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Introduction

We, the editors, are proud to offer the first issue of the seventh volume of *CTJ* in service of University and Church, especially our own Concordia University System and Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The journal continues to receives generous financial support from the Bartling Endowment through Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor (CUWAA), for which we are grateful.

As a reminder to our readers, *CTJ* is now in its second year of the reboot, which features the entire Concordia University System and is double-blind peer reviewed. In addition to the print journal, *CTJ* can be found online at our webpage (www.cuaa.edu/ctj) and is listed on ATLASerials™ with the full-text of each article available on ATLASerials Plus™. The purpose of *CTJ*

see why the translation of a word matters in understanding the Christian life.

Finally, a word about the cover art. This issue was originally put together at the beginning of January, 2020, and it was at that time that we decided to include a picture of Concordia University – Portland (CUP) on the cover due to the great support given to the journal by their theological faculty, both in terms of providing articles but also in helping with our process of blind peer review. However, as we were waiting for the journal to be printed, the closure of CUP at the end of April 2020 was announced. As editors, we decided to keep the cover as it is as tribute to the work that God has done on CUP's campus for the last 115 years. Memory eternal.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Theodore J. Hopkins and Scott E. Yakimow (CUAA), editors

Editorial: “Doctrinal Narcissism” and Its Discontents

Editorials are strange beasts in terms of genre and perhaps can best be understood in modern parlance as that of a thoughtful blog post. In that light, I take as a beginning point an extended Facebook post by Nicholas

(homophobe, transphobe, etc). Moreover, a moral narcissist frequently ends up being paralyzed into inaction due to an inability to figure out what one can do or say that would make the moral narcissist look most moral—because looks are the point, after all. For example, what should one say to a statement that lifts up the rights of women to control their own uteruses when not all women have uteruses and some men do?[2] In common parlance, a moral narcissist is the stereotype of a "social justice warrior" whose righteous fury pours out from the keyboard over the interwebs.

Adams then posits that Labour's defeat is at least in part attributable

goal of theological reflection is to serve as a training ground for being able to speak the Word of God that that person needs to hear in the present time. Doctrine serves to ensure that what is spoken is indeed the Word of God, but this is a regulative role, not the end goal. A doctrinal narcissist sees the point of theology in the creation of pretty systems; a true theologian sees that good theology must always faithfully push its way into actual practice. It

The Conversions of Adiabene and Edessa in Syriac Christianity and Judaism: The Relations of Jews and Christians in Northern Mesopotamia in Antiquity

Michael Thomas

Abstract

This paper examines the conversion legends of Adiabene to Judaism and Edessa to Christianity in the first century and the role these stories

Northern Mesopotamia is difficult to reconstruct. In part this is because there is a paucity of early and reliable documents. What texts that do exist are encrusted with layers of polemical redaction which must be carefully removed. While the task is difficult and the conclusions are understandably tenuous and incomplete, fortunately three extant texts preserve the legendary accounts of the conversions of the cities and residents of Adiabene and Nisibis to Judaism and Edessa to Christianity respectively.[1] Using these documents, it is possible to sketch a rough outline of Jewish-Christian relations in this region between the 1st and 5th centuries AD.

The *Legend of Abgar* purports to record the conversion of King Abgar V Uchama ("the Black") of Edessa to Christianity through the direct testimony of a disciple sent personally by Jesus of Nazareth. The account, if historically accurate, preserves the very first conversion of a gentile kingdom to Christian e

While these three texts emerged from a complex intertwined history of Jewish and Christian communities over several centuries, a careful reconstruction of the political, theological, and polemical motivations behind

As the diocese of Antioch exerted more and more ecclesiastical control over the Edessan church, tensions between these two versions of Christianity and between these Christianity and Judaism more generally escalated.

Legend of Abgar

The earliest account of this Syriac legend is a truncated Greek version that was preserved by the early church historian Eusebius of Caesarea in his *Ecclesiastical History* which was completed ca. 325 AD. In Book 1 of this text, Eusebius records the purported literary correspondence between King Abgar V Uchama of Edessa and Jesus of Nazareth.[6] Eusebius, as is often the case in his *Ecclesiastical History*, provides an introduction to this document. We learn that Abgar is a successful monarch in Mesopotamia who suffers from an unnamed, chronic disorder.[7] When he hears of miraculous healings being carried out by Jesus of Nazareth, Abgar dispatches a letter to him requesting his presence in the city of Edessa so that he might be healed. As if to sweeten the pot, he also offers his kingdom as a place of refuge from the Jews who are mistreating him. Jesus replies that he is not able to travel to the region of Osrhoene—the capital of which is Edessa—, for he is bound to accomplish his appointed task in Jerusalem. Bu0 ( )] TJ ET EMC /9r.30 (l) (e0

walk and you cleanse lepers, and cast out unclean spirits and demons, and you cure those who are tortured by long disease, and you raise dead men. And when I heard all these things concerning you, I decided that it is one of the two, either that you are God, and came down from heaven to do these things, or are a son of God for doing these things. For this reason, I write to beg you to hasten to me and heal the suffering which I have. Moreover, I heard that the Jews are mocking you, and wish to ill-treat you. Now I have a city very small and venerable which is enough for both.

himself and his retinue. Thaddaeus willingly agrees but requests that the audience of the entire city be in his hearing.[16] The following day the citizens were assembled, and Thaddaeus preached the Christian *kerygma* to the citizens of Edessa, and this resulted in the conversion of the "whole city of Edessans" to Christianity.[17] The account ends with the statement: "These things were done in the 340th year."[18] The 340th year of the Edessan era is equivalent to the year 30 AD.[19]

The *Legend of Abgar* has piqued the interest of scholars throughout the years. However, claims of historical authenticity of the *Legend of Abgar*, which purports to record the actual correspondence between King Abgar V Uchama and Jesus in the early first century, have long been rejected by the academic world. It is indeed hard to imagine that, if this text contained both the correspondence between Abgar and Jesus and the account of the conversion of the first gentile king to Christianity, it would not have been celebrated throughout all of early Christendom and reflected many early Christian documents. It is equally difficult to believe that Syriac Christianity started from direct apostolic transmission within a few years of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In fact, there is no reference either in the New

destroyed by a great flood in 201 AD.[27] The *Chronicle*, if it can be trusted to provide an accurate accounting of Edessan history, records that there was an established worshiping community in Edessa prior to 201 AD. Secondly, extant fragments from the works of the Christian philosopher and theologian Bardaisan (Bar Dayşān; ca. 154-222 AD) dem

Judaism. Throughout antiquity there was constant traffic between Edessa and Adiabene through Nisibis. Trade was enhanced through the shared oral language of Aramaic and common Mesopotamian culture, including the religion of Judaism. Throughout various towns and cities extending along the "fertile crescent" from Edessa to Babylon, there was a sizable contingent of Jews. Helmut Koester states: "In most of these cities the Jewish communities were not very large. Adiabene is a special case…it had a strong Jewish population, perhaps remnants of the exiles from the northern kingdom of Israel brought there by the Assyrians at the end of III [*sic*] BC."[32] It is also likely that Jewish populations increased in these urban centers after the catastrophic events of 70 and 135 AD as refugees fled IIst7a.50 (r)3d.60 ( )-1.9

Merchants were probably among the first to spread information about the fledgling Jewish sect in Palestine.[34] J.B. Segal in *Edessa: The Blessed City*

Parthian empire completely controlled the Mesopotamian region when the Romans marched into the eastern Mediterranean world in the first century BC.

