MAKING A BETTER WORLD:
AN ANALYTIC COMPARISON BETWEEN JOHN LOCKE AND THE APOSTLE PAUL

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Contents

Introduction

The evidence of evil and corruption is ever-more apparent in our world. Wars, hunger, and abuse remind us daily of humanity's depravity. They also remind us of our limitations and weakness. The devastation of evil leaves us feeling shocked and helpless. For millennia, humanity has sought meaning amidst the ashes of evil's devastation. We crave to know that our pain and suffering are noticed and that there is purpose for our life, both in the joy and the misery.

Throughout its history, the Church has been called upon to provide answers to the pressing questions raised by the presence of evil. The United States witnessed this after the terrorist attack of September 11th, 2001. The blatant appearance and work of evil caused the American people to search for the meaning behind their tragedy. According to the longitudinal social study conducted by Add Health, the events of 9/11 had a serious impact on the spirituality, church attendance, and even mental health of US citizens.[1] According to this study, people reported higher levels of "theological virtues" such as love, faithfulness, and gratitude in the months immediately following 9/11, and church attendance increased by almost 10%.[2] As a nation, the United States looked to the spiritual realm as a means to cope and eventually accept our pain. This pattern can be seen in almost every culture, race, and nation across the world. For many, religion is the first place we turn for answers to our suffering.

The observation of the world recognizes evil's presence, but the Church's beliefs proclaim the omnipotence of our God. Ever since its creation, the Church has been tasked to reconcile the

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[1] Jeremy E. Uecker, "Religious and Spiritual Responses to 9/11: Evidence from the Add Health Study," National Center for Biotechnology Information, 2008, accessed August 29, 2016, http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3118577/.

[2] Uecker, "Religious and Spiritual Responses to 9/11," http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3118577/.

existence of evil with the sovereignty of a loving God. Furthermore, the Church is called to practically live out this reconciliation by participating in the redemption of creation, a process that requires a fight against the work of evil in the world. For the Christian community, the questions and responsibility of this calling present an enormous challenge.

In his book *Evil and the Justice of God*, New Testament scholar N. T. Wright discusses the issue of evil and its relationship with the belief in a faithful and just God. Wright acknowledges the healthy existence of evil, but contends that the problem of evil has evolved from its traditional form. Today, we are dealing with a new issue. Wright characterizes this new problem of evil with three assertions: a) we, as a society, ignore evil when it doesn't affect us; b) we are surprised when we are affected by evil; and c) our reaction to evil is immature and dangerous as a consequence of our ignorance.[3] Wright makes the point that our reactions to evil determine the means by which we will fight against it, therefore our perspective on the issue of evil is crucial. When we are ignorant to the presence of evil, or only allow emotions to guide our response to evil, we are affirming evil's authority and influence. Wright contends that in order for the issue of evil to truly be addressed, we must orient ourselves on what evil is, who we are, and what our role is in this fight against evil.

The search for meaning, the reconciliation of justice and evil, and our orientation within society all relate to the philosophical concept of theodicy. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, "theodicy" is defined as a "defense of the justice or goodness of God in the face of doubts or objections arising from the phenomena of evil in the world."[4] Theodicies

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[3] N. T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 23-24.

[4]Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999), s.v. "Theodicy."

are, explicitly or implicitly, attempts to explain where we are, what the problem is, and what to do about it. Theodicies can be individual or collective, and can reflect any number of beliefs and convictions. In his book *The Sacred Canopy,* sociologist Peter Berger explores theodicy and its complex variables ranging from religion, culture, to family. Berger asserts that although every theodicy is different, there is a fundamental premise present in every theodicy, which is the "surrender of self to the ordering power of society."[5] We see this surrender of self in many forms in every nation and culture of the world. Furthermore, theodicy helps to orient ourselves as to who and where we are. Berger states,

> The individual is seen as being born, living and suffering, and eventually dying, as his ancestors have done before him and his children will do after him. As he accepts and inwardly appropriates this view of the matter he transcends his own individuality as well as the uniqueness, including the unique pain and unique terrors, of his individual experiences. He sees himself "correctly," that is, within the co-ordinates of reality as defined by his society.[6]

Theodicies serve the implicitly theological function of giving meaning to our joy and sorrow, orient us in our social context, and provide answers to the questions of evil. Berger states that every individual, family, and institution has an implicit theodicy which helps to make sense of our lives and purpose. Our theodicies determine our perspective and reactions to the events of life. Wright also explores the complexities of theodicy formation among individuals and collectives. For Wright, theodicy formation is a cultural phenomenon unique to every individual and institution.

In his work *The New Testament and the People of God*, N. T. Wright explores the themes of identity and meaning for the Christian community within the context of scripture. One of the key ideas Wright discusses is the idea of "worldview," specifically a Christian

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[5] Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York City: Anchor Books, 1969), 54.

[6] Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 54-55.

worldview. Wright describes the Christian worldview as one that "will attempt not just to describe but to commend a way of looking, speaking about, and engaging with the god in whom Christians believe, and with the world that this god has created. The term 'worldview' carries the implication that this is not only what *is* believed but what *ought to be* believed."[7] Furthermore, Wright lays out four fundamental questions which a worldview answers: a) who are we? b) Where are we? c) What is wrong? And d) what is the solution?

Clearly, the concepts of theodicy and Wright's "worldview" both address similar issues. They both present questions of identity, social orientation, and evil. For a Christian, the answers to these questions are of critical theological and social importance. As Wright points out, the answers to the questions of a worldview are what shape both individual's and societies' convictions and practices. As a body, the Church's moral and social perception affects the manner in which we handle every matter, particularly the issue of evil. The Church's theodicy relies on our understanding of who God is and how that relates to the issue of evil. This understanding stems from sources including scripture, experience, and societal norms.

One of the purposes of this analysis is to examine how the American Church views the issue of evil and participation in the redemption process of creation. This is the foundation of theodicy, and fundamental to the mission of the Church. Unfortunately, the issue of evil and redemption of creation are points of contention in many sectors of the Church in America. These different points of contention are apparent between denominations, particular churches, and individual Christians themselves. The Church is comprised of many factions of differing convictions and approaches to ministry.

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[7] N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: Fortress Press, 1992), 131.

One prominent approach the United States has seen from the Church is the use of politics as the means of bringing about the Kingdom of God. In his work *To Change the World,* American sociologist James Davison Hunter discusses various political approaches and strategies the Church in the United States has employed concerning the task of bringing about the Kingdom of God. Hunter discusses various tactics the Church has utilized including, but not limited to, changing individuals' values, governmental elections, and production of mass media.[8] For example, Hunter specifically mentions groups, such as the Center for American Cultural Renewal, the Christian Coalition, and Christian Voice, who advocate for Christian individuals to vote for certain political candidates in an effort to combat secularity in the United States.[9] Many influential writers and pastors within the Christian community believe electoral politics to be the appropriate avenue for living our calling of changing the world. According to Hunter, all of these attempts have fallen short in bringing about true, radical change for the Kingdom in our culture.[10] Even within this one work by Hunter, we see how divided the Church in the United States has become on the question of evil and world change.

I believe these different ministerial approaches ultimately trace back to the fundamental issue concerning theodicy. As discussed earlier, theodicies express the means by which individuals and institutions develop meaning and conviction. In this analysis, I will be exploring two important sources of theodicy formation for the Church in America – the Apostle Paul and political philosopher John Locke. The concern of this project is to compare

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[8] James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World* (New York City; Oxford University Press, 2010), 9-17.

[9] Hunter, *To Change the World,* 13-14.

[10] Hunter, *To Change the World,* 17.

the theodicies of John Locke and the Apostle Paul in order to raise and answer the question of how the contemporary Church in the United States should respond to the issue of evil in a political and social context that is shaped by Lockean ideologies. I argue that the American Church has compromised the integrity of the Pauline theodicy by integrating or replacing it with a Lockean theodicy. I will be utilizing Wright's four-question framework of worldview to structure and explore the ideologies of Locke and Paul in order to better understand the explicit and implicit theodicies of each, and how the American Church's theodicy has been influenced by one or the other, or both.

