

2024-2025

The JOURNAL
of the
UNION FACULTY
FORUM

VOL 44



Letter from the Faculty Forum President

The Faculty Forum encourages a more unified university by providing opportunities that bring together faculty from different schools and departments. Meetings of the Faculty Forum organization gather recommendations and concerns from faculty across campus, and then the leaders of Forum communicate these to the President and Provost of the University. The *Journal of the Union Faculty Forum* (*JUFF*) brings together scholarly and creative works from faculty across disciplines within a single volume. This provides a glimpse of how Union faculty in very different fields express their shared faith through scholarship and creativity. Sometimes links to faith are expected. At other times, you may encounter colleagues making innovative and insightful connections to faith outside their academic disciplines. I hope that this new volume of the *JUFF* will inspire you to make new connections between belief and practice within your own discipline and beyond. Perhaps some of these insights will result in future submissions to the *JUFF*.

The opportunities that Faculty Forum provides would not be possible without the consistent work of many of my colleagues. Thank you to Georg Pingen and Janna Chance (Vice Presidents) and Mollie Carter (Secretary) for their faithful work with me in meetings with the University administration. Finally, thank you to Chris Bailey (*JUFF* Editor-in-Chief) for many years of excellent editing, and thank you to the editorial board, designers, artists, and authors that ultimately make *JUFF* possible.

Geoffrey M. Poore
Faculty Forum President 2023-2025

**Editor-in-Chief**

Chris Bailey
Professor of English

Managing Editor

Faith Behrens

Editorial Board

Caroline Ahne
David Alcazar
Isabella Cook
McKenzie Harris
Noel Moore
Lili Pettigrew
Maisyn Price
Sam Stevens
Claudia Swalm
Mattie Washington

Art Director

Angela Lee
Professor of Art

Lead Designer

Abby Thomas

Designers

Hope Bitter
Callie Bodiford
Aaron French
Sarah Johnson
Micah Lilyquist

General Submission Guidelines

A new volume of the *Journal of the Union Faculty Forum* is published during each fall semester. The editors invite submissions of poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, artwork, and scholarly articles in various academic disciplines. Submissions should be in a MS Word format with a 12-point font. Acceptance is determined by the quality of the work. We are now accepting submissions for the Fall 2025 issue. *Please email submissions to cbailey@uu.edu.*



Word from the Editors

We, the student editors of the *Journal of the Union Faculty Forum*, lay down our pencils and proudly present to you the 44th volume. We would like to thank Barefoots for supporting our caffeine addiction, the thermostat of PAC A-1 for keeping us vigilant, and Dr. Bailey for faithfully shepherding us with wisdom and clarity throughout this journey. We also celebrate the hard work and excellence of our Union faculty. From dissecting the cultural impact of Noah Kahan to exploring the intricacies of the theology of history, this journal is a tangible example of the diverse body of Christ harmoniously at work. It has truly been an honor and a joy to serve these gifted authors. We hope that you find these articles as delightful, convicting, and enlightening as we did.

Your Student Editors
JUFF Vol. 44, 2024-25

As Editor-in-Chief, I am proud to present to you Volume 44 of the *JUFF*. The baton was passed to me more than a decade ago when Dr. John Netland, Chair of the English Department at the time, had an idea to create a Professional Editing and Publishing class where students would learn the skills needed to edit an academic journal. Since 2012, I've been working alongside student editors, as well as student designers from the Art Department's Typography class, to offer a quality publication that is both aesthetically pleasing and rich in content. The credit belongs to these students, and I am beyond grateful for this year's class—for the passion, effort, and skills brought to this project. Further, a special thank you goes to Angela Lee, Professor of Art, and, of course, to those who contributed their engaging articles on pedagogy and learning; illustrations of faith; and creative works. I truly believe that *JUFF*'s inaugural (Fall 1976) co-editors, Wayne Alford and Ernest Pinson, would be proud of our efforts. Lastly, I invite you, my colleagues, to submit your own work for next year's 2025 issue.

Your Editor-in-Chief
Chris Bailey



Table of Contents

Pray Me to the River Steven Baker _____	8
--	---

Foreword: The Lilly Mentoring Program Gavin Richardson _____	9
---	---

Lilly Authors

The FIT Model of Career Selection: Exploring What a Career Can Do <i>For</i> You, <i>In</i> You, and <i>Through</i> You Jeannette Russ _____	11
--	----

A Theology of History: A Prospectus David Thomas _____	21
---	----

Two Devotionals Beth Madison _____	29
---------------------------------------	----

Every Task is Sacred: An Introduction to Martin Luther's Doctrine of Vocation Joshua Veltman _____	33
--	----

"Elimination by Whim": Ingrid Bergman, the Memphis Board of Censors, and Cancel Culture in the 1950s Chris A. Blair _____	52
---	----

Well-being and Deep Connections by Teaching Emotion Regulation to Undergraduates Tammy Patton _____	63
---	----

Additional Contributors

Earth Series: ‘e fovea ascendere, (to climb out of a pit)	
Christopher Nadaskay _____	73
Agricultural Biotechnology	
Mark Bolyard _____	75
“Our Most Fatal Tendency”: The Problem of our Gleeeful Historical Ignorance	
Ray Van Neste _____	85
Such Is the Way of Grace	
Justin Wainscott _____	93
Morrissey Moped so that Noah Kahan Could Whine: Sad Guy Music and the Elusive “Health” Part of Mental Health	
Ted Kluck _____	95
Not by Accident	
Megan Pittman _____	98
Southern-Fried Ads: A Look at Advertising Posters and Word Choice in the American South	
Angela Lee _____	102

Pray Me to the River

Steven Baker

When on this well-planned path,
by some tragedy I am thrown;
Pray me to the river wide, where
I can always find my way home.

If I struggle accepting what comes,
let me linger in remembrance;
Pray me to the river peaceful, so
I may live fully in His presence.

When in fear that our life's dream
drifts downstream unforeseen;
Pray me to the river pristine, so
I will again be washed clean.

On the days that leave me crying,
'til for His mercy I am pleading;
Pray me to the river mighty, where
I find the wholeness of healing.

Note: Steven Baker served as Union's Director for Library Services for 19 years before leaving in 2009. "Pray Me to the River" was written for his dear friend and Union colleague Carla Sanderson after she was badly injured in a car accident. Sanderson had spoken the words before going into surgery, inspiring Baker to write the poem about his friend's special retreat place on the Tennessee River.



Foreword:

The Lilly Mentoring Program

Gavin Richardson

In a now famous TED talk from July 2010, author Stephen Johnson addressed the topic of “Where Good Ideas Come From.” He offered a kind of “natural history” of innovation, with his thesis being that most good ideas come from community dialogue and interaction. Johnson’s first example concerned the fluorescence of learning that marked the Enlightenment, positing that this intellectual movement not coincidentally corresponded with the advent of the coffee house in England. Due to poor sanitation and unpotable water, the British would often drink alcoholic beverages throughout the day. With coffee, Britons now had the option of drinking a stimulant, and typically in the company of others. For innovative thinking, gathering in the coffee house was as important as the coffee itself. “Chance favors the connected mind,” Johnson concludes, seeking to explode the myth of the solitary genius. We like to imagine brilliant innovators having a eureka moment alone in their bathtubs. Johnson, however, insists that community is crucial for innovative thinking.

This is the mindset behind the Lilly Mentoring Program for the 2024-2025 academic year. The program entitled “Remembering the Call: Innovative Approaches to Collegial Mentoring” is a peer-to-peer initiative focused on helping senior faculty at Union renew their sense of vocation and reinvest energy in their careers and the institution’s mission. The program was prompted by the Provost’s Office and principally funded by a grant from the Lilly Network of Church-Related Colleges and Universities. Jean-Marie Walls and I designed and administered the program, and its participants have been dubbed the “Lilly 9”: Christine Bailey, Justin Barnard, Chris Blair, JR Kerfoot, Beth Madison, Tammy Patton, Jeannette Russ, David Thomas, and Joshua Veltman. In August, Lilly faculty participated in a weeklong retreat at the Scarritt Bennett Center in Nashville, where they enjoyed protected time to work on individual research projects. Afternoon plenary discussions addressed issues related to professional identity, commitment to the path of teaching, reflections on Christian higher education, and Union’s institutional mission. Evenings were devoted to continuing these conversations over dinner in small groups.

Throughout the academic year, these faculty meet once a month in groups of three to enjoy lunch or dinner, as well as to continue to share ideas about the fine work begun at the retreat. Early in the program, participants talked informally about contributing to a special issue of the *Journal of the Union Faculty Forum*. Of course, we want to celebrate all contributions to *JUFF*, whether they are part of the Lilly Program or not. But as the Lilly co-director, I'm especially pleased to say that the current issue of *JUFF* features contributions from six Lilly participants, demonstrating how the program, and the connected mind, are already yielding fruit.

Also during the retreat, the "Lilly 9" read selections from Joli Jensen's *Write No Matter What*, whose most memorable take-away was a challenge to write at least 15 minutes a day. It sounds simple, right? Surely professors can find 15 minutes. But in my follow-up discussions with many Lilly participants, they acknowledge that, after the start of the semester, even 15 minutes can prove difficult to protect. At Union University, faculty are grateful to have escaped the publish-or-perish academic culture that can sometimes force research to become public prematurely. However, a drawback is that everything else in our professional lives has a deadline, while research efforts often do not, unless we are under book contract. The fortuitous combination of *JUFF* and the Lilly Mentoring Program has provided a deadline and catalyzed good work from so many colleagues. According to one Lilly participant, had it not been for the monthly dinners and their soft accountability, she probably would not have produced her contribution to *JUFF*. A regular dinner appointment with colleagues, much like the regular camaraderie of the eighteenth-century coffee house, helps keep minds connected and research goals at the top of those minds.

As someone who has contributed to *JUFF* over the years, I can attest to the high quality of the student editors. On more than one occasion I've used *JUFF* as a means of refining my work for broader academic publication. So it is with equal parts pleasure and gratitude that I celebrate these contributions to the *Journal of the University Faculty Forum*, the connected minds that produced them, and the student editors who helped shape them, all under the auspices of an infinitely creative God who knits all things together.



The FIT Model of Career Selection:

Exploring What a Career Can Do *For* You, *In* You, and *Through* You

Jeannette Russ

What is the best way to choose a career? Popular websites suggest finding jobs that match your personality, interests, values, and aptitudes. They also recommend careful consideration of salary needs and life goals. The internet offers a variety of resources to assist with career selection, ranging from simple online lists of important considerations to elaborate screening tests that suggest good career matches based on answers to a series of questions. In general, the advice is geared toward helping you find a career that matches your qualifications and gives you a satisfying life. The emphasis is on what the career can do *for* you, which is certainly a valid consideration.

It is valid, but is it enough? For the Christian, a career should be a calling, and the idea of a calling implies that we should be concerned about more than simply what a particular vocation can do *for* us. Other important aspects to consider include what a career can do *in* us and what a career can do *through* us. Engaging in a particular career is likely to refine us internally in a variety of ways, ultimately aiding in the process of sanctification by working *in* us. Vocation can also contribute to the missional call to advance the Kingdom of Christ by providing avenues to serve *through* a chosen vocational path.

The ultimate goal of the FIT model is to encourage a more holistic approach to career selection. Considering what a profession can do *for* you involves practical decisions that must be taken into account. However, pondering what a chosen profession can do *in* and *through* you adds developmental and missional dimensions to the career decision, ideally leading to a choice that serves self and others equally well.

This paper will briefly describe an example of how the FIT model applies to engineering. The hope is to eventually add other career descriptions to create a book or an online resource that can help students select a worthwhile career that is a good FIT for them. It is exciting to examine careers in light of how you and your career can be integrated into the broader picture of God's unfolding plan.

Practical Career Choice: What a Career Can Do *FOR* You

It is wise to consider how a career can address necessary logistics of life, such as finding a job that provides personal satisfaction along with adequate remuneration for the lifestyle you desire. While it is popular in some circles to suggest that you “follow your dream,” current advice about career selection tends to be more practical and seeks to incorporate elements of the “dream” with a measure of reality.

Example: What Engineering Can Do FOR You

One of the most obvious advantages of engineering as a career is that it provides many employment options. Most graduating seniors have work plans lined up prior to graduation, with many finding jobs in the fall semester or even the summer prior to graduation. And they are not just obtaining generic jobs! Engineering graduates generally find work in fields that interest them, and they are given on-the-job training opportunities and meaningful responsibilities almost immediately. Just a few areas that are attractive to engineering graduates are listed below; this list barely scratches the surface of available occupations.

- **Power**—Careers in power can range from jobs that investigate alternative sources of power to utilities that design, build, and improve existing infrastructure. Providing power through innovative battery designs is also a major focus of engineering with the current emphasis on battery-powered vehicles.
- **Medicine**—Jobs in the medical field range from design of prosthetic devices to development of techniques for image-guided surgery to creation of microscopic devices that traverse the blood stream to deliver medications. Working with medical professionals to engineer solutions that improve the delivery of healthcare is a significant field that continues to expand.
- **Robotics**—Robots are everywhere, from simple mail-delivery systems to complex and specialized manufacturing robots. Robots are increasingly being developed for use in niche applications such as performing search and rescue missions (particularly after a natural disaster) and exploring hostile terrain; these types of applications help keep humans out of dangerous areas.
- **Electronics**—Electronic devices are ubiquitous, and engineers are always working to design the next generation of devices

in terms of their underlying electronics as well as specific applications. The design of integrated circuits is a specialty job that often requires graduate training, but it is a very rewarding profession that leads to everything from smart phones to devices used in space exploration.

- Structures—Engineers are involved in the design of buildings and bridges, as well as playing a key role in the design of dams, tunnels, manufacturing plants, and more. Engineers take pride in making these structures innovative and beautiful, in addition to being structurally sound. Engineers also design systems that control the flow of people or vehicles through these structures, including elevator systems for buildings, traffic signals for vehicles, and air traffic control centers for airplanes.
- Entertainment—Some engineers specialize in fields such as theme park engineering, an interesting niche that contributes to the design and maintenance of roller coasters and other theme park attractions. Engineers working in this area are also responsible for designing the highly specialized buildings that house certain rides.

Engineering students can obtain paid internships during college. These internships help students refine their plans for permanent work by giving them a chance to try something for a summer or a semester without a long-term commitment. If the internship is a good match for both the student and the employer, it often results in a full-time job offer. It is also important to note that graduates can obtain meaningful jobs after just four years of school without being required to go to graduate school.

Additionally, engineering jobs generally pay very well. On various lists of best-paying entry-level positions, the top ten spots are comprised primarily of different types of engineering jobs.¹ In terms of mid-career and overall pay, engineering jobs also do very well, although they do not dominate as thoroughly as they do on the entry-level lists. However, if engineering graduates manage money wisely and begin to save during early years on the job, the power of compound interest will enhance their overall earning potential.

1. See, for example, “10 Highest-Paying Entry-Level Jobs for College Graduates” [2024] (stilt.com), accessed on 10/5/24.

Another great thing about an engineering degree is that it opens doors beyond the engineering world. Engineers do well in law school; in fact, the area of patent law is difficult to enter without a technical undergraduate degree. Engineers also succeed in medical school and have high acceptance rates. After working for a few years, many engineering graduates have the opportunity to enter management positions since all managerial levels at many high-tech firms are filled exclusively by engineers.

An engineering graduate is equipped to do a wide variety of different types of jobs within and outside of engineering. Jobs are interesting and meaningful, with opportunities for worthwhile contributions very soon after graduation; moreover, compensation and benefits are typically excellent. There is no doubt that an engineering career can be a good choice *for* many people.

Developmental Career Choice: What a Career Can Do *IN* You

Whatever we choose to do in life refines us internally in a variety of ways, including the choice of career. Tim Keller asserts that “work is one of the ways we discover who we are, because it is through work that we come to understand our distinct abilities and gifts, a major component in our identities.”² Education helps prepare us for this work that leads to self-discovery, and a general (and admirable!) goal of education is to produce a well-rounded individual. However, many different iterations of becoming a well-rounded individual are possible. For example, a well-rounded expert in English literature is likely to have characteristics that differ from those of a well-rounded engineer—and both are useful in the body of Christ. Training in a specific area will naturally exercise certain characteristics over others, resulting in the fact that your career choice will very likely produce changes *in* you.³

Example: What Engineering Can Do IN You

Engineering courses have the reputation of being difficult. While I do not necessarily like that characterization, I will concede that

2. Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor* (Penguin Books, 2012), page 25.

3. One could argue that personal characteristics come first and lead to a career rather than the choice of career leading to certain characteristics. While true, the position of this model is that both are true in a cyclical sense. Characteristics do help determine which career we are drawn to, but that choice of career in turn further develops and refines existing characteristics as well as possibly producing entirely new characteristics through discipline-specific training.

they tend to require higher-than-average levels of time and effort. The typical class has weekly homework, and the material can be quite challenging to simply understand, much less to properly apply to the situation at hand. For this reason, the study of engineering develops perseverance and diligence in the typical student. The steady assignments also develop discipline, since the most successful engineering students cultivate good time management skills during college. These skills are tremendously helpful for life after graduation.

In addition to the somewhat generic traits of perseverance and diligence, engineering students learn to solve problems. The ability to analyze and find a solution for engineering problems translates well into broader problems of adult life and society. Analytical thinking contributes to the understanding of facts and allows for a quick grasp of the meaning and worth of a data set.

Engineers do not necessarily have a reputation for creativity, but they should! When done properly, the work engineers do is very creative because engineers are looking for improvements in products, processes, and more. Engineers must find creative ways to balance cost, value, and time. An adage quoted occasionally by engineers posits, “I can do it fast. I can do it well. I can do it cheaply. Pick any two.” While some of the newer electronic devices have made this proposition a little less ironclad, it remains a reasonable summary of challenges that must be addressed by engineers. It requires creativity to find efficient ways to balance competing needs. It also takes creativity to simply have good ideas to implement, and an engineering education fosters the ingenuity, innovation, and imagination necessary to spark ideas.

While teaching engineering for over two decades, I have witnessed countless students discover that they have both aptitude and ability in areas that had previously seemed difficult or unappealing. This realization not only leads to specific job options or research ideas, but it also encourages the students by letting them see that they are stronger and more capable than they had previously thought. It opens doors to new possibilities.

For example, I know a young lady who had planned to major in music education, wanting to create beauty and share it with others. Because she had strong math skills, she was encouraged to try electrical engineering, so she made a last-minute change of plans. After her first semester in the engineering program, she was hooked! She had uncovered a latent love of analytical thinking, and she had also seen that

engineering provides an alternate path to achieving her goals of creating and sharing beauty. As she progressed through the curriculum, her analytical skills were refined and honed, and she developed new skills in design and problem solving. Her choice of career did not fundamentally change who she was, but it enhanced certain important aspects of her character that ultimately made her a stronger and better person. Stated another way, she was exactly who God designed her to be, but she made choices that helped her better utilize her God-given characteristics and personality. Her career choice had made worthwhile changes *in* her.

Missional Career Choice: What a Career Can Do *THROUGH* You

The missional aspect of a vocation is perhaps most exciting of all, and any career ultimately provides various means for helping people. While some careers have more obvious “helping” characteristics than others, such as medicine or teaching, it is possible to find ways that all careers can assist individuals, groups, or society at large. This idea of what a career can do *through* you is a worthy goal for the Christian to consider.

Example: What Engineering Can Do THROUGH You

In the very broadest sense, engineers help others by having the skill set to translate a variety of ideas into reality. A favorite engineering definition of mine is this one: Engineers help people’s dreams come true. While that description might be a bit overstated, there is some truth to it. Many people have ideas, but to actually make them work and bring them to market typically requires some form of engineering ingenuity. By possessing the skills to design products and develop manufacturing processes to build those products, engineers are a vital part of making things happen. Of course, we also need advertising and sales specialists—and more—but engineers are key players in bringing many products to market.

Many categories of engineered products involve items that have literally changed the way we live. An obvious example is the area of transportation, where engineers have designed modern vehicles that allow for safe, efficient travel—whether we need to drive across town, fly across the country, or even travel into outer space. (Admittedly, that last option is not available to the average person, but the fact that anyone at all can travel into space and return safely to Earth is an engineering marvel!)

While transportation is an obvious example of physical infrastructure, there are many other key elements in the proper functioning of society. From the power grid to the communications network to lighting systems, engineers contribute to them all. Furthermore, engineers are constantly investigating new ways to install infrastructure projects that reduce energy consumption. For example, the Eastgate Center in Harare, Zimbabwe, uses passive cooling modeled after termite mounds that expel hot air through an elaborate system of chimneys. This fascinating biomimicry project allows the Eastgate Center to consume less than half of the energy used by buildings with traditional air conditioning methods.⁴

By improving and maintaining physical infrastructure, engineering can also advance social infrastructure. An inspiring example is reported by Kenneth Quinn, a former United States ambassador to Cambodia. Mr. Quinn tells the story of sixteen villages in Vietnam that were given improved rice seed, but only eight of the sixteen were connected to markets via a new road. Although all had access to the better seed, only the eight villages connected to the new road were able to capitalize on their investment to improve their way of life. Mr. Quinn later recounted, “I carried this lesson of roads with me through the rest of my diplomatic career, increasingly convinced that there was a correlation between the absence of quality roads and hunger, poverty, political instability, and terrorism.”⁵ What an example of the potential link between physical and social infrastructure!

Some engineered products are much more individualized; they are inherently and specifically designed to provide help to a particular person or group in some way. Examples abound, just a few of which are listed below.

- Assistive technology—With assistive technology, engineers can have a frontline impact on quality of life for individuals with various disabilities. Assistive technology can help people eat, dress, work, and play. There are many specifically engineered products, even from my personal knowledge at Union.

4. “Biomimicry Architecture: Eastgate Centre-Harare, Zimbabwe” (archestudy.com), accessed 10/4/24.

5. “Opinion: Want to Make a Dent in World Hunger? Build Better Roads” (nationalgeographic.com), accessed on 10/5/24.

