

THE 2020 STUDENT RELIGIOUS STUDIES CONFERENCE
Sponsored by the
Midwest Region Society of Biblical Literature

February 7, 2020
Saint Mary's College
Notre Dame, IN

Friday, February 7

10:30-11:45 a.m. **Registration** **Spes Unica 313**

11:45 a.m. -12:00 p.m. **Orientation** **Spes Unica 313**

12:00-1:30 p.m. **SESSION ONE**

Chair: Somebody Spes Unica 313

Jonathan Baker, Andrews University
Joshua 2, 6: Rahab as the Fulfillment of the Israelite Covenant

Kieun Chung, Andrews University
The More Important Miracle

Nicolás R. Chaij, Andrews University
Yahweh Justified Before The Sons of God: Cosmic Conflict as the Key to Job

Chair: Somebody Spes Unica 339

Mark Culajay, Judson University
An Exegesis of Matthew 15:1-20

Erin McLaughlin, Saint Xavier University
Exploring the Sotah Ritual in the Gospel of James

Paul J. E. Cox, University of Notre Dame
Developing a Vocabulary of Salvation: A Function of the Markan Prologue (1.1-15)

1:30-2:00 p.m. **BREAK** **Spes Unica 313**

2:00-3:45 p.m. **SEMINAR** **Spes Unica 313**

3:45-4:00 p.m.

BREAK

Spes Unica 313

4:00-5:30 p.m.

SESSION TWO

Chair: Somebody Spes Unica 313

Nathon Hilton, Andrews University

“Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh:” Identity and the Divine Name as Linguistic Phenomenon in Exodus 3:11-18

Frentzen Pakpahan, Andrews University

Moses on the Mountaintop: The Prayer and Intercession of God’s Intermediary in Exodus 32:7-14

Briana Maund, University of Notre Dame

“And This Thing Became a Sin:” The Golden Calves in Exodus and 1 Kings

Chair: Somebody Spes Unica 339

Carista Ritchie, Judson University

An Exegesis of Ephesians 2

Philip J. Lowe, Denver Seminary

Paul and Paraenesis: Ancient-Rhetorical Studies and the Connection of Praise and Paraenesis in the Book of Colossians

JC Schroeder, Grand Rapids Theological Society

Early Christian Identity Formation and Union with Christ in Colossians 3:1-11

Chair: Somebody Spes Unica 335

Arsany Paul, University of Notre Dame

Fr. Matthew the Poor’s Alexandrian Tradition of Theosis

Joseph Lim, University of Notre Dame

Thomas Aquinas on Human Law and Free Self-Determination

Stephen Evensen, University of Notre Dame

Is Virtue a Basic Good? A Reply to the New Natural Lawyers

5:30 p.m.

DINNER

SMC CAFETERIA

ABSTRACTS

Jonathan Baker, Andrews University

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Joshua 2, 6: Rahab as the Fulfillment of the Israelite Covenant

The Torah and historical books of the Old Testament focus on the covenant made between God and Abraham first found in Genesis 12, and how this covenant is carried out in Abraham's descendants, the nation of Israel. While there are many references throughout the Torah detailing the legal rights that existed for Canaanites who sought acceptance into the Israelite community, much less work has been dedicated to the role of the covenant in relation to "Canaanite foreigners." The story of Rahab in Joshua 2 and 6 serves as an important narrative example of how God's covenant with Israel affected Canaanites who sought to become part of Israel and follow Yahweh

Nicolás R. Chaij, Andrews University

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Yahweh Justified Before the Sons of God: Cosmic Conflict as the Key to Job

Job 1:6-12, the conversation between God and Satan, is vital to understanding the book's narrative. In it the reader is given a behind-the-scenes look at the source of Job's suffering. It is the point that drives the entire story forward. This paper demonstrates that the heart of Job 1:6-12 is a cosmic conflict between God and Satan. This is accomplished through two main focuses. First of all, the identity of the "Sons of God" is explored and explained to be a title of representation or authority. This illuminates the identity of "the Satan" and provides necessary context for his conversation with God. Second, this conversation itself is broken down and explained. It is shown to be highly antagonistic. Satan uses terms that declare unmistakably that he is the legal sovereign of the earth. To this God provides a counterclaim, namely Job. It is then that Satan maligns the character of God before the Sons of God. The stage for the narrative of Job is then set and shown to be a cosmic conflict between God and Satan that centers on God's character.

Kieun Chung, Andrews University

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The More Important Miracle

There are many overt parallels between the ministries of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. Elijah is well known for his many prayers throughout his ministry, his prolific record of prayers stands in stark contrast to the comparative paucity of prayer found in Elisha's ministry. The Bible scarcely mentions Elisha praying at all. As one of the two instances which depict Elisha's prayers, 2 King 2 especially emphasizes his communication with God. Within this passage, the specific prayers of Elisha are in focus three separate times.

