thomas thinks that there are two ways in which a thing can be known: "in itself, and in another."¹⁸ God knows that which is not God in this second way: in another, or more specifically, through knowing Godself.¹⁹ Because all things have an essential relation to God and so depend for their essence on God, by Her simple act of knowing Herself, God knows the essence or truth of all things. In short, in both God's knowledge of Herself and in Her knowledge of creation, the object is known through God's own being. This is just a different perspective on the same concept from the previous paragraph. Again, because God simply is Her knowledge, She simply is truth itself.

Hegel and God's Simple Knowledge

One of the smaller arguments running throughout this paper is that Hegel actually helps us better articulate this classical idea of God's simple knowledge with all of its political implications for disagreement.²⁰ Perhaps the best place to begin Hegel's version of God's simple knowledge is with his discussion of God's simplicity and pre-Kantian metaphysics in his *Science of Logic*.²¹ For Hegel, classical metaphysics was better than the critical philosophy of Kant, which "bade man go and feed on mere husks and chaff," saying that nothing could be truly known at all.²² Nevertheless, the notion that things can be known through direct apprehension without the mediation of one's own subjectivity is equally problematic for Hegel. Such direct apprehensions rely on categories, or finite forms (which Thomas calls *concepts*). Yet for Hegel, truth "is always infinite, and cannot be expressed or present to consciousness in finite terms," since these finite terms are themselves subject to further negation and development.²³ To think of God in terms of simplicity, then, is problematic for Hegel if simplicity is understood as a positive term or

the divine intellect rather than because of its relation to the truth of a human intellect." Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*, trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952), I.4.

¹⁷ ST I.16.5.

¹⁸ ST I.14.5.

¹⁹ ST I.14.5.

²⁰ Of course, there are significant differences between Hegel and Thomas. Most strikingly is the asymmetry between the two over what Thomas calls "real relations." For Thomas, there is a real relation for creatures to God but only a "logical" relation for God to creatures. But for Hegel, there are, in a certain sense, real relations going both directions. The goal of this paper is not so much to present a technical comparison of Thomas and Hegel, although such a study would be worthwhile. Instead, by placing two seemingly opposed theologies together, this paper will merely hint at some important points of overlap between the two theologians.

²¹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Logic of Hegel: Translated from the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, 2nd ed., trans. William Wallace, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1892) (hereafter cited as SL).

²² SL, 26–27. Hegel, of course, may be misreading Kant on this point. See Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

²³ SL, 28.

as a predicate.²⁴ Simplicity instead must be understood as a “half-truth” or as “a term of thought, which . . . is itself untrue and hence unable to hold truth.”²⁵ This is in a sense what Thomas said with his doctrine of God’s simplicity. God’s simplicity functions to ensure that none of our categories, predicates, or finite statements—including simplicity itself—have any ultimate claim to exhaust God’s divine reality and life.

With this understanding of God’s simplicity, Hegel goes on in *Science of Logic* to articulate an understanding of God’s knowledge. To apply categories such as existence or simplicity to God is nothing more than “external reflection about the object.”²⁶ That is, such categories or concepts say more about the person making the reflection than they do about God. In order to have any genuine knowledge about an object, that object must “characterize its own self and not derive its predicates from without.”²⁷ Later, once Hegel has moved to his 1827 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, God is exactly such an object. God is fully *das in sich Verschlossene*, “self-enclosed” or in “absolute unity” with Godself.²⁸ God fully knows Herself in this fundamental self-relation, which is none other than God’s life or history. Through God’s divine history as triune, God achieves a unity with Herself and with the world, which is retroactively taken back into God’s eternal being. This gives God an absolute knowledge of both Themselves and of the world.²⁹ This means that God knows both Herself and the world through the unity which She has with Herself as a result of the divine history. Or, to put it in more familiar language, God knows Themselves and the world through Themselves. So again, much like for Thomas, God’s knowledge of Godself and all creatures comes from God’s own self relation.

To summarize this section and our working doctrine of God’s simple knowledge up to this point: God knows Herself through Herself because Her being is Her very act of knowing. In knowing Themselves, God also has knowledge of creation, since creation obtains its being from God. Therefore, as the one who perfectly knows Himself and all of creation, God is Truth itself.

II. GOD’S SIMPLE KNOWLEDGE AS MYSTERY

Now that a doctrine of God’s simple knowledge has been sketched, we can begin developing the significance of this framework for disagreement. One ethical principle often presented for framing disagreements could be called the *humility principle*. It goes something like, “either party may be wrong, so we can agree to disagree.” However, this is an *anthropological* description of disagreement. The goal of this paper is to provide a description within the framework of the *divine reality*. This section, then, will argue that an understanding of God’s simple knowledge provides a positive restatement of the

²⁴ This aversion to predicates is at the heart of Hegel’s logic. See Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel’s Preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Yirmiyahu Yovel (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 107.

²⁵ *SL*, 28.

²⁶ *SL*, 28.

²⁷ *SL*, 28.

²⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Peter Crafts Hodgson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), I:369 (hereafter cited as *LPR*).

²⁹ Hegel, *LPR* III:272–326. For Hegel’s idea of “absolute knowing,” see the final chapter of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Terry P. Pinkard, Cambridge Hegel Translations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), §422–34 (hereafter cited as *PS*).

humility principle that is not rooted in any sort of human failure. Said differently, disagreement happens not merely because we are finite creatures prone to error but, more profoundly, because of the magnitude of who God is and, therefore, because of the elusive nature of truth itself.

As we saw in the previous section, for both Thomas and Hegel, the doctrine of God's simple knowledge functions as an apophatic doctrine; something about God will always elude us. Sometimes the terms *apophatic theology* and *via negativa* are used interchangeably, but this is not strictly correct. Accordingly to Sarah Coakley, apophatic theology understands that "to make claims about *God* involves a fundamental submission to mystery and unknowing, a form of unknowing more fundamental even than the positive accession of contentful revelation."³⁰ It is not merely the use of negative propositions to affirm something about God (e.g., God is not a composite being), but an understanding that even after everything we have said about God, the mystery of God remains central.

Thomas's account of God's simplicity is often read as an example of *via negativa* with a purely negating function.³¹ This is partly excusable given the fact that Thomas himself presents the doctrine through a set of negative propositions about God. But as Thomas points out elsewhere, whenever we make a negative statement about God, it is always made on the basis of some positive understanding of who God is.³² Eleonore Stump compares the function of God's simplicity to modern physics's understanding of photons.³³ Although we have a good understanding of how light behaves and can make a number of affirmative propositions about light, for now at least, we cannot say exactly *what* a photon is. It seems to be both a particle and a wave, yet neither a particle nor a wave. Although our current inability to say exactly what a photon is (probably) comes from our own lack of understanding, the doctrine of God's simplicity says that God will always be like a photon for humanity. Though we can make a number of affirmative statements about *who* God is, ultimately *what* God is will always elude us.³⁴

Hegel also takes this elusive knowability of God as his starting point. In the section titled "Knowledge of God" in his 1827 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel begins

³⁰ Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 44–45.

³¹ Tyler R. Wittman, "'Not a God of Confusion but of Peace': Aquinas and the Meaning of Divine Simplicity," *Modern Theology* 32, no. 2 (April 1, 2016): 151–69.

³² "Moreover the idea of negation is always based on an affirmation: as evinced by the fact that every negative proposition is proved by an affirmative: wherefore unless the human mind knew something positively about God, it would be unable to deny anything about him." Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae De Potentia Dei*, trans. English Dominican Fathers (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1952), Q.7 A.5 (hereafter cited as QDP). Bauerschmidt points out that even in the "revealed knowledge of God," Thomas's apophatic approach remains central for his methodology. Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, *Thomas Aquinas: Faith, Reason, and Following Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 157.

³³ Eleonore Stump, "God's Simplicity," in Davies and Stump, *Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, 137.

³⁴ This is actually the highest recognition of God for Thomas: "It is because human intelligence is not equal to the divine essence that this same divine essence surpasses our intelligence and is unknown to us: wherefore man reaches the highest point of his knowledge about God when he knows that he knows him not [*quod sciat se Deum nescire*], inasmuch as he knows that that which is God transcends whatsoever he conceives of him." QDP, Q.7 A.5 ad.14. See Bauerschmidt, *Thomas Aquinas*, 139–41.

by saying that our knowledge of God begins with the distinction between God and what is not God.³⁵ In other words, it begins with the recognition of our radical difference from God and therefore with God as unknown. But, in this recognition of a limit to our knowledge, we end up recognizing that there must be something beyond that limit or boundary. We end up affirming something positive about God even in the recognition of God's ultimate mysteriousness.³⁶ So, for both Thomas and Hegel, God's simplicity means the ultimate mysteriousness of God even in the midst of our ability to make positive statements about that God.

We therefore constantly make the simple God into a composite being. We cannot talk about God in God's simplicity but always refer to God as if He had parts or properties (e.g., God is wisdom, knowledge, or truth). If the doctrine of God's simple knowledge is properly understood, however, it means that whenever we name God by some creaturely perfection or make some claim about the world, what we refer to in God is finally something quite different than what we name; or more accurately, God in Their self-knowledge is always something more. How those composite claims subsist in a simple God is only comprehensible for the simple God who knows Herself through Herself. In other words, only God fully knows who God is (1 Cor. 2:11).

This provides the first part of our framework for thinking about disagreement, what we will call "noetic depravity." If God's knowledge of Herself is also God's existence as the one simple truth, then in the same way that God always remains a mystery, truth also remains something much more than we could ever know or say.³⁷ But this is not because of some noetic failure on our part; it is because the God who is truth is who He is. With this understanding, we can reformulate the humility principle, grounding it in the divine reality. Our disagreement is not the result of any noetic failure on my part or on your part.³⁸ If it were, or even if it were perceived as such, it would make sense for us to resort to some sort of violence or coercion against each other in order to change some perceived failure. But if the source of our disagreement comes from outside ourselves—from who God is—this provides a different formulation of the humility principle. We can agree to disagree because we have both recognized the elusive nature of truth itself.

Contrary to the ethics of the Enlightenment, then, resolving our disagreements cannot be a matter of overcoming our own noetic deficiencies or, more importantly, overcoming what we perceive as other people's noetic deficiencies. This forces us to sit with the profound yet uncomfortable idea that we cannot change other people's minds to know what is true because we ourselves cannot bring our own minds to know what is true. Of course, the best way to resolve a disagreement will be for one side—or most often both

³⁵ LPR, I:381. For a discussion of this idea in Hegel, see Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 172–76.

³⁶ PS, 424–25.

³⁷ Cf. Pieper commenting on Thomas: "not only God Himself but also things have an 'eternal name' that man is unable to utter." Josef Pieper, *Silence of St Thomas*, 3rd ed. (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 1999), 65.

³⁸ Here and throughout the paper, I am assuming that disagreement—and thus its resolution—has its source in something more than just "thinking differently." This would make disagreement into a disembodied, abstract activity. Rather, disagreement includes the whole self: emotions, experiences, beliefs, inclinations, habits, etc. I use the word *noetic*, then, more in the sense of the faculty that orders our understanding of our embodied existence.

sides—to overcome their misperceptions or misunderstandings. However, the point here is not to describe the exact process by which this resolution takes place but simply to establish a theological framework in which a resolution can begin to take place. This framework means that combative methods for disagreement resolution such as debate, persuasion, violence, or coercion are unthinkable. If our initial description of disagreement includes the elusive nature of truth, any action which already assumes a greater access to the truth is fundamentally mistaken. This restatement of the humility principle, then, provides us with a framework where resolutions must include a mutual commitment to knowing and unknowing, learning and unlearning.

Our theological framework could, by way of analogy, be compared to the political implications of the Reformation's doctrine of justification by grace alone. We called this first part a "noetic depravity." Just as the reformers saw the divine righteousness as unattainable for humanity on its own, truth is also categorically unattainable for humanity because of who God is. Nothing we do for ourselves or for others will justify us before God. In the same way, nothing we do will *ensure* that we or anyone else will come to know the truth. Of course, this is not the whole story of justification. This analogy will continue to be developed in the next section.

III. GOD'S SIMPLE KNOWLEDGE AS GRACE

The notion that we can agree to disagree because truth is elusive is not entirely satisfying. However, this is not the entire importance of God's simple knowledge for our disagreements. God's simple knowledge is also the grounds for what we *can* know about God and therefore what we *can* know as true. If the first part of our theological description of disagreement was "noetic depravity," the second part could be called "noetic grace."