Why the Comparison?

The influences of John Locke and the Apostle Paul on American society are generally not contested, but rarely discussed in conjunction. The juxtaposition of Locke with Paul is rare due to reasons that will be discussed later in this analysis; and a comparison between Locke and Paul such as this has never been conducted before within academia. The reason a comparative analysis between Locke and Paul is necessary is due to the immense contributions both have had on the political and theological landscapes of the United States. Many believe the social spheres of politics and religion have been successfully dissected by Liberal thought and progression,[11] and therefore Locke and Paul's contributions are exclusive to their respective disciplines. However, I contend that they both have influenced the spheres of both politics and religion through their respective theodicies. Both Locke and Paul provide answers to the questions of a worldview and therefore an understanding of theodicy, and as a society, the United States has accepted these theodicies into its cultural fabric.

[11] The word "Liberal" here is used to reference the pattern of thought and philosophy that emerged during the Enlightenment, characterized by the empowerment of the individual, belief in the Rationality of man, and glorification of Liberty.

As a Western nation, the United States is considered a product of the Enlightenment line of thought. American founders such as George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and Thomas Jefferson were all heavily influenced by the writings of the Enlightenment Era, particularly John Locke. In his work, *Republican Theology,* professor and political scholar Benjamin Lynerd discusses the influence of Locke on the framers of the Constitution and on today's American political landscape. Lynerd asserts that the fundamental American political "ethos" is rooted in Lockean principles such as limited government and the rights of the individual.[12] These Lockean principles are evident in the founding documents of the United States, such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Federalist Papers, all of which emulate and support the Lockean principles of limited government, individual liberties, and the Natural Law. The Declaration of Independence asserts the inalienable rights of every individual as "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness," which is a reference to Locke's unalienable rights of "life, liberty, and property."[13]

Not only did Locke have influence on the founders of America, but his philosophies continue to shape and play an important role in society today. As Lynerd points out, we see Locke's influence in the political realm in the people who advocate for small government, a "return to our roots," and an appeal for individual liberty.[14] Discussions concerning these principles are common in the American political dialogue, and still cause discord amongst elected officials. Locke's influence can also be seen in the economic realm. Locke's theory of individual liberty and man's inherent right to property contributed to the development of capitalism in the United States. Locke's writings developed and popularized the idea of private property, and the

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[12] Benjamin T. Lynerd, *Republican Theology*, (New York City; Oxford University Press, 2014), 24-25.

[13] John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, (Mineola, NY; Dover Publications, 2002). 72.

[14] Lynerd, *Republican Theology*, 24-25.

government's interaction with said property. The US economy is known for its free market policies, which allow businesses to flourish with limited regulation from the government. These policies are all designed around the central idea that every person is entitled to private property, and said property is under the protection of the government.

America's respect for liberty, democracy, and limited government, borrowed from Locke, have all contributed to an overall culture of individualism and materialism. Due to our political roots in Locke, American culture, both politically and socially, has been affected. We see this same pattern in other parts of Western civilization where the philosophies of the Enlightenment are a fundamental piece of their historical development. Compared to underdeveloped nations, Westernized countries have been shown to be both more individualistic and materialistic. The philosophical roots of these tendencies can be traced to the writings and ideas of the Enlightenment Era.

The Theodicy of John Locke

Why Locke?

In order to fully understand the philosophical roots of the Church's theodicy, it is necessary to examine some of the key influences that have shaped its formation. I have chosen to analyze the political philosopher John Locke and his works in order to understand American politics and how they have shaped the American Church. Locke played a significant role in shaping 17th century political philosophy, which has in turn influenced both the political and religious landscapes of America today.

John Locke is many times referred to as the Father of Liberalism due to the influential role he played in shaping the Enlightenment, Western liberalism, and the birth of individual liberty.[15]

[15] Christopher Ferrara, *Liberty, The God That Failed* (Tacoma: Angelico Press, 2012) 47.

Scholar and attorney Christopher Ferrara claims both "Thomas Hobbes and John Locke were nothing less than the original framers of political modernity."[16] Locke's most notable work, *The Second Treatise of Government,* started a social and political discussion concerning ideas such as individual rights, limited government, and the social contract—concepts that most in Western societies today assume to be fundamental to modern civilization. These principles were radical in their day, so much so that Locke in fact did not claim authorship for *The Second Treatise* until several years after it was published. Locke and his works helped to usher in the Enlightenment Era in both Europe and America. The Enlightenment was characterized by a "new belief in the value and the rights of the individual." [17] Scholar Benjamin Lynerd notes that Locke serves as the canonical fountainhead for the ideals of limited government, "life—liberty—and estate," and the inherent right to perfect freedom.[18] This contributed to a general attitude of discontentment and rebellion against the monarchy in England, which laid the foundations for the American Revolution.

Lockean influence can be seen throughout the political heritage of the United States. Many of the philosophies and principles found in *The Second Treatise* can be found in the structure America's government and the language of our founding documents. Leaders such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison all lived and studied during the height of the Enlightenment era, to which, as previously mentioned, Locke significantly contributed. Jefferson in particular was heavily influenced by John Locke and his ideals, to the extent that much of the language of the Declaration of Independence is taken from several of Locke's published works.

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[16] Ferrara, *Liberty, The God That Failed,* 41.

[17] C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1.

[18] Lynerd, *Republican Theology,* 24-25.

Basic themes of Enlightenment philosophy such as individual liberty and self-government influenced America's first leaders, and therefore shaped our nation's long-term political landscape. According to scholar Steven D. Green, "the impact of the Enlightenment theorists on the founding generation cannot be understated; writers such as Locke, Montesquieu, and Voltaire. . . were 'quoted everywhere in the colonies' as the Revolution approached."[19]

Not only has Locke had a profound influence on the political landscape of America, but his philosophies have also embedded themselves in the American Christianity as well. Studies show that in particular, evangelical leaders and congregations show a stronger affinity and commitment to principles of limited government and self-reliance.[20] Lynerd summarizes these findings by saying, "White evangelicals embrace a Lockean disposition toward government, placing a high premium on individual liberty."[21] Furthermore, Lynerd notes "the rhetoric of American evangelicalism. . . elevates limited government and individual liberty as practical extensions of the gospel. . . American evangelicals have embraced a political theology that reconciles the Lockean social contract to the ideals of their faith."[22] Locke's theories did not simply affect the American political landscape, they also shaped the nation's religious foundations. Green notes that "for Enlightenment thinkers, religious understanding could only be acquired through rational thought, freed from the restraints of religious doctrine."[23] This kind of understanding contributed to the incorporation of Lockean principles into the religious

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[19] Steven K. Green, *Inventing a Christian America,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 53.

[20] Lynerd, *Republican Theology,* 27-28.

[21] Lynerd, *Republican Theology,* 28.

[22] Lynerd, *Republican Theology,* 32.

[23] Green, *Inventing a Christian America,* 53.

framework of the American Church. Historian and professor Mark A. Noll analyzes Locke's influence on colonial America's religious landscape in his work *In the Beginning Was the Word*. Noll states, "For the British colonies and later American experience, it was not so much that Locke supplanted the biblical witness. It was rather that Locke and Habakkuk would advance together in shaping the public life of late-colonial America and then the early United States."[24] Noll concludes that much of the rhetoric, values, and references used in sermons and religious writings during colonial America reflect a commitment to Lockean principles and language.[25]

Therefore, when one is attempting to understand American political culture and the American Church, the inclusion and understanding of John Locke is essential. His contribution to the political and religious foundations in the United States is unmistakable and should be acknowledged. When discussing the modern day intersection of politics and the Church in America in this project, I will be using John Locke and arguing that his principles continue to shape both our political and religious contexts in America today.

The Anthropology of Locke

Who Are We?