As Rome emerged as the dominant player in the Mediterranean basin, she began to move eastward in order to secure the commerce and trade routes running through Mesopotamia to Iran, India, and China. It was along such routes that silk and silk garments came from China, muslin, spices, metals, drugs, and precious stones from India, and carpets from Iran.[45] Just as the Romans could not afford Parthian control over these routes, the Parthians were unwilling to relinquish their sovereignty over the major east-west routes. Koester summarizes the stakes: "The wars of the Romans with Parthia for possession of Mesopotamia involved in part the attempt to control this important trade route."[46] Thus, conflict erupted over the control of the sweeping bend of the Euphrates River east of Edessa. But control was not easily gained, and security was even more fleeting.

The Roman Governor of Syria, Marcus Licinius Crassus, led his legions against the Parthians in 53 BC. Instead of taking a northern route through Armenia and then swinging southward to attack Northern Mesopotamia, he opted to cross the Euphrates at Zeugma, losing one of his own horses to the river.[47] He led seven legions into Parthian territory, but they immediately came under fire from opposing cavalry employing the famed Parthian shot.[48] With their backs against the river, communication, and more importantly, retreat strategies were impossible. The legions and Crassus himself were slaughtered and the famed Roman standards were captured. The Battle of Carrhae, on the eastern side of the Euphrates was one of the most humiliating defeats in Roman history.[49] Marcus Antonius's own Parthian invasion also ended in defeat in 36 BC. Although his own life was preserved,

prisoners taken in 53 and 36 BC.[52]

In 114 AD Emperor Trajan, exercising a more innovative plan,

legions penetrated as far as Seleucia-Ctesiphon. As a reflection of the weakness of the Parthians toward the end of the second century AD, the kingdom of Osrhoene, of which Edessa was the capital, welcomed the Romans during this campaign. Segal summarizes the dramatic event:

> Henceforth, after 164, acquaintance with and friendship with the people of Osrhoene were taken for granted by Rome. The King of Edessa now became a reliable ally of the Empire. When the Parthians invited King Abgar the Great to cooperate in the recapture of Nisibis from the Romans, he refused. Instead, he accepted the invitation from Emperor Septimius Severus to visit Rome, and he was given an extravagant reception there. Now the crossing of the Euphrates from Antioch to the neighborhood of Edessa had become secure and familiar.[58]

the west through Antioch as this region was annexed by the Roman Empire. Why then was the Abgar legend originally created? The answer to this question hinges on when the Syriac legend first was promulgated. Comparison of the Eusebius's account of the *Legend of Abgar* and the Syriac text of the *Doctrine of Addai*

The Abgar legend undermines the primacy of Gentile Christianity (i.e. Pauline) since Abgar confessed Christ well before Saul encountered the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus. The legend might also suggest Abgar's preeminence over other followers of Jesus since he had never encountered Jesus. Jesus purportedly called attention to his remarkable faith, even at a great distance: "Blessed are you who believe in me without having seen me! For it is written of me that those who have seen me will not believe in me, and that those who have not seen will believe and live."[70] By rooting the story in the direct correspondence between Abgar and Jesus, the Syriac legend not only proclaimed how Christianity arrived in Edessa but lent Edessan Jewish-Christianity authority and prestige over the newer Gentile Christianity that had just arrived with Roman hegemony.[71]

If the Abgar legend was created for this purpose, did the author merely invent the names and themes which are central to the story or were they borrowed from a common source? Recall that Jewish-Christianity in Edessa shared a close relationship with the Jewish communities in Nisibis and Adiabene: "Jews of Edessa looked eastward to more powerful Jewish

his mother had also become a Jewish proselyte through the teaching of another Jewish merchant. His father died shortly after Izate's arrival, and the son ascended to the throne in 36 AD. While he was at first reluctant to declare his allegiance to Judaism openly to the people, he eventually was circumcised and acknowledged his religious commitment publicly. While the royal families of Adiabene were scandalized by his rejection of the ancestral religions, the commoners joined their king in the practice of Jewish monotheism. Thus, according to the conversion legend, it was during Izates' reign that the region of Adiabene and Nisibis became Jewish.[74]

The parallels with the Abgar legend are striking. Izates ascends to the throne in 36 AD and thereby is a contemporary of King Abgar V Uchama. Secondly, the young prince is converted to Judaism through a Jewish merchant named Ananias. This trader shares the same name as Abgar's emissary sent to Palestine in the Abgar legend.[75] It is Ananias who delivers Abgar's letter to Jesus and carries the Lord's response back to the king. In both stories, merchants, especially Jewish ones, play crucial roles in the transmission of monotheism. But the kings themselves convert to Judaism and Christianity respectively and thus render their sovereign territories monotheistic. The similarity of motifs and names led Robert Murray, in his book entitled *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, to declare that these parallels are more than a coincidence: "The Edessan story of the conversion of Abgar was *borrowed* by…Christians from their former Jewish brethren to the east. It was, perhaps, a garbled memory (though retaining not a few similarities) of the true story about the first century royal conversions in Adiabene."[76] Once the stories are compared, it is difficult to deny that the author of the Syriac legend appropriated large sections of the Adiabene conversion account to craft a story concerning the conversion of Edessa.

This process of appropriation of the legend intimates a fairly amicable relationship between the Jewish-Christian community in Edessa and the Jewish communities of Adiabene and Nisibis at least in the third century when the Abgar legend was created and promulgated. Had there existed a bitter schism between these communities, it is hard to imagine that the Edessan Christian community would have promulgated a conversion story which so closely resembled the *Conversion of the Royal House of Adiabene.* This is not to say that anti-Jewish elements are not found in Eusebius's account of the *Legend of Abgar*. Indeed, King Abgar offered Jesus a refuge

[74] [illegible] was written. Others have ably treated this issue. See Lawrence H. Schiffman, "The Conversion of the Royal House of Adiabene in Josephus and Rabbinic Sources" in *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*, ed. Louis Feldman and Gohei Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 293-312. See also Jacob Neusner, "The Conversion of Adiabene to Christianity," *Numen*.

from the Jews who were seeking to do him harm.[77] More poignantly, King Abgar expressed the desire to kill those Jews in Jerusalem who put his Lord Jesus to death.[78] While these statements clearly reflect a tension between Edessan Christianity and Judaism, it is not surprising that an extant text such as the *Legend of Abgar* would contain anti-Jewish elements. What can be said definitively is that the anti-Jewish statements found in Eusebius's copy of the *Legend of Abgar* pales in comparison to what is found in the *Doctrine of Addai* which dates from the late fourth or early fifth century. Something dramatic happened within the Edessan community that created the occasion for a new redaction of the Abgar legend which features caustic, anti-Jewish rhetoric.

