

**Canadian Evangelical Theological Association Annual Meeting  
Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences, St. Catharines, ON  
May 25, 2014**

*Brock University, Thistle 307*

**Welcome and Worship (8:30-8:45 am)**

**Paper Presentation Session #1 (8:45-10:15 am)**

- **The (Im)mutability and (Im)passibility of YHWH: The Contribution of Judges 2:11-23**  
*Mary Conway, McMaster Divinity College*

This paper investigates the contribution that the book of Judges makes to the doctrines of (im)mutability and (im)passibility of Y<sub>HWH</sub>. After giving an overview of these doctrines, it considers input from representative ends of the theological spectrum: open theism and conservative evangelicalism. Open theists contend that God does suffer and change his mind, conservative evangelicals generally argue that he does not. After dealing briefly with some preliminary issues concerning the role of metaphor and the process of deriving theology from narrative, this paper carries out an analysis of the paradigmatic statements of Judges 2:11–23, focusing on the use of the Hebrew lemma נחם in Judges 2:18, כִּי־יִנָּחֵם יְהוָה, which has been variously translated “for the LORD would be *moved to pity*” (NRSV), “for the LORD *relented*” (TNIV), “for it *repented* Jehovah” (ASV), “The LORD would *have mercy* on them” (GNT), and “for GOD was *moved to compassion*” (Message). Whatever the English translation, in the context of Judges these verses could imply two things: first, that Y<sub>HWH</sub> can be affected by the suffering of his people and second, that he can subsequently change his mind about his intentions and his behavior towards them based on their suffering and their cries for help. After closely examining the passage under consideration and relating it to the balance of the book of Judges, this paper will draw theological conclusions and suggest how our understanding of the character of Y<sub>HWH</sub> might need to be reconsidered.

- **Paul’s “Robust Conscience” and His Thorn in the Flesh**  
*J. Gerald Janzen, Christian Theological Seminary*

On the nature of Paul’s “thorn in the flesh,” Ralph P. Martin concludes, “The possibilities . . . fall into two categories, . . . human opponents and physical ailments,” and he notes that, while we ourselves may never know the truth, “in all probability, the Corinthians knew of what Paul spoke.” I propose that they knew “of what Paul spoke” from their own experience or observation (1 Cor 5:1-5; 2 Cor 2:1-11) of Satan in the latter’s function as an agent of God (Thiselton). On the basis of the Satan theme common to these passages and 2 Cor 12:7, I propose that Paul’s thorn is the prick of conscience, his lingering *remorse* (*re-morsus*, “re-bite”) over his collusion in the stoning of Stephen and his persecution of the church. Such an interpretation I take to be reinforced by (a) the imagery for *pain of conscience* as a “prick,” or “bite,” or “gnawing” pain attested in ancient Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and in modern Western, textual traditions; and (b) the convergence, in 1 Timothy 1, of the thematics of conscience, Satan, and Paul’s past persecutory activity. Such a diagnosis of Paul’s thorn as lingering remorse suggests a revision of Krister Stendahl’s diagnosis of Paul’s post-Damascus Road conscience as “robust.” Rather, his formerly, misleadingly robust conscience is now healthily “chastened,” and informs his use of “conscience” language in, e.g., Romans and the Corinthian Correspondence.

- **Presidential Address: A Vision for the Future of CETA**  
*J. Richard Middleton, Northeastern Seminary at Roberts Wesleyan College*  
Respondent: *August Konkel, McMaster Divinity College*

**CETA 2014 Business Meeting (10:15-10:45 am)**

## Break (10:45-11:00 am)

### Paper Presentation Session #2 (11:00-12:00 noon)

- **Trauma in Genesis 16**  
*Marina Hofman, Wycliffe College*

Trauma Theory examines the impact of a traumatic experience on the victim's psyche and its influence on his or her reasoning and subsequent behaviour. With the development of Trauma Theory as a biblical interpretive method, one might ask: How would our view of Genesis 16 be impacted by a Trauma Theory reading? This paper seeks to enrich our characterization of Sarai and Hagar and our understanding of Genesis 16 by examining the impact of Sarai's struggle and suffering as an infertile woman, Hagar's experience as a concubine, her abuse at the hand of Sarai and then Hagar's desperate act of running away. It examines the role of the divine messenger in giving voice to Hagar's pain and his instruction for Hagar to return to the place of her abuse. Finally, this paper discusses how we might draw on a trauma perspective of Genesis 16 to help us to address and respond appropriately to the suffering of people in our church and social communities.