- Union students devised a spoon stabilizer to help a young man with cerebral palsy manage his spoon and eat without assistance.
- Union students designed and built a device to help a young man put on gloves that were required for his job. Without the assistive device, he needed help putting on his gloves; thus, the device offered him autonomy at work.
- Union students designed a toy for a young boy who suffered a traumatic brain injury from a near-drowning accident. It had lights to capture his attention and featured specific elements that he enjoyed. It was tailored precisely for his pleasure, an important consideration as he was not able to play with a lot of standard toys.
- Union is a certified “Enable” site, which means that we are qualified to 3D print a prosthetic hand for anyone who contacts us with a need.
- Sports equipment—Golf clubs are designed using nanotechnology techniques to increase uniformity in the material, allowing athletes to see improvement in their golf swings. Similarly, nanotubes can be added to tennis racquets to increase their strength and provide additional control and power when hitting the ball.⁶
- Medicine—Engineers have been involved in developing techniques for minimally invasive surgery and remain involved in continually improving methods and equipment. Engineers also develop and improve medical equipment for diagnosing, treating, and monitoring all manner of illnesses, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal conditions, neurodegenerative diseases, diabetes, infectious diseases, and many more.

Tim Keller asserts that “God left creation with deep untapped potential for cultivation that people were to unlock through their labor.”⁷ The field of engineering abounds with examples of how creative people have unlocked the potential of materials that have existed from the beginning of time to design products that have life-

6. “Nanotechnology in Sports: From Performance Enhancement to Injury Prevention” (hilarispublisher.com), accessed on 10/4/24.

7. Keller, page 22.

changing effects. A fascinating example can be found in the history of semiconductors, which are unique elements that sometimes behave like metals and conduct current, while at other times behaving like nonmetals and failing to conduct, as the name suggests. Faraday is credited with first observing the properties of semiconductors in 1833,⁸ but it was decades later before any practical applications were discovered. During the twentieth century, the development of vacuum tubes, transistors, and integrated circuits led to the invention of radio, television, computers, advanced medical equipment, communications satellites, smart phones, and much, much more. The goodness of God in creation provides materials through which engineers exercising their God-given ingenuity can make great contributions to society.

Beyond products and infrastructure, engineers have a unique opportunity to participate in global missions. In several countries, traditional missionaries are not at all welcome—they cannot even get a visa. However, engineers (along with medical personnel and teachers) are universally welcome. Engineers can get a job in a closed country and be very effective in spreading the Gospel to people who would never be reached by traditional missionaries. They can work there full-time for a period of months or years, they can do consulting work where they visit regularly, or they can simply talk to as many people as possible in a single trip. Opportunities abound for the profession of engineering to be used *through* the faithful Christian engineer.⁹

Concluding Thoughts

Our work matters—to us and to others. Choosing a career is an important decision that can be enhanced by considering what a particular career can do *for* us, *in* us, and *through* us. Ultimately, work can help us draw nearer to our Lord. As Ron Rolheiser says, “Work, like prayer, is a privileged way to get to know God because, when we work, we are toiling in partnership with Him.”¹⁰ Finding and enjoying a career that is a good FIT brings fulfillment and joy to a necessary part of our lives.

8. “1833: First Semiconductor Effect is Recorded” | *The Silicon Engine* | *Computer History Museum*, accessed 10/4/24.

9. Opportunities also abound for secular engineers to find ways to help others through the profession of engineering, including organized programs through highly respected organizations such as Engineers Without Borders. However, the missional aspect is obviously specific to Christian engineers.

10. Quoted in Ruth Haley Barton, *Embracing Rhythms of Work and Rest* (IVP, 2022), page 23.

Jeannette Russ

Chair of Engineering



Jeannette Russ has taught engineering at Union for twenty-two years. She worked at Hewlett-Packard for several years before returning to academia, and she considers it a blessing to have worked for an excellent corporation prior to her current work for an excellent university. She enjoys encouraging students to appreciate the many wonders of the field of engineering as much as she does. She would love to discuss the FIT model with colleagues in other professions to see if it applies beyond engineering.



A Theology of History:

A Prospectus

David Thomas

“No one can learn a new language unless he first trusts that
it means something.”

Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 151.

Introduction

The invention of the secular was a theological project, an explicit rejection of Christianity. So argues John Milbank in his book *Theology and Social Theory*. Sociologist Christian Smith argues similarly that secularization was not a natural consequence of modernization, but resulted from an intentional struggle designed “to overthrow a religious establishment’s control over socially legitimate knowledge.”¹ N. T. Wright takes a similar path: Neo-epicureanism won the day in intellectual circles in the mid-1700s and has been the foundation for modern thought, including its rejection of theologies of revealed religion, ever since.² Alexander Schmemmann argues more broadly that secularism “is above all a *negation of worship*.”³ Secularism denies that people are worshipping beings, *homo adorans*, creatures for whom worship is an essential, defining act. Substantial answers to modern secularity, it stands to reason, must be theological and devotional in reply. For Christians to build faithful communities, recover faithful practices, and rightly love God and neighbor, the way forward requires theology. By this I mean not merely theological assessment—critique is the easier part—but a baptized imagination, a theologically-informed vision of life in this created order.

This includes how we narrate history. Contemporary historical understandings developed within the theological context of modern secular society were cast in an immanent frame and dominated by a Neo-epicurean worldview, with the central narratives tied to an

1. Christian Smith, ed., *The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 1.

2. N. T. Wright, *History and Eschatology: Jesus and the Promise of Natural Theology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2018), 9. Reinhold Niebuhr gives similar priority to the Epicureans. Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1941), 18.

3. Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1982), 118.

“ontology of violence.”⁴ Christianity, by contrast, argues that history is for—literally, *for*—the arrival of healing and renewal in the Prince of Peace. “This is why,” writes Milbank, “it is so important to reassert theology as a master discourse; theology, alone, remains the discourse of non-mastery.”⁵ Let me revisit the historical features of story, humanity, and time in a Christian frame. This can be a stretch, I realize; we have all been educated into secularity. But let me emphasize: to care about theology is not idiosyncratic, or a matter of personal piety and private interest. What we are after is meaning that is not merely constructed but also grounded in Christ, and for that we need the testimony to objective reality offered by Scripture and the Church.

Theological Orientation

One reasonable place to begin is to clarify which God and which theology we are talking about. I mean to stand as firmly as I can on the revelation of Jesus Christ as found in Scripture and interpreted by the Church. In other words, my primary commitment is not to the modern standards of the discipline of historians, but to the revealed Son of God testified to in the Scriptures.

The Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is creator, sustainer, and redeemer of all creation, which includes human history. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit remain the foundation and buttress of the Church through the great variety of historical contexts. And the Church itself, far from being a series of social clubs, is the covenant community of Jesus Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In other words, as valuable as secular approaches have been in building understandings of our world—and they have been exceptionally strong here—secular thought disregards human experiences of spiritual reality or depicts it as downstream effects of material causes. Nonetheless, the pursuit of meaning, spiritual purpose, and transcendent hope continues, despite the deep modern and post-modern commitments to immanence. In light of human spiritual longing, how can we fail to care about the theological basis of our understanding? I simply mean to lay my cards on the table.

With that convictional stance, though, comes a substantial tension for the professional historian, for the revelation of God’s redemption

4. Ibid., 6.

5. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 4.

came in particular times and places: it was and remains historical. The various interpretations of that revelation are also contextualized by the histories of particular times and places.

Modernity claims that to assess the historical past, including the claims of Christ, it is best to start from a neutral field that is strictly limited to the contingent details of history, not one skewed by religious faith. Modernity argues that Christian faith in Jesus as the Son of God depends on knowledge of the transcendent to which we have no trustworthy, falsifiable access. Furthermore, the transient, contingent nature of human life prevents any one person from speaking for all of us universally, thus Christian claims to the universality of Christ are indefensible. All discussion of divine purpose and activity are at best impossible to talk about and at worst a power play. They are thus cast out of the camp.

Christians argue, however, that no field is neutral. All claims begin from a convictional stance, thus claims to neutrality are indefensible. To assess the historical past, including the claims of Christ, it is best to start from a field that includes the full human experience, not one skewed by the exclusion of what is most real.⁶ The appearance of Jesus in history, in fact, *provides* access to the transcendent. The contingent details of history gain their deepest meaning contextualized by the self-revelation of God. The split between the historical and the transcendent imposed by modern thought is a false dichotomy. Instead, people are best understood from their unique relation to God, rather than from their unique rationality or relation to nature.⁷

The incarnation honors the unique, argues Hans Urs von Balthasar, and because of Christ the unique *is* the historical norm.⁸ Reinhold Niebuhr comes to the same conclusion: “The same Christ who discloses the sovereignty of God over history is also the perfect norm of human nature.”⁹ The person of Jesus fills in G. E. Lessing’s great ugly ditch (a metaphor for the conviction that uncertain historical events cannot prove universal truths such as the existence and love of God), and also refutes Immanuel Kant’s antithesis between the unique

6. N. T. Wright, *History and Eschatology: Jesus and the Promise of Natural Theology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2018), xii.

7. Niebuhr, 13.

8. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *A Theology of History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), 13-14. See also Niebuhr, 68.

9. Niebuhr, 68.

and the universal.¹⁰ With Jesus, the unique and historical is also the universal and transcendent. Jesus is not only the Son of Man but also the Son of God. Thus, the Word of God is the action of God: historical and contingent, but also divine proclamation, revelation, freedom, and Lordship.¹¹ Jesus is the key to interpreting all creation and we cannot separate his universal truth from his particular existence. In Christian theology, argues Balthasar, engagement with abstract, general truths “always subverts the contemplation and interpretation of the unique.”¹² Separating the historical from the transcendent truncates our understanding of each.¹³

Christianity is itself an accounting of human history. The story of Jesus—active in creation, anticipated by the prophets, incarnate by the Virgin Mary, crucified, risen, and assuredly returning—in this historical narrative is the measure, the meaning, and the redemption of all other historical narratives.

A Sketch

Let me borrow some helpful structure from Jeremy Begbie’s delightful article on beauty, which argues for “a theological account of created beauty”¹⁴ and articulates an approach that can serve as a model for a theological account of human history.

First, a theological account of the human past would rely for understanding on commitment to creation and its triune Creator: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Modernity, a theological project itself, has emphatically jettisoned creation, along with the Creator and the Creator’s purposes. I don’t wish to argue against human construction of meanings, institutions, and things, but neither do I wish to excise reliance on the revealed identity of the Creator and the purposes of His creation. Both are needed. Historical understanding is of penultimate status. In the midst of the multiple goals of historians, attentiveness to matters of ultimate concern remains not merely valuable, but essential.

10. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol 1, pt 1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, trans by G. T. Thomson (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1936), 166.

11. *Ibid.*, 178, 352.

12. Balthasar, 17.

13. N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 5, 10, 13.

14. Jeremy S. Begbie, “Created Beauty: The Witness of J. S. Bach” in Daniel J. Treier, Mark Husbands, and Roger Lundin, eds, *The Beauty of God: Theology and the Arts* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007), 24.

Second, a theology of history would take as a foundational context the narrative of redemption revealed in Scripture: creation, fall, redemption, and eschaton. All smaller human histories—histories of empires, nations, tribes, families, and individuals—take their proper place in the story of humankind during the ages of the Lord’s renewing work.

Third, such a theology would rely on a biblical anthropology. Modernity has lost track of much about humankind: createdness, the *imago Dei*, sin and finitude, beauty and suffering, the essential unity of the human person within communities, human purpose, and *telos*. Christianity re-members what modern thought has dismembered. Understanding the story of human societies requires a faithful anthropology.

Fourth, and dwelling within the previous point, a theological understanding of human history requires a commitment to God’s intention for human flourishing. There are a variety of ways of saying this. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job summon us to a life of wisdom. Isaiah demands holiness and justice. Jesus summarizes the Law and the Prophets as a life of love. These all call the historian to something more than (but not less than) getting the facts straight. The historian’s job is truthful remembering for the sake of the community which, importantly, is part of the lasting community intended for human flourishing, namely the kingdom of God. Truthful remembering is part of the call to love our neighbors, seek the peace and well-being of our communities, and pursue wisdom. It is part of the call to discipleship and moral formation.

Fifth, a theology of history will attend to the interaction between divine sovereignty, chaos, human freedom, and the malign irrationality of evil. Scripture gives credence to all four as substantial players in the narrative that makes up human history. As historians construct narratives and piece together explanations for enormously complex events, these four have something to contribute:

- The created order is *created*, made, not self-constructed. There is a givenness to reality, not only in the way things are (creation), but also in human identity (the *imago Dei*), in the way events unfold (divine providence), and in the *telos* (renewed creation).

- Scripture implies that the Holy One of Israel is comfortable with chaos, at least for now. Water often symbolizes chaos and formlessness, most famously in Genesis 1:2 where the Spirit is depicted as hovering over the waters from which God forms the earth and its abundance. Scripture ends on the same note: when the new heaven and new earth are formed, the sea—symbolizing chaos—will be no more. Meanwhile, chaos remains a part of life, not necessarily evil, not necessarily good.
- Human choice is also a given. There is an essential place in Scripture for free will, for meaningful decisions to be made, and for commitment and renunciation. Those choices include the remembering, retelling, recording, and preservation of some things and not other things: the vagaries of evidence.
- Finally, there is also a place for things to go wrong: for bad choices, missed opportunities, and confusion; for callous opposition to whatever is good; for deliberate and unintentional sin; and for the monstrous evils that strip from us meaning, purpose, volition, emotion, thought, and hope.

Sixth, a theological understanding of the human past will attend to Jesus of Nazareth, the Incarnate Word, promised in the covenants, spoken of by the prophets, Messiah and Lord, and central figure in the narrative of redemption.

Seventh, a theological account of the human past will look to the eschaton, the full unveiling of the New Heaven and the New Earth inaugurated in the Incarnation. On the surface, this might seem a little odd. Aren't historians preeminently committed to the material evidence that allows us to narrate stories from the past? Sure, but historians are committed to more than just evidence and the past. For all of its emphasis on the past, history as written and taught is also present-minded and teleological. The *telos* has an essential role. It allows the historian to filter the details, interpret the evidence, and understand how contingent details fit the story the historian is trying to tell. For Christians, the *telos* that provides meaning and context for all the subordinate *teloi* is the second coming of Christ.

Eighth, and finally, a theology of history will retain a commitment to rightly placed devotion. Modernity is devoted to the self and to the nation and thus to the charismatic leaders and causes that promise liberty and power. A theological account of human history will testify

to the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, locating historical accounts within the redemptive eschatology which will restore to us rightly ordered love for God, others, creation, and, yes, ourselves.

The secular, materialist, and financial commitments of the modern academy have produced history in quality, volume, and diversity that would amaze earlier generations. However, modern presuppositions reduce purpose to things national and personal, reduce *telos* to this life and these institutions, reduce vision to the horizon of the self, the interest group, or the nation, and reduce devotion and gratitude to the heroes of those same selves, interest groups, and nations. I don't want to overturn or reject the great success of modern history; I want to enrich it. Christians know history and historical understanding to be full of the love, suffering, and glory of God: how do we talk about this with authenticity? The bullet points above sketch a framework: a recognition of creation, a kingdom narrative, a theological anthropology, causality that is not merely materialist, recognition of the Messiah and the eschaton, and the pursuit of rightly ordered devotion. N. T. Wright observed that "the distinction between the 'supernatural' and the 'rational' is itself a product of *Enlightenment thinking*."¹⁵ Thus, the modernist split between history and theology is a choice, "neither necessary nor automatic."¹⁶ The division is convenient and productive for specialization but, in the end, I would argue that it is mistaken. To be made in the image of God is to be engaged with and responsible for not only the content of our studies, but the foundation upon which they rest.

15. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 10.

16. *Ibid.*, 13.

David Thomas

University Professor of History



David Thomas received his Ph.D. from The Ohio State University in 1993 and came to Union in 1994. At Union he currently serves as University Professor of History, and he teaches courses in American History, including Colonial America, the American Revolution, the Civil War and Reconstruction, and African-American History. He also teaches in the Honors Community. Dr. Thomas published *The Stories We Tell Our Children: How Our Past Is Made Present In Children's Literature* (Royal Fireworks Press, 2008), and he is working on a second book, *A Theology of History*.



Two Devotionals

Beth Madison

A Dusty Prayer

I sought the Lord [on the authority of His word], and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears. (Amplified Bible, Psalm 34:4¹)

As I pray, I learn to pray.

As I learn to pray, I lean into prayer.

As I lean into prayer, I long to pray.

As I long to pray, I love to pray.

Most importantly, I learn to lean in love and long more for the One to Whom I pray. Our Good God not only welcomes me to come to Him in prayer, but also He is the One waiting and listening for my prayers. He is the One prompting me to prayer and thus, to believe that He hears and will answer my prayers. And He does the same for you. He knows our prayers before we do. And He is the only One Who can answer every single one of our prayers.

In power and permanence.

In placement and purpose.

In position and peace.

In provision and protection.

In His way.

In His will.

In His working.

In His Word.

For His worship.

For He alone is worthy.

My assignment is to pray.

He is God. There is none other.

He is faithful and true.

He is loving and forgiving.

1. For all translations not noted, please reference the *New International Version*.

He is kind and gracious.
 He is all-knowing and ever-present.
 He is all-powerful and oh so very tender.
 He is righteous and just.
 All of the time. In all of His ways.
 Most importantly, He is holy.
 Holy, holy, holy. Enthroned forever. Lifted high.

For He is the One Who pursues us in His lavish and reliable love beyond understanding or imagination. He is faithful to answer every prayer. I don't have to see or understand how God will answer any of my prayers. My task is to believe He will answer all of my prayers because of His character. Yet He is the One Who stoops to listen to you and to me...

David said it best in Psalm 8:4 *ESV*: *What is man that you are mindful of him? And the son of man that you care for him?* Who am I that He would hear my prayers? Including those prayers I can't let loose from my heart. Those prayers I'm afraid to admit to myself. Those prayers that I don't understand.

He knows. He listens. He answers. And as I pray, He bestows boldness for me to keep praying for Him to increase my right fear and wonder of Him and my right there faith in Him.

Father,

Thank You that You know all of us here in the soil of our souls. And in the knowing, You love us still. I can't understand any of that, but I will trust You in all of this. Thank You that I don't have to understand but can rest right here in trusting You in all Your ways. Thank You for that peace that passes all understanding, which can guard my heart in the strength of my Jesus Christ.

Thank You that You reign high and lifted-up. Mighty are You, O God! Please help me to learn to lean into You in love, trust, devotion, and adoration. You alone are worthy. There is indeed none like You!

In the strong Name of Jesus, Amen.

Writing in the Dust

Since I haven't been able to walk in the woods or fields lately, I've started writing down my prayers at my desk at home. The act of writing helps me stay focused on what's essential—the praying, instead of what's distracting—the everything else. Afterwards, I discard the scrawled (sometimes tear-stained) pages knowing that my Jesus heard the petitions, pleas, and praises sent up from my heart to His.

Yet today, I felt that I was supposed to share a little bit of what I've been praying for many of you living in the hard places of life where petitions are numerous, praises are breathed, pleas are repeated over and again, and promises are clung to with both hands.

I have to keep telling myself these truths before, during, and after my prayer times:

No one is overlooked or forgotten by our Jesus.

No one is unloved or ignored by our Jesus.

All of us are welcomed to come and find rest with our Jesus.

So, if you're in a hard place today, I pray these words might encourage you to hold fast in hopeful faith. Look up and see our Jesus praying for you at the right hand of our Good God (see Romans 8:34).

Dear Father God,

Thank You for knowing all about my friends and their challenges. Thank You for being with my friends in their challenges at all times. Thank You for having a good plan for good for my friends for all time. Thank You for Your goodness and mercy that will follow us all the days of our lives. Thank You for allowing us to dwell in Your house forever because of Your gift of Jesus for us.

Please make a straight, clear, clean way for my friends today. Please reveal Your leading to them. Please help them (and me, too) to keep loving, listening, learning, and not leaning on our own understanding.

Please guard them with unmovable, unbreakable, unshakable, unmistakable hedges of protection for their hearts, minds, and souls. Please garb them in Your armor of the helmet of salvation, breastplate

of righteousness, belt of truth, shoes of the gospel of peace, shield of faith, and sword of the Spirit. Thank You that nothing is bigger, stronger, or more powerful than You. Thank You that nothing is impossible for You, including whatever any of us might face today. Thank You that You've already won victory over death, hell, grave, fear, pain, loss, shame, regret, guilt, and grief for all of us.

Please let nothing block my friends (and me) from living in Your light today. Please let nothing come between all of us hearing and proclaiming Your truth in love today. Please open wide our minds and mouths to receive wisdom and return praise to You today. Please help us to welcome and receive Your good plan that is for our good.

Thank You that You make a way for us to run in the freedom of Your provision and path every day. Thank You that You take what man intended as evil and use it for good in the saving of many lives. Thank You that no one can close what You open nor open what You have closed. Please help us to rely on Your lavish love all the way down to the smallest particle of the soil of our souls.

In the strong Name of Jesus, Amen.

Note: Here are some of the verses I referred to in this prayer. May our Good God strengthen your heart as you read and pray His Word to Him today: *Psalm 23 and 119; Isaiah 42:16; Proverbs 3:5-6; Jeremiah 32:17; Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 John 3:1; Genesis 50:20*

Beth Madison

Associate Professor of Science



Beth Madison teaches science courses in the School of Adult and Professional Studies and the College of Arts and Sciences. Her focus is on integrating environmental science with faith in the classroom, laboratory, and writing. Currently, she's working on a book and video project on finding hope in long-term suffering. All three of her books, *Good Ground Volumes 1 & 2* and *Well Grounded: Cultivating Intimacy with God* are available from Amazon. Her blog, soulscientistblog.com, features excerpts from these books along with topics she finds interesting in science and faith.



Every Task is Sacred:

An Introduction to Martin Luther's Doctrine of Vocation

Joshua Veltman

History credits the pugnacious and prolific German pastor Martin Luther (1483-1546) with sparking the Protestant Reformation along with all its far-reaching sociopolitical consequences. While it may be reasonably claimed that Luther was born into a world that was already a tinderbox waiting to be ignited, there is no denying that the unrelenting waves of forceful rhetoric emanating from his pen and pulpit provided both an initial and a continuing source of fiery energy for the Reformation. In the spiritual realm, Luther's doctrine of salvation through faith alone upended a long history of Christians striving for righteousness through good works. In the temporal realm, his doctrine of vocation effected an equally profound transformation in how believers understood the meaning of ordinary work.