who must be avoided at all costs: “Crucifiers” and Christians are not to be friends.[84] The *Doctrine of Addai* reflects this new reality. It is a rewriting of

The Protonike story, recorded in the *Doctrine of Addai*, claims that after she was converted by Simon Peter she traveled to the Holy Land with her daughter in search of the sites connected with the Savior.[89] After arriving, she hears that the Jews have taken over the sites and will not allow Christians into these areas. Furthermore, the three crosses that stood on Golgotha are guarded by the Jews as well. Protonike, requesting a meeting with the High Priest Onias, demands that the Jews allow her into the sites.[90] Coming into the tomb that contained the crosses, she is perplexed to

Secondly, the frail girl on the point of death is the very daughter of Protonike. This suggests, it would seem, more intensity concerning the emotional impact of the story; there is more at stake than just a local woman's life. But the clearest indication that the Protonike story is the product of a Syriac redactor from the later fourth or early fifth century is the deliberate inclusion of anti-Jewish rhetoric.

As mentioned above, the Syriac *Doctrine of Addai* contains several anti-Jewish statements and stories that can only be explained fully when considered within a late fourth or early fifth century Syrian milieu. The anti-Jewish theme in the Protonike story is illustrative. The Jews have withheld the holy sites from the Christians.[94] Protonike orders Onias to relinquish the sites against his will. In addition, the *Doctrine of Addai* contains another legend in which King Abgar writes Emperor Tiberius because he is unable to "pass over into a country of the Romans to enter Palestine and kill the Jews, because they crucified the Messiah."[95] Tiberius, instead of dismissing the letter, sends an emissary to look into the matter. Aristides, after hearing Addai's testimony concerning Jesus' crucifixion at the hands of the Jews, purportedly related the atrocities to Tiberius who in response sent troops against Jerusalem. When the troops arrived, they killed several leaders of the Jews. When Abgar heard the report concerning the massacre, he rejoiced greatly.[96] There is no evidence, however, that these reported events are historical. First of all, one must ask why Tiberius would tuwtc9L5 0 Tr [-6.60

of the Abgar legend. Indeed, the retention of these positive comments may suggest the opposite meaning: Jews who continued to practice the traditions of their ancestors proved themselves to be stubborn and intractable. Addai's farewell address sums up the negative portrayal of Jews in the *Doctrine of Addai*: "Make the path and road smooth in a rough place, between the crucifying Jews and the erring pagans…beware of the crucifiers and do not be friends with them, lest you be responsible with those whose hands are full of the blood of the messiah."[100]

Luther and Bonhoeffer on the Sermon on the Mount: Similar Tasks, Different Tools[1]

Theodore J. Hopkins

On the surface, Martin Luther and Dietrich Bonhoeffer appear to be direct contrasts in their interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount. On the one hand, Luther regularly calls for the proper distinction between two realms, the *weltliche Reich* or temporal realm and the *geistliche Reich* or spiritual realm.[2] In the preface to his commentary, Luther complains that the "schismatic spirits and Anabaptists" "do not recognize any difference between

Bonhoeffer's use of the Sermon on the Mount mirrors Luther not by articulating doctrines of law and gospel but by using God's Word to condemn and construct, exposing self-invented pieties for what they are and creating faith through Christ's promise. What Bonhoeffer means by "Word" differs slightly from Luther and Bonhoeffer uses different tools to expose and comfort, yet Bonhoeffer largely mirrors Luther in using the Sermon to do the two tasks of law and gospel. In the third purpose, a larger difference between Luther and Bonhoeffer becomes apparent. Luther focuses more on God's commands fulfilled in a person's vocation in society while Bonhoeffer emphasizes the visible community of the church in which Christ is followed and his life embodied. Throughout their interpretations of the Sermon, Bonhoeffer may not say what Luther says, but he uses the Sermon on the Mount to do what Luther did. Bonhoeffer proclaims the law that exposes the "lovely disguise"[12] of "self-invented and self-chosen piety"[13] and proclaims the gospel that carries Christ the Savior to sinners, forgiving them and calling them to a new life of obedience to his Word.

This essay will first explore selections of Luther's commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, particularly his exposition of the beatitudes. Luther's central concern becomes evident: justification by faith alone and sanctification as the fruits of faith. We will also see that Luther structures the entire Christian life according to God's Word, criticizing those who do otherwise. In this context, Luther uses the various two-realms distinctions[14] as tools to criticize his opponents and concretize the Christian life in sixteenth-century Saxony. From there, I turn to Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship*, showing that Bonhoeffer's polemic against cheap grace is an argument against separating sanctification from justification. The intimate connection of justification and sanctification is reinforced in Bonhoeffer's argument that "immediacy is an illusion."[15] Then, I will sketch Bonhoeffer's description of the Christian life through his exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. Bonhoeffer's tools are different, but like Luther Bonhoeffer places the Word of God at the center of the Christian life and condemns the best the world has to offer so that people turn to the Word. Finally, in the conclusion, I note the similarity in the tasks of law and gospel and analyze two differences: the

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not merely *found* in his work. Bonhoeffer uses God's Word law and gospel, even if he uses different tools to condemn and construct the Christian life. Compare Peter Frick, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Gerhard Ebeling: An Encounter of Theological Minds," in *Engaging Bonhoeffer: The Impact and Influence of Bonhoeffer's Life and Thought*, ed. Matthew D. Kirkpatrick (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 239–58, who shows that Bonhoeffer considers law and gospel to be problematic, but in need

primary referent of "Word of God" and the primary place where the Christian life happens. In short, Bonhoeffer is a faithful *Lutheran* interpreter of Scripture who rejected part of the Lutheran legacy in order to proclaim clearly God's Word as condemning law and transforming gospel.

Luther on the Sermon on the Mount

Luther's commentary on the Sermon, published in the fall of 1532, was originally presented as a Wednesday sermon series from 1530–32 during the absence of the usual Wittenberg pastor, Johannes Bugenhagen, who was supervising the reformation in Lübeck.[16] In the preface to his commentary, Luther sets his agenda against two adversaries. On the one hand, Luther interprets the Sermon against the Roman Catholic "jurists and sophists" who have turned the commands of God in the Sermon into "twelve 'evangelical counsels,' twelve bits of good advice," which do not apply to all Christians but only to those who desire "to attain a perfection higher and more perfect than that of other Christians."[17] For Luther, turning the sermon into evangelical counsels is problematic for three reasons. First, it makes "Christian salvation dependent upon works apart from faith," also creating levels of Christians as if salvation did not depend on the same Word and same baptism for all. Secondly, it makes Christ's commands optional by denying the applicability of Jesus's words to all Christians.[18] Third, it allows the jurists and canon lawyers to rule the church instead of Christ, which also supports the papal claims to temporal power.[19] For Luther, the Sermon is directed to all Christians to live sanctified lives, as the fruits of faith, according to God's command in established society.