- **Biblical Violence is Not an 'Exegetical' Issue: Christian Ethics and the Boundaries of Biblicalism**  
*Anthony Siegrist, Prairie College*

It is no secret that the Bible, especially the Old Testament, contains accounts of horrific violence—not just the violence of the battlefield, but also violence against civilians and defenseless children. Neither is it a secret that these accounts have been used by self-identified Christians to rationalize horrific actions throughout history. None of this is new. Neither, as such, are judgments like that of Eric Seibert, advanced in his recent book *The Violence of Scripture*, that reading these accounts requires critical appraisal.

In this paper I argue that Evangelicals generally should be concerned about how these biblical episodes are interpreted and rhetorically employed. This arises naturally from a gospel-centered theology. On the other hand, the way scholars like Seibert engage these issues is theologically anemic. We might say it is 'overly' Evangelical. It seems to ignore much of the Christian tradition's prior modes of interpretation, specifically the hermeneutical implications of the doctrine of the Trinity.

I argue that the Trinity functions as a hermeneutical key for addressing issues of violence. This can be seen in Jim Reimer's simple suggestion that while God is love, God is not a pacifist. Approaches that fail to see the dynamism in Scripture, avoiding the way the New Testament engages the Old are essentially unitarian. I'll refer to the work of Hans Boersma as well as the current debate surrounding the social trinity to develop this point. The upshot of my argument is that the issue of biblical violence is not so much an exegetical issue as a theological one. The result will be a paper that engages a number of disciplines and contributes to an important ongoing discussion in Canadian Evangelical circles.

## Lunch (12:00-1:30 pm)

### Paper Presentation Session #3 (1:30-3:00 pm)

- **Express Yourself! Jazz and the Church's Mission**  
*Bradley K. Broadhead and Jonathan Numada, McMaster Divinity College*

Psychologists and sociologists have observed that individualizing and atomizing elements of Western culture undermines "ontological security" and creates "ontological anxiety." This paper argues that the Church's solution to these problems lies in a return to community through a jazz-shaped perspective on mission.

We begin with a survey of Paul's teachings on church unity and submission, as well as his descriptions of his motivations for ministry. In particular, we focus on Paul's body of Christ analogy, his teachings on spiritual

gifts, and on the church's relationship to the world. These descriptions are set in contrast to some of the sociological, cultural, and psychological phenomena facing post-industrial society as described by Anthony Giddens, Iva Ilouz, and Jennifer DeSilva.

The social dynamics of jazz music serve as an analogy for the ways participation, appreciation, and collective purpose can exemplify mutual submission. The multiple factors at play in a successful jazz performance establish analogically that creating an opportunity for individual self-expression without community is impossible. Jazz embodies practically the biblical concept that contribution to mission requires mutual submission; each musician must have the courage to step forward to demonstrate their skill and the humility to yield to others to realize the collective project of music. Similarly, participating in mission entails de-centering the self to Christ and others within the context of human community while paradoxically requiring the full expression of an individual's God-given gifts and abilities.

- **The West and the Rest: Fresh Opportunities for Theology in the West**  
*David Kirwa Tarus, McMaster Divinity College*

Modern scholars of Christianity have pointed out that the Christian center of gravity has shifted from the global West and North (Europe and North America) to the global South and East (Africa, Asia, and Latin America). Andrew Walls, Philip Jenkins, Lammin Sanneh, and others have documented this shift effectively. This shift has produced, in the words of Andrew Walls, a post-Christian West and a post-Western Christianity. However, with the millions of new migrants every year the global church is literally coming to Europe and North America. Recent research shows that three-quarters of all immigrants in the United States are Christian. Mark R. Gornik, in *Word Made Global* (2011), noted that when he began writing his book he was not able to locate "a single article or book on the subject of African churches in North America." Gornik's observation poses the question, Is the post-Christian West ready for the Christian rest? Using African immigrants as a case in point, this paper explores ways African immigrants "do" theology and what that means for the church and the academy in North America. The paper highlights first the demographics of South to North migrations; second, the religious presuppositions that African migrants bring to North America; third, the implications of "African migrant theology" to the Church and the academy in North America. The paper concludes with two suggestions for way forward: re-orient theology, and re-order the academy.