These two realms, the spiritual and temporal, alternately denoted as the heavenly and earthly realms, constitute the highest level of organization in Luther's model of reality.¹ A fuller understanding of the doctrine of vocation can be had through reference to this model, depicted in Figure 1.

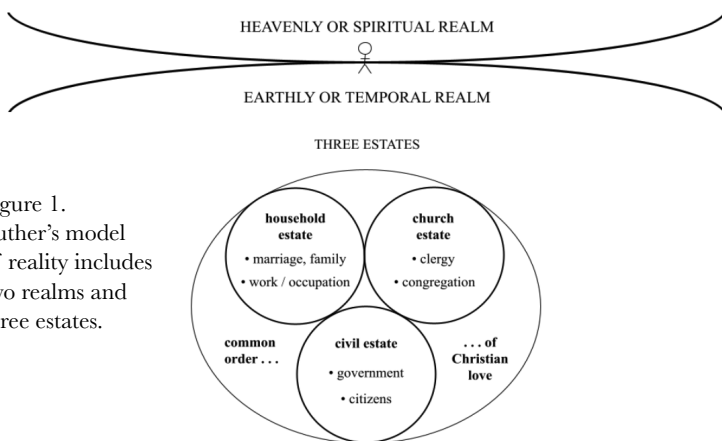


Figure 1.
Luther's model
of reality includes
two realms and
three estates.

1. Robert Kolb, "Two Realms," in *Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Traditions*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 756.

The spiritual realm is the realm of grace, gospel, and justification through faith; it is the realm where we passively receive Christ's imputed righteousness and through this acquire a right standing *coram Deo* ("before God").² The temporal realm is the realm of works, law, and ongoing sanctification; it is the realm where we actively pursue righteousness and through this acquire a right standing *coram hominibus* ("before men"). Crucially, however, all works in the temporal realm contribute precisely nothing to our right standing before God. Rather, we pursue good works as a thankful, obedient, and loving response to our Creator and Redeemer.

From the spiritual realm comes the universal calling to follow Christ. This is the first of the two main senses in which Luther understood *vocatio*, a Latin term commonly rendered in English as "vocation" or "calling" and in German as *Beruf*.³ Luther describes the two types of calling as a "double vocation":

We have a double vocation, a spiritual and an external. The spiritual vocation is that we have all been called through the Gospel to baptism and the Christian faith... this calling is common and similar for all. ...The other contains a differentiation: It is earthly, though also divine.⁴

The universal calling or vocation from the spiritual realm is the same for all people, and there is only one proper way to respond: by saying "yes." For the earthly calling or vocation, however, there are as many ways of working it out as there are people. In other words, the particular vocation a person receives in the temporal realm is unique to him or her. But how can this be, since surely there are fewer different kinds of jobs than there are people on the earth? This question betrays a contemporary, narrow understanding of vocation as merely "occupation" or "job" that Luther himself did not hold. To begin to grasp Luther's much broader conception of vocation, we turn again to the model in Figure 1.

The human person hovers between the heavenly and earthly realms, in a manner of speaking. In a seminal early tract called *The Freedom*

2. Marc Cortez, Christological Anthropology in *Historical Perspective: Ancient and Contemporary Approaches to Theological Anthropology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 89.

3. Douglas J. Schuurman, "Vocation," in *Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Traditions*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 769-70.

4. Quoted in Karlfried Froelich, "Luther on Vocation," in *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004).

of a Christian (1520), Luther wrote that a Christian “lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love. By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor.”⁵ The Christian’s life is always other-oriented; in the heavenly realm, he is oriented toward Christ through faith, and simultaneously in the earthly realm, he is oriented toward his neighbor through love. Believing Christians, in the words of David Speers,

are those who are connected to God, who have been justified, sanctified, and now in vocation live suspended between heaven and earth. ...We look up to God, and relate to God in faith. We look down to earth in love. Man stands between God and men and God blesses them with all kinds of blessings...⁶

People act as a conduit for God’s blessings upon others. These acts of blessing are accomplished by serving one’s neighbor in daily life in the earthly realm.

This earthly or temporal realm consists of three distinct arenas of action or “estates” within which a person may serve her neighbors in love, plus a fourth catch-all estate called “the common order of Christian love.”⁷ The terminology used by Luther to describe these estates (also called “hierarchies” or “orders”) was somewhat variable across time, but the underlying concepts remained consistent. The secondary literature on the doctrine of vocation reflects Luther’s variable usage as well, but here, for the sake of clarity, the estates will be consistently identified as the household estate, the civil estate, and the church estate. Luther enumerated these estates in several of his writings, most succinctly in his *Lecture on Genesis Chapter Eighteen* (1539):

This life is profitably divided into three orders: (1) life in the home; (2) life in the state; (3) life in the church. To whatever order you belong—whether you are a husband, an officer of the state, or a teacher of the church—look about you, and see whether you have done full justice to your calling...⁸

5. LW 31:371. See special note at the end of article for bibliographic information on Luther’s Works.

6. David Speers, “Vocation and the Concept of ‘Time’ in Martin Luther’s Lectures on Ecclesiastes,” in *Sanctification: New Life in Christ*, The Pieper Lectures 7 (St. Louis: Concordia Historical Institute & The Luther Academy, 2003), 6-7.

7. John T. Pless, “Three Estates,” in *Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Traditions*, ed. by Timothy J. Wengert (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 744.

8. LW 3:217.

Luther viewed these estates as instituted by God as part of the created order, as we read in *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* (1528):

...the [three] holy orders and true religious institutions [are] established by God. ...[They] are found in God's Word and commandment; and whatever is contained in God's Word must be holy, for God's Word is holy and sanctifies everything connected with it and involved in it.⁹

God the Father lovingly and providentially established these estates to instill order in human affairs for the good of his children.¹⁰

A major portion of serving others in love and helping to provide for their welfare will occur in the home, the state, or the church, but these do not cover every possible situation. Luther conceived of “the common order of Christian love” to cover all the rest, a sort of fourth charitable-spiritual estate. Again, in *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*, we read:

Above these three institutions and orders is the common order of Christian love, in which one serves not only the three orders, but also serves every needy person in general with all kinds of benevolent deeds, such as feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, forgiving enemies, praying for all men on earth, suffering all kinds of evil on earth, etc. Behold, all of these are called good and holy works.¹¹

In Luther's model of reality, this common order of Christian love is a superordinate structure that encompasses the three estates and fills in the gaps between them. It includes charitable works like helping the poor, and also spiritual works such as prayer and forgiveness, that don't fit neatly into the institutions of home, state, or church, but nevertheless are critical parts of the Christian's calling.

The notion of a threefold division of quotidian human activity was not new to Luther. It was already part of the prevalent worldview in Luther's time that had persisted from the Middle Ages, and he carried it over into his own model of reality.¹² In doing so, however, Luther made a significant innovation: whereas the medieval view saw a given

9. LW 37:364

10. Pless, 744.

11. LW 37:365.

12. Jane E. Strohl, “The Framework for Christian Living: Luther on the Christian's Callings,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and Lubomir Batka (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 366.

person as belonging primarily to one of the estates (you were a peasant householder, or a clergyman, or a ruler), the Lutheran view saw every person as fulfilling a role somewhere in all three estates at the same time.¹³ These well-defined roles or “offices” within each estate are numerous. Luther lists various offices in a representative though not necessarily exhaustive fashion in passages like the following:

All who are engaged in the clerical office or ministry of the Word are in a holy, proper, good, and God-pleasing order and estate, such as those who preach, administer sacraments, supervise the common chest, sextons and messengers or servants who serve such persons. These are engaged in works which are altogether holy in God’s sight.

Again, all fathers and mothers who regulate their household wisely and bring up their children to the service of God are engaged in pure holiness, in a holy work and a holy order. Similarly, when children and servants show obedience to their elders and masters, here too is pure holiness, and whoever is thus engaged is a living saint on earth.

Moreover, princes and lords, judges, civil officers, state officials, notaries, male and female servants and all who serve such persons, and further, all their obedient subjects—all are engaged in pure holiness and leading a holy life before God.¹⁴

The offices of each estate are arranged into a hierarchy of authority. The church estate ranges from bishops to sextons,¹⁵ the household estate ranges from fathers to children and servants, and the civil estate ranges from princes to ordinary subjects. The authority of each office may be different, but each office is necessary for the smooth functioning of the whole. Furthermore, each office is holy and pleasing to the Lord.

The various roles or offices in each estate have evolved to a certain degree since Luther’s time, but the underlying concepts remain the same. For “masters and servants,” we might substitute “employers and employees” (more on how work fits into the household estate later). For “princes and lords,” we might substitute “governors and mayors” and the like, while “subjects” could be read as “citizens.” A crucial

13. Strohl, 366-67; and Pless, 744.

14. LW 37:364-65.

15. Today we might call them church custodians.

point in Luther's system is that the "lowest" position in a hierarchy, one with little to no authority, is still an office, and fulfilling the duties and obligations of that office is a holy calling. This explains how every person is an officeholder in all three estates, not just one. For instance, it might seem that a young, unmarried man who works as a policeman has an office in the civil estate (keeping the peace and enforcing the law) but not one in the household or church estates. However, he does hold the office of "son" and has the duty to honor his father and mother, and he also holds the office of "congregation member" in his local church and has the obligation to attend services and tithe, among other things. Of course, one can be entirely negligent in one's duties and obligations, but that doesn't negate the offices as such.

To take another example, consider a married woman who serves as mayor of her city and sings in the choir at her church; her offices in the civil and church estates are obvious, but she also holds the offices of wife to her husband and mother to their children. The particular combination of offices in the various estates, plus the common order of Christian love, constitutes a given individual's calling or vocation.

The number of possible combinations of offices is great but not endless. There are probably quite a few unmarried policemen who attend church, and more than one mayor with a family who sings in the church choir. What makes each person's vocation truly unique is that he or she holds offices *in relation to specific people*. The policeman patrols among the people of a particular town, attends church with a certain congregation, and is a son to two specific individuals. The mayor serves the people of one city, sings in the choir for the people in a given church, and acts as wife and mother just in her own family. The Lord calls us to fulfill our given roles at a certain place and time in history and with respect to specific other children of God. This vocation is ours alone and cannot be carried out by anyone else.

Given the description of vocation up to this point, one may wonder if the modern notion of vocation as job, occupation, or career factors into Luther's model at all. Indeed, it does, but it is rolled into the household estate alongside marriage and family. In the more agrarian, pre-industrial society of Luther's time, income-generating work typically took place within the home or its immediate environs. This arrangement is not entirely absent from modern life (family farms still exist, as do shops whose owners live on the premises), but it has largely been replaced by breadwinners who commute to other locations

for work. As John T. Pless explains, “Living before the Industrial Revolution, where daily work is generally separated from the home, Luther saw work in the context of the family and for the good of these people who are the nearest neighbors.”¹⁶ The modern mindset tends to think of work and family as separate categories, but in Luther’s mind they were closely entwined, so it stands to reason that he would include them both in the household estate.

Luther advocated strongly for the holiness of ordinary work and the equal dignity of all occupations. His polemical stance is best understood against the background of the pre-Reformation understanding of vocation, which invariably entailed entering the priesthood or some monastic order. In other words, only priests, nuns, monks, and friars¹⁷ had a “vocation,” while the common people just worked. According to Denis R. Janz, this belief gave rise to a problematic division of status and power between the clergy and the laity and “eventually helped produce an oppressive ‘clericalism,’ which Luther grew to despise.”¹⁸ Gene Edward Veith points out some additional negative repercussions of this narrow view of “the vocations” and the vows associated with them: the vow of celibacy repudiates the goods of marriage and family, the vow of poverty preempts productive economic work, and the vow of obedience to the church hierarchy undercuts the duty to obey civil authority. Veith writes that “[i]n rejecting the clerical vows of celibacy, poverty, and obedience, Luther insisted that the seemingly secular estates that God had ordained for human life are precisely the places where Christians are to live out their faith.”¹⁹ Luther came to see the clerical orders as providing an easy way out for those who would shirk the tough but rewarding work of raising a family and providing for

16. Pless, 745. The ongoing shift from the Industrial Age to the Information Age and the maturing of information technology (IT) has enabled some people to move back home for work. Curiously, working in the home on a networked computer is called “remote work.”

17. Luther famously began his career as a friar in the Augustinian order, but none of the works he ever performed in this capacity eased his conscience or gave him assurance of salvation. Kenneth Hagen takes pains to point out the differences between monks and friars, and enjoins all to stop calling Luther a monk, in *The Word Does Everything: Key Concepts of Luther on Testament, Scripture, Vocation, Cross, and Worm. Also on Method and on Catholicism* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2016), 31-32. In short, monks were typically cloistered in one place and cut off from the world, whereas friars pursued their work out in the community.

18. Denis R. Janz, *The Westminster Handbook to Martin Luther* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 134.

19. Gene Edward Veith, “The Glory of God Alone: Luther on Vocation,” in *The Legacy of Luther*, ed. R. C. Sproul and Steven J. Nichols (Orlando: Reformation Trust, 2016), 183.

them, as evidenced in this darkly humorous passage from *The Estate of Marriage* (1522):

Alas, must I rock the baby, wash its diapers, make its bed, smell its stench, stay up nights with it, take care of it when it cries, heal its rashes and sores, and on top of that care for my wife, provide for her, labor at my trade, take care of this and take care of that, do this and do that, endure this and endure that, and whatever else of bitterness and drudgery married life involves? What, should I make such a prisoner of myself? O you poor, wretched fellow, have you taken a wife? Fie, fie upon such wretchedness and bitterness! It is better to remain free and lead a peaceful, carefree life; I will become a priest or a nun and compel my children to do likewise.²⁰

Indeed, Luther viewed the Roman Catholic clergy of his time as nothing more than parasites living off the laity's hard-earned tithe money and giving them little of value in return, while the lifestyles of the more corrupt among them simply devolved into the pursuit of hedonic pleasure. The combined weight of the many problems and abuses of the clerical system—a system into which he himself was groomed but ultimately rejected—pressed on Luther and helped shape the content and tone of his writings on the sanctity of humble work and the inherent dignity of all manner of labor.

In his open letter *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate* (1520), Luther wrote that

priests, bishops, or popes are neither different from other Christians nor superior to them. ...A cobbler, a smith, a farmer, each has the work and office of his trade, and yet they are all alike consecrated priests and bishops, and every one by means of his own work or office must benefit and serve every other, that in this way many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, even as all the members of the body serve one another..²¹

In this passage, Luther directly challenges the two-tier system of clergy vs. laity mentioned above. The cobbler is just like a priest in terms of

20. LW 45:39.

21. LW 44:130.

the value of his work and the good he does for others. The farmer is just as holy as a pope because he serves his neighbors and provides for their welfare. Luther takes the idea of the body of believers, i.e., the church, needing all its different parts (see I Corinthians 12:12-27) and expands it to include “secular” society. The whole society is like the church; every person plying an honest trade is needed and is doing holy work for the good of all. Elsewhere, Luther describes how God uses ordinary people doing ordinary work to bless His children: “For He will be working all things through you; He will milk the cow through you and perform the most servile duties through you, and all the greatest and least duties alike will be pleasing to Him.”²² And again:

A servant does good works when he fears God, believes in Christ, and leads his life in obedience to his master. First he is justified before God through faith in Christ; then he goes on to lead a godly life in faith, maintains moderation and decency, serves his neighbor, cleans the stable, gives the horses fodder, etc. If he goes on performing works such as these, he is doing better works than any Carthusian monk. For since he is baptized, believes in Christ, and in assured hope is waiting for eternal life, he knows that whatever he does in his calling pleases God. Therefore everything that he does in his occupation is a good and precious work. To be sure, they do not seem to be great, outstanding works: riding out to the field, driving to the mill, etc. But because God’s law and command covers them, such works cannot but be and be called good works and services rendered to God, no matter how insignificant they appear to be.

In like manner also a maidservant does good works when she performs her calling in faith, obeys her mistress, sweeps the house, washes and cooks in the kitchen, etc. Though these works are not as glamorous as the works of the Carthusian who hides behind a mask and has people gaping at him, still such works are much better and more precious before God than those of the Carthusian who wears a hair shirt, keeps his vigils, gets up at night and chants for five hours, eats no meat, etc. Although these

22. LW 6:10.

appear to be glittering and shining works before the world, yet they have no command and order of God.²³

The self-appointed works of the monks have no value because they help no one, but the God-appointed works of the manservants and maidservants have great value because they help many. Despite critical passages like the foregoing, Luther did not seek to abolish the clergy but rather to reform it and expand who was counted among their number. In Froelich's memorable formulation, "Luther did not eliminate priests or do away with the priesthood. Instead he eliminated the laity!"²⁴ In sum, everyone is a priest who does his work and serves his neighbor in love.

A given task is not holy in and of itself; rather, it is made holy through the faith of the worker. This much is made clear in Luther's passage about the servants quoted above. Luther expounds the idea that work is sanctified by faith in other passages as well, such as this one from his *Commentary on The Sermon on the Mount* (1532):

If you are a manual laborer, you find that the Bible has been put into your workshop, into your hand, into your heart. It teaches and preaches how you should treat your neighbor. Just look at your tools—at your needle or thimble, your beer barrel, your goods, your scales or yardstick or measure—and you will read this statement inscribed on them. Everywhere you look, it stares at you. Nothing that you handle every day is so tiny that it does not continually tell you this, if you will only listen. Indeed, there is no shortage of preaching. You have as many preachers as you have transactions, goods, tools, and other equipment in your house and home. All this is continually crying out to you: "Friend, use me in your relations with your neighbor just as you would want your neighbor to use his property in his relations with you."²⁵

For Luther, the tools of the trade literally preach to and through the faithful Christian. They teach the craftsman about the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) and preach to the craftsman's neighbors by giving witness to God's providence. In *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520), Luther wrote that:

23. Martin Luther, *Dr. Martin Luther's Sermon on Our Blessed Hope*, trans. Arthur Schulz in *Journal of Theology* 35, no. 2 (1995): 9-10, https://journaloftheology.org/jtheo_arch/jt-1995-vol-035-num-03.pdf.

24. Froelich, 127.

25. LW 31:237.

the works of monks and priests, however holy and arduous they may be, do not differ one whit in the sight of God from the works of the rustic laborer in the field or the woman going about her household tasks, but...all works are measured before God by faith alone. ...Indeed, the menial housework of a manservant or maidservant is often more acceptable to God than all the fastings and other works of a monk or priest, because the monk or priest lacks faith.²⁶

An even more pointed and succinct statement, replete with Luther's trademark hyperbole, is found in the *Church Postil for the First Sunday in Advent* (1522):

A miller's maid, if she believes, does more good, accomplishes more, and I would trust her more if she only takes the sack from the donkey than all the priests and monks [do] if they sang themselves to death day and night and tormented themselves until they bleed.²⁷

The key phrase here is "if she believes." Her menial task of unloading sacks of wheat is transformed into a glorious, good work in the sight of God, because she has done it in faithful obedience to her calling and is acting as a conduit for God's blessings upon the people who will eat the bread made from that wheat. Her work has the same outward appearance as the work of an unbelieving miller's maid, but inwardly it has been sanctified through her faith.²⁸

The miller's maids, craftsmen, farmers, cobblers, and all like manner of ordinary working people hold offices and serve in the household estate, according to Luther's scheme. This estate also encompasses the offices related to marriage and family. Luther held this aspect of life in high esteem as well, and encouraged all people to consider their family lives as noble callings. In this passage from *An Exhortation to the Knights of the Teutonic Order That They Lay Aside False Chastity and Assume the True*

26. LW 36:78.

27. LW 75:45.

28. See also Luther's discussion of the shepherds who witnessed the Nativity in *The Gospel for the Early Christmas Service* (1522), LW 52:37. After seeing the newborn Christ, they did not abandon their shepherding for a "more holy" way of life, i.e., monastic disciplines, but rather returned to their fields to serve God there with their changed hearts.

Chastity of Wedlock (1523), Luther asserts that parenting is “a precious and noble good work”:

For in the sight of God it is a precious and noble good work to bring up children and train them, to rule your wife and servants in a godly manner, to support yourself by the sweat of your face, and to endure much misfortune and unhappiness at the hands of your wife, children, servants, and others. Such good makes little show...²⁹

With the mention of “support[ing] yourself by the sweat of your face,” he explicitly links income-generating labor with the family under the banner of the household estate. In a Church Postil³⁰ called *Gospel for St. John’s Day* (1540), Luther lists “son” and “daughter” as offices in the household estate in addition to “husband” and “wife”:

How is it possible that you are not called? You will always be in some estate; you are a husband or a wife, or a son or a daughter, or a servant or a maid. Take the lowest estate for yourself. Are you a husband, and you think you do not have enough to do in that estate with governing your wife, children, domestics, and property so that all may be obedient to God and that you do no one any wrong? Even if you had four heads and ten hands, you would still be too little either to make a pilgrimage or to take some saint’s work as your own. Again, are you a son or daughter, and do you think you have not enough to do with being modest, chaste, and temperate during your youth, with obeying your parents, with not offending anyone by words or deeds?³¹

This makes clear that all people in a system, even those with a low level of authority, have a role to play in it and thus have a definitive calling in that sphere. Sons and daughters work out their callings and bless the whole family by faithfully performing specific duties and adhering to admirable norms of behavior. Naturally, as everyone ages, the roles and responsibilities shift somewhat; the mantle of a new office may be placed upon one’s shoulders, but the old ones are never really put off, even by death of loved ones. For example, a girl begins life with the office

29. LW 45:153-54.

30. Luther’s influential Postils were sermon guides intended for publication and distribution to other pastors. See Hagen, 244.