On the other hand, Luther interprets the Sermon against a second adversary, "the new jurists and sophists, the schismatic spirits and Anabaptists."[20] According to Luther, these Anabaptists disrupt the stable order of society, refusing to participate in secular government by denying that Christians can hold office or take oaths, rejecting a Christian's right to protect his family, and condemning all who own private property. Thus, Luther claims, "They do not recognize any difference between the secular and the divine realm, much less what should be the distinctive doctrine and action in each realm."[21] For Luther, these Anabaptists not only deny the divine ordinance of the secular realm, but they also "mislead whole crowds of people" by making justification by faith dependent upon good works. They substitute the true Word of God for "glorious words" like "Spirit" and "fruits of the Spirit." Instead of listening to these glorious words, a Christian "must

[16] Jaroslav Pelikan, Introduction to Volume 21 of *Luther's Works*, LW 21:xix–xxi.
[17] LW 21:3–4.
[18] Ibid., 4.
[19] Ibid. This is only implicit in the preface. Luther writes6.96 Tf 1 0 0 1 41.16 107.06 107.029(n)8.90m 0 Tr

pay attention only to the Word, which shows us the right way of life that avails before God."[22]

Although Roman Catholics and Anabaptists appear to be nothing

God's Word tears down the glorious works of humanity and calls instead for humble service to the neighbor according to God's command.

According to Luther's antisemitic interpretation, Jesus preaches the beatitudes against a Jewish understanding that the good life is a life that appears good to human wisdom.[26] These Jews "did not want to suffer, but sought a life of ease, pleasure, and joy; they did not want to hunger nor to be merciful, but to be smug in their exclusive piety while they judged and despised other people. In the same way, their holiness also consisted in outward cleanliness…."[27] Not only the Jews, however, hold such a doctrine

be profane (Acts 10:15); indeed it must be the very purity with which we see God."[33] Whether it is a Roman Catholic monk who runs away from society to live in prayerful solitude or an Anabaptist monk who makes a new society apart from established government and institutions, Luther believes that such a self-made holiness violates God's command to love and care for the neighbor in society.[34]

Purity of heart does not come from doing works that appear good to the world, even following Jesus's Sermon perfectly in order to be seen by others—these are likely to be mortal sins.[35] Purity of heart comes from hearing God's Word and letting it condemn one's glorious words and works, creating a new heart that is filled with the Word of God.[36] Hence, Luther calls for preaching of the Word of God as law and gospel, tearing down "self-made sanctity and self-chosen worship" that threatens the true gospel[37] and instructing people about Christ and faith before also teaching the importance of good works according to Christ's Word and command.[38] Thus, the Word of God first acts as corrosive, purifying salt, calling all to repent for living according to their own notions of piety and ignoring the duties God has blessed and given to them. Christians must constantly struggle to rely on God and his Word, to

> It all depends, therefore, on really knowing and maintaining the definition of what Christ calls good works or fruits: a good work is one that is required or commanded by the Word of God and proceeds on the basis of that commandment. So a wife who is pious and faithful in her marriage can claim and boast that her station is commanded by God, that it is supported by the true, pure, and unadulterated Word of God, and that it heartily pleases God. Hence her works are all good fruit.[58]

In a similar way, Luther also says that the man who hauls manure is actually hauling "precious figs and grapes" in God's sight, even though such work is condemned by reason, since the Christian man is doing his calling in a station that helps his neighbors in society. God's Word of promise, which justifies the sinner and makes the tree good, and command is what makes a Christian's work good and holy, nothing else.[59]

Therefore, the main question for Luther is what the Word says and what God calls his people to do. God's Word establishes the stations that Christians inhabit and use for the good of others. It does not call the Christian to pursue perfection apart from society either in a monastery (Roman Catholicism) or in an alternative society (Anabaptism); rather, God calls Christians to love and care for their neighbors in good vocations already

time, Luther does not believe that nude reason, apart from God's Word, will

complacent Christians who have capitulated to Nazi ideology. Then, I will proceed to describe Bonhoeffer's understanding of Matthew chapter five, including the beatitudes and the importance of the visible church-community.

Costly Grace Versus Cheap Grace and Jesus as the Mediator in *Discipleship*

Bonhoeffer begins *Discipleship* with a direct question that focuses the Christian life on Jesus alone: "What did Jesus want to say to us? What does he want from us today? How does he help us to be faithful Christians today? It is not ultimately important to us what this or that church leader wants. Rather, we want to know what Jesus wants."[74] In this way, Bonhoeffer centers the Christian life on the incarnate Word of God: Who is this Jesus and what does he want? To ask any other question is to avoid God's commandment with human words and works. It does not matter if Jesus's commands seem too difficult for normal Christians; Bonhoeffer rejects the notion that the Sermon on the Mount is optional. Rather, he places *every* Christian under the yoke of Jesus.[75] In fact, following the Sermon may require painful separations from family and nation. Regardless, the Christian is called to simply obey,[76] following Jesus under his light and easy yoke (Matt. 11:28–30). No matter how difficult such a life is, because Jesus is the one who leads, Bonhoeffer can claim, "Discipleship is joy."[77]

Having centered discipleship on the Word of God enfleshed in Jesus of Nazareth—just as Luther focused the Christian on hearing, believing, and living according to the Word proclaimed and written—Bonhoeffer distinguishes between "cheap grace" and "costly grace." Bonhoeffer uses this distinction to do three things: to expose the self-invented pieties of twentieth-century Germany, cod " hrsa 18 >> B-3.10 (w)5.706a

and discipleship; cheap grace rejects Jesus's call for Christians to follow him in his church. Instead, the Christian is to "live just like the rest of the world" since grace justifies the world and demands no self-denial or difference between the Christian and everybody else.[80] Bonhoeffer concludes his opening diatribe against cheap grace:

> Cheap grace is preaching forgiveness without repentance; it is baptism without the discipline of community; it is the Lord's Supper without confession of sin; it is absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without the living, incarnate Jesus Christ.[81]

Costly grace, on the other hand, is "*simply* grace."[82] It is the call of Jesus, like the disciples received, to leave behind the nets and follow the master. This grace is costly because "it condemns sin," and "costs people their lives."[83] It does not allow the Christian to live as she did before, wallowing in her sin. To use Luther's language, costly grace is caustic, condemning sin yet also graciously justifying the sinner. Above all, Bonhoeffer writes, grace is costly because it cost God the life of his Son. At the same time, this costly grace is *grace* since it calls people to follow Jesus, forgives their sins, and brings them under the yoke of the incarnate God who died to give them life.[84] Costly grace, then, emphasizes the connection between justification and sanctification in the concrete call of Jesus Christ. "Faith and obedience cannot be separated from each other at all."[85] The Word of Jesus justifies the sinner, and he calls her to a life of discipleship, simply obeying and following him in the church.[86]

