



9:00–10:00am – Theology Session – “Christian Theology, Creation, and Ecology”

Moderator: Dr. Colin Toffelmire, Associate Professor of Old Testament, School of Ministry Chair

Death and Resurrection: A Christological Analysis of Compost and Soil

- Dallas Loewen

In this paper, I explore the way healthy topsoil is necessary for all created life and as such, the preservation and proper caretaking of topsoil, I argue, is a theological matter. I discuss Biblical themes of incarnation, resurrection and life-to-death cycles, particularly in relationship to the ecosystems within topsoil who depends on decomposition. The Biblical vision of flourishing for all creatures demands action from God’s people to care for the land and all who depend on it. In this paper, I will conclude that reading the scriptures through an agrarian lens can help restore humanity’s right relationship to the rest of the created world. Using both scientific data on the importance of topsoil and theological analysis on the importance of non-human creation, this paper contributes to the understanding of how we might embody the biblical mandate to care for creation in practical, even interventionist ways.

Wisdom Literature & Creation

- Caleb Moore

The Bible's Wisdom Literature speaks deeply about creation through metaphor and imagery. In this video, I interviewed and explored these ideas with some of my local congregation and formed it into a video that portrayed these themes and ideas brought out through conversation. The questions I asked my participants are as follows:

1. How do you see the Bible’s wisdom literature teaching humanity to care for creation?
2. Where and how do you see the wisdom and wonder embed in creation? (This can be answered both through your personal thoughts but also through reading the scriptures of Job, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs)
3. Where has humanity mistreated and gotten away from the Bible’s wisdom in how we are to live within creation?
4. Finally, how ought we, as Christ's followers, to live in God’s creation?

Angels and Humanity: Messengers and Stewards joined in praise in the Celestial Hierarchy and Karl Barth

- Russell D. Clarke

The significance of creation stewardship is often overlooked in many churches, yet this is central to understanding humanity as made in God's image. Furthermore, angelic beings are frequently ignored in evangelical churches beyond an acknowledgment of their existence as divine messengers mentioned in biblical texts. Angelic nature presents an enigma—spiritual beings who occupy exalted positions in proximity to God yet seem inferior to human beings in that they are not made in God's image. Thus, Angelology has the potential to contribute to a better understanding of creation, God's plan for creation, and humanity's place in creation. Although the earth is the primary theatre of human praise, all creation praises God; thus, there is an opportunity to explore the heavenly element of creation and how this relates to humanity. Angels are spiritual creatures who act as God's entourage in heaven and messengers on earth, providing a point of contact with humanity between earth and heaven; therefore, angelology contributes to a broader theology of creation. To better understand angels and heaven in this discussion, two key texts on angels will be explored and examined: Pseudo-Dionysius's Celestial Hierarchy and Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics. Humanity is called to be stewards of creation, which in addition to caring for the earth, means joining all of creation, including the angels of heaven, in praising God the Creator.

10:10–11:10am – Social Sciences Session 2 – “Student Research in the Social Sciences”

Moderator: Dr. Rodrigo Dal Ben, Assistant Professor of Psychology

The Impacts of Coming out on Mental Health for Gender, Sexual, and/or Romantic Minorities and Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour

- Karanah Defante

Few studies consider the impact of coming out on mental health for those who are Gender, Sexual, and/or Romantic (GSR) minority and Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Colour (BIPOC). Twelve participants ages 18 to 29 who identify as GSR-BIPOC participated in a semi-structured narrative interview. Thematic analysis of interview transcripts resulted in six major themes: 1) Being a part of a community serves many purposes for GSR-BIPOCs; 2) Deciding to come out depends on multiple and complex factors and requires various coming out strategies; 3) GSR and BIPOC identity; 4) Discrimination experiences; 5) Mental Health and Resiliency; and 6) Generative values of GSR-BIPOCs. This study also used redemption and contamination narratives in participants' meaning-making. Narrative analysis suggests that participants experienced contamination through culture and norms, which negatively impacted their sense of belonging and acceptance throughout many spaces. Fifty percent of participants spoke of the fear of expressing 2SLGBTQ+ identity due to many factors, such as hiding or portraying different identities to others to cope with oppressive systems. Conversely, all

participants told stories demonstrating resistance against socially contaminating narratives by constructing redemptive narratives grounded in communion, agency, and resiliency. Seventy-five percent of participants experienced finding a safe place in a distinctive community that provided connection and belonging with others. Similarly, many participants also expressed gaining enhanced agency because coming out fostered a sense of self-acceptance, well-being, promoting relationships, and resiliency. Finally, some participants described well-being grounding in continuous advocacy for GSR and BIPOC awareness and acceptance.