In order to understand any given belief system, one must begin with that system's account of identity. In regards to Locke, the understanding of identity plays a crucial role in shaping the rest of his worldview. In his work *The Second Treatise of Government,* Locke explores dimensions of human identity in relation to government. Locke's discussion of these ideas in *The Second Treatise* has an inherently political focus as evidenced by its discussion of the role and structure

[24] Mark A. Noll, *In the Beginning Was the Word,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 97.

[25] Noll, *In the Beginning Was the Word,* 263.

of government. However, this work begins by describing Locke's perception of humanity and its place in the world, which then in turn shapes his discussion over government. As Locke asserts, "to understand political power aright, and derive it from its original, we must consider what state all men are naturally in."[26]

In order to understand Locke's perception of human identity, one must have an understanding of Locke's State of Nature. For Locke, the State of Nature influences and determines the role of both humanity and government. The State of Nature is Locke's "Garden of Eden," in a sense. It defines humanity's political origins, and therefore how government, political power, and authority should be exercised. We see the phrase "State of Nature" previously used by Hobbes in his work *Leviathan*, though Locke takes the liberty to redefine this phrase in a radically different way.[27] For Hobbes, the State of Nature is a state of perpetual chaos and fear, and man's ultimate desire is for power.[28] Locke, however, presents the State of Nature as "a state of perfect freedom to order their [men's] actions and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit."[29] Despite this distinction, though, both Hobbes and Locke essentially use the State of Nature as a metaphorical depiction of man's consciousness and identity.[30] Locke utilizes the State of Nature context and narrative to depict both the truth and application of his ideology for society.

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[26] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, 1-2.

[27] Thomas Hobbes and J. C. A. Gaskin. *Leviathan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), Part I, Ch. 13, 62.

[28] Pierre Manent, *The Intellectual History of Liberalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 40-41.

[29] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, 1-2.

[30] "Metaphorical" in being used here to describe how Locke viewed the role of the State of Nature. Locke wants to present a social truth without having to rely on historical fact. For Locke, the State of Nature does not present a literal origin story, it is instead a thought experiment borrowed from Thomas Hobbes that functions to provide an explanation of human nature through a mythological narrative. This narrative illustrates the points Locke is trying to make in his discussions over natural rights, economics, and government.

Locke's perception of human identity focuses strictly on the individual. For Locke, solitude is a key element of man's most natural state.[31] Locke's foundational identity is defined by isolated individualism. Locke states, "Men being, as has been said, by nature, all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this estate, and be subjected to the political power of another, without his consent."[32] Here, Locke establishes the individual as the most basic, functional unit of the State of Nature. Political scientist C. B. Macpherson notes that the essential ingredient to the 17th century political landscape was a new belief in the rights and value of the individual.[33] Furthermore, "the human essence [according to Locke] is freedom from the dependence on the wills of others."[34] Locke embodies the 17th century ideal of individualism and emphasizes individualism as the basis for human identity. The principle of individualism is fundamental to Lockean anthropology, and therefore critical to understanding for this discussion.

Another fundamental element of the Lockean man in the State of Nature is the endowment of "natural rights" to all men upon birth. The natural rights of every man are life, liberty, and property.[35] Furthermore, man's ultimate right is to protect these three rights, commonly known as self-preservation.[36] Locke asserts, "This [self-preservation] makes it lawful for a man to kill a

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[31] It is important to note Locke's use of the word "men" throughout his works. Professor Daniel Skidmore-Hess notes that Locke's *First Treatise* advocated for gender equality in society, however Locke's political ideologies discussed later in his *Second Treatise* only reinforced the social understanding of gender roles of Locke's day. Locke's theories affirmed the idea of public and private spheres into which men and women are separated. Locke's political and anthropological theories were not written as gender neutral, and were not meant to apply to both sexes equally. See, Daniel and Cathy Skidmore-Hess, *Patriarchalism & Equality in Locke's Two Treatises* (Conference Papers -- Southern Political Science Association. 2010 Annual Meeting), p1. 13p.

[32] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, 44.

[33] Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, 1.

[34] Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, 3.

[35] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, 38.

[36] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, 8.

thief who has not in the least hurt him, nor declared any design upon his life, any farther than by the use of force so to get him in his power as to take away his money or do what he pleases, from him."[37] Here, Locke extends the meaning of self-preservation to include an individual's material wealth. For Locke, property and labor are intertwined into an individual's essence; therefore they deserve to be defended.

The idea of self-preservation was not novel in Locke's society, but in fact had been previously introduced and defended by philosopher and theologian St. Thomas Aquinas in his work *Summa Theologica.*[38] In this work, Aquinas developed the concept of self-preservation as a natural instinct of humanity in a way that significantly shaped the political landscape of his day and also laid the foundation for the Enlightenment Era. Locke reaffirms Aquinas' theories of self-preservation and builds upon these theories in order to shape his own anthropological outlook. Furthermore, Locke makes explicit for the political ruler what Aquinas had emphasized for the moral ruler.

Scholar and political scientist Pierre Manent notes that in the *Second Treatise* Locke establishes the notion that the natural rights of man are "essentially prior to the institution of society, independent of others' consent or political law."[39] This assertion made by Locke establishes the rights of the individual as the priority of both society and government. Throughout the rest of the work, Locke will depend upon the premise of natural rights and self-preservation to shape his image of government and political power. Individual rights define the Lockean man, who is the building block for the Lockean society. Locke's basis for how humans

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[37] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government,* 8.

[38] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I-II 94, 2.

[39] Pierre Manent, *Intellectual History of Liberalism,* (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1996), 42.

should interact with each other and the world is rooted in the belief in the natural rights of all. His vision of community and society are oriented around not only the individual, but the empowered individual.

Where Are We?

In order to examine comprehensively Locke's perspective of humanity's orientation in the world, the concept must be separated into two – the emotional framework as well as physical. Emotional "location" or orientation is the basis for how one perceives the world in which he or she lives. Discussion over Locke's perception of emotional orientation will prove to be essential to fully understanding his theodicy. Furthermore, in addition to emotional orientation, one's understanding of physical location in society also plays a critical role in determining humanity's interaction, community, and society. As will be discussed later on, Locke's vision of humanity's position in the world provides a new account of civilization and also insight into the formation of Lockean theodicy.

Therefore, for the discussion of Lockean theodicy, the separation of emotional and physical orientation is essential. Locke's discussion of the State of Nature provides insight into his understanding of human consciousness and emotion in addition to his perception of identity. As previously discussed, the State of Nature is the metaphorical representation of Locke's understanding of man's natural state. In the State of Nature, man is independent and maintains full authority over his person and possessions. This ideology functions as both an understanding of identity and orientation in society. As will be shown, this premise of complete independence and jurisdiction is foundational to Lockean theodicy.

Locke's surface account of where we are in the world is simply the State of Nature. Locke uses the State of Nature as the stage on which he plays out his theories and worldview. The State

of Nature is governed by the natural law of Reason, and therefore needs no social construct to ensure liberty, equality, and harmony.[40] As Locke states, "The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions."[41] Ultimately, the State of Nature is a place where liberty, equality, and justice are enjoyed and exercised by all men without discord or strife. In understanding Lockean anthropology, it is important to note Locke's establishment of Reason as the sovereign law of nature. For Locke, Reason is what gives man his humanity. His later discussions over the role of government, economics, and humanity are all based upon the understanding of the "rational" being. Locke does not discuss the identity, role of government, etc. for the "unreasonable" or "irrational" individuals due to the fact that Locke did not consider such discussion applicable to those individuals. In any comparison between Lockean and Pauline anthropologies, this is an important point of distinction and discussion.

According to Locke, humanity's physical orientation is isolation. As previously discussed, humanity lives in solitude until we *choose* to enter into society.[42] Locke empowers the individual in a way that had previously never been done before—by offering community as a choice. He states "all men are in the State of Nature till by their own consents they make themselves members of some politic society."[43] Locke discusses why this choice is beneficial to the

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[40] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, 2.

[41] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, 3.