According to Bonhoeffer, Luther's own struggle with monasticism was part of the struggle for costly grace. Monasticism initially had been "a living protest" against a cheapening of the Christian life, but over time Christendom relativized monasticism and turned it into a "special meritoriousness" for a select few.[87] Luther saw through the façade of

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[80] Ibid., 44.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Jonathan D. Sorum, "Cheap Grace, Costly Grace, and Just Plain Grace: Bonhoeffer's Defense of Justification by Faith Alone," *Lutheran Forum* 21, no. 3 (1993): 20. Emphasis original. Sorum's essay is a good analysis of Bonhoeffer's distinction between cheap and costly grace that shows it is fundamentally Lutheran.
[83] Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 45.

monasticism's costliness to see the sin embedded within it: "Luther saw the monk's escape from the world as really a subtle love for the world," which left intact the most glorious work of the world, the "pious self."[88] For Bonhoeffer, Luther condemned the sinful pretensions of the world, exposing the purity of monasticism as self-love, by calling Christians to live as Christians *in the world*. Luther did not justify the world or secular vocations as such; he rather called Christians to be disciples in the midst of their vocations. "A Christian's secular vocation receives new recognition from the gospel only to the extent that it is carried on while following Jesus."[89] For Bonhoeffer, this is costly grace.

Bonhoeffer not only uses the distinction between cheap grace and costly grace to condemn the "bourgeois-secular existence" of many Christians and call them to simple obedience following the commands of God,[90] but he makes a similar point by witnessing to Jesus Christ as the Lord who justifies the sinner and calls her to the extraordinary life of discipleship. For Bonhoeffer, the important point is not *how* Jesus calls his disciples, but *who* Jesus is.[91]

happen only through him. He stands not only between me and God, he also stands between me and the world, between me and other people and things. He is

Bonhoeffer's goals is to clear out all self-invented piety so that Jesus's Word will be heard for what it is, the command of the Son of God. At the same time,

The importance of the church as a community comes more into focus as Bonhoeffer moves from the beatitudes to the next section of the Sermon, Matthew 5:13-16 on salt and light. Bonhoeffer rejects Luther's understanding that the "office" of the disciples, the preaching of God's Word, is to be salt and light.[113] Instead, Bonhoeffer claims, "What is meant is their whole existence, to the extent that it is newly grounded in Christ's call to discipleship, that existence of which the Beatitudes speak. All those who follow Jesus's call to discipleship are made by that call to be the salt of the earth in their whole existence."[114] Thus, for Bonhoeffer, the disciples are salt and light precisely as they become visible to the world, a visible community of faith separate from the world.[115] The world will not praise and adore these visible marks—such is usually a sign of self-invented piety anyway—rather, it is the visibility of being poor, strangers, meek, peacemakers, and of course being rejected and persecuted as Jesus was. In short, Bonhoeffer says that it is all one work: "bearing the cross of Jesus Christ."[116]

In this way, the Christian community is "extraordinary," and it makes space for the "extraordinariness" of the Christian life.[117] Bonhoeffer's interpretation of Jesus's antitheses stresses this point. The Christian church is a community of simple obedience to God's law in a world of lawless faith, which is enthusiasm;[118] it is a community of reconciliation and forgiveness in a society of power;[119] it is a community of chastity and purity in a world of unlimited desire;[120] it is a community of truth where sin is uncovered and

blessed because of the call and promise of Jesus. Jesus's disciples are merely servants who are doing their duty according to the Word and command of God.

Word in faith, and loving the neighbor in society as God commands.[130]

For Bonhoeffer, however, the Word is primarily the incarnate Son of God, Jesus himself. Jesus authorizes the proclamation of law and gospel in his church, and the Scriptures are the authoritative norm of Jesus's life and ministry, but at the heart of the Christian life is a person, Jesus of Nazareth. While Luther would say the same thing about Jesus,[131] for Bonhoeffer, the

Christian life, but also for understanding nation, vocation, and public life. For Bonhoeffer, the Word that structures the Christian life is fundamentally Jesus rather than the written and proclaimed Word, which still remain essential in Bonhoeffer's thought.[135]

The second major difference is how they conceive of the *locus* where the Christian life takes place. Against the new and old monastics who established pure Christianity apart from established society, Luther places the Christian in the world.[136] Luther uses the two realms distinction to emphasize that the Christian is called to love the neighbor in society and not apart from it. Thus, Luther employs the concept of office or vocation to concretize the shape of the Christian life in the world.[137] For Luther, Christians are called to do their duty—as parents, neighbors, merchants, servants, princes, and/or pastors—and it is precisely in doing their duty in society that they follow God's commands to love and serve their neighbors. Luther pointed Christians to follow territorial law[138] not b0 (s)-3.60 Tr [( )1-2.90231.20 (4s)-3.60 4e c1(s)-3.60 (e)-

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Christ is our new life."[142]

By centering the Christian life on the church, the most important question for Bonhoeffer is not how the Christian should live in the world but, what is the structure and order of the church? For Bonhoeffer, the church is the living body of Christ. He explains,

> Jesus Christ lives here on earth in the form of his body, the church-community. Here is his body crucified and risen, here is the humanity he assumed. To be baptized therefore means to become a member of the church-community, a member of the body of Christ (Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 12:13). To be in Christ means to be in the church-community. But if we are in the church-community, then we are also truly and bodily in Jesus Christ.[143]

Just as Jesus is the center point of the Christian life—his commands and example are the heart of discipleship—so the church is the body of Christ, the bodily community of Jesus, and cannot be known apart from him.[144] This means that the church corporately is formed into the image of Jesus. For Bonhoeffer, this is especially evident in the persecution and suffering of the church: in the church, "we take part in Christ's suffering and glory."[145] It is not that each individual Christian is necessarily called to suffer; rather, the entire body of Christ suffers and some are permitted to suffer on behalf of the body. In a sense, this "vicariously representative action and suffering" is a *vocation* given to some of the members in order to serve the whole body of Christ.[146]

Bonhoeffer also emphasizes the visibility of this community: "The body of Christ takes up physical space here on earth."[147] Just as Christ himself

Confession of a Lutheran University

David W. Loy

I. Introduction

This article argues that a Lutheran university must, in fact, maintain a substantive, public theological confession. The argument falls into two parts. The first part examines Luther's 1524 letter "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools" and the 1530 sermon "On Keeping Children in School," showing how the concept of vocation as concrete social relationship provides guidance about the ends schools ought to pursue.[3] The second part turns from Luther to the

sought within each vocation as well as the means to be used in achieving them.