In the context of God's ultimate unknowability, or simplicity, God gives Godself to us so that we might know Them. For Thomas, since truth is God's being and knowledge, when God gives us knowledge of the Truth, God gives us what is "substantially in God." This knowledge then "becomes accidental" in us through our participation in God's being.³⁹ Thomas calls God's gift of knowledge "grace." This participation in God's being, God's knowledge and truth, is Her grace to us so that we might know, although imperfectly, who She is in the midst of Her unknowability.

We have already seen that God cannot be known in His simplicity and that we can accordingly only know Him as a composite being. This could be construed as a deficiency on our part—that is, we make God into a composite being. But if it is God who gives us knowledge of Herself as grace, even our composite knowledge of God can be thought of as something sustained by God's simple knowledge. In this simple knowledge, God knows all discursive thoughts that humans could have and all composite statements that could be made about God. But as with Their knowledge of creatures, God knows these composite statements about Themselves through Themselves and therefore as simple.⁴⁰ James Brent gives the helpful analogy of a portrait model who knows herself so perfectly that

³⁹ ST I-II.110.3. See ST I.12.7.

⁴⁰ ST I.14.14. See ST I.15.2: "Inasmuch as He knows His own essence perfectly, He knows it according to every mode in which it can be known." See also ST I.16.5.

she knows every portrait that could be painted of her from every possible angle.⁴¹ In other words, part of God's simple knowledge is each individual mode by which God could be known. So, for Thomas, even our composite statements about God are part of God's simple knowledge, not in their complexity, but as a resolved and simple truth.⁴² In this way, our broken composite statements about God can be truthful insofar as they have their essential relation to God's knowledge. So, it can be said that God gives us knowledge of Herself that, although partial, is nonetheless truthful insofar as it too subsists in God's being and is therefore primarily related to God's being.

This is the point where Hegel is perhaps most strikingly similar to Thomas. In Hegel's reformulation of the ontological argument for God's existence, the first stage of faith is to believe that God exists. But already in this initial step, because God's existence is the fullness of who God is, one must have already given one's implicit assent to the entire divine life.⁴³ Thinking, for Hegel, is then the process through which this implicit faith, which is already in our consciousness, becomes immediate knowledge to our consciousness.⁴⁴ But importantly, this process is the result of an *Erregung*, "outside stimulus," which makes the implicit knowledge become mediated knowledge. In other words, God's being is present in human consciousness from the beginning through an implicit faith that later becomes explicit knowledge through its interactions with the world. Since this knowledge is not original to us (it exists in God's being) nor discovered by us (it requires an outside stimulus), we could say, though of course Hegel does not use this language, that it is given to us as a grace.⁴⁵

In Hegel's most basic definition of God, She is the beginning and end of all thought.⁴⁶ But God is not only the "soil out of which the distinctions grow."⁴⁷ He is at the same time the simple "abiding unity" who keeps all distinctions enclosed within Himself.⁴⁸ That is why to think about God at all is to have already presupposed God's existence and therefore, implicitly, the totality of who God is. In light of this, Hegel makes it clear—perhaps anticipating Feuerbach's critique of his philosophy—that the infinite is not grounded upon the finite. Instead, for Hegel, "the truth of the finite is this affirmative element that is called the infinite."⁴⁹ To think at all, whether about God or about anything, is to think out of God's reality. It is therefore to think out of God's simplicity or God's ultimate self-relation—that is, God's knowledge of Herself through Herself. So again, as we saw with Thomas, finite statements about God do not constitute God's infinite being. It is the other way around; God's infinite being is the condition for all finite statements that could be made about God or about the world. To think about God, or to think at all, is to think out of God's simple knowledge and truth.

⁴¹ James Brent, "God's Knowledge and Will," in Davies and Stump, *Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, 162.

⁴² Cf. Bauerschmidt, *Thomas Aquinas*, 136–37.

⁴³ LPR, I:386–88.

⁴⁴ LPR, I:412–13.

⁴⁵ Rowan Williams suggests applying this word to Hegel's process. "Hegel and the Gods of Postmodernity" in *Wrestling with Angels: Conversations in Modern Theology*, ed. Mike Higon (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 30–31.

⁴⁶ LPR, I:374.

⁴⁷ LPR, I:374.

⁴⁸ LPR, I:374.

⁴⁹ LPR, I:424. Cf. SL, 26–29.

This establishes the second part of our theological framework for disagreement. If the content of truth does not depend on what we think we know, its existence does not ultimately depend on *our* actions or defense, and it can truly be accepted as grace. According to both Thomas and Hegel, to think of God at all, even through finite composite statements, is to implicitly think the totality of God's existence. So, when we think about God, by God's grace, we are truly thinking about *God*. We are implicitly thinking about the ultimate reality and therefore what is true. Even though our statements about the simple and unknowable God make Him into something composite and knowable, in His grace, God takes these statements into His very being and knowledge. There, our broken and finite statements either about God or about the world are sustained by God and find their perfection in Him. The truth of our thinking does not come from *our* thinking or knowing, but rather it comes from God's thinking and knowing.

If noetic depravity functioned as the total depravity part of our justification analogy—there is none who knows the truth, no, not one—then this second part is the positive side of justification: a sort of noetic grace. Even in the midst of the elusiveness of truth, God takes our efforts and makes them true in Herself. This provides a context for our disagreements in which the disagreement is in a sense already resolved; it has already been reconciled in God's being. This means that we can disagree in a way that does not ground the resolution of our disagreement in any one of our actions. The only final resolution will be found and is already found in God's simple knowledge. Of course, this resolution currently eludes us, leading to the frustrations and violence of human history. But that is why we are in constant need of God's grace.

Rather than continuing in the sort of disagreements that lead to violence or exclusion in order to achieve one's ends, the church must act within this context of its primary relation to the God who knows all things simply. This instead requires a radical, and frankly uncomfortable, openness to the idea that both sides of a disagreement actually make up part of the final truth or God's own knowledge of Herself. That is, God knows both sides of the disagreement and has already reconciled them within Godself; they are both already somehow a part of God's being. This should lead us to cultivate the virtue of empathy—namely, a posture of openness to the world in which we gradually come to participate in God's being and truth by grace. Of course, this participation does not happen suddenly; it still requires the temporal processes of learning, unlearning, negotiating, and rediscovering. But our discovery of the truth no longer needs to be a conquest for the truth. We do not need to prove other people wrong through violence or exclusion in order to justify our own viewpoints; it is God who creates the possibility for reconciliation and the discovery of the truth.

IV. CONCLUSION

The language and shape of this argument have subtly been patterned on the doctrine of justification. The simplicity of God's existence and truth results in a sort of noetic depravity, not because of some human failing but because of the magnitude of who God is. But in an act of grace, God knows Godself so perfectly as to take our feeble efforts into God's life and knowledge, where they are sustained and given back to us as a gift. With this gift of knowledge, we are given a non-competitive space to disagree with one another

as moral subjects. This does not mean that we should not try to discover the truth through a process of empathic learning and negotiation. In fact, if this theological framework for disagreement is properly understood, it should lead to more engagement with those who are different from us, and so it should lead to more disagreement. But just as the Reformation proclaimed peace through knowing that our justification does not finally depend upon our works, God's simple knowledge proclaims peace through knowing that the resolution to our disagreement does not finally depend on our actions. If the Reformation responded to people's anxieties about attaining eternal life, God's simple knowledge responds to people's anxieties about navigating the conflicts and complexities of modern political and social life. If God knows all things simply, we are given the freedom to disagree with one another in way that actually allows for the sort of empathic learning and negotiation needed to resolve our disagreements. We are given the freedom to grow and to truly learn from one another.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allison, Henry E. *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense*. 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Complete English ed. Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981.
- . *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*. Translated by Robert W. Mulligan. Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952.
- . *Quaestiones Disputatae De Potentia Dei*. Translated by the English Dominican Fathers. Westminster, MD: Newman, 1952.
- Bauerschmidt, Frederick Christian. *Thomas Aquinas: Faith, Reason, and Following Christ*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Brent, James. "God's Knowledge and Will." In Davies and Stump, *Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, 158–72.
- Burrell, David. *Aquinas: God and Action*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016.
- Coakley, Sarah. *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity.'* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Davies, Brian. *Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae: A Guide and Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Davies, Brian and Eleonore Stump, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*. Oxford Handbooks. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Dolezal, James E. *God without Parts: Divine Simplicity and the Metaphysics of God's Absoluteness*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011.
- Eitel, Adam. "Making Motions in a Language We Do Not Understand: The Apophaticism of Thomas Aquinas and Victor Preller." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 65, no. 1 (February 1, 2012): 17–33.
- Hector, Kevin. "Apophaticism in Thomas Aquinas: A Re-Reformulation and Recommendation." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60, no. 4 (November 1, 2007): 377–93.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Hegel's Preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by Yirmiyahu Yovel. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- . *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Edited by Peter Crafts Hodgson. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

- . *The Logic of Hegel: Translated from the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. 2nd ed. Translated by William Wallace. Oxford: Clarendon, 1892.
- . *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by Terry P. Pinkard. Cambridge Hegel Translations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Jenson, Robert W. "How the World Lost Its Story." *First Things*, no. 201 (March 2010): 31–37.
- Ortlund, Gavin. "Divine Simplicity in Historical Perspective: Resourcing a Contemporary Discussion." *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 16, no. 4 (October 1, 2014): 436–53.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Pieper, Josef. *Silence of St Thomas*. 3rd ed. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 1999.
- Plantinga, Alvin. *Does God Have a Nature? The Aquinas Lecture 44*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980.
- Preller, Victor. *Divine Science and the Science of God: A Reformulation of Thomas Aquinas*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967.
- Rose, Gillian. *Dialectic of Nihilism: Post-Structuralism and Law*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1984.
- . *Hegel Contra Sociology*. London: Humanities Press, 1981.
- Stump, Eleonore. "God's Simplicity." In Davies and Stump, *Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, 135–46.
- Williams, Rowan. "Between Politics and Metaphysics: Reflections in the Wake of Gillian Rose." In *Wrestling with Angels: Conversations in Modern Theology*, edited by Mike Higton, 53–76. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- . "Hegel and the Gods of Postmodernity." In *Wrestling with Angels: Conversations in Modern Theology*, edited by Mike Higton, 25–34. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- . "Interiority and Epiphany: A Reading in New Testament Ethics." In *On Christian Theology*, 239–64. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.
- Wittman, Tyler R. "'Not a God of Confusion but of Peace': Aquinas and the Meaning of Divine Simplicity." *Modern Theology* 32, no. 2 (April 1, 2016): 151–69.

An Oppressed People in a Groaning Creation

Toward an Eco-Public Theology of Undocumented Farmworkers

EMILY WILKES¹

Princeton Theological Seminary

No longer can thoughtful Americans take for granted those foods that make for a balanced diet without even asking how they reach their tables. No longer can those who might be indifferent ignore the welfare of the migrant for no other reason than self-protection. So vast a . . . neglected group of human beings threatens the very life of the nation.

—Edith E. Lowry²

A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

—Leonardo Boff³

Who picks your fruits and vegetables? Because nearly half of all hired US farmworkers are undocumented,⁴ there is a significant chance that an undocumented immigrant harvested the domestic produce in your local grocery store.⁵ The intimate connection between consumers and undocumented farmworkers is rendered invisible within the black box of US industrial agriculture. In this paper, I will discuss how access to fruits and

¹Emily Wilkes is a second-year student in the MDiv/MACEF dual degree program at Princeton Theological Seminary. With a background in sociology from Davidson College, she is passionate about how theology can speak to justice issues like immigration, ecology, and disability. She is pursuing ordination in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

²Edith E. Lowry, *They Starve That We May Eat: Migrants of the Crops* (New York: Council of Women for Home Missions and Missionary Education Movement, 1938), 62.

³Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 49.

⁴Trish Hernandez and Susan Gabbard, *Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2015-2016: A Demographic and Employment Profile of United States Farmworkers*, prepared by JBS International Inc. for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Policy Development and Research, January 2018, 5, https://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/ETAOP_2019-01_NAWS_Research_Report_13.pdf.