[42] The term "enter into society/community" appears approximately nine times throughout the *Second Treatise*, and is used deliberately by Locke to communicate a certain image of both the individual and the community. Locke empowers the individual as the one who steps into community for the economic and social benefits it offers. Community plays a secondary role in shaping Locke's anthropology. Locke rarely discusses the idea of community or society without the language of choice being included. See pg. 7,40, 55, 59.

[43] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, 7.

individual (economic gain), but being a member of society ultimately remains a choice.[44] This concept is crucial in understanding Locke's anthropology and theodicy because it creates an image of individual who does not need anything from anyone. In the comparison between Lockean and Pauline theodicy, this characteristic will mark a crucial distinction.

What is the Issue?

One of the basic concerns of theodicy is the explanation of evil in the world. As previously discussed, theodicy provides a framework to give meaning to suffering. When examining John Locke's theodicy, the issue of evil is both raised and discussed in length throughout his works. Locke's theories of knowledge, government, and society all give an account of evil in the world and attempt to provide meaning and a solution. For Locke, evil can be defined as the absence of freedom for the individual. Locke refers to this kind of existence as the State of War.[45] The State of War is defined as "a state of enmity and destruction" in which one creates the State of War by attempting "to get another man into his absolute power."[46]

The question remains why the State of Nature would cease to exist for humanity and devolve into the State of War. Locke explains that the State of Nature cannot be maintained due to people who threaten the natural rights of other individuals. As Manent states,

> Although the State of Nature is not essentially a state of war, it tends naturally to become so. In the State of Nature, men have no recognized judges to arbitrate their difference: each one is judge of his own cause. Consequently, everyone's rights are in perpetual danger. The State of Nature always ends up becoming a state of war.[47]

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[44] The language of "consent" appears more than 80 times throughout *The Second Treatise,* reflecting Locke's strong commitment to the idea of individual liberty and self-ownership. This belief runs contrary to the common 17th century belief in the "divine right" of monarch and governing bodies and particularly to the ideas of 17th century political theorist Robert Filmer. See *Patriarcha* by Robert Filmer.

[45] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government,* 8.

[46] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, 8.

[47] Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism,* 48. Manent notes that in this understanding of inevitable chaos, Locke's "man" is essentially "more Hobbesian than Hobbes' man," meaning that the Lockean individual is in an

When the liberties and harmonious existence of the State of Nature are disrupted, individuals enter into the State of War. This State of War offers a problem for society in that it threatens the livelihood of the associated individuals. Furthermore, the State of War presents an economic threat to society. When individuals are in the State of War, they cannot contribute to society in any fashion. Therefore, the State of War becomes not only the problem of the individuals involved, but also the surrounding community. Locke does not give an account as to why the State of War is inevitable for the State of Nature, but utilizes this principle as a foundational element to his anthropology. Locke acknowledges that something is wrong with the State of Nature that causes it to devolve into the State of War. Therefore, because the State of Nature cannot be guaranteed, certain steps must be taken to guard against irrationality and evil, and to protect the rights of the individual.

As previously mentioned, Locke discusses rationality and reason extensively throughout his *Second Treatise,* but he does not provide an explanation as to the absence of these qualities. When considering Lockean and Pauline anthropologies, this is an interesting point of comparison. Neither Locke nor Paul truly provide an account or justification for the existence of evil. It is a presupposed and understood principle both Locke and Paul affirm and upon which they build their anthropologies and theodicies. This is a common theme throughout various theodicies and religious narratives of humanity, and reflects a fundamental mystery within our own existence.

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even more dismal and pessimistic situation than Hobbes' man. For Hobbes, the State of Nature *was* the State of War, and therefore in need of social structure and authority. Locke at first takes a more positive approach to the State of Nature, but then reaches a "Hobbesian moment" when he acknowledges the natural digression of the State of Nature into the State of War.

What is the Solution?

The last concern of any theodicy is to provide an answer to the issue of evil in the world. As discussed, Locke's theodicy is based upon the tension between natural rights and the existence of irrationality. It is in response to this tension that Locke offers his solution to the inevitable State of War and the problem of evil.

For Locke, the body politic and the privatization of spirituality are the pillars of his solution to the issue of irrationality and the rights of individual. *The Second Treatise* discusses Locke's vision of the political body, and his *Letter Concerning Toleration* presents Locke's theories over the role of religion in society. Religion plays a key role in shaping Locke's theodicy due to the heavy influence the Church had in all social spheres of Locke's day. Locke understood that in order to change the political landscape, he had to reshape the spiritual landscape as well. This interconnection between politics and religion is both understood and addressed in Locke's anthropology.

For Locke, the body politic is created in order to establish an authoritative power to which all individuals willingly submit themselves. Locke proceeds in his *Second Treatise* to describe this body politic and its functions in society. For Locke, "the purpose of the political institution is to preserve property endangered by the inevitable disorders of the State of Nature."[48] Locke states, "The supreme power cannot take from any man any part of his property without his own consent: for the preservation of property being the end of government, and that for which men enter society, it necessarily supposes and requires, that the people should have property, without which they must be supposed to lost that, by entering into society, which was the end for which

[48] Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism,* 48.

they entered into it. [49] Locke understood the right to and preservation of individual property as the ultimate purpose of the body politic.[50] Furthermore, this political body would be subject to the will and consent of the governed. This type of institution was different from previous political bodies in that it itself was subjected to the laws it created. This idea of an accountable body politic, or social contract, was novel and radical in Locke's day, and had significant impact on both the social and political landscapes of the years to come.

The privatization of religion or spirituality was one of Locke's most controversial theories in his day. Before the 16th century, the implications of the word "religion" were completely different than they are today. Locke played a crucial role in re-defining the meaning of "religion," and succeeded in establishing it as "an interior and universal impulse. . . [Religion] would come to mean a system of doctrines, intellectual propositions that could be either true or false."[51] Due to Enlightenment thinking and Lockean influence, "religion became solely a private affair" within society.[52] The reason this principle is key to this discussion is its implications for Locke's understanding of spirituality and the Church. Making religion a private vs. public issue radically transformed how churches and individuals engaged in worship and service. Furthermore, the long-term effects of such a shift are still influencing the Church today.

As previously noted, Locke understands the creation of society as a conscious choice of individuals. To remove oneself from the State of Nature is to enter into a kind of community or society with other individuals. This is done solely to avoid the State of War and protect man's natural rights.[53] For Locke, the protection of self is the ultimate reasoning behind community and

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[49] Locke, *Second Treatise of Government,* 64.

[51] William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2009), 72.

[52] Ferrara, *Liberty, The God That Failed,* 48.

[53] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government,* 10.

the body politic.[54] The State of War presents a threat to both individuals and society, therefore it should be avoided at all costs. However, this understanding of community and relationship presents various anthropological and spiritual concerns. In response to Locke's account of community, attorney and activist Christopher Ferrara claims Locke "deconstructed man from his environment and disconnected him from his metaphysical existence."[55] Through creating a new narrative of man—the State of Nature, natural rights, and the privatization of religion—Locke essentially alienated man from his traditional place among creation. This will be a pivotal point of distinction and discussion when juxtaposing the anthropologies of Locke and the Apostle Paul.

Conclusion

In Locke's day, this vision of economics, community, and society was radical. Locke, commonly referred to as the Father of Liberalism, propelled a vision for Western thought that drastically changed the social and political landscape of his time. To empower the individual with innate rights, to dissect the idea of community, and to offer the body politic as a solution to the ills of society were all relatively foreign and novel. Furthermore, as scholar Christopher Ferrara observes, the creation of the State of Nature, natural rights, and the body politic allowed Locke to circumvent the conventional narrative of his day and to provide a drastically new account of humanity and society.[56] Ferrara states, "The Hobbeslockean state of nature conveniently avoids both the happy state of man before Original Sin and his fallen state

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[54] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government,* 64.

[55] Ferrara, *Liberty: The God That Failed,* 55.

[56] Ferrara, *Liberty: The God That Failed,* 55-56.

afterwards, for those two states point, once again, to the role of grace and the Church in the building of political society."[57] By rewriting the origin narrative for humanity, Locke constructed a different vision of humanity's identity and our role in the world. This new vision had significant effects on the social and political landscape of Locke's day, and continues to shape the American context to this day.

