

Ambrose Research Conference 2024

Theology Session Abstracts

Theology Session 1 (Room L2084)

Shannon Zumwalt, “The Lamb of God: Jesus’ Expanded Identity in Revelation”

In John, Acts, and 1 Peter, Jesus is referred to as an “amnos,” a sacrificial lamb. Throughout the book of Revelation, Jesus doesn’t lose his sacrificial nature yet his identity expands to being an “arnion,” a lamb without inherent connotation. The lack of inferred purpose of the Lamb in Revelation releases Jesus’ identity from the bounds of a sacrificial lamb to be open to greater revelation. Jesus is identified as the Lamb dozens of times across Revelation when he is revealed as a shepherd, a victor, and a husband, among other characteristics. By exploring these instances and their meaning, the shift in language from Jesus being an “amnos” lamb in the rest of the New Testament to an “arnion” lamb in Revelation is not insignificant, but rather one of the means through which Jesus’ expanded identity is revealed.

Beth Stovell, “The Glory of this Present House: Temple Conceptualization, Persian Imperial Power, and Hope in Haggai”

Discussions of temple are central to the message of Haggai. Through its depiction of the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple, Haggai represents elements of empire, power, and politics due to the relationship between the temple and Persian imperial power. Using conceptual metaphor theory, this chapter will examine how Persian conceptions of temples and temple building work alongside Jewish conceptions of temples and temple building (or re-building) in Haggai. Examination of the linguistic structures in Haggai will show how power is positioned within the text through language. Based on this analysis, the chapter will further examine how these temple conceptions locate Haggai within the broader Book of the Twelve, including themes of hope in the Twelve.

Theology Session 2 (Room L2084)

Shannon Zumwalt, “Return to Creatureliness: How the Disability Experience Informs and Corrects our Understanding of Humanity”

Since creation, humans have been recorded throughout the biblical narrative as struggling with our identity as members of creation, yet set apart from the rest of creation. Eating of the tree of knowledge initiates the human narrative of rejecting creatureliness and striving for godlikeness. This narrative continues on today as humans reject our interdependence and rather strive for independence and superiority, inherently contradictory to our created order and purpose. By first examining this biblical example of denying creatureliness among others, exploring the disability experience can then be undertaken. One of the gifts of a faithful understanding of disability is the encouragement of recognition and appreciation of all humanity's creatureliness. Meaningfully considering and appreciating the disability experience can help all people embrace their intended and actual creatureliness in light of the biblical narrative and our context here and now.

Caleb Moore, “A Guilty Canadian Church - Bonhoeffer's Theology Responsibility and Living in Truth and Reconciliation Canada”

Throughout Bonhoeffer's work, there is a deep seeded theology of responsibility. Coming from an understanding of the cross through a Christological lens, Bonhoeffer sees a freedom to and not from responsibility but a freedom to serve one's neighbors. As Nazi Germany rose and the German church mostly aligned itself with it, Bonhoeffer struggled to understand what a responsible Christian and church would do. A theology of responsibility is to actively work with and for one's neighbor, to seek the face of Jesus in the least of these. For the last two decades Canada has been on a path of reconciliation and truth telling when it comes to its history of colonization. The church within Canada was an agent of much of this pain, suffering and death. With the understanding of Bonhoeffer's theology of responsibility and the freedom to serve, which includes being guilty, I will explore how the Canadian Church can seek a Christ-like, responsible response to the painful truths being reveals and how the TRC provides a framework for such a response.

Within this paper will include the conversation about multiple Bonhoeffer works, including Ethics and Sanctorum Communio and Discipleship. For our conversation on the Canadian situation and responses, I will engage with several of Ray Aldred's work, Richard Twiss, and the summary of the TRC, A Knock on The Door.

Russell Clarke, “John Wesley and the Communion of Saints: sanctified people called into fellowship as the body of Christ”

The Communion of Saints has been a confession of the Christian faith for centuries, the fellowship of believers past and present who constitute the mystical Body of Christ—the Church. Recent developments in Ecclesiology have sought to provide a greater understanding of the differences in beliefs and practices that once divided Christians into a sense of shared unity among the various church traditions. It was always the ministry of Jesus, through the work of the Holy Spirit, to bind together diverse and disparate groups of people into the common community of love, and in so doing become witnesses to the life and peace of God's kingdom. John Wesley's teachings on Christian living emphasize both personal holiness and communal participation, all under the direction of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies and unifies the individual disciples of Christ into the people of God. This paper argues that Christian Perfect, as Wesley terms the Christ-centred life of sanctification, is the fulfillment of the biblical promise of God's covenantal community and intended as a participatory practice to be experienced in corporate fellowship together with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. In essence, sanctification and communion go hand-in-hand as the inner transformation of the Christian life enables the experience of authentic unity and communion nurtures the growth of Christian living.