⁵Though many fruits and vegetables in US grocery stores are imported, this paper focuses on domestic produce. See “The US increases its dependence on imported fruits and vegetables,” Fresh Plaza, January 17, 2018, <https://www.freshplaza.com/article/2187979/the-us-increases-its-dependence-on-imported-fruits-and-vegetables/>.

vegetables is often made possible by undocumented farmworkers who work excruciatingly long hours for little pay, live in labor camps described as “one inch above squalor,” and fear advocating for themselves because of their tenuous legal status.⁶

The national discourse concerning undocumented labor couches the debate primarily in economic terms. Both the Right and the Left operate within a neoliberal framework, ignoring the impact of the free market on the land and the people who work the land.⁷ My hope is to demonstrate the insufficiency of these two ideologies, to propose an alternative, and to illustrate the deep polarization of partisan politics without contributing to it. Neither of the two major political parties in the United States addresses how policies enacted by corporate agribusiness lead to the abuse of both human communities and the environment. The undocumented farmworkers are therefore doubly crushed by the weight of the exploitation of land and the exploitation of their laboring bodies.

In order to address both, this paper will work toward the development of a public theology—specifically, an eco-public theology—that attends to both an oppressed people and a groaning creation.⁸ One cannot be attended to without the other. An anthropocentric public theology, even one that centers on liberation, does not sufficiently address the damage that human action inflicts upon the environment. Similarly, an ecotheology that fails to take seriously vulnerable human communities ignores environmental racism, or the ways in which race and class are linked with exposure to ecological degradation.⁹

The foundation of eco-public theology is built upon three practices: rhetorical practices (naming the root causes of institutionalized injustices), symbolic practices (reinterpreting theological symbols to redirect a social imagination toward justice), and prophetic practices (denouncing sinful practices and announcing an alternative way of being).¹⁰ Rhetorical practices play a deconstructive and educative role within the scope of eco-public theology, while the other two components, symbolic and prophetic practices, are constructive and oriented toward action. This paper functions primarily as rhetorical

⁶ Seth M. Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 5.

⁷ I use the terms *Right* and *Left* as political categories throughout this paper. On a basic level, I use these categories as representative of the platforms (ideologies) expressed by the Republican National Committee (RNC) and the Democratic National Committee (DNC). I examine rhetoric of media from a variety of sources and use the categories *Right* or *Left* whenever the rhetoric of the source in question aligns with the RNC or DNC official platforms, respectively. I employ the term *neoliberal* both as an economic principle and as a normative ideology of Western society. See Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 41; see also Keri Day, *Religious Resistance to Neoliberalism: Womanist and Black Feminist Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 9.

⁸ The term *eco-public theology* is used throughout Rosemary P. Carbine, “Imagining and Incarnating an Integral Ecology: A Critical Ecofeminist Public Theology,” in *Planetary Solidarity: Global Women’s Voices on Christian Doctrine and Climate Justice*, ed. Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Hilda P. Koster (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2017).

⁹ United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States: A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Communities with Hazardous Waste Sites*, 1987, <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML1310/ML13109A339.pdf>.

¹⁰ This methodology (rhetorical, symbolic, prophetic) is named in Carbine, “Imagining and Incarnating an Integral Ecology,” though, unlike Carbine, I will be using it as a *process* in building an eco-public theology.

practice, though it seeks to lay the groundwork for future work in constructing symbolic and prophetic practices.

The paper begins with a thorough description and critical analysis of the current public discourse along partisan lines. It will then move toward the development of an eco-public theology that is especially concerned with the plight of undocumented farmworkers. By critically participating in the public sphere and naming institutionalized injustices that harm both human communities and creation, an eco-public theology prepares the way to employ “theopolitical community-building praxes that evoke and witness to new possibilities for a more just, loving, and peaceful world, for a more interdependent, interconnected sense of solidarity that seeks justice.”¹¹

“FLOODS, INVASIONS, CRIMINAL ALIENS, AND THE BORDER CRISIS”:
CURRENT PUBLIC DISCOURSE

Rhetoric has the power to obscure facts. People in power—particularly the Trump administration and the media—deeply inform public perception of immigrants in the way they speak about the border. The Trump administration repeatedly portrays immigrants as a threat to the United States, which the media inadvertently reinforce by reflecting this language. The following terms, though by no means exhaustive, illustrate common rhetoric that both the Right and the Left employ in their discussion of immigration.

- Water metaphors: Using water metaphors—as in, immigrants are “*flooding* our Southern Border,”¹² and the “*First wave* of migrants arrive,”¹³ resulting in a “*surge* at the border”¹⁴—reifies the narrative that immigrants are dangerous, difficult to contain, and ultimately destructive.¹⁵
- Invasion: The Associated Press described a migrant caravan traveling through Mexico toward the US border as “a ragtag army of the poor.”¹⁶ By likening asylum-seeking families to an army, the AP reflected the Trump administration’s language of the threat of “invasion.”¹⁷

¹¹ Carbine, “Imagining and Incarnating an Integral Ecology,” 50.

¹² Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), “Tremendous numbers of people are coming up through Mexico in the hopes of flooding our Southern Border. We have sent additional military,” Twitter, February 5, 2019, 6:10 a.m., <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1092787440560078849>. Italics added.

¹³ Annie Rose Ramos and Gabe Gutierrez, “First Wave of Migrants Arrive in Tijuana, Mexico, Filling Shelters,” *NBC News*, November 17, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/first-wave-migrants-arrive-tijuana-mexico-filling-shelters-n937586>. Italics added.

¹⁴ Miriam Jordan, “A New Surge at the Border is Forcing Migrant Families Into Motel Rooms,” *New York Times*, October 18, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/18/us/migrant-families-arizona-ice-motels.html>. Italics added.

¹⁵ Carly Goodman, “How to Talk about the Migrant Caravan,” *American Friends Service Committee*, October 24, 2018, <https://www.afsc.org/blogs/media-uncovered/how-to-talk-about-migrant-caravan>.

¹⁶ Joe Concha, “AP Apologizes for Tweet Calling Migrant Caravan ‘a Ragtag Army of the Poor,’” *The Hill*, October 22, 2018, <https://thehill.com/homenews/media/412553-ap-apologizes-for-tweet-calling-migrant-caravan-a-ragtag-army-of-the-poor>.

¹⁷ Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), “Many Gang Members and some very bad people are mixed into the Caravan heading to our Southern Border,” Twitter, October 29, 2018, 7:41 a.m., <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1056919064906469376>.

- Criminal: Trump's frequent use of the word "criminal" obscures several facts about undocumented immigrants.¹⁸ First, crossing the border the first time is not a felony, but a misdemeanor.¹⁹ Second, undocumented immigrants are significantly less likely to commit crimes than native-born citizens.²⁰ Third, for those seeking asylum from violent circumstances, the UN Refugee Agency states that "refugees should not be penalized for their illegal entry or stay. This recognizes that the seeking of asylum can require refugees to breach immigration rules."²¹
- Crisis: The administration and media alike often deploy the word *crisis* in describing the situation at the southern border,²² ignoring that the number of undocumented immigrants crossing the border is near historic lows.²³

To expand upon this final point, although the rhetoric employed against undocumented immigrants has grown increasingly vitriolic, the number of undocumented immigrants from Mexico has actually declined by about one million in the last decade.²⁴ The undocumented-Mexican population in the United States stopped growing in 2008 and has been declining ever since.²⁵ While the primary demographic of people crossing the borders was once single adults from Mexico seeking work, now parents with children from the Northern Triangle of Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador) seeking asylum comprise the majority of undocumented border crossers.²⁶ Therefore, in terms of the number of people crossing the border without documents, there is no crisis. However, as sociologist Douglas Massey argues, "If there is a crisis, it is . . . a human rights crisis. Families and children seeking asylum from horrendous conditions in countries of origin are being unlawfully turned away at the border or being arrested as criminals instead of having their asylum claims adjudicated."²⁷

¹⁸ Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump), "The Democrats do not want us to detain, or send back, criminal aliens! This is a brand new demand. Crazy!" Twitter, February 11, 2019, 5:18 a.m., <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1094948909657542656>.

¹⁹ 8 U.S.C. § 1325 (2017).

²⁰ Alex Nowrasteh, "Criminal Immigrants in Texas: Illegal Immigrant Conviction and Arrest Rates for Homicide, Sex Crimes, Larceny, and Other Crimes," Cato Institute, February 26, 2018, <https://www.cato.org/publications/immigration-research-policy-brief/criminal-immigrants-texas-illegal-immigrant>.

²¹ "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees," UNHCR, December 2010, 3, <https://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10>.

²² The White House (@WhiteHouse), "This afternoon, President Trump hosted a roundtable discussion with State, local, and community leaders, who spoke on how the crisis at the border," Twitter, January 11, 2019, 1:13 p.m., <https://twitter.com/WhiteHouse/status/1083834391984513024>.

²³ Douglas Massey, "Today's US-Mexico 'Border Crisis' in 6 Charts," *The Conversation*, June 27, 2018, <https://theconversation.com/todays-us-mexico-border-crisis-in-6-charts-98922>.

²⁴ Gustavo López, Kristen Bialik, and Jynnah Radford, "Key Findings about U.S. Immigrants," Pew Research Center, November 30, 2018, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/11/30/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/>.

²⁵ Massey, "Today's US-Mexico 'Border Crisis.'"

²⁶ Dara Lind, "Half the People Caught by Border Patrol Are Now Children or Families," *Vox*, October 23, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/10/23/18014998/families-border-asylum-caravan>.

²⁷ Massey, "Today's US-Mexico 'Border Crisis.'"

This increasingly vitriolic language especially impacts the undocumented immigrants who already live in the United States, more than half of whom are from Mexico.²⁸ About 8 million of the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States have jobs, making up 5 percent of the US workforce.²⁹ In the last few decades, some US industries, especially agriculture, have become increasingly reliant upon immigrant labor.³⁰ Both the Right and the Left, whether intentionally or inadvertently, allow this public framing to influence their perspectives in the debate. This is the public discourse that eco-public theology must respond to.

The Debate: Undocumented Immigrants and Farm Labor

US industrial agriculture depends on the abundant labor supply of undocumented immigrants.³¹ The Right prioritizes preventing people from crossing the border without documentation and deporting those who have already arrived in the United States.³² But because nearly half of all hired US farmworkers are undocumented, this presents a significant challenge for the agriculture industry: how will farmers cope with this significant labor gap if their labor is deported?³³ The Right employs two solutions to the dilemma: invest in better technology or hire native or documented workers.

Proponents of agricultural advancements argue that advancements in technologies lead to the reduction of the use of water and fertilizer and increase the amount of crops produced.³⁴ Satellite navigation systems allows farmers to closely manage where and how crops are growing, reducing wasted resources and improving output.³⁵ On a smaller scale, in recent decades the agricultural industry has embraced mechanization and the technological advances associated with farming, like machines used to thresh wheat and milk cows. If technology continues to improve—from managing crop lands via satellite to milking cows with machines—the industry may become even less labor-intensive, relying less on the labor of undocumented immigrants and shifting to a more mechanized agricultural industry.³⁶

²⁸ Mary Jo Dudley, “Why Care about Undocumented Immigrants? For One Thing, They’ve Become Vital to Key Sectors of the US Economy,” *The Conversation*, June 25, 2018, <https://theconversation.com/why-care-about-undocumented-immigrants-for-one-thing-theyve-become-vital-to-key-sectors-of-the-us-economy-98790>.

²⁹ Dudley, “Why Care about Undocumented Immigrants?”

³⁰ Michael Frank, “Can America’s Farms Survive the Threat of Deportations?,” *Atlantic*, June 6, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/06/can-americas-farms-survive-the-threat-of-deportations/529008/>.

³¹ Frank, “America’s Farms.”

³² Republican National Committee, “Republican Platform: Government Reform,” 2019, <https://gop.com/platform/reforming-government/>.

³³ Hernandez and Gabbard, *Findings from NAWS*, 5.

³⁴ Jayson Lusk, “Why Industrial Farms Are Good for the Environment,” *New York Times*, September 23, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/25/opinion/sunday/why-industrial-farms-are-good-for-the-environment.html>.

³⁵ National Coordination Office for Space-Based Positioning, Navigation, and Timing, “Agriculture,” GPS.gov, last modified March 6, 2018, <https://www.gps.gov/applications/agriculture/>.