The Theodicy of Paul

Why Paul?

Outside of specifically Christian settings, discussions of political philosophy, government, and American politics rarely include the Apostle Paul as an authoritative voice. Typically, Machiavelli, Rousseau, Washington, and Jefferson are the names that come to mind when one thinks of these concepts, while the teachings of Paul are generally reserved for the "religious sphere." This misunderstanding of Paul and his writing has contributed to the manner in which the Church in America has allowed their theodicy to be shaped. In fact, a discussion over American politics and theodicy must include discussion of the Apostle Paul due to his vast influence on both Christian and American culture.

Needless to say, the Apostle Paul is and has been one of the theological pillars of the Church. Paul played a critical role in spreading Christianity throughout Europe and Asia Minor, and his writings account for over 25 percent of the New Testament. Paul wrote over issues of identity, moral living, the character of God, and the role of the Church. The early Church heavily depended on Paul for encouragement, doctrine, and instruction, and today, the Church still uses Paul's writings as a cornerstone for shaping Christian epistemology, doctrine, and worldview.

[57] Ferrara, *Liberty, The God That Failed,* 55.

However, Paul's writings cannot be reduced simply to the "religious." Today, Paul is not generally understood or read as a political philosopher due to the wedge that society has driven between politics and religion. As someone who greatly contributed to the development of Christianity, Paul's writings have been reduced to theological principles that have no place in the political arena. This misunderstanding of the role of scripture in political life and the message of Paul can be traced back to the Lockean principle of the privatization of religion. As previously mentioned, Locke's *Letter Concerning Religious Toleration* partitioned the understanding of a comprehensive existence into the "political" and the "religious."

This creation of two different spheres of life was a direct consequence of the influence of theologians such as Augustine, Martin Luther, and John Calvin. Both Augustine and Luther contributed to the creation of the "Two Kingdoms" theology. This doctrine asserts that existence is divided into the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Man. These two kingdoms have opposing beliefs, values, and goals; however, Christians are citizens of both kingdoms. Luther in particular believed that God ordained the creation of these two separate kingdoms in order to serve different purposes. The Kingdom of Christ works to bring about salvation and morality to God's people, while the Kingdom of Man provides order and structure for the functioning of society.[58] Luther believed that the secular kingdom of this world was not subject or accountable to the principles of the Kingdom of God, but was still divinely appointed by God.[59] Theologian Paul Althaus states, "[Luther believed] the lordship of Christ can never be an institution or an order of this world; it is a completely personal reality."[60] For Luther, salvation, morality, and

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[58] Paul Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1972), 1.

[59] E. G. Rupp and Benjamin Drewery, *Martin Luther, Documents of Modern History* (London: Edward Arnold, 1970), pp. 121-6.

[60] Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther,* 1.

bringing about the Kingdom of God are all personal concerns that do not intersect with the social and political concerns of the Kingdom of Man. The Kingdom of Man will never be transformed into the Kingdom of God this side of Christ's return. Therefore, a Christian should not approach the world (including politics) with a mindset as to how it can be saved, but how it can best be served until the Kingdom of God comes. The "Two Kingdoms" doctrine laid the foundation for the division of "worldly" and "religious" matters that we see in our society today. Politics began to be understood as a worldly pursuit that had no eternal significance in the Kingdom of God.

However, in Paul's day, no such division existed. Paul's message would not have been seen as simply "religious," instead it would have been understood as a comprehensive claim that affected one's entire existence. Paul lived in a context that was dominated by the Imperial Cult that enforced the worship of Caesar as the "son of god." The Imperial Cult influenced almost every area of daily life and would have been a theological and social concern for early Christians and for Paul. As theologian Richard Horsley states, "Recent studies by classical historians and archaeologists . . . find that honors and festivals for the emperor were not only widespread, but pervaded the public life, particularly in the cities of Greece and Asia Minor, the very area of Paul's mission."[61] In all of Paul's teachings, writings, and travels, the presence and influence of the Roman Empire by extension established the gospel as a counter-cultural message. The principles and language of the gospel presented new understanding of morality, relationship, and salvation. There was no partition between the "religious and political," or "secular and spiritual." Life was understood more comprehensively; therefore, the message gospel invaded every aspect of life much like the Empire did at that time. N. T. Wright notes that "the modern western

[61] Richard A. Horsely, "General Introduction," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), 1-8.

separation of theology and society, religion and politics, would have made no sense either to Paul or to any of his contemporaries, whether Jewish, Greek or Roman."[62]

Paul's message was understood as a counter narrative to the ideals and principles of Rome. Paul preached the establishment of a new kingdom in which Jesus Christ reigned over all the nations, not the permanence or infallibility of Rome. Paul listed Rome as another name in a long list of temporary worldly powers, not the permanent institution of justice and peace.[63] Paul proclaimed Jesus as the only means of salvation, not Caesar or the Empire. This message established Christ, Paul, and the Church as an implicit threat to the imperial cult. Paul did not view the gospel as something reserved to private life, but instead understood the message of Christ as "upstaging, outflanking, delegitimizing and generally subverting the 'gospel' of Caesar and Rome."[64] Paul's message was a political challenge to the authority of Rome.[65] Just as Paul did not see Rome as an "insignificant backdrop for his work," the American political context should not be understood as irrelevant in the discussion of the Church's theodicy.[66]

Regarding theodicy formation for the Church in America, the voice of Paul cannot be discounted or reduced to simply a "spiritual" influence. The theodicy of the American Church

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[62] N. T. Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 60.

[63] N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 1286.

[64] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God,* 1306.

[65] Paul's message both implicitly and explicitly challenged the authority of Rome. As previously mentioned, the gospel was a direct contrast the teachings of Caesar and the Empire, yet Paul never calls for revolution or governmental reform. Instead Paul preaches peace and love. A call to rebellion or revolution would have been a message that echoed the values of Rome. Paul intentionally preaches the gospel as a message that directly contrasts the narrative of the Empire. It is important to note there is a tension that exists in the character of Paul's teachings. Paul presented a new way of existence separate from Rome, but did not preach insubordination to Caesar. This tension perhaps is best represented by the fact that Paul wrote most of his letter while in Roman custody. This tension is difficult to fully capture or comprehend in this short discussion over Paul, but is still important to point out.

[66] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God,* 1282.

has been drastically influenced by the individualism of Locke, which has then informed our reading the Apostle Paul. We have dissected the anthropology of Paul and forged it with the principles of isolated individualism of Locke. One of the objectives of this project is to invoke ignored or neglected dimensions of Pauline anthropology, and to argue for a political reading of Paul and the gospel he proclaimed.[67]

The Anthropology of Paul

Who are We?

The issue of identity is a concept that provides a foundational framework for Paul and his message to the Galatians.[68] The Galatians struggled with issues of morality and community, and Paul ascribes these problems as having to do with issues of identity.[69] For Paul, the Church's identity shapes the way in which we view the world, present the gospel and bears witness to the Kingdom of God. As N. T. Wright illustrates and as previously discussed, the issue of identity is foundational to every worldview. When analyzing Paul, his anthropology, and his vision for the Church, identity is an essential piece to the discussion.

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[67] It is important to note that there is an ever increasing understanding of Paul's writings as political in both Christian and secular academic circles. Scholars such as N. T. Wright and Benjamin Lynerd understand politics as being part of the message of the Apostle Paul. Secular, postmodern philosophers such as Badiou (*Saint Paul: The Foundation for Universalism)*, Agamben (*The Time That Remains)*, and Taubes (*The Political Theology of Paul*) have all researched and published various works arguing for a political understanding and interpretation of the Apostle Paul. This academic trend is due in part to a renewed understanding of a comprehensive existence instead of divided spheres of life.

[68] I will be using Paul's letter to the church in Galatia as my primary text for unfolding the anthropology of Paul. The reasoning for this is due to the fact that the letter to the Galatians is both brief and theologically rich. The length of Galatians is manageable for a project of this sort, and the letter also offers extensive material relevant to the discussions of identity, justification, and theodicy.