As social institutions, Lutheran educational institutions might also be said to have vocations. Each exists in relationships with other institutions and individual human beings, and its particular social context generates norms that govern the ends it ought to seek. In fact, when Luther addressed the importance of educating children, his argument rested on the nature of

the city.[22] Later in the sermon he lauds the work of civil servants, claiming, "We shamefully despise God when we begrudge our children this glorious and divine work and stick them instead in the exclusive service of the belly and of avarice, having them learning nothing but how to make a living, like hogs wallowing forever with their noses in the dunghill, and never training them for so worthy an estate and office."[23] Luther calls withholding a good education from children "service of Mammon," "caring for their bellies," "horribly ungrateful," and idolatry.[24] To people who do so Luther says, "you want God to serve you free of charge both with preaching and with worldly government, so that you can just calmly turn your child away from him and teach him to serve Mammon alone."[25] As beneficiaries of the social order and Christians who are to love their neighbors, parents have a duty to ensure their children receive a proper education.

should be needed there."[29] A proper education prepares students to love their neighbors more effectively in all of their future vocations.

As in the "Letter," the educational objectives Luther articulates in "Sermon" flow from the vocations of the Christian school. The school has an obligation to the church to prepare boys for further theological study. It has an obligation to the city to prepare students to read and write in the legal language of the day, understand the subtleties and complexities of civil service or private business, and engage the riches of the culture in order to provide wise direction for home, business, and state. "The jurists and scholars in this worldly kingdom are the persons who preserve this law, and thereby maintain the worldly kingdom," Luther writes.[30] What the Lutheran school should teach can be inferred from its concrete vocation in its specific time and place. Given its vocation to the church, a substantive theological confession is a necessary part of its curriculum.

III. The Modern Lutheran University

Like schools in Luther's day, the university in the modern United

of alienating potential students.[35] This section argues that Lutheran universities should not abandon their public confessions in the face of these challenges. They have obligations toward parties besides students, their parents, and the government. Two vocations in particular are important for the argument: the vocation toward society and the vocation toward the church. Each vocation requires the Lutheran university to maintain a substantive, public theological confession that informs not just instruction in theology but instruction across the entire curriculum.

Universities in the United States exist as corporations by leave of the state.[36] States grant this corporate status and its associated privileges because the university stands in a particular relationship to society at large: it is composed of people from the society's communities, it draws students from those communities, and it promises to provide benefits to the communities (or at least to the students drawn from those communities). In other words, the university has a vocation to the community, and with that vocation come specific obligations. The university has an obligation to shape and form students to make positive contributions to the communities. Certainly, these positive contributions can be medical, technical, and economic. In fact, even universities which claim not to inculcate any moral values are at least providing occupational training to students, and occupational training prepares students to make such medical, technical, and economic contributions. However, as Luther says, "the welfare of a city does not consist solely in accumulating vast treasures, building mighty walls and magnificent buildings, and producing a goodly supply of guns and armor."[37] The city also needs people with the wisdom to use its medical, technical and economic goods well.

This means that the Lutheran university must, for the good of society, form and shape students not only to pursue occupations but to pursue them responsibly, to contribute to their professions and communities in wise ways, and to analyze social and political issues not only from a technical perspective but also from a broader, moral perspective.[38] Christenson puts

[35] For various *diagnoses* of the problem, see Robert Benne, *Quality With Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious Traditions* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), ch. 2; Jodock, "The Lutheran Tradition," 13–38; John W. Wright, "How Many Masters? From the Church-Related to an Ecclesially Based University," in *Conflicting Allegiances: The Church-Based University in a Liberal Democratic Society*, ed. Michael0 (r)-23 (a)4.

the matter succinctly: “Learning in a Lutheran university also means that the pursuit of knowledge is interwoven with concern and care.”[39] Although we can achieve amazing technical feats, “many of the successes of the technological project of mastery make us all feel less rather than more in

Yet the Christian dogmatic tradition has long affirmed that "Christian faith" must be understood in terms of both the individual's trust in the God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ and the objective content of the "faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3)—both *fides qua creditur* and *fides quae creditur*. Christian theologians through the ages have followed the example of Jesus, the apostles, and the prophets in applying the objective content of the faith to the issues facing Christians in the various vocations in

and in helping all Christian students understand the implications of the faith

and irrelevant to contemporary society.[56] Such concerns are not unfounded,

relevance of the Christian faith for their disciplines and professions—and for the pressing questions that our nation and world face. This can happen only if the faculty members themselves maintain a clear confession of the Christian faith. A Lutheran faculty that maintains a substantive theological confession helps ensure that the church has people who are prepared to preach and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ accurately for the salvation of God's people, and it helps to ensure that Christians are prepared to live out their faith wisely, intelligently, and humbly in a complex and fallen world.[60]

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[60] I am grateful to the Rev. Dr. Scott A. Ashmon for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

מוט MEANS "COLLAPSE," NOT "BE SHAKEN"

Paul Puffe

My thesis in this paper is that the definition of the Hebrew verb מוט (not to be confused with the verb מות) means "to collapse," and not "to be shaken," as it is primarily defined in all the lexicons. Chart A shows the

similar nouns מוֹט and מוֹטָה, both of which mean “carrying pole, yoke,” and tries to accommodate this relationship in his discussion of the definition. However, he also points out that the Hebrew noun מַטֶּה “staff, branch” derives from the root נטה

Nations roared: kingdoms collapsed;
He [God] uttered with His voice: the earth melted.

הָמ֣וּ גוֹיִ֣ם מָ֭טוּ מַמְלָכ֑וֹת
נָתַ֥ן בְּקוֹל֗וֹ תָּמ֥וֹג אָֽרֶץ׃

Notice should also be given to Psalm 125:1, where "All those who are trusting in YHWH are like Mt. Zion, (which) will not collapse, forever it will sit." It is not the case that Mt. Zion has never known an earthquake or shaking, but it will never collapse: it will endure and sit securely forever.

Psalm 125:1 also leads to the next major subject used with this verb, which is people. Psalm 125:1 effectively stated that "those who trust in YHWH" will not collapse. A large number of verses indicate that this will be the case for the "righteous." In all these cases it is not that God's followers will never be troubled and shaken, but that in spite of these attacks they will never collapse, they will never give way and be lost. Thus, we have Psalms 15:5, 21:8, 55:23, 62:3,7, 112:6, and Proverbs 10:30. In all these passages the sense is that the person of God will not fall and be destroyed; the focus is not on whether they might experience threats that may rock them. The following quotations are from the NIV with a correction indicated.

Psalm 15:5 … who lends money to the poor without interest; who does not accept a bribe against the innocent. Whoever does these things will never be shaken/collapse.

Prov 12:3 (Eng. 12:3) A man is not established through wickedness, but the root of the righteous will not be moved. 11he9-s
Prov 21:28 (Eng. 21:28) A false witness will perish, but the man who listens will speak forever. 11he9-s
Prov 25:19 (Eng. 25:19) Confidence in a treacherous man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth or a lame foot. 11he9-s
Prov 30:33 (Eng. 30:33) For as churning the milk produces butter, and wringing the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife. 11he9-s
love of th almset, 11he9-s

Lest my enemy say, I have finished him,
my adversaries rejoice because I collapse.

פֶּן־יֹאמַר אֹיְבִי יְכָלְתִּיו
צָרַי יָגִילוּ כִּי אֶמּוֹט׃

Another passage deserving comment is Proverbs 25:26:

A muddied spring and a polluted fountain
is a righteous one collapsing before a wicked one.