This paper analyzes Elisha's prayers, specifically in relation to the chiasmic structure I discovered in the chapter, which even further emphasizes his prayers. Interestingly, the prayer and the miracle that are in the center of the chiasm focus on blinding rather than the healing of sight. When comparing Elisha's prayers and the outline of the text, additional spiritual and theological implications such as revealing God's ultimate solution through Elisha's action and the will of God to equally care for both Israelites and Gentiles are indicated. Elisha's ministry is also more clearly elucidated through the irony and humor revealed in the story and the structure of the passage.

Paul J. E. Cox, University of Notre Dame
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Developing a Vocabulary of Salvation: A Function of the Markan Prologue (1.1-15)

This paper argues that the prologue of the Gospel of Mark (1.1-15) provides its readers with a perspective for comprehending the theological effect of the crucifixion of Jesus. The gospel develops the perspective by imbuing certain words and phrases with narrative weight in the prologue and reusing them at Jesus' crucifixion. The paper focuses primarily on the Greek words behind the concepts of spirit, baptism, forgiveness of sins, and repentance. The paper concludes that the Gospel of Mark invites the reader to understand the crucifixion as extending the effect of Jesus' baptism at the Jordan on him to all his followers.

Mark Culajay, Judson University
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An Exegesis of Matthew 15:1-20

This Exegesis of Matthew 15:1-20, details a situation between Jesus and the Pharisees. While these incidents are not uncommon in the gospels, this particular incident shows the Pharisees way of thinking and Jesus's ability to counter their arguments. The issue the Pharisees bring up is the issue of ritual hand washing, ritual hand washing only applied to the Pharisees and priests, no one else. This shows that the Pharisees not only believe themselves to be more "spiritual" than Jesus and his followers, but also goes to show that they truly do not understand what true worship actually is.

Stephen Evensen, University of Notre Dame
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Is Virtue a Basic Good? A Reply to the New Natural Lawyers

Since Elizabeth Anscombe published "Modern Moral Philosophy," it has been a common assumption among moral philosophers that virtue ethics and deontology are rival normative theories. One particular version of deontology, colloquially known as "new natural law" (NNLT), has been framed as an alternative moral theory to Kantianism and consequentialism. My paper challenges the assumption that virtue and deontological theories are rivals by arguing for the complementarity of NNLT and virtue ethics. First, I show why NNLT is a deontological theory and describe how NNLT decides which goods are basic goods. Second, I offer a number of reasons why NNLT should see virtue as a basic good. If virtue is desirable for its own sake, as

I argue it is, and NNLT does not identify virtue as a basic good, then NNLT suffers from an inability to account for a widespread moral intuition. Third, I identify objections to my claim that NNLT should see virtue as a basic good and demonstrate that they do not succeed.

Nathon Hilton, Andrews University

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"Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh": Identity and the Divine Name as Linguistic Phenomenon in Exodus 3:11-18

The enigmatic four-letter morpheme employed to address the name of God in Exodus 3 has been the object of intense debate among scholars within Judaism and Christianity for various centuries. Instead of interpreting the text isolated from its literary and linguistic context as some theologians have done in the past, this paper delves into Exodus 3 story by analyzing the theological themes of identity, relationship, and remembrance advanced in verses 11 through 18 as they elucidate the implications of the name of God in verse 14. In addition, I dive into the theological and philosophical implications of various key words in light of the Angel's dialogue with Moses to argue that the name of God appears within Moses's story as a linguistic phenomenon that aims to attest of God's willingness to intercede for Moses and Israel despite their shortcomings. Instead of being apprehended as a distant concept lying beyond human cognition, the name of God in Exodus 3:11-18 suggests God's continual immanence in the created world; a world within which the Divine carefully intercedes for the people "saved" from the powers of mental affliction and physical oppression.

Joseph Lim, University of Notre Dame

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Thomas Aquinas on Human Law and Free Self-Determination

In the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas claims political rulers are sufficiently prudent to recognize what is good for their subjects. Hence, these rulers may direct their subjects' acts as they see fit. Contemporary adherents of Thomas may conclude that citizens must follow their political authorities' legal dictates without fail. Yet Thomas also suggests that, in certain situations, citizens may judge what is good for them contrary to their rulers' dictates and justifiably act accordingly. If so, citizenly judgments ought to be taken seriously in legal deliberations. This picture of rational exchange offers a promising account for democratic politics.