³⁶ Wendell Berry offers a compelling critique of this perspective in “Feminism, the Body, and the Machine” in *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*, ed. Norman Wirzba, 65–80 (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2002). He argues that through more advanced technologies, humans become even more

For the tasks that still require manual labor, the Right argues that there are enough unemployed citizens to fill a potential labor shortage if the industry were to lose undocumented-immigrant farmworkers.³⁷ There are currently six million unemployed citizens, some of whom likely have a background in agriculture.³⁸ Currently, however, they cannot compete with the inexpensive labor that undocumented workers provide; though farmers have taken advantage of cheap labor through the employment of undocumented migrants, they would have to pay market prices if they wanted to retain native-born and documented workers.³⁹

In response to this claim, the Left argues that the labor of undocumented farmworkers is indispensable to the industry.⁴⁰ Affordable produce for consumers depends on undocumented immigrants' willingness to work for wages below the market price:⁴¹ they often make no more than \$10,000 per year.⁴² But even if the wages were higher, these are not desirable jobs; the agriculture industry is consistently ranked as one of the most dangerous in the private sector.⁴³ Native and documented workers are reluctant to apply for jobs harvesting crops in the fields; "days often begin in the middle of the night—say, 3 a.m.—to leave enough time to get to a pickup point (a parking lot or vacant lot), to be picked up (or not—the labor contractors who collect workers and deliver them to farms generally don't take all of them), and get trucked to the worksite."⁴⁴ Undocumented farmworkers work nonstop; many pickers are not paid by the hour but per pound of fruit or vegetable harvested.⁴⁵ They labor in dangerous conditions; they endure dust, bee stings, flash floods, excruciating heat, and exposure to chemicals and pesticides, all while their bodies are perpetually crouched or bent low to the ground.⁴⁶ If they fall behind the

disconnected from the earth and therefore from each other. Thus, though technological progress may facilitate the lives of future generations, we are in fact inadvertently threatening their wellbeing by driving an even greater wedge between them and nature.

³⁷ Spencer P. Morrison, "No, America's Farmers Don't Depend on Illegal Immigration," *Center for American Greatness*, January 13, 2018, <https://amgreatness.com/2018/01/13/no-americas-farmers-dont-depend-illegal-immigration/>.

³⁸ Bureau of Labor Statistics, "The Employment Situation—November 2018," U.S. Department of Labor, November 2018, 1, https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empisit_12072018.pdf.

³⁹ Morrison, "No, America's Farmers Don't Depend on Illegal Immigration."

⁴⁰ Jerry Hagstrom, "Democrats Introduce Bill to Shield Farmworkers from Deportation," *Progressive Farmer*, January 18, 2019, <https://www.dtnpf.com/agriculture/web/ag/perspectives/blogs/ag-policy-blog/blog-post/2019/01/18/democrats-introduce-bill-shield>.

⁴¹ Tamar Haspel, "Illegal Immigrants Help Fuel U.S. Farms. Does Affordable Produce Depend on Them?," *Washington Post*, March 17, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/food/in-an-immigration-crackdown-who-will-pick-our-produce/2017/03/17/cc1c6df4-0a5d-11e7-93dc-00f9bdd74ed1_story.html.

⁴² Haspel, "Illegal Immigrants Help Fuel U.S. Farms."

⁴³ Kamala Kelkar, "When Labor Laws Left Farm Workers Behind—and Vulnerable to Abuse," *PBS NewsHour*, September 18, 2016, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/labor-laws-left-farm-workers-behind-vulnerable-abuse>.

⁴⁴ Haspel, "Illegal Immigrants Help Fuel U.S. Farms."

⁴⁵ Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*, 72.

⁴⁶ Rory Carroll, "Fruits of Labor: Sunny California is No Paradise for Farm Workers," *Guardian*, August 15, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/aug/15/california-farms-pick-your-own-fruit-vegetables-working-conditions-jobs>.

other pickers, they risk losing both a day's wages and a ride back home to the labor camp.⁴⁷

The Left argues that undocumented immigrants are indispensable to the industry because of their willingness to tolerate extremely harsh conditions for little pay. In a recent study conducted by the Cornell Farmworker Program, thirty New York dairy farmers reported that "they turned to undocumented workers because they were unable to find and keep reliable U.S. citizens to do the jobs."⁴⁸ The following case study provides evidence of their claim:

In 2011, there were on average 489,000 unemployed people in North Carolina and approximately 6,500 available farm jobs offered through the North Carolina Growers Association. Despite the fact that each of these jobs was in or next to a county with over 10 percent unemployment, only 268 of the nearly 500,000 unemployed North Carolinians applied for these jobs. More than 90 percent of those applying (245 people) were hired, but just 163 showed up for the first day of work. A month in, more than half had quit. Only 7 native workers—or 3 percent of US workers hired—completed the entire growing season. By contrast, roughly 90 percent of all Mexican farm workers at the NCGA complete the growing season.⁴⁹

Many native and documented workers would rather be unemployed than subjected to such dangerous and brutal work environments. Therefore, undocumented immigrants are vital to the agriculture industry because they are the only ones willing to tolerate the intolerable conditions.

Undocumented farmworkers bear these conditions while under the threat of deportation back to their home countries. The Department of Homeland Security justifies the increasing raids of labor camps in search of undocumented immigrants by "expanding the definition of what's considered a criminal—looking for pretext."⁵⁰ Because of the increasingly aggressive immigration enforcement typical of the Trump administration, farmers are already planting fewer crops than in previous years.⁵¹ The risk of deportation has farmers nervous that their entire labor supply will disappear over the course of a weekend. According to a recent study, if all undocumented farmworkers were deported, there would be a 24 percent fall in farm production (\$1.37 billion in commodity value lost); farmers would be forced to let their produce rot in the fields due to the labor shortage.⁵² Thus, because undocumented farmworkers are already so integrated in the industry, the economic loss caused by their deportation would be significant.

⁴⁷ Haspel, "Illegal Immigrants Help Fuel U.S. Farms."

⁴⁸ Dudley, "Why Care about Undocumented Immigrants?"

⁴⁹ Michael A. Clemens, "International Harvest: A Case Study of How Foreign Workers Help American Farms Grow Crops—and the Economy," *The Partnership for a New American Economy and The Center for Global Development*, May 2013, 2, <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/sites/all/themes/pnae/nc-agr-report-05-2013.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Frank, "America's Farms."

⁵¹ Frank, "Can America's Farms Survive the Threat of Deportations?"

⁵² Frank, "America's Farms."

NEOLIBERALISM: A RHETORICAL CRITIQUE OF THE CURRENT PUBLIC DISCOURSE

Neither argument is sufficient. The Right blatantly ignores the evidence that US citizens are not willing to work in such brutal conditions. The Left views these conditions as a necessary evil and undocumented workers as expendable labor, warning consumers of the significant economic loss and rise in the cost of produce predicted if undocumented farmworkers are deported.⁵³ Both arguments reduce the value of the land and the people who work on it to what they can produce. The current public discourse presupposes neoliberalism as normative, valuing farmworkers—and the land they work on—for nothing more than the profit they can generate.

Neoliberalism, an ideology implicit in the rhetoric of both the Left and the Right, instrumentalizes both humans *and* the land as means to an end. As Day notes, neoliberalism “orders people to live by the generalized principle of competition in *all* social spheres of life, making the individual herself or himself an enterprise. It demands that individuals relate to each other in instrumental ways.”⁵⁴ Neoliberalism as the instrumentalization of human communities and the environment is the lens through which most of Western society views and moves through the world. Any rhetoric entrenched in this ideology insufficiently addresses the plight of the farmworker. This rhetoric disregards their dignity, fails to account for the historical conditions that led to the creation of such brutal workplaces, and ignores how such conditions are sustained by the industrialization of agriculture, or the creation of agribusiness.

Here begins the deconstructive work of eco-public theology. Having examined the rhetoric deployed by the Trump administration, the media, and both major political parties, this section now aims to problematize these narratives. Within eco-public theology, rhetorical practices educate about institutionalized injustices and critique normalized rhetoric that harms vulnerable groups, shifting the discourse to prioritize marginalized and vulnerable groups.⁵⁵

This section will expose how the logic of capitalism fragments communities and how it has contributed to the rise of agribusiness. It will then describe the effects of agribusiness, from the demands forced upon small-scale farmers to global migration patterns. This section aims to demonstrate that neoliberalism does not refer only to economics but is also a mode of being in the world that fundamentally shapes how we relate to our environment and communities. This informed perspective is necessary in working toward a constructive eco-public theology.

The Logic of Capitalism

Wendell Berry describes the logic of industrial capitalism as “inherently violent”; by definition, it “impoverishes one place in order to be extravagant in another,” while simultaneously contributing to the fragmentation of communities and ecological disasters.⁵⁶ Berry offers a historical reading of the violent mentality of global capitalism,

⁵³ Frank, “America’s Farms.”

⁵⁴ Day, *Religious Resistance to Neoliberalism*, 8–9.

⁵⁵ Carbine, “Imagining and Incarnating an Integral Ecology,” 50.

⁵⁶ Wendell Berry, “The Agrarian Standard,” in *Citizenship Papers* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2003), 146.

tracing the impulses of greed and conquest to the very settling of the land that became the United States by European colonizers. He argues that the inclination to exert dominance over both land and others is intertwined with the country's founding. Because this impulse to control is so foundational to the historical consciousness of the nation, this displacement has played out over and over again, both within the country and around the world; "[g]eneration after generation, those who intended to remain and prosper where they were have been dispossessed and driven out, or subverted and exploited where they were. . . . Time after time, in place after place, these conquerors have fragmented and demolished traditional communities, the beginnings of domestic cultures."⁵⁷ The greed that both sustains and is generated by this global capitalism leads to two forms of migration: "the movements of those seeking to conquer new 'frontiers,' and the movements of those who have been displaced as a result."⁵⁸ These conquests have fragmented—and continue to fragment—communities through exploiting both the land and the people living on it.

This is the ideology that undergirds neoliberalism. When the value of both land and humans is based on the profit they can generate, the temptation to exploit becomes more attractive. Neoliberalism leads to a warped perspective of our own relationships to our bodies, our neighbors, and the earth; Berry observes that "we began to see nothing wrong with putting the body—most often somebody else's body . . .—to a task that insulted the mind and demeaned the spirit. And we began to find it easier than ever to prefer our own bodies to the bodies of other creatures and to abuse, exploit, and otherwise hold in contempt those other bodies for the greater good or comfort of our own."⁵⁹ This contempt manifests in the subjugation of other bodies and distorts relationships with all else, including the earth itself; "relationships with all other creatures become competitive and exploitative rather than collaborative and convivial. The world is seen and dealt with, not as an ecological community, but as a stock exchange."⁶⁰ Thus, neoliberalism becomes a normalized mode of being in the world, obfuscating the violence large corporations cause when exercising the logic of capitalism. Agribusiness is one such industry where both the human and environmental cost is deeply felt.

The Roots of Agribusiness and the Seeds it Sows

Industrial agriculture promotes the consolidation of farmland in order to maximize profits and achieve economies of scale.⁶¹ Between 1935 and 1989, the number of small farms in the United States declined from 6.8 million to under 2.1 million while the US population doubled.⁶² As family-run farms went out of business, agricultural corporations

⁵⁷ Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977), 4–5.

⁵⁸ Ronald Osborn, "Seyla Benhabib, Wendell Berry and the Question of Migrant and Refugee Rights," *Humanitas: National Humanities Institute* 23, no. 1 (2010): 131.

⁵⁹ Berry, *Unsettling*, 104.

⁶⁰ Berry, 105.

⁶¹ Frank Elwell, "The Industrialization of Agriculture," in *Industrializing America: Understanding Contemporary Society Through Classical Sociological Analysis* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999), <http://faculty.rsu.edu/users/f/felwell/www/Theorists/Essays/Berry1.html>.

⁶² David C. Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1995), 224.

have grown and consolidated power.⁶³ These corporations find that it is more profitable to contract out smaller producers. They control the market and the terms under which the producer must operate and control the methods of production, then demand that the farmers invest in the latest technology, which often forces the farmers into debt.⁶⁴ Farmers can purchase expensive farm inputs like seed, fertilizer, and insecticide, only directly from the corporation that bought them out.⁶⁵ The farmers are left with three choices: accept the terms, go out of business, or find a crop whose market is not yet controlled by a large corporation.⁶⁶ The last century has seen a complete restructuring of the agriculture industry, resulting in what amounts to modern-day serfdom for the farmers.