מַעְיָן נָרְפָּשׁ וּמָקוֹר מָשְׁחָת
צַדִּיק מֹט לִפְנֵי־רָשָׁע׃

It is not simply the idea that the righteous one is threatened and wavering under the pressure of the wicked that is so offensive; it is the fact that the opposite of what is right has occurred. The spring is full of mud/dirt; the

אִם־אָמַרְתִּי מָטָה רַגְלִי
חַסְדְּךָ יְהוָה יִסְעָדֵנִי׃

If I said, my foot is collapsing,
Your devotion, O YHWH, supports me.

You caused the earth to quake,
You split it open.
Heal its breaks, for it is collapsing.
You have made Your people experience harshness,
You have made us drink wine [that causes] staggering.

הִרְעַשְׁתָּה אֶרֶץ פִּצַּמְתָּהּ
רְפָה
ׇ

and thus signify the shaking of the earth? In the context of the whole, the first choice is better. The conclusion of verse 20 signifies the destruction and collapse of the earth ("it has fallen and will not arise"). Verse 19 tells the result that the earth is destroyed. Verse 20 backs up and tells us the same story, this time dramatizing both the process (in the first three lines of verse 20) and result of the destruction (in the final line).[1]

One final instance of the verb מוט seems to be of no help in determining the meaning of the verb. However, it may be that this improved understanding of the verb may aid in interpreting this passage. In Job 41 Leviathan is described as a terrifying creature that cannot be mastered by humans. This is most likely the picture of a terrifying crocodile. In verse 15 of this description we read:

מַפְּלֵי רָוֹ

overcome: he will not collapse, he will not succumb, he will not be defeated. The presence of God with the believer will carry him through the ordeal, and he will come out secure on the other side. This kind of assurance is not necessary if the people of God are the kind who never stagger under the attacks of the Tempter, but it is of great value for real humans who experience genuine spiritual difficulties. The improper understanding of this

CHART A: DEFINITION OF מוט IN COMMON LEXICONS				
Lexicon	Qal 13x	Niphal 25x	Hithpolel 1x	Hiphil 1x
BDB[1]	totter, shake, slip	be shaken, be moved, **be overthrown**	be greatly shaken	**dislodge, let fall, drop**
KB-2nd[2]	totter	be caused to totter, be caused to reel, stagger	be tottering constantly	
KB-3rd[3]	sway	be made to stagger, be made to totter	reel; also, extra-Bib. re ship "tossed about")	
Holladay[4]	waver, reel, totter, stagger, flinch	be made to stagger, stumble, totter, be made to wobble	shake, reel	
Jastrow[5]	incline, waver, **decline**; **give way**, bend	be shaken, bent	**be declining, sink**	bend, shake

[1] Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).
[2] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros (Leiden: Brill, 1953).
[3] Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, M. E. J. Richardson, and J. J. Stamm, The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, vols. 1-4. (Leiden: Brill

CHART A (Cont.): DEFINITION OF מוט IN COMMON LEXICONS				
Lexicon	Qal 13x	Niphal 25x	Hithpolel 1x	Hiphil 1x
TDOT[1]	totter, waver			
Analytical H-C Lex.[2]	totter, shake (re foot) slip, slide (re hand) be weak, fail	be moved, shaken		**cause to fall or come down**
Langen-scheidt[3]	waver, totter, quake	totter, stumble, **fall**, tremble	"same as Q & N"	cause to totter, **cause to fall, precipitate**
Alcalay, dictionary of modern Hebrew[4]	totter, shake, quake, waver, **collapse, fall, decline**, bend, become poor, slip	waver, **fall**, totter, be shaken, **be destroyed**	**collapse**, be shaken, be moved, **come down, decline;** also Polel: **collapse**, shake, move, **overthrow, knock down**	**cast, throw down, humble oneself, bring disaster to/on**

[1] G. Johannes

CHART C: FULL LIST OF USES OF THE VERB מוט, WITH STEM AND ASPECT NOTES.

(Usages not cited in Chart B are marked with *.)

*Lev. 25:35 Q p
Deut. 32:35 Q y
I Chron. 16:30 N y
*Psalm 10:6 N y
Psalm 13:5 (E4) N y
Psalm 15:5 N y
Psalm 16:8 N y
Psalm 17:5 N p
*Psalm 21:8 N y
*Psalm 30:7 N y
*Psalm 38:17 Q i
Psalm 46:3,6,7 (E 3,5,6) Q i, N y, Q p
Psalm 55:4 (E3) Hi y
*Psalm 55:23 Q i
Psalm 60:4 (E3) Q ptc
**Psalm 62:3,7 N y, N y
*Psalm 66:9 N i!
Psalm 82:5 N y
Psalm 93:1 N y
Psalm 94:18 Q ptc
*Psalm 96:10 N y
Psalm 104:5 N y
*Psalm 112:6 N y
*Psalm 121:3 N i
Psalm 125:1 N y
Psalm 140:11 (E10) N y
*Proverbs 10:30 N y
Proverbs 12:3 N y
Proverbs 24:11 Q ptc
Proverbs 25:26 Q ptc
Isa. 24:19 (2x) Q i, Ht p
Isa. 40:20, 41:7 N y, N y
Isa. 54:10 (2x) Q y, Q y
*Job 41:15 N y

26 in chart B + 14* not in chart B =total 40

Q 13 2p 3y 4ptc 4i
N 25 1p 22y 0ptc 2i
Hi 1y
Ht 1p

Book Reviews

ascriptive, yet affirms "that much of what is related in the book of Numbers probably does correspond to some degree or other with events that did happen in the wilderness" (59). In chapter four, Briggs begins with what he calls his "theological reading of the text," showing by contrast how Karl Barth's understanding of sloth in Numbers 13–14 imposes Barth's own dogmatic goals onto the text rather than reading the text as Scripture. In chapter five, Briggs first shows how the legislative material of Numbers 15 has been understood by other commentators, concluding that his theological interpretation only needs to look at "the overarching narrative" (129). He then plunges into the difficult story of Korah's rebellion in Numbers 16, making his point that a purely descriptive approach is difficult for modern ears to accept and noting how the New Testament book of Hebrews views these narratives.

The only chapter which actually emphasizes a Christian (that is, Christo-centric) reading of Numbers is chapter six, "The Rock Was Christ." Briefly surveying the text of Numbers 20:1–13, Briggs moves quickly to his theological approach, which "seeks to relate the claims of the text in some manner to the claims of (or for or about) Christ" (168). Thus, he cites "1 Corinthians 10 as an exemplar of a critical theological hermeneutic in practice" (169). A Christian reading of a text will "find Christ," to use Luther's noteworthy phrase. As Briggs notes, "Paul reads Numbers literally. As long as it is understood that 'literal sense' is not here in this traditional way. In this ascriptive sense the rock is 'literally' Christ…" (183).