31. LW 75:353-54.

of daughter and may in due course add the offices of wife and mother. She never ceases being a daughter, though; even when her parents have passed away, there are ways in which she can continue to honor her father and mother. If her husband dies, making her a widow, she takes on the mantle of head of household and continues as mother to her offspring. In *The Judgment of Martin Luther on Monastic Vows* (1521), he quotes and comments on I Timothy 5 as follows:

[Paul] says, “If any widow has children or grandchildren, let her first learn to rule her own house, and let these children serve their parents in their turn. This is acceptable to God” [vs. 4]. Paul regards as a widow in the full sense of the word a woman who has neither parents nor children nor anyone else to look after her. This is how he expresses it, “She is a real widow who is left alone, who has set her hope in God, and who continues steadfastly in prayer and supplication day and night” [vs. 5].³²

If she finds herself without parents or husband or children and in need of support from the church, her office of widow—humble and vulnerable though it may be—comes to the fore and affords her opportunities for the ministry of prayer. Every person’s holy vocation, regardless of his or her particular situation, inescapably includes some aspect of family within the household estate.

While Luther maintained strong categorical distinctions among the estates in his writing and preaching, a moment’s reflection makes it obvious that there could be a certain amount of overlap between them. For instance, the work you do in the church or civil estates could be the means by which you provide for your family in the household estate. Just as Luther praised ordinary work, he also placed a high value on the various roles and functions in the civil and church estates. His views on the civil estate have already been addressed in a general way. The key point is that the civil offices are all good, necessary, and pleasing to God, and that everyone has an office. You might be tempted to protest that you do not in fact have an office in the civil estate because you do not hold any position of authority in the government. Remember, however, that just as “child” is a low-authority office in the civil estate but an office nevertheless, so too is “subject” or “citizen” in the civil estate. This office carries with it certain obligations and opportunities for service that, if

32. LW 44:396-97.

practiced diligently, stave off chaos and prevent societal breakdown. In a few places, Luther specifically addresses a variety of higher-authority offices that likewise help to preserve peace and social order. In *Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should be Obeyed* (1523), he speaks about serving and assisting the “sword,” which we can read as “use of force” in modern parlance:

...you are under obligation to serve and assist the sword by whatever means you can, with body, goods, honor, and soul. For it is something which you do not need, but which is very beneficial and essential for the whole world and for your neighbor. Therefore, if you see that there is a lack of hangmen, constables, judges, lords, or princes, and you find that you are qualified, you should offer your services and seek the position, that the essential governmental authority may not be despised and become enfeebled or perish. The world cannot and dare not dispense with it.³³

The term “hangman” is jarring to read today, but here we can substitute the more euphemistic “capital punishment” and view it as part of the overall criminal justice system. Luther assumes that his readers aren’t in need of “the sword,” i.e. of being disciplined by the state (“it is something which you do not need”), but obviously some people do need it and ought to get it, so that the peace might be kept and the innocent protected. In a bluntly non-pacifistic passage from *Whether Soldiers, Too, Can be Saved* (1526), Luther likewise affirms military service as a holy calling:

...God honors the sword so highly that he says that he himself has instituted it [Rom. 13:1] and does not want men to say or think that they have invented it or instituted it. For the hand that wields this sword and kills with it is not man’s hand, but God’s; and it is not man, but God, who hangs, tortures, beheads, kills, and fights. All these are God’s works and judgments.³⁴

Secular governments, or “temporal authorities,” are instituted by God and are a means of blessing His people with stability and order and of restraining evil.

33. LW 45:95.

34. LW 46:96.

Since those who exercise secular authority have been baptized with the same baptism, and have the same faith and the same gospel as the rest of us, we must admit that they are priests and bishops and we must regard their office as one which has a proper and useful place in the Christian community.³⁵

Serving in the government is a legitimate and high vocation, one that can be carried out in faith and love by a Christian.

Luther avers that good civil leaders are like priests and bishops because their work is holy in the church estate; however, there are actual priests, bishops, and the like to consider. Given Luther's harsh criticism of the clergy in his day, it may come as a surprise that he gave them equal footing in his vocational scheme: "priests, bishops, or popes, are neither different from other Christians nor superior to them, except that they are charged with the administration of the word of God and the sacraments, which is their work and office."³⁶ He was able to separate the abuses of individuals from the offices they held, condemning the former while still upholding the latter. In *A Sermon on Keeping Children in School* (1530), Luther offers a list of various offices in the church estate: "It includes the work of pastors, teachers, preachers, lecturers, priests (whom men call chaplains), sacristans, schoolmasters, and whatever other work belongs to these offices and persons. This estate the Scriptures highly exalt and praise."³⁷ There is a necessary hierarchical element in the church estate as in the other estates, but through faith the hierarchy is flattened. That is, the various office bearers are different in authority but equal in dignity and worth in the eyes of God. Lines of decision-making authority are necessary, and someone has to be in the top position. Luther asserts, however, that those with greater authority are granted it by consent of those with lesser authority.³⁸ The authority really lies with the whole group, and individuals in the top positions are simply the ones appointed to wield it on behalf of all and for the good of all.

Luther really did hold the offices of the church estate in high esteem. The church-related work of preaching, writing, and teaching theology at the University of Wittenberg occupied a prominent place in his own vocation, after all. (After his split with the Church of

35. Martin Luther, *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate* (1520), in LW 44:129.

36. LW 44:130.

37. LW 46:220-21.

38. See LW 44:128.

Rome, he also famously married the ex-nun Katharina von Bora and raised a family with her.) He understood the church estate as having a role alongside the civil estate in maintaining peace and order in the temporal realm:

For this office not only helps to further and sustain this temporal life and all the worldly estates, but it also gives eternal life and delivers from sin and death, which is its proper and chief work. Indeed, it is only because of the spiritual estate that the world stands and abides at all; if it were not for this estate, the world would long since have gone down to destruction.³⁹

Luther's notion of the "true pastor" helped him maintain positive regard for the office, as it enabled him to cordon off and keep at a distance all the false pastors, i.e., the corrupt, self-absorbed monks and priests, that he railed against.

A true pastor thus contributes to the well-being of men in body and soul, in property and honor. But beyond that see how he also serves God and what glorious worship and sacrifice he renders. For by his work and word there are maintained in this world the kingdom of God, the name and honor and glory of God, the true knowledge of God, the right faith and understanding of Christ, the fruits of the suffering and blood and death of Christ, the gifts and works and power of the Holy Spirit, the true and saving use of baptism and the sacrament, the right and pure teaching of the gospel, the right way of disciplining and crucifying the body, and much more.⁴⁰

Luther's fondness for good pastors is on full display when he writes, "[W]ho can recount all the distinction and honor that a good and faithful pastor has in the eyes of God? There is no dearer treasure, no nobler thing on earth or in this life than a good and faithful pastor and preacher."⁴¹

From this overview of Luther's doctrine of vocation, it becomes clear that Luther's teaching on the subject provides much more than just advice on how to glorify God in one's job (although it does do that). It provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how all facets

39. LW 46:220.

40. LW 46:227-28.

41. LW 44:223.

of life, from the individual to the familial to the communal, are joined together to create an integrated life that is pleasing to the Lord. All Christians receive a universal calling from the heavenly realm to follow Jesus and live for Him. Living for Jesus plays out in the earthly realm in the estates of the household (which includes both the family and one's occupation), the church, and civil life, and in the common order of Christian love. People's positions or offices in the various estates range from the highly exalted to the humble and lowly, but God looks not at external appearances but at the heart of the believer, and is well pleased when work of whatever kind is done faithfully and lovingly. God calls each person to live for Him through offices in the various estates at a particular time and place, and in relation to specific people. Thus each person's vocation is completely one-of-a-kind. All Christian believers who faithfully pursue their vocations become priests, because they make a sacrifice of something valuable to them for the good of others, something that they might rather keep for themselves, such as time, resources, and effort. Every task, if done in faith and for the good of loved ones and neighbors, is sacred.

Note: The research reflected in this essay was conducted as part of a larger study on J. S. Bach and vocation. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from Luther's writings will be drawn from Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, eds. Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, Helmut T. Lehmann, Christopher Boyd Brown, and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (Saint Louis Concordia Publishing House, 1955-). References will be made to specific volumes and page numbers within this edition, e.g., LW 75:45.

Bibliography

- Cortez, Marc. *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective: Ancient and Contemporary Approaches to Theological Anthropology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.
- Froelich, Karlfried. "Luther on Vocation." In *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics and the Church*. Edited by Timothy J. Wengert. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Hagen, Kenneth. *The Word Does Everything: Key Concepts of Luther on Testament, Scripture, Vocation, Cross, and Worm. Also on Method and on Catholicism*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2016.
- Janz, Denis R. *The Westminster Handbook to Martin Luther*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.
- Kolb, Robert. "Two Realms." In *Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Traditions*. Edited by Timothy J. Wengert. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017.
- Luther, Martin. *Dr. Martin Luther's Sermon on Our Blessed Hope*, translated by Arthur Schulz. In *Journal of Theology* 35, no. 2 (1995): 9-10. https://journaloftheology.org/jtheo_arch/jt1995-vol-035-num-03.pdf.
- Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works*. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, Helmut T. Lehmann, Christopher Boyd Brown, and Benjamin T. G. Mayes. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955.
- Pless, John T. "Three Estates." In *Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Traditions*. Edited by Timothy J. Wengert. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017.
- Schuurman, Douglas J. "Vocation." In *Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Traditions*. Edited by Timothy J. Wengert. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017.
- Speers, David. "Vocation and the Concept of 'Time' in Martin Luther's Lectures on Ecclesiastes." In *Sanctification: New Life in Christ*, 1-18. The Pieper Lectures 7. St. Louis: Concordia Historical Institute & The Luther Academy, 2003.
- Strohl, Jane E. "The Framework for Christian Living: Luther on the Christian's Callings." In *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*. Edited by Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and Lubomir Batka. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Veith, Gene Edward. "The Glory of God Alone: Luther on Vocation." In *The Legacy of Luther*. Edited by R. C. Sproul and Steven J. Nichols. Orlando: Reformation Trust, 2016.

Joshua Veltman

Professor of Music



Joshua Veltman serves as Professor of Music History and Literature at Union University. He earned a B.A. in Music History at Calvin College and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Musicology at The Ohio State University. The occupational aspect of his vocation centers around teaching students how to love music and the arts well. At Union University, he teaches classes in music history, art appreciation, and Beauty in Honors. In his research, Joshua applies a diverse toolkit from the fields of history, theory, theology, psychology, computer science, and media technology. Dr. Veltman has written and presented on a variety of topics including Renaissance music, Navajo music, music and fractals, theological aesthetics, popular music, and the biography of J. S. Bach. He has also been called to lead a household with one wife, two dogs, three children, four stepchildren, and five grandchildren. Joshua and his wife, Jo, are members of Cornerstone Community Church in Jackson. Dr. Veltman contributes to university and civic life as a clarinetist.



“Elimination by Whim”: Ingrid Bergman, the Memphis Board of Censors, and Cancel Culture in the 1950s¹

Chris A. Blair

In the 1950s, actress Ingrid Bergman, now best known for her leading role in *Casablanca* (Curtiz 1942) and her Academy Award-winning roles in *Gaslight* (Cukor 1944) and *Anastasia* (Litvak 1956), was effectively “canceled” because of her affair and resulting child with director Roberto Rossellini, both married, while in Sicily shooting the film *Stromboli*.² Bergman, married to Los Angeles neurosurgeon Peter Lindström and mother to 11-year-old Pia, traveled to Italy in early 1949 to begin work on the film and quickly engaged in an adulterous affair with the director. By the summer of 1949, Bergman was expecting a child with Rossellini, who was also married with an 8-year-old son. Bergman gave birth to Roberto “Robin” Rossellini the week before their film was to be released in the United States. The resulting firestorm was equal to anything seen on social media today. Most view cancel culture as a 21st century phenomenon driven primarily by the rise of social media. Cancel culture, however, is not as new as one might think.

The Outrage over the Affair

While much had been written about the affair during the shooting of *Stromboli*, the outrage exploded in February 1950 with the birth of their child and the suspiciously timed release of the film—RKO Pictures coordinated the release of the film with the birth of their child. Calls for a boycott came from numerous religious organizations, Catholic bishops, and local church bodies, arguing that support of the film would be “glamorizing and sensationalizing” adultery.³ Memphis and Seattle banned *Stromboli*, as well as numerous small cities across the nation, and regional theater chains in Texas and Indiana refused to show the film.

1. This essay is part of a larger research project on Lloyd T. Binford and the Memphis Board of Censors.

2. “Demand for ‘Stromboli’ Ban Swells in Nation-wide Storm.” *The Buffalo News*, Feb. 2, 1950, 8.

3. “Anti-Hollywood Uproar Grows Over Bergman.” *Los Angeles Evening Citizen News*, Feb. 7, 1950, 2.

The state censor board of Ohio approved *Stromboli* on the merits of the film, but it later attempted to rescind its approval based on the personal behavior of the star and the director. The state Attorney General determined that the censor board lacked the authority to take such action.⁴

In fact, numerous cities across the nation decided that they could not ban a film based on the conduct of the creators rather than the content of the film itself. Using similar logic, the Catholic Legion of Decency, an organization that reviewed and rated films, passed the film as appropriate for adult audiences, stating, “We judge the pictures, not the actors.”⁵ That reasoning did not stop the Memphis board of censors from unanimously banning the film. Their official statement declared:

It is the considered opinion of the Memphis and Shelby County Board of Censors that it would be inimical to the public morals and welfare to permit the public exhibition of a motion picture starring a woman who is universally known to be living in open and notorious adultery.⁶

After the film was banned in Memphis, the Nashville board of censors ruled they could not legally ban the film. Censor board chairman Sam Davis Bell stated, “I think this is a terrible thing that we have this to contend with, but there isn’t anything we can do about it.”⁷ By the end of the week, however, the Nashville mayor created a new, larger censor board, and the City Council passed an ordinance that empowered the board to ban any film “in which there appears any person who has gained by his or her personal conduct a reputation for laxity in morals.”⁸ To take matters further, the Nashville board of magazine censors voted to ban any magazine that “glorifies or approves the recent acts of Ingrid Bergman and Roberto Rossellini.”⁹

4. “Ohio Censor Loses Plea to Recall ‘Stromboli.’” *The Akron Beacon Journal*, Feb. 8, 1950, 2.

5. “‘Stromboli’ Ban Made Official By Censors.” *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, Feb. 8, 1950, 13.

6. “‘Stromboli’ Ban Made Official,” 13. This language was common to films banned by the Memphis Board of Censors because a 1921 law empowered the board to prohibit anything “immoral, lewd, or lascivious or . . . inimical to the public safety, health, morals, or welfare” of Memphis. See *Binford v. Carline*, 9 Tenn. App. 364 (1928); Wayne Dowdy, “Censoring Popular Culture: Political and Social Control in Segregated Memphis,” *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers* 55, 98-117.

7. “Memphis Bans Stromboli, But Nashville Can Not.” *The Daily News Journal* (Murfreesboro, TN), Feb. 8, 1950, 6.

8. “Nashville Props Morals.” *The Commercial Appeal*, Feb. 12, 1950, 16.

9. “Magazines ‘Glorifying Bergman’ Banned.” *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, Feb. 14, 1950, 1.

Public condemnation would also come at the national level from the floor of the Senate. Senator Edwin Johnson (D-Colo.) condemned the actions of Bergman and Rossellini, as well as RKO Pictures for synchronizing the release of the film with the birth of their child, as he proposed a motion picture licensing bill that would “insure [*sic*] wholesome motion pictures for the people and...eliminate persons of low character from making and appearing in films.”¹⁰ While his bill did not pass, his comments were repeated in newspapers across the nation—the 1950s equivalent of retweets. Johnson referred to Bergman as “a powerful influence for evil” and an “apostle of degradation,” and concluded, “If out of the degradation associated with *Stromboli*, decency and common sense can be established in Hollywood, Ingrid Bergman will not have destroyed her career for naught. Out of her ashes may come a better Hollywood.”¹¹

Public Support for Banning *Stromboli*

Calls to “cancel” Bergman would have rung hollow without a swell of public support, which is still true today. The actions of legislators and censorship boards found support through civic and religious groups and letters from individual citizens. Lloyd T. Binford, chairman of the Memphis Board of Censors, received approximately 150 letters of support after announcing the ban on *Stromboli*. Additionally, civic and religious organizations sent letters of support to local newspapers. *The Commercial Appeal* received a letter from the Tennessee Federation of Women’s Clubs, who unanimously voted to endorse “the action taken by Mr. Lloyd Binford in decrying the showing of Ingrid Bergman films in the City of Memphis.”¹² The members of Union Avenue Baptist Church also wrote to “go on the record as approving wholeheartedly the action of the local censor board...in banning the motion picture ‘*Stromboli*,’ and sincerely hope said board will ban all other pictures of Ingrid Bergman.”¹³ Binford and the Memphis Board of Censors received praise from the floor of the House of Representatives as Rep. John E. Rankin (D-Miss.) entered Binford’s condemnation of *Stromboli* into the *Congressional Record*, recommending it as good reading to every

10. 81 Cong. Rec. 3282-3283 (daily ed. March 14, 1950).

11. 81 Cong. Rec. 3288 (daily ed. March 14, 1950).

12. “‘*Stromboli*’ Officially Banned on Grounds of Star’s Conduct.” *The Commercial Appeal*, Feb. 8, 1950, 17.

13. “‘*Stromboli*’ Officially Banned,” 17.

member of Congress “as well as every Christian mother and father in America.”¹⁴

Some of those Christian mothers and fathers did follow the controversy and expressed their opinions on the 1950s version of the comments section of Facebook or X (formerly known as Twitter)—the letters to the editor page of their local newspaper. Mrs. O. B. Carlton of Memphis shared her views shortly after news of the ban, “I believe every Christian-minded person in Memphis should uphold Lloyd T. Binford in his effort to ban a picture starring an actress who has not only brought discredit to the motion picture industry but has shown absolute disregard for two of God’s Ten Commandments.”¹⁵ F. M. Freeman echoed those thoughts, writing, “More power to Lloyd Binford and his committee in banning Ingrid Bergman’s ‘Stromboli.’ As an example to young America she is about the most sordid, yet she is glamorized by newspapers.”¹⁶ A reader from Gadsden wrote:

I add my voice to the multitude of decent people who are commending the Board of Censors for banning the movie “Stromboli”. ...What hope can we have of the survival of Christian homes in this land and the virtuous and purity of womanhood if these practices are not condemned and suppressed.¹⁷

Annie R. Inman of Memphis shared her support for Binford in banning *Stromboli* and pondered, “I often wonder who will uphold the standards of our shows when Mr. Binford dies.”¹⁸ Much like today, support was not just local but came from across the country. LaVerne Smith of Miami wrote *The Commercial Appeal* to say, “Congratulations to the good people of Memphis in taking its stand against Ingrid Bergman-Rossellini films.”¹⁹

The Pushback on the Outrage

While some view cancel culture as a positive force aimed at holding people accountable for wrong actions, others see it in a negative light as

14. “Binford Views Recorded.” *The Commercial Appeal*, April 20, 1950, 27.

15. O. B. Carlton. Letter to the Editor. *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, Feb. 9, 1950, 6.

16. F. M. Freeman. Letter to the Editor. *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, Feb. 9, 1950, 6.

17. Letter to the Editor. *The Commercial Appeal*, Feb. 19, 1950, Sec. IV, 4.

18. Annie R. Inman. Letter to the Editor. *The Commercial Appeal*, Feb. 12, 1950, Sec. IV, 4.

19. LaVerne Smith. Letter to the Editor. *The Commercial Appeal*, Feb. 12, 1950, Sec. IV, 4.

punishing people who don't deserve it.²⁰ People were quick to come to Bergman's defense in the 1950s as well. Not everyone was offended by the birth of Bergman and Rossellini's son, especially since they married as soon as their respective divorces were finalized. One newspaper article reported that they received "about 5000" messages and telegrams congratulating them on the birth of their son.²¹ Their hospital was inundated with flowers, gifts of silver spoons, cups, and rattles, according to Rossellini. People across the nation with no personal connection to Bergman and Rossellini rushed to their defense in editorials and letters to the editor. The average pushback to the outrage and the resulting bans on the film fell into two camps: some bemoaned the affair while equally bemoaning the censorship of the film, while others focused on the Christian principle of "judge not, lest you be judged."

The editorial board of the *Memphis Press-Scimitar* encapsulated the first response perfectly. They published two short editorials on the same page on the same day. The first one entitled, "Bergman-Rossellini," said:

Recently we printed the Ten Commandments on Page One. Maybe we should reprint two of them today in comment on yesterday's world-wide news:

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.*²²

The second editorial, directly below the first, entitled "Bergman Movies," stated:

The movie "Stromboli" and other Bergman films should not be officially banned, as is proposed by Memphis Censor Binford.

If people want to stay away from the pictures to rebuke Ingrid Bergman and Roberto Rossellini for their conduct, they are free to do so.

But this is not a field for official public censors to enter. Official banning would tend to defeat its own purpose. The mere banning of a picture prejudices many people in favor of it and tends to heroize those who made it.²³

20. Emily A. Vogels, *et al.* "Americans and 'Cancel Culture': Where Some See Calls for Accountability, Others See Censorship, Punishment." Pew Research Center, May 19, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/05/19/americans-and-cancel-culture-where-some-see-calls-for-accountability-others-see-censorship-punishment/>.

21. "5000 Write to Ingrid." *The Commercial Appeal*, Feb. 6, 1950, 10.

22. "Bergman-Rossellini." *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, Feb. 4, 1950, 4.

23. "Bergman Movies." *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, Feb. 4, 1950, 4.

Editorials across the nation echoed these sentiments. A newspaper in Kansas opined:

I hold no brief for Miss Bergman's conduct. Nor do I for any of the other several hundred Hollywood actors or actresses who seem to feel privileged to pick up a new wife or husband any time the old one gets a little shopworn.

But it occurs to me that if any film could be banned upon presentation that one actor in it had led a less than pure and holy personal life—every picture show in the country would have to close its doors tomorrow.²⁴

The more vigorous pushback, however, centered on how Christians should respond to the news of Bergman and Rossellini's affair.