[69] Bruce W. Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 17-18.

Paul is addressing the question of whether or not to follow the Mosaic Law for the church in Galatia, and he answers this question by discussing this issue of identity. As Pauline scholar John Barclay notes, "Abraham, and the discussion of the identity of the 'sons' or 'seed' of Abraham dominate the argument of Gal. 3:6-18."[70] Paul discusses the idea of identity in a two-fold manner: Christ and the community of the Church.

Throughout Galatians and his other letters, Paul repeatedly uses the phrase "in Christ" to illustrate the distinction that exists between those who follow Christ and those who do not. Paul states, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. . . And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3:26-27, 29, ESV).[71] The identity of the Church is rooted and shaped in Christ. Our identity in Christ should be the defining aspect of the Church that allows us to find community in diversity. The Old Testament Law provided tangible practices in which the Jews found their identity for centuries. For Paul however, the Old Testament Law functioned in an age that Christ had brought to an end (Gal 3:23-24). The Church exists in the new age of Christ in which the identity of the Church is defined by the cross of Christ (Gal. 2:20, 6:14).[72]

The second piece of Paul's understanding of identity is the Church. For Paul, the Christian's relationship with other believers and the world is defined by the community of the Church. New

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[70] John Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 52.

[71] All of the scriptural references in this project are taken from the English Standard Version of the Bible.

[72] In Galatians 2:20 and 6:14, Paul refers to the cross as the reality which forms his identity. He is explicit, however, in 4:12-20 that he wants the same expression of cruciform identity in the lives of the Galatian Christians. See Susan Eastman, *Recovering Paul's Mother Tongue: Language and Theology in Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, 25-61.)

Testament scholar Bruce Longenecker observes that "not only is the Christian united with Christ, and thereby a son of God and an offspring of Abraham; the Christian is also united to other Christians."[73] Longenecker also states that Paul views the Church as "God's eschatological triumph. . . exhibited by the establishment of a community of catholic membership. The formation of such a group is itself the placard, the display, and the disclosure of the power of the ultimate divinity."[74] The existence and identity of the Church is a foundational issue for Paul because the Church functions as the reflection of the triumph of God in the world. This is exemplified by the language that Paul uses throughout Galatians. Paul prioritizes the importance of community and harmony in Galatians 5 and 6 with his use of phrases such as "one another," "each other," and "the household of faith" (Gal 5:15, 26; 6:2, 9-10). The identity of the Church plays a critical role in how the Church approaches its engagement with the world. Paul teaches that we should not approach our work as segregated, disjointed individuals, but instead as a community which finds identity and unity in Christ.

Where are We?

Paul draws a distinction between the "old and new domain," old and new creation, the present evil age and the age to come (Gal 1:4, 6:15). The dividing line between the two existences is the death and resurrection of Christ. Richard Hays states, "In Galatians, the cross is interpreted not primarily as an atoning sacrifice for forgiveness of sins but as a cataclysmic event that has broken the power of forces that held humanity captive, brought the old world to an end, and inaugurated a new creation."[75] Bruce Longenecker notes, "For Paul, the two ages are defined

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[73] Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God*, 66-67.

[74] Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God,* 57-58.

[75] Richard Hays, "The Letter to the Galatians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," in *NIB* ed. J. Paul Sampley (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 187.

only in relation to Christ, the one who rescues Christians from the age of evil and has inaugurated a new sphere of existence."[76] This distinction has theological, eschatological, and ecclesial significance. Longenecker notes that "Paul inserts [Gal 1:4] an unexpected (and therefore important) eschatological reference that highlights the triumph of God in the dawning of the new age, the new world which is distinguished from the evil world of old."[77] In Galatians Paul emphasizes the fact that the Church exists in a new age that is the triumph of God, and the Church is the living proof of that triumph.

Paul also notes that the Church is living as the new creation within this "present evil age" (Gal. 1:4). The coming of Christ has radically and irrevocably changed our world; however, the Church is still waiting for the full realization of the Kingdom of God. This age is defined by hope in Christ while living in the midst of a broken world. N. T. Wright refers to this tensive existence as an "inaugurated eschatology."[78] Christ has come and inaugurated a new way of life, but the full realization of that life has not come. Until then, the Church is called to exist in this tension between the ages as a living testimony of the Kingdom of God.[79]

What is the Issue?

For Paul, the "power of sin" and "the flesh" are the forces that distort and destroy creation.[80] This distortion and destruction began in the Garden of Eden for Adam and Eve and continues to

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[76] Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God*, 45.

[77] Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God,* 46.

[78] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God,* 922-24, 1048-49.

[79] In Galatians 6:1-10, Paul gives a simple and concise picture about what living in an inaugurated eschatology looks like for the Church. It is a picture of community, harmony, and restoration among the people of God and the world. The tensive existence between the first and second coming of Christ is filled with hope and struggle. However, the practice of doing good to all is what defines and sets apart the Church in this "present evil age."

[80] When Paul refers to the "flesh" in Galatians, he is referring to the beliefs, practices, and desires that run contrary to the way of the Spirit. Paul draws a contrast between flesh and the Spirit as conflicting forces. Longenecker refers to the "flesh" as "the operating principle of the present evil age" (Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God,*

corrupt our world. Those who do not know Christ live under the power of sin and the flesh—shaping and defining their existence. Paul states, "So also, we while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world" (Gal. 4:3). According to Longenecker, Paul's understands the power of sin or the "elemental things" as "a kind of spiritual force, a power with intentionality that exists and holds human beings in its grip, forcing them to conform to its programme in contrast to the ways of God . . . Paul depicts the power of sin as a suprahuman cosmic power that is active in God's world, influencing God's creatures, and working to undermine God's purposes."[81] Sin and the desires of the flesh mark the fallen world in which we live and continue to work against the purposes of God and his Church. The interaction and engagement with these forces is a reality that Paul understood as a daily task for the Church.

Paul also spends a large portion of Galatians discussing the Law and its role in the Church. As previously mentioned, many of the Galatians felt that they needed to uphold the Old Testament Law in order to be righteous. Paul addresses this issue with a lengthy discussion over the Law and its role within the Church. For Paul, the Law is not the vehicle by which God engages with the world or brings about salvation. Furthermore, Paul considers the Law to be a human agent of morality, which does not bring about righteousness or salvation. Paul believes the Law only causes arrogance, division, envy, and conflict (Gal. 5:20-25).[82] Paul even uses his

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46). The flesh produces conflict and strife, while the Spirit produces love and harmony. For Paul, to want to abide by the Law and uphold Jewish ethnocentrism is to subscribe to the influence of the flesh.

[81] Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God,* 38-39.

[82] In his commentary on Galatians, J. Louis Martyn associates the lists of the "deeds of the flesh" with the use of the law becoming a means of division and conflict among the Galatians. Martyn says, "Convinced that observance of the Law is bringing them to a higher plane of life, the Galatians who have accepted the Teachers' message are lording it over their fellows, thus exacerbating divisive tendencies (5:15). To them—and to their envious fellows, Paul says, 'Do not think of yourself as better than others, provoking one another, envying one another' (5:26)." *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 544.

own life as an example of how the Law is itself subject to distortion and can cause conflict and strife (Gal. 1:11-17).[83] Even though the Law was the central piece of the spirituality of Israel, Paul rejects the Law and establishes it as a part of this "present evil age."

What is the Solution?

What is justification?

In order to understand the issues of evil and the discussion of Paul in Galatians, the idea of justification must be analyzed and understood. The church in Galatia was struggling with the issue of certain "agitators" who were trying to convince the church they must follow the Old Testament Law in order to become a member of the people of God, specifically the requirement of circumcision (Gal. 5:12).[84] The Apostle Peter himself had withdrawn himself to eat only with Jews and not with Gentiles due to the belief that he was risking his status as a member of the people of God. In Galatians 2, Paul recalls his interaction with Peter at Jerusalem and Antioch and condemns Peter for his actions. Paul then begins a discussion over the idea of justification. Paul states, "We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified" (Gal. 2:15-16). Here we see that Paul is drawing a contrast between faith versus works of the law as means for justification.