- **The Christomorphic Kingdom: Improving Inaugurated Eschatology**  
*Jon Stovell, McMaster Divinity College*

Inaugurated eschatology enjoys the position of a broad consensus among biblical scholars and theologians as the best interpretation of the concept of the kingdom of God, and rightly so. Nevertheless, inaugurated eschatology is not perfect. It suffers from some systemic limitations that hinder it from becoming as theologically robust as it might otherwise be. These limitations can, however, be overcome, and it behooves us as scholars to consider how best to do that.

This paper argues that focussing almost exclusively on the temporal structure of the advent of the kingdom of God has had several subtle but significant detrimental effects on inaugurated eschatology as classically formulated, but that if more attention is paid to the patterns involved in the implementation of the kingdom of God—to *how* it comes rather than merely to *when* it comes—then the shortcomings of inaugurated eschatology that have been evident to date can be overcome.

In support of this argument, this paper first offers a critical analysis of key features of inaugurated eschatology in order to identify where the weaknesses lie. The dominance of the matter of chronology, the one-sided emphasis on the NT's eschatological dualism to the neglect of its assumptive-redemptive theology, a tendency to conflate kingdom with triumph, and vague articulation of the relation between present and future modes of the kingdom's realization will be identified as outstanding sources of difficulty. In its second part, the paper sketches a proposal for understanding the kingdom of God in which inaugurated eschatology is maintained in full, but is incorporated into a richer model where the patterns involved in Jesus' first and second advents provide the paradigm for the patterns of the kingdom subsequent to those advents. The proposed model will be

shown to correct inaugurated eschatology's identified shortcomings and thereby to enable new and deeper insights into the nature and characteristics of the kingdom of God.

### **Break (3:00-3:15 pm)**

### **Paper Presentation Session #4 (3:15-4:15 pm)**

- **Knowing with a Purpose: John Calvin's Pietistic Knowledge of God in the *Institutes***  
*Lane Scruggs, Wycliffe College*

Why Calvin-on-knowledge of God now? This paper aims to address this question along two parallel paths. First, in the mangle of *modern versus postmodern* understandings of "knowledge of God" within our current Western milieu, the balance that Calvin strikes between subjective and objective knowledge – without the bondage of these very contemporary categories – is timely and erudite. Second, the connection between the knowledge of God and the piety of the believer is occasionally drowned out in writings on Calvin's theology and this knowledge-piety marriage offers an intensely practical challenge to the reader who engages Calvin as the pastor, exegete, and civil magistrate he is, rather than merely as a Reformed Dogmatician. This paper intends to propose Calvin's work to the wider Evangelical church as a solution to the impasse between modern propositional arguments for knowledge of God and postmodern non-foundational, experiential knowledge of God. This will be accomplished by rejecting the conception of knowledge as a body of information mastered by the human intellect and proposing a form of piety that is not empty ritual, but responsive to God's works and Word. Through examining parts of the *Institutes*, this paper is theological and historical in scope; additionally, it aims to have Calvin address the contemporary theological context with pastoral concern.

- **Mormon Trinitarianism: A New Tritheistic Challenge to Trinitarian Orthodoxy**  
*Sanjay Merchant, Moody Bible Institute*

Mormon scholars David Paulsen and Brett McDonald contend that Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), taught a form of social trinitarianism, which they have termed "Elyonic monotheism," according to which the Father, Son, and Spirit are ontologically independent gods who share a covenantal unity that is sufficiently robust to constitute divine oneness by biblical and creedal standards. Against trinitarian orthodoxy, they argue that intra-divine love precludes consubstantiality. The operative assumption is that genuine, interpersonal relationality requires that the divine persons encounter one another as discrete others. Paulsen and McDonald add that the challenge of divine plurality for trinitarianism is not to avoid the inference that the Father, Son, and Spirit are ontologically independent but that they are ontologically graded. In other words, the problem of divine plurality is not the problem of individuation without particularization but the problem of individuation without diminution.

I reply that their purely covenantal construal of divine triunity renders the Trinity voluntary and, therefore, contingent. It is unlikely, moreover, that free will—understood either in libertarian or compatibilist terms—is necessary for genuine love between individuals. Finally, I respond that Mormon tritheism (or something similar) has surfaced historically and has been found, by the preponderance of the Christian theological tradition, to be unbiblical and uncreedal. I survey, in particular, the tritheistic debates prompted by the miaphysite polymath John Philoponus and the nominalist Roscelin of Compiègne.

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