Dr. R. Paul Caudill, pastor of First Baptist Church Memphis, addressed the affair in his Sunday morning sermon, quoted in the next day's newspaper:

If that Hollywood actress yonder...had had Christ in the center of her heart...this ugly picture that has stirred to nausea the world would never have happened. ...Henceforth, every time you look upon that character upon the screen, I hope that Christians will say, "Yonder goes an adulteress, the blackest adulteress the world can know."²⁵

He further explained that we cannot afford to have children idolize people whose lives are as "black as the soot of hell," and said that if he had his way, he would plead Bergman and Rossellini to "fall upon their knees and ask God to cleanse them and make them white as snow."²⁶

Evocative of a back-and-forth Twitter battle, the letters to the editor section of the local newspapers overflowed with comments both attacking and supporting Dr. Caudill's sermon. Ruby May Gaither of Jackson, Tennessee, responded to Caudill's characterization of Bergman as the "blackest adulteress the world can know," asking, "Who is he to say? And what of the man in the case? Is he without guilt? Why do people always think the woman the worse?"²⁷ She continued:

24. "Parade of Virtue." *The Iola Register*, Feb. 9, 1950, 4.

25. "Pastors Are Critical of Bergman's Affair." *The Commercial Appeal*, Feb. 6, 1950, 11.

26. "Pastors Are Critical," 11.

27. Ruby May Gaither. Letter to the Editor. *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, Feb. 14, 1950, 6.

Yes, those two have sinned. I do not approve what they did. May the Lord forgive us ALL, for EVERYBODY has sinned. Sins that are different, yes, but nonetheless accountable to God, who is, after all, the final judge of mortal man. He says forgive 70 times 7—have we done that? Maybe mine and your sins do not show up in the form of a corpse or an illegitimate baby but they show up on Judgment Day.²⁸

Some strongly supported the words of Gaither; some were quick to criticize. Vera E. Hooper of Memphis praised Gaither's letter, published on Valentine's Day, as "the most beautiful Valentine I have ever received," stating that "it is high time that all this [controversy] be brought to a close and leave it all in the hands of the Blessed Savior."²⁹ Mrs. A. H. Brantley, also from Memphis, disagreed. In response to Gaither's letter, Brantley asked, "If ministers and the churches are not supposed to uphold honesty and decency, then who is?" and added, "The Bible says to forgive; it also says to repent. I may be wrong, but without repentance, [*sic*] I do not believe there is any forgiveness."³⁰

In this ongoing debate, the use of biblical passages like "judge not lest ye be judged" and "He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone" was so commonplace it bordered on cliché. Questioning a person's faith for criticizing someone's behavior, however, definitely raised the tension in the discourse to another level. Perhaps the strongest critique of the pastor's comments against Bergman and Rossellini came from the somewhat anonymous "L. F. M.," calling the pastor's faith into question, stating:

I do not condone Miss Bergman's conduct, neither do I condemn. I am amazed at the attitude of Dr. Caudill and the various religious groups who have spoken so strongly against Miss Bergman. Certainly they cannot be Christians and still feel as they do. Why do I say this? The answer is found in the Bible. John viii:1-11. This scripture relates the story of a young woman taken in the act of adultery. The custom was to stone persons so taken. When asked what should be done about stoning her, Jesus said, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast a stone."³¹

28. Gaither, Letter to the Editor, 6.

29. Vera E. Hooper. Letter to the Editor. *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, Feb. 18, 1950, 4.

30. A. H. Brantley. Letter to the Editor. *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, Feb. 21, 1950, 6.

31. "Thinks Censors Out of Line." *The Commercial Appeal*, Feb. 12, 1950, Sec. IV, 4.

While these letters to the editors differ from contemporary social media discourse in the length of their comments and the speed in which they are shared, they share a number of similarities with cancel culture, such as the disinhibition that relative anonymity brings, redirecting the argument by noting hypocrisy, and the tendency toward *ad hominem* attacks.³²

The Canceling on Ingrid Bergman, for a Time

Despite the opposition and a stack of letters to the editor, Ingrid Bergman was effectively canceled in Memphis in 1950. None of her films, either new or old, were allowed to be shown in Memphis. When asked about a potential re-release of an old Bergman film in 1954, the censor board chairman Lloyd T. Binford wrote, “I feel confident you have overlooked the fact that the Board of Censors *banned forever* Ingrid Bergman and all of her productions” [emphasis added].³³ Yet forever was not long at all. All of Bergman’s films were quietly un-banned in 1956, shortly after Binford retired. Re-releases of older Bergman films, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Fleming 1941) and *Saratoga Trunk* (Wood 1945), were shown, and later that year, her first Hollywood film in six years, *Anastasia*, for which she would earn her second Best Actress Oscar, played in Memphis.³⁴

Mirroring contemporary cancel culture, Bergman’s Hollywood comeback came at a cost. She announced that she would divorce Rossellini in 1956 after news of his affair with a new mistress became public. In essence, she needed to put the affair behind her to be widely accepted again. She would still have her detractors, and throughout the entire ordeal, others would serve as her defenders—the letters to the editor in her defense would continue throughout the 1950s. Nonetheless, the instinct to exile a celebrity like Bergman remains as strong today as in the 1950s. The offenses have changed over the years and the players have changed roles, but the instinct behind cancel culture is much the same.

32. For more about online disinhibition effect, see John Suler. “The online disinhibition effect.” *Cyberpsychology & Behavior: The Impact of the Internet, Multimedia and Virtual Reality on Behavior and Society*, 7, no. 3 (2004): 321-6. doi:10.1089/1094931041291295.

33. “Old Bergman Film Booked, Banned; This is Forever.” *The Commercial Appeal*, Nov. 16, 1954, 25.

34. Ben S. Parker. “Ingrid Bergman Stars in Picture at Warner.” *The Commercial Appeal*, April 19, 1956, 25. For more about Bergman’s life and career, see Donald Spoto, *Notorious: The Life of Ingrid Bergman* (Harper Collins, 1997).

While one can identify the commonalities between this event and modern cancel culture, one can also investigate the arguments made against censorship grounded in public support at the time. In *The Commercial Appeal*, the editors made a reasoned plea against censorship that could easily be used today against cancel culture:

The underlying principle of censorship is that the book, play, painting, poem or film should be judged on its intrinsic qualities—the thoughts conveyed—rather than on the private shortcomings of the author. Great works that have been the inspiration for many generations would not exist today if censors had viewed them with an eye to the personal lives of the creators. We could cite numerous examples. To banish a book or play because the author did not measure up to the moral standards of the censor would establish a precedent that could lead to elimination by whim.³⁵

Such “elimination by whim” is precisely what some fear in cancel culture. Interestingly, the editors’ proposed solution was a variation of cancel culture. Instead of official censorship by a government-sponsored board, the editorial argued, “the general public, outraged by the brazen disregard for decency displayed by Bergman and Rossellini, will accomplish what the Memphis censor board seeks to do by fiat, namely, ignore the film in such numbers as to let there be no mistake on its reaction to the whole sordid mess.”³⁶ One must wonder if the editors could have seen 21st century cancel culture, would this have remained their solution.

35. “Public Should Censor.” *The Commercial Appeal*, Feb. 8, 1950, 6.

36. “Public Should Censor,” 6.

Bibliography

Binford v. Carline, 9 Tenn. App. 364 (1928).

Dowdy, Wayne. "Censoring Popular Culture: Political and Social Control in Segregated Memphis." *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers* 55, 98-117.

Spoto, Donald. *Notorious: The Life of Ingrid Bergman*. HarperCollins, 1997.

Suler, John. "The Online Disinhibition Effect." *Cyberpsychology & Behavior: The Impact of the Internet, Multimedia and Virtual Reality on Behavior and Society*, 7, no. 3 (2004): 321-6. doi:10.1089/1094931041291295.

Vogels, Emily A., Monica Anderson, Margaret Porteus, Chris Baronavski, Sarah Atske, Colleen McClain, Brooke Auxier, Andrew Perrin, and Meera Ramshankar. "Americans and 'Cancel Culture': Where Some See Calls for Accountability, Others See Censorship, Punishment." Pew Research Center, May 19, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/05/19/americans-and-cancel-culture-where-some-see-calls-for-accountability-others-see-censorship-punishment/>.

Chris A. Blair

Professor of Communication Arts



Chris Blair is a professor of Communication Arts and Coordinator of Digital Media Studies at Union where he has served for the past 25 years. He is currently serving as interim assistant dean for the College of Arts & Sciences. An undergraduate alumnus of Union, Blair earned his master's and Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Memphis. His previous research in digital media has been published in the *International Digital Media and Arts Association Journal* and *Renewing Minds*. A Memphis native, he is currently working on a documentary and book about the Memphis Board of Censors and Lloyd T. Binford, their notorious chairman in the first half of the 20th century. Blair works with his wife, Ashley Fitch Blair, chair and associate professor of Communication Arts. Both of their children have attended Union.



Well-being and Deep Connections by Teaching Emotion Regulation to Undergraduates

Tammy Patton

“Emotions are not reactions to the world, they are your construction of the world” (Barrett, 2018, p. 104).

Problem Statement

Following my dissertation, *Engaging Methods to Teach Empathy: A Successful Journey to Transformation*, I began exploring emotion regulation (ER), as it was a component of empathy that showed mixed results in significant development in a previous research design with undergraduate students (Patton, 2019). The mixed results from my previous research were that, at least quantitatively, ER did not show significant growth on the Empathy Assessment Index (EAI) or the Interpersonal Social Empathy Index (ISEI) with the teaching of empathy intervention.

Empathy is a crucial skill for professionals in mental and medical settings and has been shown to be essential for effective therapeutic care (Moudatsou et al., 2020); thus, empathy is a quality that should be taught in undergraduate education. Segal’s social work model of empathy (2011), used in my original dissertation, included three components: affective empathy (the physiological and automatic feeling state), cognitive empathy (the understanding of another’s emotional state, also known as other-oriented perspective taking), and self-other differentiation (the ability to regulate one’s own emotions in response to another’s distress). While affective empathy and cognitive empathy improved in my initial research, self-other differentiation (emotion regulation) did not show significant growth. This current research aims to effectively develop ER in college students through various teaching interventions and assess its impact on ER and well-being using pre and post-tests.

Literature Review¹

Given its importance for future success, how can ER be developed in college students? Emotion regulation has been found in research

1. The literature review is an excerpt from the complete study.

to contribute significantly to careers, health, relationships, and personal well-being (Park, et al., 2020). Emotion regulation is defined as the processes an individual uses to influence their emotional state, the timing of emotions, and their facial expressions (Livingstone & Srivastava, 2012). It involves being aware of one's emotional state and using problem-solving or coping strategies to manage it (Menefee, 2022). This paper will explore the definition of emotions, the process of emotion regulation, and strategies to manage both negative and positive emotions, aiming to enhance students' well-being and life satisfaction.

The Process Model of Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation involves managing both positive and negative emotions. Seminal research described emotion regulation as a growing field in the 90s and provided a process model of emotion regulation (or emotion generative process). The process model of emotion regulation outlined five points where emotions could be regulated: “(a) situation selection, (b) situation modification, (c) attentional deployment, (d) cognitive change, and (e) response modulation” (Gross, 1998, p. 271). Previous research therefore viewed emotions as “flexible response sequences” in behavior, experience, autonomic system, and neuroendocrine system versus a simple activation state (p. 272). To simplify, our nervous system processes emotions and that process involves physiological, cognitive, and behavioral responses consciously or unconsciously. This can be termed an emotional response tendency.

Emotion regulation strategies can be categorized into five families based on their primary impact on emotion generation: situational strategies, attentional strategies, cognitive strategies, and response modulation strategies (Gross & Ford, 2024).

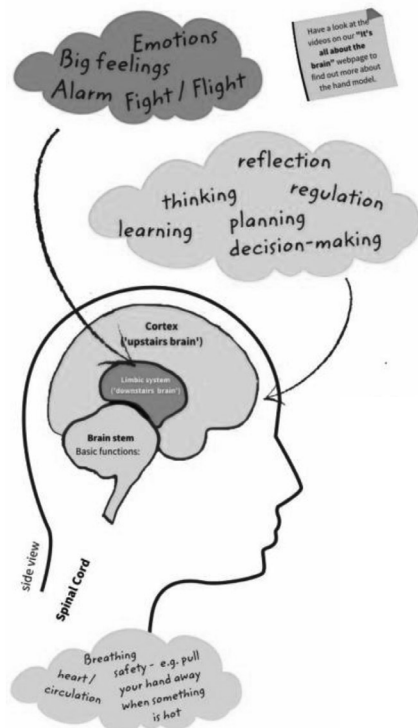
Situational strategies seek to alter emotion by selecting which situations are encountered (situation selection) or modifying what is going on in them (situation modification). Attentional strategies seek to alter emotion by changing what aspects of the situation are attended to. Cognitive strategies seek to alter emotion by modifying how the situation or one's goals are cognitively represented. Finally, response modulation strategies seek to alter emotions by directly modifying emotion-related experiential, behavioral, or physiological responses. Because each strategy has different costs and benefits that vary by

context, strategy selection involves a matching process. For example, where an upsetting situation can be improved, it may be best to change the situation rather than to use cognitive strategies. By contrast, in a context where little can be done to improve the situation, it may be best to use cognitive rather than situational strategies (Gross & Ford, 2024, pp. 7-8).

Biological Research on Emotion Regulation

Many fields such as biology have studied the concept of how emotions are modulated. Relative to the field of biology, there are neural processes helpful in emotion regulation. The interoceptive network issues predictions based on sensations and previous experiences to become your affective feelings, such as “pleasantness, unpleasantness, arousal, and calmness” (Barrett, 2018, p. 176). These affective feelings form the foundation for us to label emotionally. Enhancing emotional awareness and concepts can improve perception and response (Barrett, 2018). For example, excitement is much different from contentment.

Neural involvement in emotion processing and regulation includes the upper regions of the brain. The prefrontal cortex, for example, is integral to reasoning and cognitive processing (Gross, 1998). Additionally, “the autonomic nervous system is one avenue for your brain to regulate your body’s internal environment” (Barrett, 2018, p. 306). The prefrontal cortex, or the logical brain, can influence emotions through the strategy of cognitive processing or reframing. Dan Siegel demonstrates this concept by explaining emotion regulation using the hand model of the brain:



The upstairs brain is the logical piece, consisting of the cortex that is involved in planning, problem solving, and regulating. When you make a fist, the front part of the fingers and knuckles represent the top part of the logical brain. The downstairs brain consists of the emotional pieces, which are part of the limbic system. With the thumb enclosed in the fist, the thumb represents the amygdala, or fight, flight, and freeze part of the autonomic nervous system. It responds to fear and communicates to the other part of the downstairs brain, the brainstem that controls bodily functions such as the heart, digestion, and respiration. The brainstem is represented by the middle part of the hand, thumb, and wrist. Most of the time the upstairs and downstairs brains are connected and communicate well with one another, but when danger is sensed, the upstairs brain can become disconnected from the emotional, survival, downstairs brain. The downstairs brain is in charge of fight, flight, and freeze, with a potential elevated heart rate in response to fear. Siegel calls that the “lid being flipped” (represented by opening your hand so that your fingers are separated from your thumb). To return the lid down so we can communicate logically and regulate our emotions, Siegel coined the phrase “Name It to Tame It.” He means that naming or labeling emotions helps us to tame the emotions (impacting conceptual networks). Some people may have a lid that is stuck in high alert due to trauma, but naming emotions or labeling can help people begin to tame their emotions. Being able to be aware of bodily sensations and the internal processing lays the groundwork for the possibility of changing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that influence well-being.

Upstairs / Downstairs Brain

Think of your brain in two parts; the **upstairs brain** and the **downstairs brain**. The **upstairs brain** (cortex) is the 'smart part' - thinking, planning, learning, decision-making, regulation and reflection.

The **downstairs brain** (limbic system and brain stem) the emotional part - feelings, and our **alarm system** which is meant to keep us safe from danger (like sabre-toothed tigers) by getting us ready to fight or run away.

Most of the time the upstairs and downstairs parts work well together with our 'smart part' keeping a lid on emotional stuff. Sometimes when we experience strong emotions or the alarm system goes off... we can flip our lids. The downstairs brain takes over and thinking / logic go and it's 'react, react, react'.

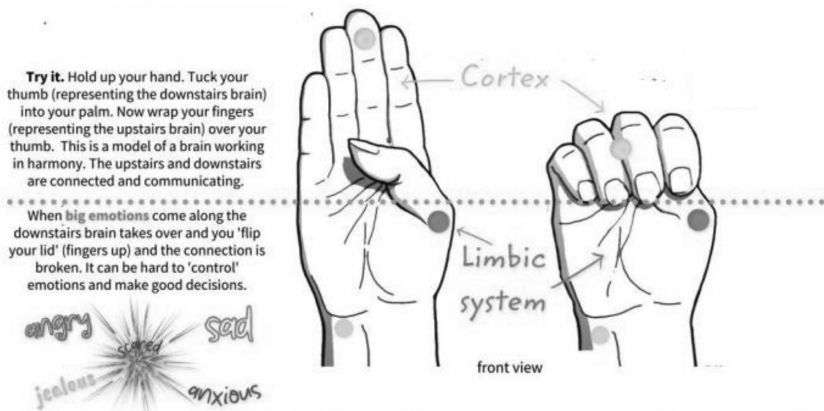
Sometimes the downstairs brain sets off a **false alarm**. No real danger (like STTs) but that makes us feel under attack; like being asked to tidy your room, speak in public or being told off by a teacher!

Name it to tame it

Everyone flips their lids. We can learn to "**name it to tame it**" - understand what happens and develop ways to help the 'upstairs brain' to get back in control'.

Some people have had a tough time growing up or have had really stressful experiences in their lives (sometimes called 'trauma'). This means that their alarm system can get 'stuck' in the 'on' position and they can 'flip their lid' more quickly. It's not their 'fault' - their experiences have made them more alert and looking for danger. For those people it is often really helpful if they practice '**naming it and taming it**' with another person like a trusted adult. This is called **co-regulation**.

Further biological research into trauma reveals that stimulating the downstairs brain can aid in trauma recovery besides cognitive processing. Research on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has found that yoga alone is significant in reducing or alleviating symptoms of PTSD. From 2008-2011, sixty-four women with PTSD that was resistant to treatment were assigned to one of two groups: yoga or women's health education group (van der Kolk, et al., 2014). Long-term improvement was found in the ten-week class of Trauma Informed Yoga over the education group. Fifty-two percent of the subjects in the yoga group no longer had symptoms consistent with PTSD compared to the education group. Both groups did show improvement, but the education group lapsed after the initial treatment versus the yoga group. Biological-based treatments alone, or in conjunction with cognitive processing, aid in emotion regulation. But what are some cognitive strategies? Both biological and cognitive approaches contribute to effective emotion regulation. The following sections will explore cognitive strategies in more detail.



Hand Model of the Brain - Why we "flip our lid"

Top-Down and Bottom-Up Strategies for Emotion Regulation (Putting It All Together)

Emotion regulation strategies can generally be categorized into two types: top-down and bottom-up. Top-down strategies are mediated by the cortex, whereas mindfulness is considered a bottom-up regulation strategy. Bottom-up strategies, which originate from the brain stem, have the potential to affect the gray matter near the

amygdala, influencing its responsiveness to fear and stress (Guendelman et al., 2017). Research indicates that an eight-week mindfulness-based intervention can significantly improve emotional reactivity, body awareness, mood, and arousal and is also beneficial for managing depression and anxiety (Guendelman et al., 2017).

Mindfulness and related techniques such as yoga play a crucial role in emotion regulation and overall well-being. Yoga, which incorporates mindfulness, helps release stress and tension, thereby supporting both physical and mental wellness. Since dysregulated emotions can lead to medical disorders (van der Kolk, et al., 2014), nurturing our minds and bodies simultaneously is essential. Dan Siegel (2015), author of *Brainstorm*, emphasizes that we can improve our brain and body health through specific practices. For instance, Bessel van der Kolk, a leading trauma specialist, found that six weeks of yoga can be as effective as several months of talk therapy for veterans with PTSD (van der Kolk, et al., 2014).

Siegel's (2015) concept of the "Healthy Mind Platter" outlines seven daily habits scientifically proven to promote a healthier mind, body, and relationships. These habits include:

1. Sleep Time: Ensuring adequate sleep or practicing good sleep hygiene.
2. Physical Time: Engaging in sixty minutes of exercise most days of the week.
3. Focus Time: Concentrating on one task at a time, avoiding multitasking.
4. Time-In: Practicing mindful awareness of one's inner life.
5. Downtime: Relaxing without specific goals in mind.
6. Playtime: Engaging in spontaneous, playful activities.
7. Connecting Time: Forming positive connections with people and the environment through activities such as volunteering.

Of these concepts, time-in needs further exploration. Mindsight, or time-in, a concept introduced by Siegel (2015), is the ability to truly see or know the mind and involves three skills:

1. Insight: The ability to sense one's own internal mental life, connecting past, present, and future.
2. Empathy: The capacity to understand others' mental lives and perspectives.

3. Integration: Integration consists of emotional and social intelligence which involves knowing how we are feeling, how others are feeling, and then being connected together with empathy (2015). “We make maps in our minds...Maps of others, ourselves, and the world together (me, you, and we)” (Siegel, 2023).

To develop awareness of our subjective inner life, we must observe our feelings, memories, perceptions, thoughts, images, and sensations. Siegel (2015) suggests using the SIFT method—examining Sensations, Images, Feelings, and Thoughts—to explore our mental landscape. One of his recommendations to enhance and practice empathy is analyzing characters in movies to better understand their inner experiences. Mindsight and empathy help us to honor our lives with others, which is the integration piece.

Self-regulation, another key concept in Siegel’s work, involves modulating emotions through mindsight (insight into one’s own mental life, empathy, integration) and self-empathy. Effective self-regulation is crucial for maintaining harmony and connection with others (Siegel, 2015). For example, if a person feels inadequate and subsequently withdraws from studying, self-empathy could shift their perspective, leading to increased self-confidence and a more proactive approach to studying with others.

Improving the inner mental life and developing self-empathy involve regular practice of “Time-In,” focusing attention on our inner experiences rather than external distractions (Siegel, 2015). Mindful meditation is a valuable tool in this process, akin to brushing one’s teeth or taking medication per Siegel (2015). By regularly engaging in mindful practices, such as breath awareness, we can cultivate resilience and a kinder attitude toward ourselves and others. Siegel advises approaching this practice with curiosity, openness, acceptance, and kindness.