[83] In Galatians 2, Paul discusses the issue of Jews eating with Gentiles. He uses this narrative to display how the Law causes division and strife among the people of God. Even the Apostle Peter is mentioned in Paul's admonition to the Galatians due to his withdrawing from fellowship with Gentiles in Antioch. For Paul, this is an excellent example of how adherence to the Law is counterproductive to the mission of the gospel.

[84] The word "agitators" only appears in a selection of Bible translations (NIV, NET Bible, BSB are a few). Other translations use various terms such as "troublemakers," "those who unsettle you," and "those who are disturbing you." However, despite the various interpretations, many scholars use the word "agitators" when discussing this verse and the situation in Galatia, and that is why I have used it here.

For Paul, justification is the crux of the issue for the church in Galatia. The term "justification" is generally understood as a reference to morality or attempts to earn salvation; however, these are not the issues Paul is concerned with. From examining the context of Paul's discussion in Galatians as well as the Jewish understanding of morality, it can be stated that "justification" is understood by both Paul and the church in Galatia to mean the idea of membership in the community of faith. Justification is the process by which one became a part of the people of God. N. T. Wright notes,

> Reading Paul strictly in his own context. . . we are forced to conclude, at least in preliminary way, that 'to be justified' here does not mean 'to be granted free forgiveness of your sins,' 'to come into right relation with God,' or some near-synonym of 'to be reckoned, in the right before God,' but rather, and very specifically, 'to be reckoned by God to be a true member of his family, and hence with the right to share table fellowship.'[85]

Therefore, "justification" is not a reference to morality or salvation, but instead a reference to the issue of community and identity. Paul's use of the phrase "works of law" should not be understood as attempts by the Galatians to attain moral merit before God. Instead, "works of the law" refers to the efforts to uphold specific indications of Jewish identity such as circumcision and eating with Gentiles. The church in Galatia was experiencing issues with Jewish nationalism and division between Jews and Gentiles, not attempts to earn salvation through good works. There were some in Galatia who believed it was necessary to uphold certain portions of the Law in order to remain within the chosen people of God. Richard Hays notes, "By withdrawing from table fellowship with Gentiles, Peter was not seeking to earn salvation through good deeds; rather, he was seeking to maintain the boundary between the Jewish-Christian community and its Gentile neighbors."[86] Longenecker states, "To be marked out by righteousness, or to be justified,

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[85] N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision,* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 96.

[86] Hays, "The Letter to the Galatians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," 239.

is primarily about having membership within the covenant people of the just and sovereign God whose own covenant righteousness will be established once and for all in the eschatological in breaking of divine sovereignty."[87] Paul addresses the issues of nationalism, exclusivism, and division with the statement that it is by faith that one is justified and enters in the people of God, not race. The reasoning for this distinction will become apparent later on in this paper.

What is not the solution*?*

Paul talks extensively about the "works of the Law" and the flesh throughout Galatians 2 and 3. When Paul refers to the "works of the Law," he is not necessarily talking about the moral code for the Galatians. As previously discussed, the Galatians were dealing with issues of identity and community, not salvation or morality. Therefore, the term "works of the law" appear to be referring to those activities which distinctly express Jewish identity.[88] The theological importance of these Jewish identifiers goes back to the issue of justification. The churches in Galatia were attempting to understand what was required for someone to enter into the covenant promise of Abraham.

For Paul, the key to solving the issues of disunity, strife, and evil does not lie in the Law, and in Galatians 2:16, Paul establishes the Law and the works of the flesh as contrary to the purpose and mission of the Church. To those seeking to use the Law as the solution to the issues of sin and morality, Paul responds by stating, "You who are seeking to be justified by law: you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision [with circumcision seen as the gateway

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[87] Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God,* 104.

[88] Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*, 82. Of course, Barclay here is relying on James Dunn and his work *The New Perspective on Paul* in which Dunn discusses the matter of "works of the law." Dunn, James D. G. "The New Perspective on Paul." In *The New Perspective on Paul*, 99-120 Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

requirement for full submission for the entire Law (Gal. 3:3)] means anything, but faith working through love" (Gal. 5:4-6). He further insists "by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified" (Gal. 2:16). Paul also calls out the church leaders who are condoning the mistreatment of the Gentiles, particularly Peter the disciple of Jesus. Here, Paul is placing the institution of Law as anachronistic to the gospel of Christ. Hays notes that "Paul is rebuking the Galatians for defection not merely from the Pauline mission movement, but also, more fundamentally, from God's grace."[89] For the Church, Law should not be the force that shapes our theodicy. Instead, it is the life, death, and resurrection of Christ that defines the theodicy of the Church.

Who are the people of God?

As has been said throughout this paper, the issue at hand for the Galatians is community and justification. This issue stems from the Jewish understanding of the promise of Abraham and their identity as the covenant people of God. In Genesis 12, God establishes a covenant with Abraham and his descendants, establishing them as the chosen people of God. To share in the spiritual inheritance of Abraham was reserved for the nation of Israel until the coming of Christ. The issue for the Galatians and the "agitators" is how might one become a member of the covenant people in order to receive the promised blessing of Abraham and be a part of the people of God. Therefore, the question is: who is included in the promise of Abraham?

What is the solution?

For Paul, the solution to the issues of sin, flesh, and division among the people of God is found in the same places as the solutions to the issue of identity—Christ and the Church. For reasons that will be discussed later on, it is the faith in Christ and membership in the body of the Church that interact in a way that provide a new, vibrant theodicy for the world. Through Christ

[89] Hays, "The Letter to the Galatians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," 204.

we are saved, and through the Church the world is led to Christ. The relationship between Christ and the Church is a concept that much of the New Testament and New Testament scholars today address. Paul uses Galatians 5 and 6 to outline the new creation and the community of faith, and how that impacts the world.

One of Paul's primary encouragements to the church in Galatia is to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16). Paul uses this phrase to describe the life and moral code by which the Church should live and operate. Paul presents the works of sin and the Law—"enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, disputes, dissentions, factions, and envying" (Gal. 5:20). Paul then contrasts that with the fruit of the Spirit—"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal 5:22). These two images clearly depict Paul's view of morality and moral agency. Paul views the Church as the primary moral agent of the Spirit and the gospel. Martyn notes, "God has commenced his own participation in human morality, and that participation has clearly brought radical changes to the whole of the human moral agent. . . Who is it who loves, rejoices, lives at peace, and is patient? Clearly members of the Galatian congregations."[90]

For Pauline anthropology, community plays an essential role in the gospel and the mission of the Church. It is in community and submission to one another that the Church battles the forces that undermine and pervert creation. Richard B. Hays notes that "Paul holds for the vision of a community of faith in which all are one in Christ. . . Jews and Gentiles are no longer to be divided, because Christ's death has brought us together."[91] Paul understands the community of the Church as the primary tool through which God engages with the world and fulfills his promise to Abraham, not the Law (Gal. 3:29). Paul states "Bear one another's burdens, and

[90] J. Louis Martyn, "The Gospel Invades Philosophy," in *Paul, Philosophy, and the Theopolitical Vision,* ed. Douglas Harink (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2010). 28-29.

[91] Hays, "The Letter to the Galatians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," 195-196.

thereby fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). And then "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (Gal 6:10).

One critical aspect of Paul's understanding of the solution to evil is the principle of faith. As previously discussed, Paul uses Galatians 2 and 3 to discuss the issues of identity and justification. He concludes these discussions with statements regarding faith and its role in solving these issues. Traditionally, these verses are interpreted to say "faith in Jesus Christ" and "faith in Christ." The English Standard Version reads in Galatians 2:16, "Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified." Then again in 3:22, "But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."