Industrial agriculture causes catastrophic harm to land. The use of oversized mechanical equipment that tills the land, seeds, and harvests acres of land in a matter of minutes harms the soil through its concentrated compaction.⁶⁷ The liberal application of chemicals in fertilizers and herbicides and the reliance upon fossil-fuel energy in the production process pollute air, soil, and water.⁶⁸ Berry notes, "Forcing all agricultural localities to conform to economic conditions imposed from afar by a few large corporations has caused problems of the largest possible scale, such as soil loss, genetic impoverishment, and groundwater pollution."⁶⁹ Industrial agricultural practices require standardization; it is "placeless and displacing. It does not distinguish one place from another. It applies its methods and technologies indiscriminately in the American East and the American West, in the United States and in India. It thus continues the economy of colonialism."⁷⁰ Agriculture as it is practiced now is an extractive industry that "cannot use the land without abusing it."⁷¹

Agribusiness, Free Trade, and Globalization

The countries that consume beyond their environmental means control the rules of the international economy.⁷² They "adjust the rules to ensure their own ability to make up their national environmental deficits through imports—often without being mindful of the implications for the exporting countries."⁷³ As some eco-justice activists and theologians argue, globalization is "often nothing less than eco-imperialism, which is profit- and fossil-fuel driven, energy intensive, polluting, unjust, and wasteful, destroying

⁶³ Two grain companies control 50 percent of US grain exports, three companies slaughter 80 percent of US beef, Campbell's controls 70 percent of the soup market, and four companies control 85 percent of the cereal market. See Korten, 224.

⁶⁴ Elwell, "Industrialization of Agriculture."

⁶⁵ Elwell, "Industrialization of Agriculture."

⁶⁶ Elwell, "Industrialization of Agriculture."

⁶⁷ Elwell, "Industrialization of Agriculture."

⁶⁸ Elwell, "Industrialization of Agriculture."

⁶⁹ Berry, "Agrarian," 146.

⁷⁰ Berry, 146.

⁷¹ Berry, 146.

⁷² The United States makes up 5 percent of the world's population yet consumes 25 percent of the world's resources. See Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss, "Use It and Lose It: The Outsize Effect of U.S. Consumption on the Environment," *Scientific American*, accessed March 16, 2019, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/american-consumption-habits/>.

⁷³ Korten, *Corporations*, 30.

the freedom and sovereignty of the other—whether other communities, countries, or species, especially the most vulnerable.”⁷⁴

Corporate agribusiness used its political power to push for free-trade agreements, which had devastating consequences for Latin America. The dispossession of land, the loss of opportunities for employment and livelihood, and the destruction of natural resources are all real, felt impacts of agribusiness.⁷⁵ The passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, for example, fragmented rural and farming Mexican communities: “The United States promised economic prosperity for its southern neighbor if it would only open up its ports of entry and take shipment of cheap goodies. Soon after Mexico signed on the dotted line, it found itself drowning in a *pinche montón* of subsidized *gringo* corn that crashed their economy and put millions of peasant farmers out of work.”⁷⁶ This resulted in millions of people living in food poverty, leaving jobless Mexicans with no choice but to migrate to the United States at an unprecedented rate.

Neoliberal policies like NAFTA widened the chasm between the “developed” and “developing” countries, while the burden of ecological degradation continues to impact the health and the livelihood of the poor.⁷⁷ This is neoliberalism normalized, without thought for how these destructive policies might affect the conditions of people from other countries or their land. Though Berry has not yet explicitly written about questions of international migration, his insight of global capitalism as “inherently violent” because it “impoverishes one place in order to be extravagant in another” is particularly relevant here.⁷⁸ Corporate agribusiness wielded its political power to push for NAFTA, which “effectively produc[ed] poverty by banning Mexico from protecting indigenous small corn producers while allowing American corn subsidies for large corporate agribusiness.”⁷⁹

A NEW RHETORIC: TOWARD A CONSTRUCTIVE ECO-PUBLIC THEOLOGY

To summarize the alternative narrative offered in the previous section, Latin American immigrants left their home countries because they were driven out by the demands of corporate agribusiness, only to arrive in the United States seeking agricultural jobs from farmers who are already indebted to the demands of many of those same corporations. Thus, the system responsible for the conditions of undocumented farmworkers is reminiscent of Steinbeck’s description of the bank monster in *The Grapes of Wrath*:

The bank isn’t like a man.

Yes, but the bank is only made of men.

No, you’re wrong there—quite wrong there. The bank is something else than men. It happens that every man in a bank hates what the bank does, and yet the bank does it. The bank is something more than men, I tell you. It’s the monster. Men made it, but they can’t control it. . . .

⁷⁴ Nancy G. Wright, “Christianity and Environmental Justice,” *CrossCurrents* 61, no. 2 (June 2011): 171.

⁷⁵ Jason de León, *The Land of Open Graves* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 6.

⁷⁶ de León, 6.

⁷⁷ de León, 6.

⁷⁸ Berry, “Agrarian,” 146.

⁷⁹ Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*, 167.

The monster isn't men, but it can make men do what it wants.⁸⁰

The bank monster illustrates how the monster of neoliberalism operates. It sustains whatever unjust systems are necessary to generate profits. Individuals cannot control it but are caught up in its system. What makes the neoliberal monster particularly dangerous is its ubiquity; individuals who are caught up in its system, particularly in the United States, rarely even perceive it as a threat; neoliberalism "provides the normativity of our very existence as it tends to totalize" aspects of shared life.⁸¹ Neoliberalism "produces human subjectivities that see social relations (such as friendship, care, love) as market relations wherein persons are nothing more than material means toward the ends of another person's goals (individual financial success, social status, etc.)."⁸² The most vulnerable experience the tangible, destructive effects of neoliberalism. Farmers, for example, cannot control the monster of neoliberalism; they are simply beholden to its demands. The undocumented farmworkers they employ are therefore continually crushed by the monster's unending demand for larger profits.

Eco-public theology therefore has a responsibility to critique the monster and shift public rhetoric beyond the current partisan bifurcation. Pastors, theologians, and other religious actors who influence the public sphere must interrupt the prevailing harmful discourses about undocumented farmworkers. As an institution that professes to care for the marginalized, the poor, and the oppressed, the church has a clear responsibility to speak against these injustices for which economic systems are directly responsible.

Rhetorical practice is only the first step in building a more robust eco-public theology. Rhetorical, symbolic, and prophetic practices build upon each other; rhetorical practices give religious actors in the public sphere a new language to name injustices, symbolic practices connect this newly developed framework to Christian symbols, and prophetic practices interpret and dramatize these religious symbols for the public, denouncing injustice and preparing the way for a more just society.

This paper has focused primarily on the rhetorical practices needed in developing an eco-public theology and has devoted comparatively less time to symbolic and prophetic practices with the hope that a more robust understanding of the issue will cultivate the imagination of religious actors. In this way, they can connect the symbols of their own particular traditions with whatever prophetic practices will be most effective in their particular contexts.

Symbolic Practices

Symbolic practices draw upon, extend, and "reinterpret a religious symbol system to redirect our sociopolitical moral imaginary toward justice."⁸³ The following list illustrates how biblical symbols and Christian praxis can provide a powerful alternative to the rhetoric of the Right and the Left. This list is by no means exhaustive; pastors and theologians can employ their own theological imaginations to connect their contexts with Christian symbols.

⁸⁰ John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2014), 34–35.

⁸¹ Day, *Religious Resistance*, 9.

⁸² Day, 9.

⁸³ Carbine, "Imagining and Incarnating an Integral Ecology," 50.

- Food: Jesus frequently uses food and meals as symbols in the Gospels (e.g., Luke 9:10–17, 11:11–12, 12:20–21; Matt. 22:1–14), the most famous example of which is the Last Supper (e.g., Matt. 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:7–39). In this act, Jesus identifies his body with the food they are about to consume. Pastors and theologians may draw connections between the broken bread and the broken bodies of undocumented farmworkers picking food covered in pesticides, chemicals, and diseases.
- Incarnation: The incarnation as expressed in Jesus’s life and work can be connected to the plight of undocumented farmworkers. His birth in impoverished and vulnerable circumstances and his family’s subsequent flight to Egypt identify him with those who must leave their countries of origin in search of a safer life (Matt. 2:13–23). Jesus persistently identified with those who suffered, particularly with the disenfranchised, vulnerable, and those on the margins (e.g., Matt. 25:31–46, John 8:1–11, Luke 19:1–10, Mark 5:24–34). This is a God who suffers deeply with those who suffer.
- Land: The implicit significance of land is apparent throughout the Bible. The motif of the Promised Land presupposes an understanding of the importance of a deep connection with home and land (e.g., Exod. 3:8), a significance that is no longer apparent to many Western, modern-day readers. Additionally, many of Jesus’s parables take place within a pastoral setting and use a variety of agricultural symbols like seeds and soil, pointing towards good, sustainable agriculture as illustrative of the character of God (e.g., Mark 4:1–20, 4:26–29, Matt. 13:24–30.).
- Creation: The Psalms provide language for the expression of awe and wonder at God’s creation while also affirming the worth of human life within it (e.g., Pss. 8, 19, 104). Additionally, Jesus often pointed to creation as an example of how to structure our lives (Matt. 6:25–34). Theologian and eco-justice activist Nancy Wright asks, “Don’t we have an obligation to remember that Jesus pointed to the lilies of the field as an icon for God’s care and radical faith claim that we need not think for the morrow or amass riches? Doesn’t that criticize a profit economy and the greed that drives it?”⁸⁴
- The Cross: The cross reveals not only Jesus’s identification with the oppressed, but it also gives us eyes to see the most vulnerable, those exploited in shadow of empire. We must name sins for what they are; to do any less is to cheapen the cross.
- The Beast of Revelation: Revelation provides a scathing critique of the Roman Empire’s exploitative economic system. The mark of the beast described in Revelation 13 is necessary to participate in the global economic system; “no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark” (Rev. 13:17 NRSV). This is an exploitative economy; the merchants “weep and mourn” when no one will buy their many products, which include human beings (Rev. 18:11–13). Pastors and theologians may connect the beast of Revelation with the monster of neoliberalism, a modern economic system that similarly exploits human beings and creation for the benefit of empire.

⁸⁴ Wright, “Christianity and Environmental Justice,” 183.

Prophetic Practices

Prophetic practices both denounce injustice and announce alternative ways of being in the world.⁸⁵ This step requires creativity and imagination in translating rhetorical and symbolic practices in the public sphere. It must point toward God's love for the world rooted in justice for the oppressed—both the land and people. Utilizing Christian symbols from both scripture and tradition, prophetic practices “mediate the present and future reality or point the way toward a more just common life by dramatizing injustice and attempting to partly actualize an alternative possibility to that injustice through different forms of collective action.”⁸⁶

Depending upon the context of the religious actor, a prophetic practice of an eco-public theology can take various forms. It can include joining in the work of faith-based community organizing around farmworker rights; leading an educational series on the history of various produce and learning about the history and justice issues related to each; hosting potlucks where all of the dishes incorporate food that was grown within a 10-, 20-, 50-, or 100-mile radius; learning how to compost, both individually and corporately (i.e., as an institutional body, like the church); leading a Bible study about food, economic systems, or immigration; beginning a community garden; offering cooking classes for ideas about what to do with whole, fresh produce; encouraging people to decrease their reliance upon the products of agribusiness; connecting with local farms and shopping at farmers' markets; building relationships with local farmers; offering and taking Spanish classes; or organizing religious institutions around immigration justice. These examples are obviously not comprehensive. They are intended to spur the imagination of religious actors like pastors and theologians working within their particular contexts.

CONCLUSION

A colonizing perspective is so ingrained in the public consciousness of the United States that it remains unchallenged in major national discourses. As this paper has demonstrated, this is especially true when considering the conditions of undocumented farmworkers. An eco-public theology provides the tools to critically deconstruct the root causes of the systemic abuses they experience as well as construct an alternative way forward built upon justice and love.