The Church and Poverty Complex: Insights from Multidisciplinary Perspectives

- Nabila Maliki

Systemic oppression, an irrefutable factor contributing to poverty post-COVID-19, can be linked to the barriers contributing to reducing the efficacy of poverty reduction. This paper investigates how the church, broadly conceived, has addressed systemic oppression to respond to poverty among marginalized groups. An unstructured focus group with faculty researchers from different disciplines provides a multi-layered perspective on the church's response to poverty. The participants responded to vignettes addressing the experiences of the LGBTQ+ community, women immigrants, and the over-representation of visible minorities in the criminal justice system. The analysis demonstrated that the extent to which churches may approach the issues concerning the LGBTQ+ community is dependent on whether churches take an affirming stance. Concerns underlying tenets of some Christian doctrines may be at the root of the ethical problems that influence how the church addresses the salient needs of newcomers. The participants noted how these responses could trend towards commodifying a person and therefore miss the substantive relational factors of the dimensions of poverty. Participants also discussed the bifurcated personality of the Canadian Church and how this bifurcation exposes striking contradictions at the heart of core Christian values. In sum, the complex nature of the church's history and its beliefs/values concerning its roles and responsibilities to society characterize the heart of the church's response to poverty. This research aims to advance discussions concerning the church and poverty response, gaining insight into the causes of the disconnect between the church and diverse communities.

2:10–3:10pm – Social Sciences Session 3 – “Faculty Research in the Social Sciences”

Moderator: Dr. Joel Thiessen, Professor of Sociology, Social Sciences Chair, Director of Flourishing Congregations Institute

An Open Phonotactic and Orthotactic Probabilities Calculator

- Dr. Rodrigo Dal Ben

Language development and processing rely on multiple sources of information, such as linguistic regularities from spoken and written language. For instance, phonotactic or

orthotactic probabilities, or the chance of a given syllable occurring in a given position of a word can influence several psychological processes. Phonotactic probabilities have been shown to influence speech segmentation, word recognition, word learning, speech production, rating of word-likeness, reading and spelling, and cognitive processes such as memory and decision making. Any language has several words (type) with varying frequency (token). From this rich set of information, the calculation of phonotactic and orthotactic probabilities requires two information: 1) representative and up to date linguistic corpora and 2) a powerful computational software. Building on open corpora for several languages (e.g., sublex corpora from English, Chinese, Dutch, Portuguese), we are currently developing an open source phonotactic/orthotactic calculator able to handle linguistic corpora from any given language. Our calculator segments words into n-grams (1-, 2-, 3-grams) and calculates their probability of occurrence (type and token based) on each position of the words. From the probabilities, users will be able to either 1) calculate the probabilities for a list of words, or 2) create words/non-words that follow a given probability range and n-gram size. Both operations will allow researchers from any part of the world to quickly assess the suitability of their existing stimuli and to create stimuli with properties that are tightly controlled and that are relevant for their research.

The Impact of Racist Public Discourse on Racialized Individuals: Expanding Ideas of Harm

- Dr. Monetta Bailey

This study investigates the impact of public discourse on race and racism on the identity formation and actions of racialized immigrant individuals in Canada. The sociology of knowledge suggests that people socially construct and act upon their world through language. As such, public discourse, which represents a way of knowing about the social world, impacts both identity formation and social action. Whether institutional discourse, such as policies and guidelines, or public discourse, such as everyday discussions or media messages, discourse is a means by which people gain knowledge. There has been an increase in racist discourse in both mass and social media. Current discourse is guided by both objective data, such as media reports on increase in police reported racialized hate crimes, as well as a constructionist view, focusing on the ways in which racialized immigration has been increasingly constructed as a problem in society. This paper discusses the impact of public discourse on race and racism on racialized/immigrant individuals in Canada. The data presented come from focus groups conducted as part of a larger study which addressed how individuals interact with larger discourses to guide their identity and govern their behaviour and practices.

Flourishing Agency: Identifying and Nurturing the Critical Resilience and Performance Strengths in Business Students

Dr. Alex Sanderson (presenter), Dr. Wayne Hammond, and Dr. Murray MacTavish

The “Flourishing Life” framework was used to support the development of 10 business students’ ability to thrive, by focusing on building capacity to flourish, through the provision of information on personal strengths, resources, and ability to persevere (Hammond, 2019). The Flourishing Life Survey was administered at beginning and completion of the course to better understand individual patterns of development (<https://flourishinglife.com/assessment-and-tools>). Each student was provided their initial flourishing profile and mentored to promote a deeper understanding of strengths, across three domains: 1) mastery skills (e.g., communication), 2) personal strengths (e.g., self-awareness), and 3) environmental strengths (e.g., mentors). Student responses on the pre-post Flourishing Life Questionnaire (FLQ) showed considerable progress in developing their personal strengths related to one’s ability for positive self-esteem, sense of purpose, self-management, and other awareness. The student responses also reflected an enhanced capacity to develop strong rapport in their personal, school and learning domains. Finally, the students' responses reflected considerable progress in developing a deeper understanding and ability to draw upon the performance soft skills and character traits research has identified as critical for developing one’s competence. Additionally, students responded to eight semi open-ended questions regarding their learning and mentorship experiences. Most students indicated the program produced clear and positive gains, stating they learned key information about their strengths, their skills in relation to future employment and personal areas for growth. Importantly, they also expressed they had overcome challenges and/or gained self-awareness about their ability to persevere.