To summarize, integrating mindfulness and self-regulation techniques into daily life can significantly enhance emotional well-being, physical health, and interpersonal relationships. By practicing mindfulness, engaging in activities like yoga, and following Siegel’s Healthy Mind Platter, individuals can cultivate a more balanced and resilient life.

Research Design

Current research on regulating negative and positive emotions can be used in the undergraduate setting to teach emotion regulation. I previously taught emotional regulation as a construct of empathy with mixed results (Patton, 2019). Interpersonal empathy developed but emotion regulation was harder to develop in the college population (Patton, 2019). In order to teach and measure the development of emotion regulation, the emotion regulation process will be taught along with techniques outlined in this paper. Per Gross (1998), “According to a process model of emotion regulation, emotion may be regulated at five points in the emotion generative process: (a) selection of the situation, (b) modification of the situation, (c) deployment of attention, (d) change of cognitions, and (e) modulation of responses” (p. 271). Certain strategies can be used at five different points such as tools from Dan Siegel (*Brainstorm, NowMaps*), Harvard University (positive reframing and examining the evidence chart), Livingstone and Srivastava (journaling emotion regulation utilizing a list of positive upregulation activities along with education on benefits of engagement, betterment, and indulgence domains with limitations), assertiveness training, and yoga as well as Christian accommodated mindfulness (CAM). A pre, mid, and post-test that measures the ability to emotionally regulate, i.e., the Process Model of Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (PMERQ) will be incorporated in classes as well as well-being.

Considering engaged learning, journaling and processing will be a part of the teaching intervention throughout the two-hour elective in the spring of 2025. The research questions that will be utilized are as follows:

1. Does the teaching framework of the process model of emotion regulation (ER) along with ER skill development in an Emotions Regulation undergraduate two-hour course in the spring significantly impact the knowledge of ER and use of ER skills as measured by the Process Model of Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (PMERQ) in pre and post-tests?
2. Does increased understanding of ER and the practice of ER skills help with well-being as measured in pre and post well-being tests?
3. During journaling in the ER undergraduate two-hour course, how do students perceive the use of ER skills impacting their well-being?

Results, Discussion, Conclusions

There will be a follow up to this paper in the summer of 2025 post the teaching intervention of an Emotion Regulation two-hour elective. A special thank you to Dr. Michele Atkinson for her encouragement, her contributions with research and index related to Dr. Gross, and her volunteering to teach a portion of the future Emotion Regulation course as well as aid in the analysis of the upcoming research findings.

Tammy Patton

Associate Professor of Social Work



Tammy Patton earned her Ed.D. at Union University, and she has worked in medical social work for twenty years, been employed in higher education for twelve years, volunteered in the children's ministry at her church for eighteen years, and most recently has worked in pediatric therapy for two years. She is a certified clinical trauma professional with training in EMDR and the Flash technique. She routinely guest lectures on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and interpersonal and social empathy in our local community. Dr. Patton serves as an advisor to students in the student social work organization which supports Room in the Inn on campus each semester. She is also involved with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and the Out of Darkness walks in Jackson.

References

- Barrett, L. F. (2018). *How emotions are made: The secret life of the brain*. HarperCollins.
- Gerdes, K. & Segal, E. (2009). A social work model of empathy. *Advances in Social Work, 10*, 114-127. <https://doi.org/10.18060/235>
- Gross, J. J., & Ford, B. Q. (2024). *Handbook of emotion regulation*. The Guilford Press.
- Gross, J. J. (1998). The emerging field of emotion regulation: An integrative review. *Review of General Psychology, 2*(3), 271-299. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.2.3.271>
- Guendelman, S., Medeiros, S., & Rampes, H. (2017). Mindfulness and emotion regulation: Insights from neurobiological, psychological, and clinical studies. *Frontiers in Psychology, 8*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.0020>
- Livingstone, K.M., & Srivastava, S. (2012). Up-regulating positive emotions in everyday life: Strategies, individual differences, and associations with positive emotion and well-being. *Journal of Research in Personality, 46*, 504-516. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2012.05.009>
- Menefee, D.S., Ledoux, T., & Johnston, C.A. (2022). The importance of emotional regulation in mental health. *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15598276211049771>
- Moudatsou, M., Stavropoulou, A., Philalithis, A., & Koukouli, S. (2020). The role of empathy in health and social care professionals. *Healthcare (Basel); 8*(1), 26. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare8010026>
- Park, C. L., Williams, M., Hernandez, P., & Agocha, V. B. (2020). Development of emotion regulation across the first two years of college. *Journal of Adolescence, 84*(2), 230-242. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2020.09.009>
- Patton T. (2019). *Engaging methods to teach empathy: A successful journey to transformation* [Doctoral dissertation, Union University School of Education, 2019]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Segal, E. A. (2011). Social empathy: A model built on empathy, contextual understanding, and social responsibility that promotes social justice. *Journal of Social Service Research, 37*(3), 266-277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2011.564040>
- Siegel, D. J. (2015). *Brainstorm: The power and purpose of the teenage brain*. Pesi Publishing.
- Siegel, D. J. (2022). *NowMaps: A tween's guide to learning about your thoughts, navigating big emotions, and being a confident kid*. Pesi Publishing.
- van der Kolk, B. A., Stone, L., West, J., Rhodes, A., Emerson, D., Suvak, M., & Spinazola, J. (2014). Yoga as an adjunctive treatment for posttraumatic stress disorder: A randomized controlled trial. *The Journal of clinical psychiatry, 75*(6), e559-e565. <https://doi.org/10.4088/JCP.13m08561>



Earth Series:

‘e fovea ascendere, (to climb out of a pit)

Christopher Nadaskay



36.25”h x 72.5”w x 2”d, 2023

Acrylic Mixed Media, Ash, Damar Varnish, Salt

What began as the underpainting (preliminary layers of paint) for a painting of a lava flow became a study of light, color, and texture—elements of God’s gracious gift to us through sight. The title refers to the process of realization when a believer in Christ begins to see all of creation, both its visible and its “invisible attributes,” with new eyes. This painting is intended to be one of delight in and praise for these gifts. There is significance as well in its materiality. Materiality in this case, meaning the symbolic significance of everything of which the painting was made. Let those who have eyes to see...

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” Romans 1:20-21 (NKJV)

Christopher Nadaskay

Chair and University Professor of Art



Christopher Nadaskay is an artist and University Professor of Art at Union where he has served for thirty years. He is a graduate of Southern Arkansas University and Texas A&M Commerce where he received his B.A. and M.F.A. in Painting/Studio. His mediums have included watercolor, oils, acrylics, and various sculpture mediums. Working primarily in mixed-media painting and ceramics, he is interested in the relationship between technology, the human experience, and the created order. He has works in several collections, including the Tennessee State Museum.



Agricultural Biotechnology

Mark Bolyard

Have you ever heard people talk about “clean food,” or food unaltered by human activity? To find food unaltered by humans, you would need to turn back the clock for hundreds or thousands of years; we even see the human impact on food mentioned in the Bible. An early practice was grafting, the connection of a tree bearing good fruit to another tree with a solid root system. Romans 11:24 uses grafting to illustrate the joining of Gentiles to the foundation established by the Jews, saying, “After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these [the Jews], the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree” (NIV). We see the planting of the “high quality seed” as an illustration of God’s nurturing of Israel in Jeremiah 2:21, which was written about 2,500 years ago. Just as in biblical times, humans are modifying the plants that make our food, but now we’re modifying them on a genetic level.

Why would someone want to genetically engineer a plant? Well, there are three main reasons. The first is to improve the plant itself, such as to make it resistant to an herbicide or to insects, to convert the plant to an edible vaccine, or to improve the nutritional quality of the plant. Depending on your worldview and situation, you may not see these changes as improvements. I’ll pick up more on that idea later. The second reason is to use the plant as a factory to produce some product, such as increasing its production of ethanol or biodiesel, or even to produce some medicinal product. The third reason is to learn more about how plants actually work.

Let’s think about how to genetically engineer a plant. There are three major areas of research necessary for this process, and I’ll take some time to unpack each one:

Genetic engineering

Researchers isolate a gene from an organism that has the trait they want to impart to a plant.

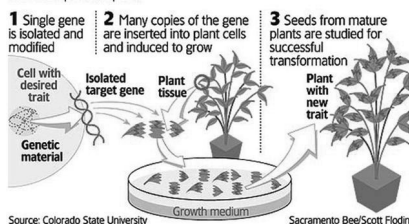


Figure 1: Plant Genetic Engineering (Genetically Modified Organisms)

Plant Regeneration

Let's say that you aren't doing so well in this class, and I offer you some extra credit. I'm willing to give you ten points in exchange for a little piece of your liver (it won't hurt—much—and it will grow back), and you take me up on it. Do you think that I or any other scientist could take that piece of liver and add all the right chemicals and hormones and vitamins and other good stuff, then grow an entirely new clone of “you” from that piece of liver?

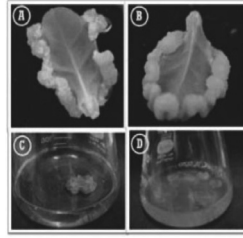


Figure 2: Callus (SciELO.org)

Now, let's say that there is another student in the class, an American Elm (the tall, quiet type). He's not doing very well either and opts to take the points in exchange for one of his organs, a leaf. Let's do the same experiment (adding the right chemicals and hormones, etc.). Do you think that if I put the leaf under the ideal conditions that I could grow a new elm tree? Turns out that with the liver, the answer is no (actually, not yet), but with the elm, the answer is yes. This process of growing new plants from pieces of tissue is called *regeneration*.

Regeneration typically involves two steps and requires the use of various hormones called plant growth regulators, which stimulate plant cells to divide. Leaf tissue (our starting material) consists of cells that are “differentiated,” meaning that they are different from each other and have different functions. If the appropriate combinations of hormones are present, the cells of the leaf will begin to “de-differentiate,” meaning that the cells will begin to lose their individual identities and become more similar to each other. This group of de-differentiated cells is called *callus* (as referenced in figure 2).

Once the callus has formed, again, if the right combination of hormones is present, cells may begin to “re-differentiate” and to emerge from the callus as a new plant. This is the process of regeneration (shown in figure 3). In order to genetically engineer a plant, one starts with plant tissue, adds the

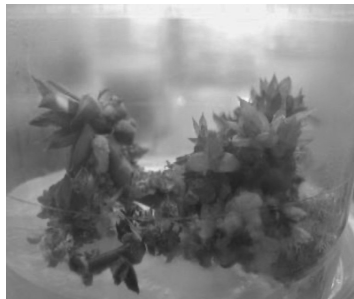


Figure 3: Regeneration (Succulent Tissue Culture)

DNA responsible for making the desired change (see figure 1), then regenerates a new modified plant containing the DNA of interest.

Not only do we need to know how to regenerate a plant, but we also need the DNA to make the desired change. This is the second major area of research for plant genetic engineering.

Genetic Information

So, the overall objective here is to add DNA to a plant (the same idea applies to genetically engineered animals or humans) that alters the plant in some specific way. Where does this DNA come from? Can you just stick it in the plant and have it work? This is actually quite an involved process, and it tends to build on years of prior research. Let's work with one specific example, that of Bt cotton.

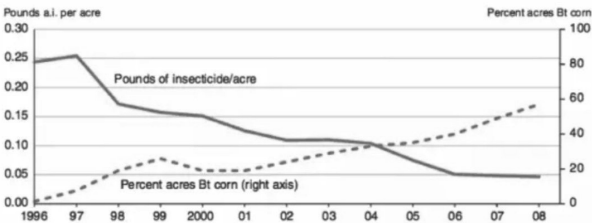
In 1901, a Japanese scientist noticed that a particular strain of bacteria, known as *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), was able to kill a certain type of moth, and this is where the story begins (Ibrahim). Over the next fifty years, these bacteria, in a dried powder form, were used as an effective but inefficient insecticide. Scientists later discovered that a specific protein in the bacteria was killing the insects.

Proteins are composed of amino acids and are produced when amino acids are arranged according to the information found in segments of DNA called genes. In God's providence, He designed this information, called the genetic code, to be used in essentially the same way by all organisms everywhere. This is a very important concept and has allowed scientists to produce Bt cotton.

Over time, scientists were able to isolate the toxic protein and determine its amino acid sequence. That information allowed other scientists to identify parts of the DNA sequence in order to capture the particular gene in the bacteria that encoded the Bt toxin (Ibrahim). To accomplish what I stated in the previous couple of sentences took another 30 years. Not only that, but there are many different strains of the Bt bacteria, each making a different protein that kills a different group of insects, and therefore each of these genes was also captured (although there are undoubtedly more to find). God has provided us with the information in nature to address lots of effects of the Fall; we just have to find it!

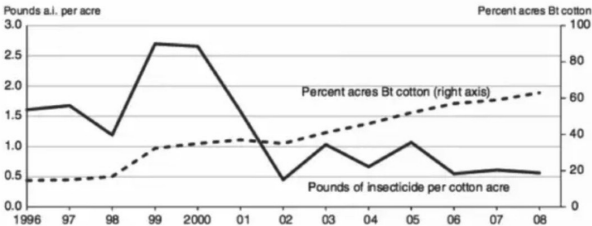
So, now we have a bacterial gene that codes for a protein that kills insects, but which is not harmful to humans, and we want to put that

Pounds of insecticide active ingredient (a.i.) per planted acre and percent acres of Bt corn, 1996-2008



Sources: Pesticides: Economic Research Service with USDA and proprietary data. See Appendix 2. Bt corn: Fernandez-Cornejo (2012).

Figure 19
Pounds of insecticide active ingredient (a.i.) per planted acre and percent acres of Bt cotton, 1996-2008



Sources: Pesticides: Economic Research Service with USDA and proprietary data. See Appendix 2. Bt cotton: Fernandez-Cornejo (2012).

Figure 4: Impact of Bt Crops on Pesticide Use (“Insect Resistant Bt Crops”)

DNA into cotton (or corn, or any other plant). It turns out that, while the genetic code itself is universal, the instructions that determine how and when the genes are used are not. What does this mean? Let me give you an example. I recently bought a chainsaw. As I was looking through the manual (figuring out where the oil goes, what the gas mixture should be), I flipped back through the pages and found a set of instructions in Spanish, French, German, and other languages that I can’t recall. While the use of the chainsaw is universal (people in the United States, Honduras, Senegal, and Belgium can all cut wood with it), the instructions are specific for the language of the person who is using it.

Genes are a lot like this. While the Bt genetic code is “universal,” the instructions that the bacteria use are different than the instructions used by cotton (or corn, or mice, or humans). What are these instructions? These are, in general, the promoter and terminator, the DNA sequences that form the beginning and end of a gene. So, not only do you have to identify the gene to make the change of interest, but

you have to identify the appropriate promoter and terminator regions, then, using enzymes to cut and paste DNA, join the instructions to the gene in the correct way. I sometimes refer to this as “getting the gene in the right environment.” The discovery of the Bt gene has led to a decrease in the use of insecticides because the plant is producing its own insecticide (see figure 4).

So far, we have found that we must have a way to regenerate the plant of interest, and we must have our genetic information in the right environment before we can go onto the last step:

Engineering the Plant

How do we get this DNA that we spent years obtaining into the plant that we can now regenerate? One of the recurring themes in science is that sometimes a discovery in one area revolutionizes another, seemingly unrelated, area. This was the case with the study of *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*, a plant pathogen (“disease-causer”) that exists in soil. The scientists studying *Agrobacterium* learned that the way the bacteria infected plants was to actually transfer a part of their DNA (appropriately called “transfer DNA,” or T-DNA) from themselves into the genome of the plant.

Let me help you imagine the effects in this way. Imagine your favorite item at your favorite restaurant. Now, imagine that item is free. In fact, the restaurant finds that the free item is very popular, so they start building new restaurants to keep up with demand for their free product. Does that sound like a good business model? Great for the customers, not so great for the restaurant! This is basically the relationship between the bacteria and the infected plant. The T-DNA the bacteria moves into the plant contains two genes. The first codes for plant hormones (similar to the ones we used for plant regeneration above), which causes the plant cells to divide (“more restaurants”). The second codes for a type of sugar (the “menu item”). These genes turn the plant cells into a growing number of “food factories,” allowing more and more bacteria to survive.

Those scientists who were studying *Agrobacterium* had an interesting idea. What if they were to replace the existing genes (those coding for phytohormones and sugars) with other genes? Would the *Agrobacterium* transfer those other genes into the target plants? If so, what kinds of genes could they deliver? (See figure 5 on next page.)

Agrobacterium-Mediated Transformation

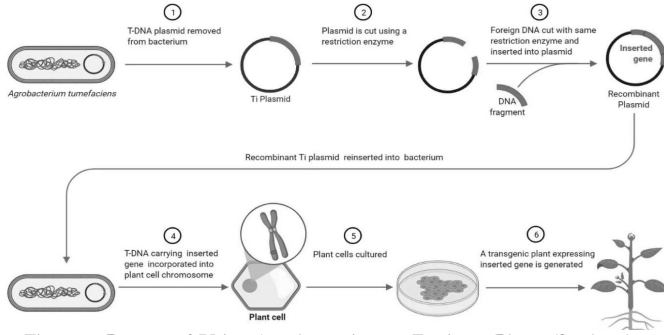


Figure 5: Process of Using Agrobacterium to Engineer Plants (Sapkota)

The scientists discovered that the bacteria would deliver any DNA that existed between two “border” sequences (short sequences of DNA) to the target plant. They began by using selectable marker genes. These are genes that provide protection for the target plant against some particular chemical, such as an antibiotic or herbicide. If the engineered plant contained the selectable marker gene, it would survive in the presence of the chemical, whereas non-engineered plants (probably the vast majority of plants) would be killed. In addition to the selectable marker gene, scientists typically introduced a second gene, which represents the point of the project, such as the Bt gene. Other categories of genes that could be introduced would be herbicide resistance genes, genes that protect against different environmental stresses (heat, cold, drought, high salt, etc.), or genes that code for proteins that add nutritional value to the crop, such as “golden rice” (Wu). Scientists have also identified genes that make plants into edible vaccines (Kurup and Thomas).

It turns out that *Agrobacterium* is not able to infect every type of plant (and therefore cannot be used for every genetic engineering project), and so other methods have been developed to introduce DNA into plants. The most effective alternative method thus far has been the “microprojectile bombardment” approach, in which DNA is coated onto tiny metal particles and essentially “shot” into the plant tissue (Tamang). From there, new engineered plants can be regenerated.

All of these have led to significant changes in the way that people grow, purchase, and think about food. For example, a number of countries, including those in the European Union, have banned

genetically modified crops, for a variety of reasons, including the unknown future impacts of GMOs, as well as the centrality of food to each nation's culture. Another issue, which particularly impacts farmers in Africa and Southeast Asia, is the way in which the large corporations that have developed GMO crops make these crops available to farmers. Traditionally, farmers have grown their crops, used most of the harvest (to eat or sell), and saved a portion to plant the next year. However, because farmers don't actually purchase and own GMO seed (it's more like renting seed), they have to use all of their harvest then pay for new seed to plant for the next year. This makes GMO crops expensive, and in much of the world too expensive to be feasible, even though these crops could provide great benefits.

The wide variability in acceptance of GMO crops has made the importing and exporting of crops particularly confusing, as some countries won't import non-GMO crops from countries in which any GMO crops are grown. In addition, the wide use of GMO crops has caused more people to become aware that their food contains GMO products, and this is causing more people to ask questions about genetic modification. These challenges will continue as more and more genetically modified plants are developed.

Genetically engineered foods have been available in the U.S. since 1995 but were not labeled as such until 2016. The Food and Drug Administration had deemed the food was safe, and they saw no need for it to be labeled. Concern about the lack of labeling led people to wonder if something was being hidden from them and that there were perceived health concerns with GM foods. In 2016, although nothing had changed about the safety of genetically engineered food, the U.S. government changed course and indicated that foods could be labeled as "GMO-free," or as containing GM products. There have been a number of claims about the health impact of GM foods. One is that genetically engineered wheat has led to alarming increases in gluten allergies and Celiac's disease. If this were true, it would be alarming. However, there are no commercially available products that contain genetically engineered wheat.

Finally, another concern about the use of genetically modified crops is the formation of "super-pests," which are weeds or insects that develop resistance (by having certain combinations of genes that allow them to survive) to the pesticide (such as Roundup or Bt toxin)

(see figure 6). This has led scientists to look for new genes and use combinations of genes to stay several steps ahead of the pests.

There are a lot of strong feelings about food, and about the way that food is produced. Regardless of how our food is produced, it is all a gift from God, who cares for us and provides for our needs. As we see in Matthew 5:45, “He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” Sun and rain are the essential elements that allow all of our food to be produced. Let us give thanks for God’s grace!

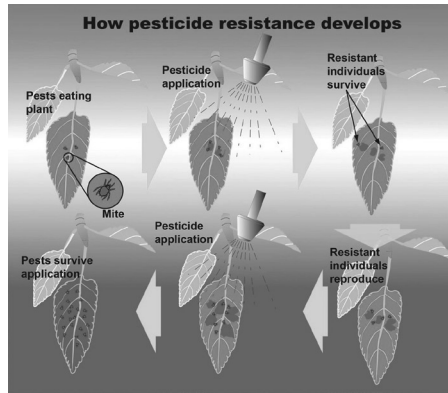


Figure 6: Process of Pests Becoming Resistant to a Pesticide (“How Pesticide Resistance Develops”)

Note: This article is one of a series of student edited chapters for a faculty-generated Global Biology textbook. Thanks to the following students of Global Biology at Union University for their comments and reviews of this chapter: Anna Slabetska, Trevor Fox, Jordan Rowland, David Parks, Sean Otto, and Brinley Schenk. Special thanks also to Ms. Laura Hailey for her editorial assistance.