Returning to the commentary-style approach, Briggs' second-to-last chapter looks at Numbers 25, the account of a plague among the Israelites because of sexual encounters with Moabite women. The priest, Phineas, reacts with zealous aggression, killing the couple in their tent and stopping the plague. After looking at the textual material, Briggs reviews recent studies which

apply the text to contemporary situations—as homiletical material for our Christian journey.

words or concepts are highlighted on the screen as they are being discussed. On the Zondervan Academic website, students can access companion materials. They include five-minute videos and "flash cards" of terms from each chapter. Instructors can register to receive teaching resources that include convenient PowerPoint slides and an instructor's manual having helpful chapter summaries, learning objectives, and a bank of test questions.

Moral Choices has many strengths. Scott Rae begins by making the case for a transcendent, objective, and universal moral law, in contrast to contemporary society's appeal to ethical relativism. The core assumption of Rae's ethical teaching is that "the *ultimate* source for morality is not God's commands but God's character" (68, emphasis his). I agree with Rae that "at its heart, Christian ethics is a blend of both virtues and principles" (68). He is an unapologetic proponent of the sanctity of human life and the traditional one-man, one-women marriage. While these hot-button topics are sometimes difficult to discuss in the classroom, Rae writes and presents those topics in a winsome way which should not give offense to those students who might have competing views. Rae has a lucid writing style, but he does not hesitate to dive into complex philosophical concepts (e.g., "The Ring of Gyges" and the Euthyphro dilemma). The text is replete with biblical passages and textboxes that highlight chapter themes with real-world cases or biographical material.

very good, the videos consist of short presentations by Rae, which are rather dry and could stand to be improved with images and other visual content. Another shortcoming of the DVD lectures is that they sometimes refer to chapter and page numbers that match older editions of the text, which can be confusing.

I recently adopted *Moral Choices* for a Christian Ethics course, and, so far, I am glad I did. I got a sense that students *did* read the book (in contrast to other textbooks I had used in the past). While Lutheran instructors will find the need to explain some textbook content in light of confessional teaching and make some tweaks to the PowerPoint slides, much of the content can be used as is. Scott Rae is an unabashed advocate for the dignity of the human person from conception until temporal death. He does not apologize for applying normative biblical principles. The textbook is most suitable for a university setting, but it could also be used in upper-level high school courses and even for an in-depth Bible class series about Christian ethics. Rae

slowly, and increase your enjoyment of a book by writing words of your own in it" (18). With such guiding principles, she explores the characters (flawed and/or faultless) in twelve stories by Henry Fielding, F. Scott Fitzgerald,

wealth of ideas for homiletic illustrations, too. It's time to take up one of those books, now, and read well.

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McKnight, Scot. *It Takes a Church to Baptize: What the Bible Says About* Infant *Baptism.* Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2018. 128 pages. $16.99 paperback.

Addressing the perennial topic of infant baptism (in the last decade or so, several books have addressed the subject), Scot McKnight, professor of New Testament at Northern Baptist Seminary in Lombard, Illinois, brings a unique perspective on the issue. Raised in the Anabaptist tradition, he "converted" to Anglicanism and was ordained as a priest in the Anglican Communion in 2014. He is a popular speaker, blogger, and writer, employing a very comfortable writing style on this important theological issue.

Noting his own "conversion," Bishop Todd D. Hunter's *Foreword* sets the tone for this short, very readable book. Hunter was also evangelically trained and questioned (even disavowed) baptism as regenerative (baptized as a Methodist, he was rebaptized as a leader of the Vineyard Movement). His conclusion, after studying the subject more carefully, is that infant baptism is theologically, biblically, historically, and personally the most credible position a committed Christian can take (xi). The endorses McKnight's book, which McKnight admits is designed "for those who are considering infant baptism in the Anglican Communion" (15).

Giving a brief introductory *Preface*, McKnight launches into his presentation with his chapter: "Our Baptism: First Six Words." The key words are family, Bible, gospel, conversion, debate, and heritage. Here Lutheran readers will already pause, since we would most likely look at Jesus' invitation (John 3 and Matthew 28) as well as His promises. Regarding family, he states: "infant baptism is the deepest, wisest, and most historic Christian way of forming our children into the faith" (3) Admitting that "there is no text in the New Testament that explicitly reveals the *practice* of infant baptism in the apostolic church" (4), he does affirm that implicitly "a *theology* for infant baptism is to be found" (5) there (citing Acts 2:38 [although he misses v. 39]; Galatians 3:27; and 1 Peter 3:21).

Leaning heavily on these six words, McKnight delves into the Anglican context of baptism. Following the Anglican baptismal liturgy from the *Book of Common Prayer,* McKnight shows its biblical connections. He emphasizes the family context for baptism and its covenantal significance. Although this approach is not completely convincing, he does make some interesting points about our contemporary American individualism as well as a helpful analogy to citizenship: "one's citizenship was established at birth by an act of

Congress. So with infant baptism: it is granted by God's grace…" (28). McKnight has a process-perspective of baptism and conversion as he speaks of "a journey into spiritual maturity [which] begins at baptism" (28). Relying on a cleverly titled book by Kara Powell and Chap Clark, *Sticky Faith*, McKnight underscores the creedal aspects of the baptismal liturgy, noting that "totally absent is anything about what we can do or have done" (42). He concludes that chapter by saying, "The work of Christ in which the infant is baptized is what brings redemption" (46).

In two key chapters, McKnight opens the biblical perspective on infant baptism. This is undeniably the strongest and most helpful chapters in the book. He begins chapter 4 by saying, "As a Bible professor, I believe our theology and our practice ought to be established by the Bible" (47), an approach I wish he had used to structure this book. He sets out three major themes: union with Christ, Spirit and church reception, and redemption. Curiously, he begins with Romans 10:9-10, but then goes to Matthew 28 and Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; and 19:5, followed by Romans 6:1-14 and Colossians 2:6-15, concluding that "Baptism is an act in which God brings us into union with Christ and all the blessings Christ has accomplished" (53). He returns to several more biblical texts (again Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:27; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Romans 6:4-8; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21), but for some reason omits John 3. He ends this chapter with "five major

Anglicanism is a self-proclaimed middle-of-the-road denomination (xi). The biblical material in this book is fairly good, but the major concern I have with McKnight's understanding of baptism is that he sees conversion as a process. Already in chapter one, he says "Infant baptism is the first public step in nurturing our children in the faith" (1). Shortly thereafter he patently states, "Conversion is a process, and it begins when the infant is baptized" (12). This theme is woven throughout the book, which weakens the fact that baptism creates the faith it requires (Titus 3:5-6). His emphasis on the liturgy also limits this book's usefulness for non-Anglicans.

Noting these concerns, I still found this book helpful, although not totally satisfying due to the liturgical context (the family of faith) receiving more press than the biblical truths and the numerous promises associated with baptism. My preference for helpful and apologetic works on infant baptism are Uuras Saarnivaara's *Scriptural Baptism: A Dialogue Between John Bapsteade baemiaw2.20 (i)2 (o)-5m.660 (n)-2.30 ( )] TJ ETType(l)6 wpf40 9 Tm 0*