US consumers have long been complicit in taking advantage of the labor of undocumented immigrants. As an institution that professes to care for the poor and the whole of creation, the church must stir us to confront the ways in which the labor of undocumented immigrants feeds our addiction to convenience. We must feel afflicted when we shop at grocery stores mindlessly, without thought for where the affordable fruits and vegetables we consume come from. But we must also be stirred to move beyond confession into action; an eco-public theology must inspire us to enact alternative ways of being in the world that honor both farmworkers and the whole of creation.

⁸⁵ Carbine, “Imagining and Incarnating an Integral Ecology,” 62.

⁸⁶ Carbine, 50.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Berry, Wendell. "The Agrarian Standard." In *Citizenship Papers*, 143–52. Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2003.
- . "Feminism, the Body, and the Machine." In *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*, edited by Norman Wirzba, 65–80. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2002.
- . *The Unsettling of America*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977.
- Boff, Leonardo. *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. "The Employment Situation—November 2018," U.S. Department of Labor, November 2018. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empst_12072018.pdf.
- Carbine, Rosemary P. "Imagining and Incarnating an Integral Ecology: A Critical Ecofeminist Public Theology." In *Planetary Solidarity: Global Women's Voices on Christian Doctrine and Climate Justice*, edited by Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Hilda P. Koster, 47–66. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2017.
- Carroll, Rory. "Fruits of Labor: Sunny California is No Paradise for Farm Workers," *Guardian*, August 15, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/aug/15/california-farms-pick-your-own-fruit-vegetables-working-conditions-jobs>.
- Clemens, Michael A. "International Harvest: A Case Study of How Foreign Workers Help American Farms Grow Crops—and the Economy." The Partnership for a New American Economy and The Center for Global Development, May 2013. <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/sites/all/themes/pnae/nc-agr-report-05-2013.pdf>.
- Concha, Joe. "AP Apologizes for Tweet Calling Migrant Caravan 'a Ragtag Army of the Poor,'" *Hill*, October 22, 2018. <https://thehill.com/homenews/media/412553-ap-apologizes-for-tweet-calling-migrant-caravan-a-ragtag-army-of-the-poor>.
- "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees." UNHCR, December 2010. <https://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10>.
- Day, Keri. *Religious Resistance to Neoliberalism: Womanist and Black Feminist Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- de León, Jason. *The Land of Open Graves*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2015.
- Dudley, Mary Jo. "Why Care about Undocumented Immigrants? For One Thing, They've Become Vital to Key Sectors of the US Economy." *Conversation*, June 25, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/why-care-about-undocumented-immigrants-for-one-thing-theyve-become-vital-to-key-sectors-of-the-us-economy-98790>.
- Elwell, Frank. "The Industrialization of Agriculture," in *Industrializing America: Understanding Contemporary Society Through Classical Sociological Analysis*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999, <http://faculty.rsu.edu/users/f/felwell/www/Theorists/Essays/Berry1.html>.
- Frank, Michael. "Can America's Farms Survive the Threat of Deportations?" *Atlantic*, June 6, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/06/can-americas-farms-survive-the-threat-of-deportations/529008/>.
- Goodman, Carly. "How to Talk about the Migrant Caravan," *American Friends Service Committee*, October 24, 2018. <https://www.afsc.org/blogs/media-uncovered/how-to-talk-about-migrant-caravan>.

8 U.S.C. § 1325 (2017).

Hagstrom, Jerry. "Democrats Introduce Bill to Shield Farmworkers from Deportation." *Progressive Farmer*, January 18, 2019. <https://www.dtnpf.com/agriculture/web/ag/perspectives/blogs/ag-policy-blog/blog-post/2019/01/18/democrats-introduce-bill-shield>.

Haspel, Tamar. "Illegal Immigrants Help Fuel U.S. Farms. Does Affordable Produce Depend on Them?" *Washington Post*, March 17, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/food/in-an-immigration-crackdown-who-will-pick-our-produce/2017/03/17/cc1c6df4-0a5d-11e7-93dc-00f9bdd74ed1_story.html.

Hernandez, Trish and Susan Gabbard. *Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2015-2016: A Demographic and Employment Profile of United States Farmworkers*. Prepared by JBS International Inc. for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Policy Development and Research, January 2018. https://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/ETAOP_2019-01_NAWS_Research_Report_13.pdf.

Holmes, Seth M. *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.

Jordan, Miriam. "A New Surge at the Border is Forcing Migrant Families Into Motel Rooms." *New York Times*, October 18, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/18/us/migrant-families-arizona-ice-motels.html>.

Kelkar, Kamala. "When Labor Laws Left Farm Workers Behind—and Vulnerable to Abuse," *PBS NewsHour*, September 18, 2016, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/labor-laws-left-farm-workers-behind-vulnerable-abuse>.

Korten, David C. *When Corporations Rule the World*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1995.

Lind, Dara. "Half the people caught by Border Patrol are now children or families," *Vox*, October 23, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/10/23/18014998/families-border-asylum-caravan>.

López, Gustavo, Kristen Bialik, and Jynnah Radford. "Key Findings about U.S. Immigrants." Pew Research Center, November 30, 2018. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/11/30/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/>.

Lowry, Edith E. *They Starve That We May Eat: Migrants of the Crops*. New York: Council of Women for Home Missions and Missionary Education Movement, 1938.

Lusk, Jayson. "Why Industrial Farms Are Good for the Environment." *New York Times*, September 23, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/25/opinion/sunday/why-industrial-farms-are-good-for-the-environment.html>.

Massey, Douglas. "Today's US-Mexico 'Border Crisis' in 6 Charts." *Conversation*, June 27, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/todays-us-mexico-border-crisis-in-6-charts-98922>.

Morrison, Spencer P. "No, America's Farmers Don't Depend on Illegal Immigration." Center for American Greatness, January 13, 2018. <https://amgreatness.com/2018/01/13/no-americas-farmers-dont-depend-illegal-immigration/>.

National Coordination Office for Space-Based Positioning, Navigation, and Timing. "Agriculture," *GPS.gov*. Last modified March 6, 2018. <https://www.gps.gov/applications/agriculture/>.

- Nowrasteh, Alex. "Criminal Immigrants in Texas: Illegal Immigrant Conviction and Arrest Rates for Homicide, Sex Crimes, Larceny, and Other Crimes." Cato Institute, February 26, 2018. <https://www.cato.org/publications/immigration-research-policy-brief/criminal-immigrants-texas-illegal-immigrant>.
- Osborn, Ronald. "Seyla Benhabib, Wendell Berry and the Question of Migrant and Refugee Rights," *Humanitas* 23, no. 1 (2010): 118–38.
- Ramos, Annie Rose and Gabe Gutierrez. "First Wave of Migrants Arrive in Tijuana, Mexico, Filling Shelters." NBC News, November 17, 2018. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/first-wave-migrants-arrive-tijuana-mexico-filling-shelters-n937586>.
- Republican National Committee, "Republican Platform: Government Reform," 2019. <https://gop.com/platform/reforming-government/>.
- Ricketts, Cliff and Omri Rawlins. *Introduction to Agribusiness*. Albany, NY: Delmar, 1999.
- Scheer, Roddy and Doug Moss, "Use It and Lose It: The Outsize Effect of U.S. Consumption on the Environment," *Scientific American*. Accessed March 16, 2019. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/american-consumption-habits/>.
- Steger, Manfred B. *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2014.
- Trump, Donald J. (@realDonaldTrump). "The Democrats do not want us to detain, or send back, criminal aliens! This is a brand new demand. Crazy!" Twitter, February 11, 2019, 5:18 a.m. <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1094948909657542656>.
- . "Many Gang Members and some very bad people are mixed into the Caravan heading to our Southern Border," Twitter, October 29, 2018, 7:41 a.m. <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1056919064906469376>.
- . "Tremendous numbers of people are coming up through Mexico in the hopes of flooding our Southern Border. We have sent additional military," Twitter, February 5, 2019, 6:10 a.m. <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1092787440560078849>.
- "The US increases its dependence on imported fruits and vegetables." *Fresh Plaza*, January 17, 2018. <https://www.freshplaza.com/article/2187979/the-us-increases-its-dependence-on-imported-fruits-and-vegetables/>.
- The White House (@WhiteHouse). "This afternoon, President Trump hosted a roundtable discussion with State, local, and community leaders, who spoke on how the crisis at the border," Twitter, January 11, 2019, 1:13 p.m. <https://twitter.com/WhiteHouse/status/1083834391984513024>.
- United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. "Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States: A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Communities with Hazardous Waste Sites." Commission for Racial Justice. United Church of Christ, 1987. <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML1310/ML13109A339.pdf>.
- Wright, Nancy G. "Christianity and Environmental Justice." *CrossCurrents* 61, no. 2 (June 2011): 161–90.

Book Reviews

Adrian Thatcher. *Redeeming Gender*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, 225 pp. \$35.95.

In *Redeeming Gender*, Adrian Thatcher considers the theological problems of androcentrism and patriarchy through the history of one-sex and two-sex theories. He relies on Thomas Laqueur's hypothesis in *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*—until the eighteenth century, humans were considered to be one-sex. Men were the default, more perfect rendering of that sex, while women were defective men. The two-sex theory, which may claim either the inequality or equality of two essentially different sexes, is an innovation of the modern period. In contrast, Thatcher seeks a christological and Trinitarian view of gender that resists the gender binary, accounts for human difference, and is egalitarian (141).

Thatcher first describes the workings of one-sex theory and its relevance to early Christian thought. Troublesome New Testament writings, such as Paul's christological endorsement of the male/female hierarchy (1 Cor. 11:3) and his notion that women do not reflect the image of God in the same manner as men (1 Cor. 11:7), assumed the one-sex theory with its continuum of perfection (27–28). Various biological narratives were crafted to support this, and Aristotle incorporated them into his own conception of maleness and femaleness as principles rather than sexes. Biology, specifically the purported male role in conception, correlated with maleness's natural superiority and femaleness's natural inferiority (13–23). Such was Paul's intellectual milieu, and Thatcher briskly illustrates the endurance of the one-sex theory through Tertullian, Aquinas, Kant, and Hegel, noting that such endurance demonstrates the disruptive innovation of the modern period's two-sex theory (41–57).

Thatcher notes that in the history of one- and two-sex theories, Christian churches have not aligned themselves with one or the other, instead appealing to both in what he dubs the “modern mix” (84–112). This circumstance is problematic. To illustrate, Thatcher makes an example of Catholicism's male-only priesthood. The Vatican affirms, on the one hand, the Nicene and Chalcedonian definitions of Christ's “man”-hood as referent to his *humanity*. “Man” in the creeds is inclusive—neither the Greek nor the Latin mentions Christ's sex. Yet this inclusive conception of Christ's human nature is abandoned when it comes to the ordination of women. The Vatican asserts that women must be barred from the priesthood because Christ's Incarnation took place “according to the male sex.” The weight given to Christ's sex in this instance is not permitted by a creedal Christology, Thatcher claims. This move may prove useful to the orthodox Christian who seeks fresh and convincing theological ground for a gender inclusive priesthood.

Beyond the modern mix, Thatcher notes the strengths and deficiencies of the one- and two-sex theories separately. The one-sex theory has never existed without a scale of

perfection privileging men to go with it, but its value does lie in its ability to affirm a single human nature against separate male and female natures (138)—the crux of Thatcher’s own proposal. Thatcher does not find the iteration of the two-sex theory, which proclaims two unequal sexes, worthy of discussion, but the egalitarian two-sex theory has serviced feminism successfully (especially in Western liberal Christianity). However, it still provides refuge for the increasingly problematic sex binary, oppositional sexism, intersex erasure, and heteronormativity (110–12, 139–40). Theology “can do better” (139).

Thatcher’s attempt to do better is the most exciting aspect of *Redeeming Gender*. In a creative application of orthodoxy, Thatcher makes three claims. The first is that the opening chapter of Genesis teaches the creation of a single humankind—not malekind and femalekind. The image of God is located in humankind, not reflected through complementary combinations of men and women. Thatcher also notes that there is no essence to women and men—except in their human nature. Orthodox Christology informs us that, following sin and God’s response to it in Christ, it is Christ who is the image of God. Thus, and secondly, Christ is the image and the essence of humankind (178–79). Through Christology, Thatcher moves us beyond theologically endorsed gender essentialism and its resultant hierarchies. Yet, those readers who claim any politicized identity may still be suspicious—is this proposal a form of theological identity erasure, a violence so often perpetrated against those of subjugated identity groups? To this question, Thatcher responds in the negative. Difference remains in Christ’s renewed humanity, and it becomes “a means of communion” (178). Here Thatcher illustrates how the life of the Trinity illuminates for humankind the redeemed dynamic of identity and difference. The redeemed life offered by the gospel is “life in communion, as God’s life is in communion” (183). Thatcher finds the meaning of “communion” in the Athanasian Creed. Its insistence that the Persons are one, yet that each have a “strong identity” means that each Person’s individuality “is not actualized at the expense of the others” (182), nor must difference be a problem to be dealt with by erasure or domination, because each Person is “in the one Life that pours itself out in self-giving Love” (186). This is the communion Christians are drawn into.