Works Cited

- “Callus.” *Scientific Electronic Library Online* (scielo.org), <https://www.scielo.org.mx/img/revistas/jmcs/v56n1/a12fl.jpg>.
- “Genetically Modified Organisms—Comprehensive Notes.” *Civildaily*, 19 Jan. 2019, <https://www.civildaily.com/genetically-modified-organisms/>. Accessed 25 Sept. 2024.
- “How Pesticide Resistance Develops.” *Grapes*, www.canr.msu.edu/grapes/integrated_pest_management/how-pesticide-resistance-develops. Accessed 25 Sept. 2024.
- Ibrahim, Mohamed A, et al. “Bacillus Thuringiensis: A Genomics and Proteomics Perspective.” *Bioengineered Bugs*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 1 Jan. 2010, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3035146/.
- “Insect Resistant Bt Crops.” *Student Materials*, 29 Feb. 2024, https://serc.carleton.edu/integrate/teaching_materials/food_supply/student_materials/1188.
- Kurup, Vrinda and Jaya Thomas. “Edible Vaccines: Promises and Challenges—Molecular Biotechnology.” *SpringerLink*, Springer US, 22 Nov. 2019, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12033-019-00222-1>.
- New International Version. BibleGateway*, 2011, <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/>. Accessed 25 Sept. 2024.
- Sapkota, Anupama. “Agrobacterium-Mediated Gene Transfer (Transformation) in Plants.” *Microbe Notes*, 21 Oct. 2022, <https://microbenotes.com/agrobacterium-mediated-gene-transfer/>.
- “Succulent Tissue Culture.” <https://www.succulent-tissue-culture.com/picture/content/freet/1929223432.jpg>. Accessed 25 Sept. 2024.
- Tamang, Sanju. “Microprojectile Bombardment: Principle, Steps, Uses.” *Microbe Notes*, 16 Aug. 2023, <https://microbenotes.com/microprojectile-bombardment/>.
- Wu, Felicia, et al. “Allow Golden Rice to Save Lives.” *PNAS*, 15 Dec. 2021, www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.2120901118.

Mark Bolyard

Professor of Biology



Mark Bolyard is a University Professor of Biology at Union University, where he has been a faculty member since 2007 and served as Chair of the Biology Department until 2022. He is currently the Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Acting Director of the Genetic Counseling program. He received a B.A. in Biology from Hanover College, and a Ph.D. in Experimental Pathology from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Prior to teaching at Union, he was a Professor of Biology at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. He is an author on over 30 publications, and his current research interests include plant tissue culture for biotechnology and plant conservation. He and his wife Susan, the secretary for the Union University MBA program, have three grown children with families of their own: Kyle, Chris (UU '15, '17), and Andrea (UU '16).



“Our Most Fatal Tendency”: The Problem of our Gleeful Historical Ignorance¹

Ray Van Neste

Allan Bloom famously wrote, “Failure to read good books... strengthens our most fatal tendency—the belief that here and now is all there is.”² “Our most fatal tendency”—given the human penchant for self-destruction, this is quite a charge. Bloom says the most common self-destructive tendency of humanity is lack of historical awareness and thinking all that matters is the current moment.

You can see this in the YOLO ethos—you only live once, so do whatever you can right now. Of course, some things excused by YOLO seem likely to lead to YODA—you’ll ordinarily die agonizingly. Surely, we see the effects of this around us—living in the moment without any sense of preparing for the future, or any sense that awareness of the past is likely one of the most valuable things to help us prepare for the future.

Thus, thinking that “here and now is all there is” is fatal because it keeps us from thinking of the future. If we don’t think ahead or plan, we’re likely to waste or ruin our lives. Evidence of this is easy to find—a student having plenty of fun but failing to complete an assignment or to study for a test, failing, getting behind, or dropping out. Ruined marriages, destroyed relationships, lost jobs: all kinds of instances where you find yourself unprepared when you could have and should have been prepared.

So, if this is a “fatal tendency,” how do we address it? How do we inoculate ourselves? Well, we could address this from several angles, but surely one key piece is developing a historical awareness. Yet our culture is gleeful in its ignorance in general—and ignorance of history in particular. As Gordon Campbell said, “We may live in a world with

1. An earlier version of this article was published as “The Problem of Our Gleeful Ignorance,” in *The Imaginative Conservative*, April 10, 2023. The essay originated as the address for the annual banquet of the Delta-Psi chapter of Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society at Union University, Jackson, TN, May 2, 2019. I am grateful to Dr. Stephen Carls for the invitation.

2. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 64.

more knowledge, but it is populated by people with less knowledge.”³ The easy go to for this is the much-used line from the song, “Don’t Know Much About History.” The context of the song is a guy wooing a girl. The guy professes his ignorance of many things, but he knows that he loves her and if she’d love him back, “What a wonderful world this would be.” I picture a young lady responding, “So, you’re telling me you’re an idiot.” OK, it’s a cute song, but, guys, a much better tack would be to state some things you do know. She probably is looking for a guy with some competence. So, list some things you do know and then say, “But none of these are as amazing as getting to know you.” But apart from silly songs, lack of historical awareness is fatal because history provides context for life and thought.

History Provides Context for Life & Thought

We know how words can be taken out of context and construed to mean something completely opposite of what was intended. But how do we interpret broader ideas, movements, cultural shifts, or ideologies? How do we know if a new idea is good, or even if it is new? History, of course. Without an awareness of history, last year’s discarded failures of ideas become this year’s latest great idea. Wait, that is exactly what is happening today! History provides the context for these ideas, helping us to understand them properly and to be aware of how they have been weighed in the past. As Harry Truman once quipped, the only new thing in this world is the history you don’t know.⁴

Historical Awareness is a Guard Against Error

My point is that without historical awareness, we are particularly susceptible to error. In C. S. Lewis’s *Screwtape Letters*, the demon Screwtape, instructing his protégé in the art of deceiving humans, says, “Remember they know no history.”⁵ The implication is that by lacking historical awareness, these people are more easily duped. They are lacking a key tool that might protect them. “[T]o ignore history is to invite disaster.”⁶

3. Gordon Campbell, *Bible: The Story of the King James Version, 1611-2011* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 55.

4. Cited by David McCullough, “Knowing History and Knowing Who We Are,” https://www.realclearpolitics.com/Commentary/com-4_18_05_DM.html.

5. C. S. Lewis, “Screwtape Proposes a Toast”, in *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: Collier Books, 1982), 157.

6. George Grant, *The Blood of the Moon* (Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991), 11.

Cicero said, “Not to know what happened before you were born, that is to be always a boy, to be forever a child.”⁷ History can and should lead us to maturity, preparing us to be discerning. It, of course, does not answer all questions, but it gives us experience. Why rely only on the years we have ourselves? History gives us the opportunity to gain years of experience by delving into the human experience, which has been written down, giving us further opportunity to gain maturity.

C. S. Lewis makes a similar point in one of my favorite quotes: “A man who has lived in many places is not likely to be deceived by the local errors of his native village; the scholar has lived in many times and is therefore in some degree immune from the great cataract of nonsense that pours from the press and the microphone of his own age.”⁸ Make no mistake—the cataract of nonsense has not ceased to flow. We need voices from different places and eras to give us perspective, to keep us from being swept up into the latest fad, and to give us pause. In this way, it will inoculate us.⁹

Yet, writing in the 1930s, Sinclair Lewis referred to “the muddy slew of recollection which most Americans have in place of a clear pool of history.”¹⁰ It doesn’t seem to me our collective, cultural awareness has improved.

Preservation

This points to the importance of history in a college curriculum and why we should not disregard our opportunities to learn more history. You need historical awareness, personally, and we need it as a people.

Theologian Alister McGrath has stated, “The surest way to destroy a people is to erase the memory of their past.”¹¹ It is striking to see the

7. Cicero, *M. Tulli Ciceronis Ad M. Brutum Orator: A Revised Text* (Cambridge: University Press, 1885), 125.

8. C. S. Lewis, “Learning in War Time,” in the *Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 58-59.

9. Another related Lewis quote: “The only palliative is to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can be done only by reading old books. Not, of course, that there is any magic about the past. People were no cleverer then than they are now; they made as many mistakes as we. But not the same mistakes. They will not flatter us in the errors we are already committing; and their own errors, being now open and palpable, will not endanger us. Two heads are better than one, not because either is infallible, but because they are unlikely to go wrong in the same direction. To be sure, the books of the future would be just as good a corrective as the books of the past, but unfortunately we cannot get at them.” (“On the Reading of Old Books,” in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology & Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970], 202).

10. Sinclair Lewis, *It Can't Happen Here* (New York: Penguin, 1970), 113.

11. Alister McGrath, *Chosen Ones* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 119.

disintegration of cultural cohesion around us and to see it paralleled by gleeful ignorance of our history. Thomas Jefferson said, “The most effectual means for preventing the move to tyranny is the teaching of history.” In the preamble to his “Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge” in 1778, Jefferson went on to say this:

Whereas it appeareth that however certain forms of government are better calculated than others to protect individuals in the free exercise of their natural rights, and are at the same time themselves better guarded against degeneracy, yet experience hath shewn, that even under the best forms, those entrusted with power have, in time, and by slow operations, perverted it into tyranny; and it is believed that the most effectual means of preventing this would be, to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give them knowledge of those facts, which history exhibiteth, that, possessed thereby of the experience of other ages and countries, they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat its purposes.¹²

Knowledge of history is a guardian of liberty and defender against tyranny.

Guidance

Not only can history guard us, it can also guide us. English historian and philosopher R. G. Collingwood (1889-1943) said, “We study history in order to see more clearly into the situation in which we are called upon to act.”¹³ Similarly, Lord Bolingbroke, an 18th-century political philosopher, said, “History is philosophy taught with examples.”¹⁴ To plot a trajectory, you need two points. We have the present, but we’ve already talked about the problem of seeing only the present. We can’t access the future, so our only option for a second point on our trajectory is the past. Thus, in order to see where you are going, or even better, to plan where you are going, you must know where you are coming from.

12. Thomas Jefferson, “Preamble to a Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge,” 1778.

13. R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 114.

14. Cited, though not identified, by David McCullough, *The American Spirit: Who We Are and What We Stand For* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017,) 57.

If we are going to provide any leadership, any thoughtful input as to where we are going and how we ought to respond to current issues, we need to know the past. What did people in the past do in similar situations? What were the future results of similar ideas, plans, or deeds? Can we learn from the failures of the past?

To point out one specific area of application, popular historian David McCullough said, “A sense of history is an antidote to self-pity and self-importance, of which there is much too much in our time.”¹⁵ When all we really know is our own personal history, we will too easily think our problems are the worst ever known by man, that we are of all people most to be pitied. Thus, everyone should recognize our trouble and cater to us. Or our troubles are the greatest ever, and we give up. Or, else, our accomplishments are the greatest of all times: we’ve overcome more obstacles than anyone else, and we ought to be appropriately praised. Historical awareness can deliver us from both crushing despair and sophomoric narcissism just by placing our own situation in the context of broader human experience.

For example, I often hear people say that we currently live in the darkest moment of human history. You can hear this all around our churches, news outlets, and even from dear, devoted people. Have you noticed yet that we seem to be in a continuous state of crisis? Just my own personal history, living just over half a century, allows me to see that this claim of being in the darkest moment of history keeps being made over and over. This at least calls for suspicion. Then, I challenge such people. “Really? Is this the worst possible time in history? Did you ever read of when the bubonic plague, the Black Death, wiped out a third of the population in Europe? And the Hundred Years War killed thousands more, so that according to some estimates, France lost half of its population. What about various times in human history where normal people, peasants, lived in constant threat of plunder and pillage with no power of their own to fend off oppressors?” I could go on with further examples, but these should shame the whining out of most of us. Of course, we have problems, but some historical awareness can keep us out of the unhelpful, unprofitable pity parties and even give us some ideas for moving forward.

15. *The American Spirit*, 57.

Here's another example: the idea that America is God's chosen people today in parallel with what Israel was in the Old Testament. There are serious biblical problems with this idea, but here I will just deal with the historical issues. Several years ago, I was having lunch with a very thoughtful church member. He was an engineer and read a good bit of theology. In our conversation, he began to talk about the U.S. as God's chosen nation. I was surprised and gently pushed back. There is no biblical evidence. We are blessed. I am grateful for that, and I particularly love my country. But we have no special status before God. He was a bit shocked, so I asked for evidence of his position. He pointed to God's intervention in our War for Independence—the fog coming in to help Washington escape from New York was one example, among many. Now in this setting I need to acknowledge the trickiness of providential readings of history, but, in this conversation, I just said, "Sure. I am comfortable with seeing God at work in the unfolding of American history. But why do you think that is limited to us? Are we so self-absorbed to think God never providentially intervened in anyone else's history? What about the Dutch fight for independence from Spain, when Spanish troops had the Dutch surrounded and all looked lost? Dutch power was in their navy, but there was no water access to this battle, so they tore down the dikes and hoped the wind would turn to drive the water in the right direction so their navy could intervene. They prayed, and sure enough, the winds came, their ships moved, and they won. In some of their books, this is seen an indication of God's intervention." I asked my friend if this was any less dramatic than his American examples, and he had to concede it was not. I asked if he had ever heard this story, and he had not. Historical awareness can deliver us from thinking only we have stories of great deliverance, which can help us avoid thinking we are more special than we are.

Examples could be multiplied. But if we lack historical awareness, we will lack discernment and direction. We will be easy prey for silly ideas. We will be even more susceptible to the self-absorbed perspective, which so dominates the air we breathe already.

Conclusion

If you don't know history, you don't know nuthin'! So let me go back to the infamous song in which a young man seeks to woo a girl by touting his ignorance. As the father of a young lady, if you

come looking for her touting your ignorance of history and practically everything else, I'd have to respond by saying, "Hit the road, Jack, and don't you come back no more."

Rather than blissfully ignorant people, glorying in their shame, we need a new wave of thoughtful, hardworking, deepthinking young people to bring to bear historical awareness to discover paths forward. We ought to heed the warning of novelist P. D. James:

We live in an age notable for a kind of fashionable silliness and imbued with a restless desire for change. ...A country which ceases to value and learn from its history, neglects its language and literature, despises its traditions and is unified only by a common frenetic drive for getting and spending and for material wealth, will lose more than its nationhood; it will lose its soul. Let us cherish and use what we still precariously hold. Let us strive to ensure that what has been handed down to us is not lost to generations to come.¹⁶

Martin Luther once said, "Causing the history of their times to be written with care ought to be the work of great men."¹⁷ Maybe some of you will be those great people to help us preserve our history and to persevere in light of it. In the words attributed to Alfred the Great, King of the Saxons: "The past is given to those in the present, to keep and guard those in the future." We need you to help us receive and appreciate the past that you might help keep and guard the future.

May God bless you to this end.

16. P. D. James, "Through All the Changing Scenes of Life: Living with the Prayer Book," in *The Book of Common Prayer*, ed. Prudence Dailey (London: Continuum, 2011), 45.

17. Edwin M. Plass, ed., *What Luther Says* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 648.

Ray Van Neste

Dean, School of Theology & Missions
Vice President, University Ministries



Ray Van Neste received his Ph.D. from University of Aberdeen, and he serves as Vice President for University Ministries and Dean of the School of Theology & Missions at Union. He is a Union alum and has served at Union since 2001. Ray and his wife, Tammie, met while students at Union and have six children and three grandchildren. All the family members are ardent Green Bay Packer fans. Ray and Tammie are members of First Baptist Church of Jackson, TN.



Such Is the Way of Grace

Justin Waincott

Reflections on the conversion of C.S. Lewis, inspired by The Making of C.S. Lewis by Harry L. Poe

If Lewis himself was surprised by Joy,
then those around him
must have encountered a different surprise.
It wasn't just that the atheist became an apologist,
or that the lover of myths
discovered one was actually true.
It's that the faultfinder became an edifier,
trading contempt for compassion
and snobbery for courtesy.
It's that the haughty scholar
became a humble servant,
and pride gave way to praise.
It's that grumbling turned to gratitude,
and the one who "suffered no fools"
learned to bear with the suffering of others.
In the end, Lewis was not only *surprised* by Joy;
he was *changed* by it.
Such is the way of grace.

Justin Wainscott

Assistant Professor of Ministry



Justin Wainscott is Associate Dean of University Ministries and the School of Theology and Missions, as well as Assistant Professor of Ministry. He holds degrees from Union University, Beeson Divinity School, and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author of a collection of original hymns and poems, *Lost in Wonder, Love, and Praise*; co-editor with Ray Van Neste of *How To Be a Pastor: Wisdom from the Past for Pastors in the Present*; *Lest We Forget: Founders' Day Addresses from Union University*; and *Recognizing and Responding to the Messiah: Sermons on the Gospel of Mark*; and he contributed the chapter on "Pastoral Theology" in *A Handbook of Theology (Theology for the People of God)*, edited by Daniel Akin, David Dockery, and Nathan Finn. Prior to his service in the academy, he spent two decades in pastoral ministry. He and his wife, Anna (UU '04), have three children, Ella, Graham, and Gavin. The Wainscotts are members of Calvary Baptist Church.



Morrissey Moped so that Noah Kahan Could Whine: Sad Guy Music and the Elusive “Health” Part of Mental Health

Ted Kluck

“Kluck, what do you think of Noah Kahan?” asked one of my students. I typically love finding common ground with my students and can almost always find something to genuinely celebrate about almost anything they like.

It was a loaded question, and I knew the right answer for that moment (“He’s the greatest!”), but I gave the real one instead: “I don’t really think of Noah Kahan at all.” This, of course, qualified as rank heresy in the classroom.

As a professor at a Christian college, I’ve spent the last 24 months hearing about Mental Health Messiah Noah Kahan, who is someone I would never know about but for the fact that I work with college students—most of whom talk like they would personally take a bullet for Kahan if given the opportunity.

Kahan is a musician (folk, I guess?) who looks like paintings of Jesus you’d find in a church basement and sings about his emotions and how hard everything is all the time. In this, he is human catnip for Gen Z and some Millennials and is doing very well for himself. I find the music “not for me” in the same way that an artist like Dua Lipa is also clearly not made—for or in any way marketed—to me. But I’m fascinated by the phenomenon of this person.

Now is a good time to say that people should (within reason) listen to whatever music they enjoy, for whatever reasons they enjoy it, and “not for me” doesn’t in any way mean “bad.” But I think what’s interesting about the Kahan situation is that it’s kind of an emotional word salad (trauma! pain! anxiety! Covid! Oh my!) that scans as “smart” music because it is performed by a guy from Vermont (from the same town as Dick Loudon...if you know, you know) wearing a sweater and acting sad. Now is also a good time to remind people that his songs may actually be good, by someone else’s metric.

Kahan is the current Hipster Heavyweight (Lightweight?) Champion of the World, having taken the strap from Bon Iver, whose music feels like fun stadium rock compared to the sad-sackery that Kahan is trading in. What's interesting to me is that my students—who are generally happy, well-resourced people—are lapping up the Kahan experience and all its attendant mopiness and anxiety with a spoon. It's almost as though Kahan (and others) are presenting a sort of emotional self-fulfilling-prophecy inasmuch as it would be very bad for business for Noah Kahan to stride onto the stage and say something like, “I feel very confident and good tonight! I just started lifting! Hello Boston!” His audience seems to want the shuffling, anxious, demure version of Kahan, such that he is as trapped in his own persona as they are in their expectations for it. Like, if he ever just woke up one day feeling good—it would potentially wreck his audience. I dislike this, for him. The “health” part of mental health (ostensibly, the *good* part) seems to be a journey without a destination.

This raises interesting questions about what we expect out of our rock stars. Because I am a) old and b) a little bit of a caveman/knuckle-dragger myself, my concert experiences include bands like The Rolling Stones and Metallica. At no point in either experience did I ever expect that The Rock Star was *anything* like me. In fact, I hoped that he wasn't and would have been disappointed if he were. I guess I go to rock shows to see rock stars doing rock star things, not guys who dress like me and shuffle around like me and feel nervous like me and play their acoustic guitars on a rug like the one in my living room. I'm paying money to see someone perform who is fundamentally *different* than me, not someone who is a human avatar for my own complex emotional palette.

However, his audiences seem to want exactly that. I would think they would want to *escape* the constant blender of self-doubt and anxiety they convey that they are perpetually trapped in, but it seems like the music and media they gravitate toward just feeds it all the more.

So, what do I think about Noah Kahan? I think that Kahan is a heady admixture of psychology-talk and church-hurt, which is downright irresistible for certain audiences. The question is, will his audiences ever allow *him* to heal? And does he even want to? With “hurt” so doggone saleable (grab your \$45 Stick Season candle on the website!), peace, hope, and joy seem downright silly by comparison.

Reprinted with permission of WORLD Magazine, originally published September 20, 2024

Ted Kluck

Associate Professor of
Communication Arts



Ted Kluck is the award-winning internationally published author of 30 books, and his journalism has appeared in *ESPN the Magazine*, *USA Today*, and many other outlets. He is screenwriter and co-producer on the upcoming feature film *Silverdome* and co-hosts The Happy Rant Podcast and The Kluck Podcast. Ted won back-to-back Christianity Today Book of the Year Awards in 2007 and 2008 and was a 2008 Michigan Notable Book Award winner for his football memoir, *Paper Tiger: One Athlete's Journey to the Underbelly of Pro Football*. He currently serves as an associate professor of journalism at Union University in Jackson, Tenn., and he coaches long snappers at Lane College. He and his wife Kristin have two children.



Not by Accident

Megan Pittman

I'm just a nurse, I thought as I found myself at a conference for Christian faculty held at a seminary teeming with theologians. I had attended several nursing conferences before but never an interdisciplinary faculty conference. I was not sure what to expect from a conference like this. I did know I was a Christian and a faculty member, so I had, at best, the minimum requirements.

Since joining the world of academia, I had covertly looked up the definition of “faculty,” “pedagogy,” and lots of other words during the last few years (secret is out now, huh?). My homeschool Latin classes helped very little. I felt like I was dropped in a foreign country just within earshot of the locals; I could pick up enough language to be able to ask for directions and find clean water. Just enough, but not enough-enough. I began to recognize the insidious presence of imposter syndrome.