Philip J. Lowe, Denver Seminary

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Paul and Paraenesis: Ancient-Rhetorical Studies and the Connection of Praise and Paraenesis in the Book of Colossians

A myriad of literature has been dedicated to the study and discussion of Colossians 1:15-20. However, recent advances in rhetorical studies beckon a fresh evaluation of the text and its intent. The question of "what" this text is communicating has generated much research, however, this paper will argue that we must first question how the text is being communicated before

evaluating its content and intent. Utilizing both rhetorical and biblical studies, this work will argue that there is an intimate connection between the rhetorical hymn of Colossians 1:15-20 and the paraenetic material throughout the remainder of the epistle. More specifically, it will be demonstrated that the paraenesis of Colossians is a pragmatic protrusion from the theology within the rhetorical hymn, and that it is intended to direct those “in Christ” in their operation within his domain.

Briana Maund, University of Notre Dame
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“And This Thing Became a Sin:” The Golden Calves in Exodus and 1 Kings

This paper will use a literary-theological approach to examine how the account of the golden calves in Exodus 32 and 1 Kings 12 are related in terms of sin and atonement. In one sense, the two stories are parallel accounts of the “original sin” of a nation. The original Israelites turn to idolatry as the covenant is written, and Jeroboam installs his idolatrous cult at the moment of the inauguration of the Northern Kingdom. But in another sense, Jeroboam's calves revive the sin of the Exodus golden calf, hundreds of years down the line. The key difference between these two events is that while Moses's intercession allows the Israelites to move forward after their idolatry, Jeroboam's sin remains unrequited, eventually leading to the downfall of the kingdom.

Erin McLaughlin, Saint Xavier University
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Exploring the Sotah Ritual in the Gospel of James

Questions surrounding the virginal conception of Jesus were prominent in early Christianity. This paper explores the trial by ordeal undertaken by Mary and Joseph against the form of the Sotah ritual in Numbers 5. The Jewish religious tradition details that the ordeal should be driven by jealousy of a woman's husband and would result in a divine judgment of the woman's infidelity and/or virginity. However, from this apocryphal gospel, we find that the process by which the ritual was delivered was unusual and was void of certain key elements to justify Mary and Joseph's trial. In the Gospel of James, this ritual functions as literary proof of Mary's virginity and Jesus' conception through divine intervention.

Frentzen Pakpahan, Andrews University
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Moses on the Mountaintop: The Prayer and Intercession of God's Intermediary in Exodus 32:7-14

The incident of the golden calf marks a pivotal turning point in the history between God and His covenant people. The newly minted Israelite people despair of the prolonged absence of their leader and mediator Moses and turn to an unacceptable alternative that directly contravenes their recent promise to obey God in all His laws. This paper considers and examines the enormity of Israel's sin, as well as the consequent rejection by God of His people. Furthermore, this exegetical study focuses on Ex. 32:7-14, the first dialogue between God and Moses wherein they argue over the fate of the Israelites, and where Moses successfully intercedes on behalf of his

people. By an in-depth comparison of the the text's characterization of the relationship of God and Moses with that of Moses and Aaron, this paper explores the nature of prayer and intercession and its effect on the petitioner, concluding that Moses becomes God's acting functionary and channels and tempers divine wrath.

Arsany Paul, University of Notre Dame
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Fr. Matthew the Poor's Alexandrian Tradition of Theosis

This paper outlines Fr. Matthew's terminology and definition of theosis which is based biblically and patristically on the concept of union with God. It then focuses on the coherence of Fr. Matthew on the doctrine of deification through his use of the writings of St. Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373), especially via two themes: first, that the Incarnation is the doctrinal basis for deification, and second, the sacraments of baptism, repentance, and the eucharist. The paper concludes with Fr. Matthew's focus on the union with God and spiritual ecstasy based on the writings of St. Macarius the Great (300-391).

Carista Ritchie, Judson University
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An Exegesis of Ephesians 2

An exegesis of Ephesians 2 through the analysis of the historical and literary context, as well as the form of the book and the phrase by phrase study of the passage reveals the message in this chapter that God transforms the lives of individuals in completion and totality. This can be seen in the spiritual transformation that occurs through the grace-filled process of salvation. The change results in a new, righteous lifestyle. Additionally, God transforms lives by removing the divide between Jews and gentiles and bringing them into unity, thus including gentiles in his promises through the sacrifice of Christ.

JC Schroeder, Grand Rapids Theological Society
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Early Christian Identity Formation and Union with Christ in Colossians 3:1-11

The author of Colossians seeks to shape the identity of the Colossian Christian community by emphasizing their union with Christ and exhorting them to adopt an eschatological orientation. Both union and affective orientation are the grounds and motivation for the community's envisioned patterns of behavior. The identity which the author seeks to establish is the foundation for the existence and function of the Christian community as a new creation work of God.

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