Redeeming Gender is a creative, orthodox, and sustainable theology of gender. Readers may find it strange that transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people enjoy only a limited presence in the work. However, this is due to Thatcher’s aim to deconstruct the problem behind our gender troubles—the gender essentialism which underpins the two-sex theory. In doing so, Thatcher has delivered on his promise to produce a theological approach to gender as a single continuum which adequately resists oppressive gender hierarchies while valuing identity and difference.

MICAH CRONIN

MDiv Middler

Princeton Theological Seminary

Benjamin T. Conner. *Disabling Mission, Enabling Witness: Exploring Missiology Through the Lens of Disability Studies*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018, 160 pp. \$24.00.

Benjamin T. Conner, Professor of Practical Theology at Western Theological Seminary, does not have a disability himself (5). Nevertheless, Conner is well equipped by his previous works (*Amplifying Our Witness*, 2012; *Practicing Witness*, 2011) to offer this intriguing title intended to “stimulate a conversation between disability studies and missiology around a vision of the entire body of Christ sharing in the witness of the church” (26).

The book consists of two parts. Part one serves as an accessible introduction to disability studies and missiology with an eye toward how they might inform each other. Chapter 1 offers an overview of disability studies in order to “complexify the notions of disability and personhood” (26). Chapter 1 also seeks to demonstrate why missiology must engage disability studies. Conner reveals how issues such as employment, incarceration, abuse, poverty, and homelessness are amplified by disability.

Chapter 2, likewise, serves to introduce missiology. Conner points to three concepts from contemporary missiology that he believes “can support disability advocates with the task of developing a contextualized disability theology and for reimagining the church’s witness” (39). Those concepts are: 1) *Missio Dei*; 2) Indigenous appropriation and contextualization; and 3) Christian witness.

Part two seeks to “[dis]able our mission history, theology of witness, and theological education by considering gifts and possibilities people with disabilities bring to our practice of witness, evangelism, and congregational life” (61). Conner briefly introduces Robert Schreiter’s categories of the “dynamics of interaction between power and difference across cultures” (61). Conner uses these dynamics (homogenizing, colonizing, demonizing, romanticizing, and pluralizing) to show how Christians have engaged disability in “a kind of crosscultural interaction where power dynamics are at play to the disadvantage of people with disabilities” (62). The following chapters use the missiological concepts introduced in part one to propose another way forward.

Chapter 3 looks at deafness and Deaf culture. Conner shows how the Deaf community complexifies notions of disability since “many Deaf persons don’t understand themselves to be disabled” (67). Instead of looking at deafness as a loss, Conner offers suggestions of “Deaf gains” that are brought to light through the missiological concepts. A particular highlight is how the translation of the Bible into native African languages, allowing for the creation of an “African Christian Theology,” parallels with sign language performing the same function for Deaf persons (100).

Chapter 4 focuses on intellectual disabilities (ID). Conner approaches ID from the perspective of theological anthropology and seeks to [dis]able theological anthropology. After using stories and perspectives of people with disabilities to complexify concepts of the image of God, Conner concludes, “Divine agency not human agency is at the center of our capacity to participate in the image of God to bear witness” (122). Having clarified his understanding of the image of God as witnessing, Conner turns to suggest ways in

which people with ID can participate in witness. He approaches this through the lens of Orthodox iconography and terms the idea “iconic witness” (122).

Finally, chapter 5 considers how we might [dis]able theological education. Conner argues that seminaries have perpetuated an ableist paradigm and “normate bias” (145). Conner suggests that we might “enable” a fuller witness by including those with disabilities in theological education, through presence, intention, and dimension.

Before giving my evaluation of the book, I should state that I myself am disabled, which has undoubtedly influenced my reading of the book. As for the book’s strengths, part one serves as a good introduction to the two fields of missiology and disability studies, and Conner does an excellent job of demonstrating how these two fields could benefit each other. Conner’s singling out of the three missiological concepts is especially interesting (36–53). As for Conner’s proposals, the best part of the book is the use of the missiological concepts to bring to light “Deaf gains” in chapter 3 (93–101). This section captures most fully what the title of the book claims to do.

However, Conner’s “tentative” suggestion in chapter 4 seems less developed (123). I am not sure Conner fully clarifies how his “iconic witness” is different from Lesslie Newbigin’s approach to people with disabilities, which he critiqued and is seeking to improve upon (55–60). “Iconic witness” as a way of saying that people with ID participate in evocative witness that “reminds” congregations of something does not seem to differ from Newbigin (e.g., 141). While Conner wants to claim that “people with disabilities have more to add to the conversation . . . than what they evoke in others” (121), he does not list these “other gifts” (141). Thus, more development on how “iconic witness” differs from Newbigin’s approach, besides different understandings of disability, is needed.

Another major problem is prominent in chapter 5. Namely, Conner seems to prize non-rational ways of connecting with God to the detriment of the rational. Conner critiques seminaries for primarily viewing disabilities in terms of accommodations (148), and he argues for a stronger presence of people with disabilities in theological education, and for disability concerns in the curriculum. Yet, while everyone can undoubtedly learn from those with disabilities, is it right to disrupt a space for those with intellectual gifts on the basis of a call for diversity? To fully understand Conner’s suggestions, a discussion of the *telos* of theological education must be had first.

Finally, I am skeptical of Conner’s wish to recast disability “in terms of diversity and multicultural expression,” and to “normalize” disability (164). While disability might be a “frequent” human experience, this should not lead us to think that it is normal. If we know of a fuller way of life, does not God wish that life for all God’s children?

Apart from the insights in chapter 3, Conner’s suggestions in chapters 4–5 are lackluster and underdeveloped. Yet, overall the book accomplishes its goal of “stimulating a conversation” between disability studies and missiology and offers some pertinent insights that should springboard many interdisciplinary discussions.

WAYNE HANCOCK

MDiv Senior

Princeton Theological Seminary

Steven Tuell. *Reading Nahum-Malachi: A Literary and Theological Commentary*. Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2016, 304 pp. \$33.00.

In this commentary on the final six prophetic books (Nahum–Malachi) from the collection often referred to as the “Minor Prophets,” Steven Tuell seeks to engage these books in a way that honors their collective identity. He observes that many ancient readers saw a unity in these books, and these books bear evidence of redactional links tying them together (2). Tuell strives to combine literary and theological scholarship in a manner that is accessible to the lay reader. Each book is treated by itself, but Tuell also discusses each book’s relationship to the others in the larger collection. Tuell begins his treatment of each book by discussing theological questions raised by the book and then considers issues of authorship, date, and setting, before moving into a closer reading of the text.

Tuell moves through each book in its canonical order, and he seeks to provide a reading that is informed by the work of contemporary, critical scholars while also being sensitive to the needs of the Christian church. Namely, Tuell addresses challenging issues raised by each prophet, but he also addresses issues pertinent in Christian circles today. For example, he observes that the “day of wrath” is one challenging theme for modern readers of Zephaniah, but that wrath can have a positive outcome. He suggests that the day of wrath is ancient Israel’s way of interpreting its suffering in a way that functions as a “potent strategy for survival” (110). He then moves to contemporary circumstances and suggests that suffering in our lives “may drive us to realize our own inadequacy and vulnerability, and therefore lead us to confession, new life, and deepened faith” (110).

Tuell’s commitment to reading these books as part of a unified collection is perhaps best exemplified in his introduction to Nahum. He observes that Nahum does not appear in the Common Lectionary, because it “gloats over the collapse of Assyria’s capital Nineveh. . . . its siege becomes a mugging and its fall a rape” (11). However, Tuell notes that the redactors of the Twelve have joined Nahum and Habakkuk by starting Nahum with a psalm, and ending Habakkuk with another psalm. Thus, the angry God who punishes Assyria also “addresses Judah’s own acts of injustice and oppression” (12). For Tuell, pairing these two together inside the context of the Twelve “prevents the careful and caring reader from an uncritical embrace of Nahum’s simplistic, black and white ideology” (12).

As a whole, the scope of this book is ambitious; each of these six books has its own peculiarities, and Tuell’s engagement shows the breadth of his scholarly interests. This breadth of scholarly interests, however, often means that the focus is not as sharp as it could be. This commentary series seeks to offer a literary and theological reading of biblical texts, and that endeavor often diffuses the focus; Tuell tends to get sidetracked in his efforts to provide a commentary on the texts that is both literary and theological. For example, his introduction to Zechariah notes, “By twenty-first-century Western standards, one could think that Zechariah was insane” (161). This is in reference to the eight visions that form the content of Zechariah’s prophetic material. In the paragraphs following this statement, he makes observations that contemporary psychologists have shown that hearing voices is not necessarily indicative of insanity, and he ultimately

wonders if our “society’s standards of mental illness apply to Zechariah or to his fellow prophets” (162). Even though scholars generally engage prophetic material in its own right—without questioning if the person was sane—Tuell’s devotion of several pages to this discussion makes the question a sort of “damnation by unnecessary defense” to Zechariah.

This lack of focus is also evident in the layout of the book. For example, in one section, Tuell moves from quoting C. S. Lewis and megachurch pastor Rob Bell to a discussion around the Canaanite god Ba’al. His quick shifts between engagement of pop culture, technical scholarship, and theological concerns are a bit jarring for the reader. All of these observations are joined under sparse headings, making it difficult to study shorter passages of biblical text. Though it is evident that Tuell has worked to engage major scholars in his preparation of this commentary, his own voice and scholarly work fail to come off the page in a clear way.

This book offers a valuable synthesis of scholarship, but the specialist will likely find Tuell’s commentary to be too general. And, though Tuell provides decidedly theological conclusions to his study of these texts, this commentary’s lack of focus makes it a less-than-ideal tool for use in preparation of papers or sermons.

JONATHAN MELLISON

MDiv Middler

Princeton Theological Seminary

James H. Cone. *Said I Wasn’t Gonna Tell Nobody*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018, 176 pp. \$28.00.

Few public intellectuals have influenced America’s theological conversation on race more than James H. Cone, the late Bill and Judith Moyers Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary. His influential books on the black experience and its theological implications have culminated in his memoir *Said I Wasn’t Gonna Tell Nobody*, a look into his career as a professor and the struggles he overcame to articulate a new theological perspective within academia. In the book, Cone claims white, European theologians have dominated the study of faith, and he deems it necessary to unpack both his experience and American history to justify the need for voices in black theology.

Cone begins his memoir with an overview of the early influences in his theological career. He details joining an all-white faculty in the midst of the civil rights movement, showing how the groups fighting for social justice and the other professors’ lack of empathy unraveled his previous understanding of God’s relationship with humanity. He cites the Detroit rebellion as one such life-changing event. He says, “The Detroit rebellion deeply troubled me. . . . I could no longer write the same way, following the lead of Europeans and white Americans. I had to find a *new* way of talking about God that was accountable to black people and their fight for justice” (2).

The nonviolent protests led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Black Power movement headed by Malcolm X inspired Cone in his theological writings. He notes how they disagreed on their approaches to black liberation. For example, Cone claims King “was greatly disturbed about unrest in the cities and the rhetoric of Black Power, which reminded him of the violent language of Malcolm X” (7). Cone believed the two movements could be reconciled, explaining how he “never thought of Black power in terms of violence and hate; rather, it expressed the necessity of black people asserting their dignity in the face of 350 years of white supremacy” (7–8).

Cone goes on to provide ample evidence of the hypocrisy of American and European theologians in the midst of racial inequality. These men interpreted and preached the gospel “in a way that ignores society’s systematic denial of a people’s humanity” (36). He decries the irony of a church that preaches the message of Christ’s love while simultaneously infringing on the rights of black people.