I went to nursing school right out of high school, working mostly in emergency medicine for about nine years. I then went into advanced practice as a family nurse practitioner in urgent care. I used to be an expert. After spending eighteen years as a nurse, I knew what I was doing most of the time, even though our work in medicine was frequently called *practice*. I had been asked several times before by friends to consider teaching but always said, “No, thank you. That’s not for me. I’m not a teacher; I’m a nurse.” About two years into full-time advanced practice, this Nineveh once again presented itself in the form of an opportunity to teach nurses. When I was asked this time, I had a revelation that God was inviting me to obedience. I had to make a move...either into the fish or on to Nineveh. Because I remembered how that Sunday-school felt board story went for Jonah, I went ahead and sailed to Nineveh. To be clear, the place I was heading to teach was nothing like Nineveh, but I perceived that this career change would be just as fraught. I was both right and wrong.

Eight years ago, I was willingly launched into the ocean of the academy with a rusty compass, a well-worn life jacket, and what seemed like a Swedish made DIY kit sans instructions to build the boat I would sail into the deep blue waters of this mystery that is academia until it all

became breezy and clear. My internal world felt like if I had been cast on Gilligan's Island, I would have been the ship. I spent most of the last few years hoping that if I pretended long enough and stayed hidden in my work to not be discovered or found out, one day I would happen upon belonging. As the imposter syndrome morphed from sneaky to obvious, the imposter part became more familiar than the real me. In this new chapter, the move from expert back to novice was a real "how do ya' do!"

Except for telling my best stories to wide-eyed and eager learners in my care, my previous professional experience did not seem to be important in this role. I had to relearn some of the *should* and *should not*s of nursing by the book that my own bad habits had helped me forget. I had to revisit pathological processes to unpack them in front of about thirty-five people who would take my words as truth. Wait. *Did* all that experience actually matter? Were all those years the foundation on which I could build this new chapter of my career?

I found the theologians gathered at that conference to be deep wells. People who, I would say, unpack a weightier text than I. Our content was different, but our mission was the same. I heard from many of them on topics of discipling, personal devotion, kingdom-mindedness, and discovering theology in any discipline. Theology in nursing? Had I considered that? God made Adam from the dust of created earth, knitting together every detail. Everything in the body worked together in harmony until death entered through deceit, causing degeneration and discord. As nurses, we get to notice, interpret, and respond using treatments and medications to partner with the created and Creator in healing. The created body continuously longs for and moves toward regeneration, back toward wholeness, and back to Eden, where the Creator walked with it and called it good. I am endlessly in awe at how the human body reflects the continuous renewing work of the Creator and how I get to partner with Him in that work.

The revelation that all this work *is* worship joined together two ideas that I had been holding separately. My work as a nurse, as an educator, and the working out of this beautiful Salvation—it's all worship. When I first started teaching, some wise women asked me what I wanted my students to love. I want my students to learn to love to be disciples of the Creator of the universe. I want them to be well-informed, critical thinkers who can apply both Christian truths and nursing principles in their daily work as worship and service unto God.

A common theme arose as each presenter took the stage at that conference for Christian faculty: Seek first the Kingdom and *all* will be added (Matthew 6:33). What does it *all* mean? It means everything. It is reasonable service, says Romans 12, to present everything about me as living sacrifice so that from surrender I may know what the good and perfect will of God is for my life. It is a simple, not easy, yet profound thing for us to do. Seek first the Kingdom.

We are all seeking something, whether that be joy, peace, significance, or belonging. That is where I got it wrong. I placed my hope in finding belonging. I was praying and reading my Bible regularly, but I was not placing my hope in the Holy Spirit to give me the desires of my heart that would lead me to His purpose (Psalm 37:4-5). I had been holding too tightly to a separation between my worship and my work. Is it too impossible to trust that the Unseen can lead me (Isaiah 30:21)? Or is it just that I am more comfortable when I think I'm in control? Control is not peace.

Nearing the end of the conference, having finished some of the best conference food I've ever had, I sat musing near the stained-glass window. "You're not here by accident," one Spirit-led theologian said as he cleared my lunch plate for me. The striking part was that, for the first time, I believed it. I knew down deep he was not talking only about being at that conference. This single phrase spoken to me pulled a thread that began to unravel years of the tightly knit web woven by imposter syndrome. My soul heard before my ears. I belong. I belong to Jesus. I belong to my brothers and sisters in the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16). I belong in the profession of nursing. I belong among those whose alphabet soup that follows their name is much meatier than mine. My discipline does matter to the Kingdom. I belong in the Academy. I belong in the University. Together we seek first the Kingdom, and *all* will be added.

You are not here by accident.

Megan Pittman

Associate Professor of Nursing



Megan and her husband, James, have three daughters and two mini-schnauzers. She earned her MSN-FNP and DNP-EL at Union University. Her foci in nursing education are adult health, community health, research, and simulation. Megan's practice background is primarily in ER and Urgent Care advanced practice. Many times a novice and sometimes an expert, she aims to encourage curiosity as a tool that invites connection, keeps us cautious, and helps us care. She aims to teach students to love the profession of nursing and always stay curious about the wonder of the human body. Her current topics of interest are clinical judgement, simulation in nursing, and transition from clinical practice to academic education for advanced practice nurses.



Southern-Fried Ads:

A Look at Advertising Posters and Word Choice in the American South

Angela Lee

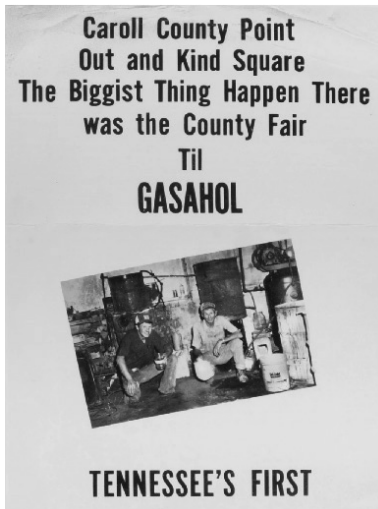
Introduction: The Poster That Started It All

It was no family secret that my grandfather brewed ‘shine back in the day. It seems that everyone in Tennessee has a grandfather who was involved in the production of liquid sin, but the thing that made my grandfather’s path different was not what he did while producing but what he did after turning his still legal. When he decided to use his knowledge of distillation for the greater good, he inadvertently had a hand in my destiny.

In 1979, long after the days of burying jars in the yard to hide the evidence, my grandfather and his friend decided to try their hand at using the still to make fuel from corn for farm machinery. They called it “gasahol” and took it to the Carroll County fair. Evidently, after producing this gasahol, my grandfather made quite a splash and garnered some local media attention. One product of this attention was a poster, a copy of which hangs in my office. Surrounding a photo of my thin, wiry grandfather and his swarthy friend is a mystifying message (see right):

These words float in tall, black, sans serif lettering on a creamy colored, slick background. The two former moonshiners smile out to the camera, kneeling in denim overalls in front of the rusty still with milk jugs of the fuel in their sun-tanned hands.

From the first moment I laid my eyes on this poster, the questions started. Who put the money up for printing it? Is there an explanation for the grammatical

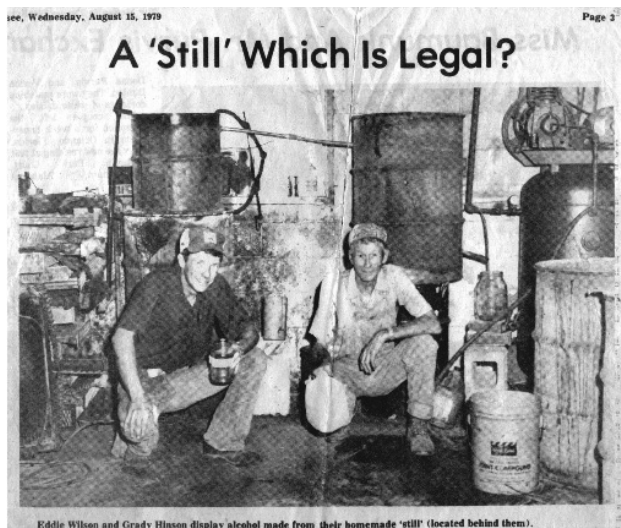


errors, even for the misspelling of the name of the county, beyond the usual excuses about the quality of a rural education? And then there's the phrasing. The whole thing seemed to read in a kind of local code to which I didn't have the key. This frustrated and alienated me. Why did I not know the code of the people to whom I was so closely related? Is it because, as a lifelong good student, my scholarship somehow buried part of my southern identity?

Ashamed of my rural upbringing, I folded the poster and placed it into a keepsake book, hiding its bad grammar from the eyes of my college-educated colleagues, the ones who were several generations away from the first college degrees in the family, unlike me. After accepting my first teaching position, I took the poster back out and smoothed it on my desk while setting up my faculty office. I looked into my grandfather's dancing eyes and accomplished smile and saw an inspirational work ethic. I decided to frame the poster and hang it in my office, grammar torpedoes be damned.

Part 1: The Investigation

After teaching graphic design history for a few years with my grandfather's photo coaching me through late prep nights, I began to notice something. The history of graphic design seemed to have a big hole in it shaped like the Southeast. How can a place as steeped in myth



and mystery as the American South be so absent from a meaningful contribution to the history books? I opened my eyes wider and looked around, attempting to build a story out of the observations.

My first interview in my quest led me to an important acquaintance, and a regular speaker in my history class, Jim Sherraden of Hatch Show Print in Nashville, Tennessee. Sherraden has been involved with Hatch since the 1980s, when he was hired to document the history of the shop. There at Hatch, he has had the luck of operating the shop through a resurgence in the interest of letterpress.

I met Sherraden on a busy Friday at the Hatch Show Print shop on Broadway, where it sits in the middle of a few honky-tonks. We walked across the street to dine on catfish tacos at the Broadway Brewhouse. After settling in with our delicious fried food, I asked him the question that lies at the heart of what I was and still am seeking to find. Is there something within graphic design that can be identified as unique to the South in symbol, color, or mark? Why, in the history of the field, do the New York School and European influences figure so significantly, while a place as rich in narrative as the South seems to have a smaller, as of yet largely unrecognized, contribution? Sherraden answered this:

There is a simplicity to the South, and posters like [the ones at] Hatch [Show Print] respond to that simplicity with bold graphics that are not overwhelming, only one or two colors. But they are as simple as the mindset of the public that they are selling to. It's only in the '30s do we have rural electrification here in the South; that's significant right there. For the record, these are not snide comments about the South. It's a completely different community down here. This is why I like that last scene in *Oh Brother Where Art Thou...* that was more than just water, that was a statement on things to come.

He was referring to the sweeping changes that came with the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority, which alternately created jobs, saved the area from a cycle of destructive flooding, and placed acres of farmland under water, as dramatized in the movie.

So it seems that there are a combination of factors that contribute to the language and look of the Hatch posters, an important representation of graphic design in the American South. From Sherraden's comments, the "hard work" mentality of the South that has influenced the emphasis of education not only evolved from the

post-Civil War reconstruction era but also from the late introduction of conveniences like electricity to the area. This pragmatism, in turn, has influenced the visual language in the posters at Hatch. The practicality of a society that had to reconstruct translated into the visual choices of the designer-printers at Hatch and directly influenced the aesthetic of the work that came out of the shop.

Because of the structure of the shop, where the order taker is also the designer and printer, the workflow continues through the same person from beginning to end. Because of this, there is an unbroken translation of the original intent of both the designer-printer and the client that placed the order.

As Sherraden spoke about the order process at Hatch, it opened up another possibility. The people placing the orders were familiar with their audience, and the orders for concert posters coming from them had the spelling, vernacular, and colloquialisms with which that audience would have been familiar. The way in which they communicated with their audiences translated into the orders.

“If you look at old Nashville pictures you can see old movie ads on the street and all of the handset type,” Sherraden said. “You only needed to see the movie for the week.” Therefore, the posters were speedily set and displayed, becoming an instant archive and direct translation of the words of the person who made the order.

After more discussion, Sherraden spoke about the tendency to mourn the blocks that had been destroyed and posters that were lost. Because of the blue-collar, utilitarian mindset of the old designer-printers at Hatch, some of the blocks were lost before their value to graphic design history was fully realized. Many were chopped up to make shelving for the shop, or repurposed in other ways. Some metal photo plates were also melted down and disposed of.

“The legacy of a shop like Hatch is important...we don’t get upset about the posters that have gone away. There’s enough here to make a good point about what design and typography looked like [in the past].”

After heading back to the shop and heartily giving him my thanks, I continued uphill to my car and tilted my face up into the beautiful Nashville sky, framed by both sleek skyscrapers and aged brick, and walked alone with my thoughts.

It seemed that the posters like the ones at Hatch Show Print and the posters like the one featuring my grandfather have been validated.

They are snapshots of this place; they are a captured moment in communication, a framing of the local spoken word.

Sherraden provided a direct lead to the next person of interest in my investigation: Nashvillian and artist-of-note John Baeder. Baeder, known for his detailed and obsessive photorealistic paintings of roadside diners, spoke as much as he could by email and in brief phone calls, but he was unable to provide a face-to-face interview for this essay. However, the easy style of the man became evident through the messages and the short voicemails we left back and forth in our attempts to connect and through his interest in my questions, coupled with the promise of a future interview and access to his photographic archives.

His book, *Sign Language: Street Signs as Folk Art*, is a small snapshot of Baeder's massive collection of photographs of street signs, a majority of which are handmade examples of commercial art. Baeder admitted in the book an interest in the crude street sign as a type of folk art. "It is fascinating," he says, "that homemade signs are often more effective than the sophisticated media to which we are accustomed. Professional communicators (and artists) take themselves so seriously that they sometimes fail to speak to audiences, they talk to each other instead. These naive signs have a power and dignity all their own, and even though the original intent is sometimes obscured, the sincerity is evident. Their modesty, pride and even vision help redefine these signs and place them into a folk art context" (Baeder 23-24).

Baeder makes a point that echoes the words of Sherraden. Southern necessity, though sometimes neglectful of things like grammar (which could be attributed to the effects of the reconstruction era on the importance of education), still has a passion that shows in its advertising products. That passion uses symbols, marks, and type, which hold colloquial artifacts designed to move a product or service. These misspellings and phrases, while ridiculed in the United States at large for being evidence of the poor quality of education in the South, exist for a reason. Whether right or wrong, they are a viable contribution to popular culture in America. The contributions of the American South to areas such as music and cuisine have been recognized, and their graphic design counterpart must exist. From Elvis to Johnny Cash, fried chicken, the biscuits of the Loveless Café, and the rap music of Three 6 Mafia, the culture of the American South, while influential, has a graphic design counterpart that needs further investigation.

Of course, in a study of a place supposedly as steeped in narrative as the American South, you cannot make a survey of the visual without including the narrative, the words of the writers of the land. While graphic design history seems bereft of a large contribution from the American South, the literary world is populated with great southern writers such as Welty, Faulkner, and Wolfe.

Fred Hobson, a professor at the University of North Carolina, has given a series of lectures that seemed to speak to the “New South,” a term that kept surfacing in my research for this essay. New South studies across disciplines abound, not only in the obvious location, but also in places like the United Kingdom. A scan of one such webpage for a conference in the UK titled “Understanding the South, Understanding Modern America” summarizes these New South studies. Parallels are made and examined between the American South and other areas of the world that have gone from plantation economies to military defeat and occupation and then into the grinding transition of the modern world economy. Hobson makes comments in an essay that describe why these parallels are drawn and how the pre-1950s southern writer used, owned, and described in his writings this “legacy of defeat and failure” with which he had been left. “The Southerner, that is, shared with the rest of the world, but not with the non-Southern parts of the United States, the realization that things do not always work out,” Hobson writes (2). This sense, to which Hobson accurately assigns the word “tragic,” seems to be an integral part of the South. It is not uncommon here for the old-timers to picnic in the cemetery where their ancestors are buried, speaking of death at the same time they are having a delightful picnic and nourishing their bodies with delicious food. In places like Savannah, Georgia, life and death seem to walk the streets hand in hand, adding to the narrative and myth of the American South, not unlike Day of the Dead festivals in Mexico. In a culture that owns defeat and failure, mysticism, religion, and ancestors mix together into stories that in turn feed the visuals and advertising art of a place.

Part 2: The Land Out Of Sync With Modernism

Based on the findings in the studies of the New South, I believe the argument could be made, with more research, to group the American South into graphic design history alongside other societies that experienced cultural upheaval and military occupation. Because

of the reconstruction era and the subsequent Rural Electrification Administration efforts, many of the conditions of the pre-1950s American South resembled those of third-world countries where access to traditional media is limited and the poster becomes king (Meggs 445).

Odette Keun's observations, written in 1937, recorded her dismay at the conditions in areas of East Tennessee, West Virginia, and Kentucky. "I've been so grossly misinformed with regard to the average living condition of the agricultural classes in this country, by the Americans I met in Europe, that I haven't got over my bitter disappointment yet," Keun writes (qtd. in "TVA: Electricity for All"). Many families existed without refrigeration and running water and relied on wood-burning stoves to cook; these conditions that would have been similar to those in third-world countries such as Cuba or areas with political upheaval such as Poland, who both have notable contributions in the Meggs text about graphic design history. In defining the American South for further study, I will concentrate on those states affected by the Civil War and Reconstruction, producing conditions similar to the countries mentioned.

The influence of areas outside of the Southeast within the United States on the larger history of graphic design owes much to immigration from Europe and Russia. The Bauhaus broke up and was scattered into metropolitan areas, with the exception of the influence in Black Mountain, North Carolina. Erté and others spread their influence across the great publishing kingdom of New York. Man Ray even seemed more comfortable in a European setting, where his experimental methods were more accepted. The United States as a whole did not seem to follow modernism as quickly as the rest of the world until the immigration of European talent, but the American South seems to stand alone in regard to the creation of its commercial art products. It marches to its own beat, possibly even to its own marching band and instruments of its own construction.

Self-conscious, machine-reliant modernism does not seem to exist in the same form in the South as it does in the publishing realm of the North. Instead, the South seems to integrate romanticism into its commercial art, attempting to blend myth with modernism, as evidenced by the photographs I took on a recent trip. Inspired by Baeder's book, I took my camera to Linden, Tennessee, a small river

town ninety miles southwest of Nashville, and photographed signs and advertising art. Examples abounded of the mix of myth and modernism.

A used appliance store advertises its wares by simply setting the appliances outside, where they intermingle with the carved wooden totems of the shop next door, each drawing attention to the other. On Main Street, two mythical murals advertise the town. One is a replica of the hands in Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* with a Bible verse inscription asking God to bless the town. In the other mural, under the words "The Forest That Feeds Us," a painting depicts the clear cutting of a forest by men and mules to produce land for crops, or it could be a reference to the area's lumber industry. A sign at a sawmill has letters cut not from wood, but from mirrors, making a very flashy sign for such an unglamorous business. Signage for the area's restaurants is dominated by the image of the catfish, the specialty dish of the area. The catfish representations range from painted to cut wood to a large three-dimensional catfish high on a pole outside of the restaurant, each attempting to catch the attention of a hungry potential customer.



Part 3: The Poster Revisited And A Conclusion

I sat at my desk, attempting to wrap up the mess I had spread with these questions. The rest of my useful life could be spent in scholarship on the things I've put forth in this brief essay, which is exactly where I wanted things to be. It seems my native land speaks a mysterious language, one with marks and grammar that I once took as blatantly wrong, but seem now to have a reasoning all their own, leaving me with a puzzle to put together.

CARROL COUNTY POINT
OUT AND KIND SQUARE
THE BIGGEST THING HAPPEN THERE
WAS THE COUNTY FAIR
TIL
GASAHOL

Grandfather Grady still stares out from the frame above my desk with his encouraging smile and worn clothing, offering a jug of the future we call ethanol. He answers no questions I have posed but encourages me to find my own answers.

The research questions that will guide my investigation are the same ones I crafted for Jim Sherraden. Is there something within graphic design that can be identified as unique to the South in symbol, color, or mark? Why, in the history of the field, do the New York School and European influences figure so significantly, while a place as rich in narrative as the South isn't recognized in any significant fashion?

My brief investigation for the purpose of writing this proposal has yielded some possibilities. The dual events of the Civil War and the late electrification of the area created special conditions. The advertising produced in these conditions may have as much in common with the graphic design of the Third World as it does with its own country, especially with the area's reliance on the poster for communication.

This also redefines the popularity and longevity of Hatch Show Print, bringing up the possibility that the poster as a medium may have been necessary instead of just another communication choice. There seems to be the possibility of a treasure trove of preserved colloquialisms and symbols in these posters. Then there are the handmade examples to consider.

"The computer is the best thing to ever happen to Hatch," Jim Sherraden has stated at almost every engagement he has had with my graphic design history class. "Now, why would I say that?" Sherraden always makes the point that the computer has preserved the history of the poster shop because it has inspired the study of the handmade commercial art that existed before the electronic methods. It has preserved a language and culture that deserves a deeper look, one that, by using the tools offered by semiotics, will help explain the pertinent contribution of the American South to American visual culture as defined by graphic design.

Bibliography

- Baeder, John. *Sign Language: Street Signs as Folk Art*. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1996.
- Hobson, Fred. *The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World*. University of Georgia Press, 1991.
- Meggs, Philip B., and Alston W. Purvis. *Meggs' History of Graphic Design*. 4th ed. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006.
- Sherraden, Jim. Personal interview. 30 Apr. 2010.
- "TVA: Electricity for All. Electric Appliances on the Farm." <http://newdeal.feri.org/tva/tva12.htm>. Odette Keun. 1937. Accessed 29 May 2010.
- "Understanding the South, Understanding Modern America." Mar. 2008. Accessed 29 May 2010. <http://www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=161589>. Professor Brian Ward. 20

Angela Lee

Professor of Art



Angela Lee works as a graphic designer and a studio artist. She is Professor of Art at Union University, where she teaches graphic design courses. She holds the Master of Fine Arts in Visual Art from Azusa Pacific University, the Master of Arts in Communication from Austin Peay State University, and the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Communications from Belmont University. Ms. Lee's studio art deals with ancestry and identity within the American South and the search for a Homeplace. Her design career spans the printing and publishing industries. Past clients have included O' Charley's Restaurants, MAPCO stores, LifeWay Christian Resources, the United Methodist Publishing House, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and others. Her pro bono work includes projects for End Slavery Tennessee in conjunction with AAF Nashville.