Cone cites theologian Karl Barth as an example of the harm abstract theologizing can have on black communities. Instead of adopting Barth’s “infinite qualitative distinction between God and the human being” (11), Cone uses the suffering of Jesus as an example of God’s identification with the poor and powerless (10). He then analyzes Luke’s gospel declaration of Isaiah 61:1, which speaks of liberation for the poor and oppressed. These examples are used to show how white, European theology had become abstracted from the black community.

In addition to Barth, Cone examines theologians Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich. Both men taught at Union, and Cone describes them as white theologians who neglected to address black suffering. He says, “Niebuhr had expressed no moral outrage against lynching or segregation, even though he lived during that era” (74). Cone then asked Professor James Luther Adams, “‘Why didn’t Tillich talk about racism in the United States the way he opposed Nazism in Germany?’ Adams said Tillich was asked a similar question and replied that ‘his American audience would reject him’” (74).

This lack of concern over white supremacy in American churches leads to Cone’s rejection of these figures’ theologies as foundational. He argues for a new way of doing theology “from the bottom and not the top,” addressing the plight of black people (10).

Cone goes on to describe the Black Christ, a liberating figure representing Black Power in the gospel. Christ is black, he claims, because “to be black means that your heart, your soul, your mind, and your body are where the dispossessed are” (47). According to Cone, this symbolic identification with the oppressed lies at the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If the black liberation movement represented Christ’s message, Cone argues, it necessarily means “the white church is the Antichrist” (51). His claim doesn’t refer to individual people; it represents the destructive nature of white supremacy in American churches. He goes on to say “White supremacy . . . is the Antichrist in America because it has killed and crippled tens of millions of black bodies and minds in the modern world. . . . It is found in every aspect of American life, especially churches, seminaries, and theology” (53–54).

Cone continues to make his point by drawing from his father's experience of oppression and discrimination. He tells the story of Charlie Cone standing up to an all-white school board despite the ever-present threat of lynching from white people. Charlie then filed a lawsuit against the separate but equal ruling in schools, which in reality left black schools with far fewer resources than white schools (57).

Without missing a beat, Cone notes potential criticisms of his views. He specifically highlights scholar Charles H. Long, who saw theology as an unfit tool for the discussion of black liberation, claiming theology was "created by Europeans to dominate and denigrate non-Western peoples" (85). In addition, he cites criticisms from his former student Delores Williams, a womanist theologian who believed black theology failed to speak to women of color, citing the same biblical stories of liberation used in black theology. These included the bondage of Hagar and the subjugation of the Canaanite inhabitants following the Exodus, illustrating how liberation could be a "deeply problematic theme, with many ethical and religious contradictions" (120). Cone admits he has no adequate response to these perplexing questions and welcomes them as an opportunity to expand his understanding. He says, "Perplexity keeps me from being too sure of any religious claim I make. Faith needs doubt" (121).

Overall, Cone's book offers an engaging look at his life using his experiences, history, and logical argumentation to make a compelling case for the necessity of black theology. He is able to unpack deep theological topics by employing the personal language of a close friend telling stories of their life. The memoir serves as a message of hope to people facing issues of racism and discrimination in our world today.

COREY PATTERSON
BA in Journalism
University of Georgia

Brad Embry, Ronald Herms and Archie T. Wright. *Early Jewish Literature: An Anthology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018. Vol. 1, 728 pp.; Vol. 2, 756 pp. \$125.00.

Early Jewish Literature: An Anthology (EJL) provides a fresh introduction to literature from the Second Temple period by presenting an in-volume access to a wide range of primary material used by Jewish groups in the first centuries BCE and CE. Because of the importance of this literature to some of the early Christian communities, highlighted points of contacts related to New Testament texts are discussed in introductory sections.

The two-volume work is arranged by literary genre based on form and theme. A description of the specific characteristics of each genre is given at the beginning of each chapter. Volume 1 includes: (1) Scriptural Texts and Traditions—such as the Book of Daniel, additions to Daniel, the Great Isaiah Scroll, and Psalms at Qumran; (2) Interpretive History—selected books of Maccabees and Josephus; (3) Romanticized Narrative, such as Tobit, Joseph and Aseneth, and Life of Adam and Eve; (4) Biblical Interpretation and Rewritten Scripture—Jubilees and representative Qumran scrolls.

Volume 2 includes: (5) Wisdom Literature and Legal Texts, such as Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon, Rule of the Community, Damascus document, and other Qumran texts; (6) Apocalyptic Literature—First Enoch, Sibylline Oracles (Books 3–5), The War Scroll, Messianic Texts from Qumran, Fourth Ezra, and Second Baruch; (7) Psalms, Hymns, and Prayers, such as Psalms of Solomon, Odes of Solomon, and other select Qumran texts; and (8) Testamentary Literature—Testament of Levi, Testament of Abraham, Testament of Moses, and the Aramaic Levi document.

Each unit begins with a relevant introduction to the documents by the author, followed by a translation of representative texts (most often translated by the author, and, if not, a recent published translation is used). This includes a narrative description of the entire document, relevant background information—author, provenance, date, occasion, sources, and transmission history—general overview of the theology of the book, and bibliography for further reading. Each of the background topics are discussed in approximately a page or less, presented in a readable format with specificity that would keep the interest of graduate and undergraduate students. Each volume also contains a glossary of key terms.

EJL also incorporates relevant yet uncomplicated charts, synoptic comparisons, structural outlines, and useful lists to facilitate in educating the reader. For example, in the Apocalyptic Literature chapter, the content from the Q285 fragment is placed alongside Isaiah 10:33–11:5, demonstrating the shared theme of the “shoot” coming out of Jesse (2:384). In the discussion on 4 Ezra, apocalyptic images of world powers (Babylon/Rome; 2:390) are compared from Daniel 7, 4 Ezra 11–12, and Revelation 13 and 17–18. And a key nomenclature chart for Ezra is given (2:393).

The drawbacks for *EJL* are few and to be expected from a two-volume anthology. The selection of primary texts requires limitation, and this is true for the length of background descriptions and theological discussions for the respective documents. By choosing some, other texts and information are left out—for example, only Testament of Levi, Testament of Abraham, and Testament of Moses are included in the Testamentary Literature unit (2:597–669); 1 Enoch is presented in the Apocalyptic Literature section, but not 2 or 3 Enoch; and the discussion of the theological significance for the Great Isaiah Scroll is two concise paragraphs (1:109). But this is the nature of a quality didactic anthology meant for scholars and students, and in order to offer a valuable balance of academic expertise, student readability, and opportunity for insights, purposed selections of primary documents from the Second Temple period must be made.

Thus Embry, Herms, and Wright fulfill expectations. First, *EJL* successfully brings together a wide range of literature from the Second Temple period with the consultation of specialized scholars in the field. Second, relevant primary texts and fragments from the same period that have been typically isolated from each other because of their historical location, provenance, and purposes (e.g., 1 Maccabees and Josephus, 1 Enoch and Sibylline Oracles, Dead Sea Scroll documents and Wisdom literature) are arranged according to shared characteristics, themes, and related contexts. As a result of this process of reading primary sources according to genre, *EJL* provides an important

platform for continued study in early Judaism, as well as the New Testament (and later rabbinic and patristic periods), engendering exploratory interest and valuable insight.

DAVID WALLACE
Assistant Professor of New Testament
Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA

Call for Papers

IDENTITY, LAND, AND PLACE: INTERSECTIONS OF THEOLOGICAL EMBODIMENT

When separated from believers' lived practices and experiences, theology tends toward dissolution into lofty conversations between elite individuals. Theology can and should do better. The church is full of wonderfully ordinary people whose everyday lives are informed by their personal faith. Theological endeavors press beyond the boundaries of the academy and join personal beliefs and faith practices to become lived experience. Theology is manifested through individual lives, in individual places, at individual times and moments. There are several important moments to commemorate this coming year. The year 2020 marks twenty-five years since the American Disabilities Act was passed; the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified one hundred years ago, eliminating a person's sex as a qualification for voting; and today the 116th Congress has a record 102 women serving on the country's behalf. With these historic events in mind, how might our positionality and intersectionality transform our theology? How can theology transform our everyday lives? In what ways may we use theology as a means for inclusion? How does sacred Scripture narrate the stories of people and the places they occupy? How have religious communities throughout history offered spaces that acknowledge, ignore, or diminish people's identities? How has the church historically wrestled with questions of situatedness or displacement? What are the practices the church has or must take on in order to recognize the people who fill its pews?

We invite graduate students and early-career scholars to submit papers considering these and related questions to the Spring 2020 issue of the *Princeton Theological Review*. We welcome submissions from diverse disciplinary perspectives: biblical studies, church history, theology, ethics, social science, philosophy, etc.

Paper submissions should be between 4500 and 5000 words and in an editable file type (doc or docx). All papers must be formatted according to *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17th edition) and include a full bibliography in addition to footnotes. Where CMOS does not offer specific guidance, please consult the Society of Biblical Literature's *SBL Handbook of Style* (2nd edition). Papers should engage with recent research and scholarship. There are no restrictions on research methodology. Submissions must be original work, must not have been previously published, and will undergo double-blind peer review.

Submissions should be made through the PTR website at <http://ptr.ptsem.edu/call-for-papers>.

If you have any questions, please contact the editorial team at ptr@ptsem.edu.

Submissions are due **October 15, 2019**.

About the *Princeton Theological Review*

The *Princeton Theological Review* is a student-run academic journal that serves both the Princeton Theological Seminary student body and the theological community at large. It promotes a free and open exchange of ideas in order to challenge, inform, and equip its audience to become more effective and faithful witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are committed to engaging theological issues in ways that are grounded in scripture, centered on Jesus Christ, formed by the work of the Holy Spirit, and mindful of the historic and contemporary stances of the church. Submissions must be original work, must not have been previously published, and will undergo double-blind peer review.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW ONLINE

We are happy to announce that in addition to the content in the print copies of this journal, we feature exclusive content on our website: <http://ptr.ptsem.edu>. Please refer to our website for our current issue, past issues, contact info, our latest call for papers, and submission guidelines.

CONTACTING THE EDITORS

Your responses to the materials published in the *Princeton Theological Review* are a critical part of the journal's success. We welcome and appreciate your ideas. Please send all correspondence to ptr@ptsem.edu or *Princeton Theological Review*, PO Box 821, Princeton, NJ 08542.

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES

We are not currently accepting subscriptions, but if you or your institution would like a hard copy of our journal, please contact us at ptr@ptsem.edu. All of our articles and book reviews are also available online at ptr.ptsem.edu. For more information about this or past journal issues please visit ptr.ptsem.edu or contact the editorial board via ptr@ptsem.edu.

REPRINTING FROM THE *PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW*

If you want to photocopy material from the *Princeton Theological Review*, please follow these guidelines: For personal use or use in congregations or classrooms, we grant permission for fifty copies to be made, provided the copies are distributed at no charge and you include the following information: "Copyright (year) (author). Reprinted from the *Princeton Theological Review*. Print Edition."

The Princeton Theological Review is not an official publication of Princeton Theological Seminary, and the opinions expressed in the Princeton Theological Review are not necessarily those of the editors or of Princeton Theological Seminary.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW
PO BOX 821
PRINCETON, NJ 08542

Cover Art: Carmelle Beaugelin, Our Lady of Peace and Justice, 2019, acrylic on canvas with gilding flakes, 30.5 x 40.6 cm. Used by permission.

Our Lady of Peace and Justice is the first of a body of work entitled *The Seven Madonnas*. Created over the seven weeks of Lent and Holy Week, this collection depicts seven images of Mary's journey of sorrow, reflection, and agency as her son, the Christ, faces the fateful events that lead up to Good Friday and Easter. *Our Lady of Peace and Justice* holds a balancing scale in one hand, mimicking the triumphant stance of depictions of Lady Justice, and an olive branch as a symbol of peace in her other hand. She plays on the subtle yet necessary aspects of the Lenten story; the centrality of female agency in male-dominated narratives, the implications of religious narratives in the public sphere, and the political conversation that finds its catalyst at the root of a mother's sorrow over the empire's execution of her son. As we look to the story of Lent to echo the truth of God's work in the public sphere today, it is becoming increasingly necessary to look to the contemporary "Madonnas" of our time: women like Collette Flanagan and Lucy McBath, whose sons' deaths at the hands of police have uncovered the church's public voice, or silence, in regard to the significance of humanity, and more specifically, black lives.