However, in the past thirty years, scholars have begun to contend that Paul's use of certain Greek verbs and articles in these passages suggest a slightly different interpretation. Instead of faith *in* Christ, many New Testament scholars read faith *of* Christ. Bruce Longenecker states, "Although the faith of believers may be included within Paul's sights at 3:23, he likely has Jesus' own faithfulness primarily in view, as his use of articles and verbs suggests."[92] And then again,

> By their faith and not by their covenant 'works of law', others enter into the sphere of covenant relationship with God that is centered in, and emerges from, Jesus' own faithfulness. . . Paul's language of 'faith' in these verses, then, is fundamentally a language of 'participation', a language that presupposes Paul's theology of union with Christ whereby Christians are incorporated into Christ.[93]

The theological implications of this distinction are significant. Each of these prepositions present a different picture of faith and what it means to be a part of the Christian community. By

[92] Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God,* 103-104.

[93] Longenecker, *The Triumph of Abraham's God,* 106.

emphasizing that is by the faithfulness *of* Christ, Paul is asserting that it is by what Christ has done that gives us salvation, not what we have done. This idea runs contrary to hundreds of years of mainstream Protestant theology. The faithfulness of Christ is what gives our personal faith in him meaning and value. Acknowledging this distinction is crucial for understanding both Pauline and Lockean anthropology, and the identity of the Church in America today. By understanding salvation, justification, and identity as issues that are solved because of the faithfulness of Christ, Paul is redefining the role of humanity in the solution to evil. Locke's worldview is defined by an individualistic and empowered perspective, while the worldview of Paul is defined by vulnerability and grace.

Conclusion

This understanding of community, identity, and justification all present many challenges to the Church in Galatia and the Church today. Submission to others, doing good for all, and a life defined by the faithfulness of Christ seem to leave the Church vulnerable to the perversion of the world. This is why the message of Paul is radical, both in his time and today. A gospel of love and humility does not establish a hierarchy of power or aggression like the other institutions of Paul's day. The Church is set apart in its understanding of the world and its role in it.

Locke vs. Paul

Now that we have explored the theodicies of Locke and Paul regarding the questions of worldview, I will now emphasize various portions of their anthropologies and conduct an explicit comparison. This will be done to portray the explicit contradictions and tension that exists between the theodicies of Locke and Paul. I argue that the Church in America has compromised a biblical theodicy by integrating it with Lockean principles; therefore, I will demonstrate how the anthropologies of Locke and Paul are in fact antithetical to one another.

The first issue of theodicy, as previously discussed, is identity. When examining the theodicy of Locke, the predominant value regarding identity is individualism. Locke is concerned with rights of the individual, self-preservation, and community as a matter of personal choice. Locke's account of identity begins with the individual as the most basic, functional unit of society. Locke then bestows upon the individual three inalienable rights – life, liberty, and personal property. Locke gives no origin or explanation as to why these rights are inalienable, nor who bestows these rights to every individual. Despite this lack of context however, Locke was able to radically change his society's understanding of ownership, the self, and the role of the government. He provided a self-narrative that altered the vision and role of humanity in the world for his day and for American society today.

When examining the Apostle Paul's theodicy, we find a completely different account of identity. Paul's account of human identity is principally shaped by the idea of community. For Paul, there are those who are "in Christ" and those who are not. Beyond these categories, Paul discounts any other form of identity. Paul states, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3:28-29). As previously mentioned, Paul discounts almost every social identity marker that was used in his day and replaces it with a single characteristic – the offspring of Abraham, otherwise called the people of God. One thing to note about Paul's understanding of identity is the lack of singular nouns and pronouns when addressing the church in Galatia. Paul's understands the Church as the comprehensive body of believers in Christ, not an aggregate of individuals. Paul's understanding and vision of the new creation and new way of living did not include an understanding of

individuals pursuing Christ on their own, but instead a congregation of people walking in Christ together.

The next portion of theodicy to examine is the question of orientation—where are we in the world? Looking to Locke, we see the prominent feature of his theodicy regarding this question is the State of Nature. For many philosophers and political theorists, there is a need to use fictional narrative or thought experiments in order to communicate the philosopher's theoretical truths. Locke borrows the idea of the State of Nature from Thomas Hobbes and then reshapes it according to Locke's philosophical principles. Locke's State of Nature is defined by ownership of one's self, isolation from others, and Reason as the governing authority. Locke describes the State of Nature as a "state of perfect freedom."[94] The State of Nature is a place where the individual can and will thrive on his or her own. This is what Locke envisions as where and how humans were originally meant to exist – free from the obligations of society and government, and free from each other.

Looking to Paul, the question of orientation is defined simply by the cross of Christ. There are the "new and old domains" of creation between which we are now living. For Paul, humanity's understanding of where we are for both creation's metanarrative and our own personal narratives is defined by the cross. As previously discussed, scholar N. T. Wright terms our existence between the old and new domains as "inaugurated eschatology." This kind of understanding presents both hope and a purpose for members of the Church. Throughout his letters, Paul encourages churches by reminding them of the age to come. However, Paul also uses this idea to challenge his listeners to live out the gospel of Christ in order to portray its truth to the world. Paul states, "Let us not become weary of doing good, for at the proper time we will

[94] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government,* 2.

reap a harvest if we do not give up. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:9-10). For Paul, our place in this world revolves around the idea of community and doing good to others, contrasted with Locke's concerns with individual freedoms and isolation.

The third portion of a theodicy is the question of what is the issue with our world. As previously discussed, the concern of theodicy is providing explanation to the presence of evil and suffering in the world. Every theodicy has a different perspective and understanding of what causes our suffering and therefore presents different solutions. Looking to Locke's theodicy, Locke assigns responsibility for the issues of our world to a lack of rationality or Reason among various individuals. As previously mentioned, the governing authority in the State of Nature is Reason, which Locke states "teaches all mankind, who will but consult it [reason], that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions."[95] When there is a lack of Reason in individuals, those individuals disrupt the harmony of the State of Nature which then digresses to the State of War. Locke believed in the power of Reason to provide harmony, peace, and understanding between individuals. Throughout his various works, Locke esteems Reason to be the guiding principle by which all men may come to knowledge and truth, particularly regarding morality and religion. Therefore, if one is not "reasonable" or lacks an understanding of rationality, he is a threat to the liberties and rights of everyone else.

The Apostle Paul takes a completely different approach to the question of what is wrong with our world. Paul, being a follower of Christ and a pillar of the New Testament church, believed sin and "flesh" to be the force that corrupts creation. Paul uses the term "flesh" in Galatians to describe sin due to it being an innate part of the human experience. Throughout his letters, Paul

[95] Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government,* 3.

discusses sin as something that part of him desires to do, while the other part of him despises it. Paul lists off both the "deeds of the flesh" and the "fruit of the Spirit," providing contrasting images of what the lives of those in Christ should look like. For Paul, the issue of sin and flesh manifests itself in dissention and division among the people of God (Gal. 5:19-21). Paul's primary concern for the church in Galatia is for their community to stay united and harmonious, not divided and contentious. Paul also discusses the Old Testament Law as being manipulated by the forces of sin and flesh, and has therefore become part of the issue. Galatians 1:3 states, "Did you [the Galatians] receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" Here, Paul equates the Law with "flesh," establishing the idea that the Law is not the correct approach for the Church living out their calling and purpose in the world.

Finally, the last portion of theodicy that we will analyze and compare is the question of what is the solution to the issue. For the issue of irrationality, Locke presents the idea of the social contract – the body politic that governs over society. For Locke, the only way to protect the ideals of the State of Nature is to leave the State of Nature and build a society upon the social contract. Locke unfolds his vision of what this governing political body will look like and how it will function in his *Second Treatise.* For Locke, the social contract is the only means by which individuals can maintain and protect their natural rights without fear of others. This governing body's primary responsibility is to protect its citizens and their property and to leave individuals to exercise their rights and use their property as they see fit. Again, we see the themes of individualism and isolation. The government's role is to ensure that the individual can, in essence, remain an individual. The individual's right to life, liberty, and property all fall under

the guard of the government. The only reason for creating society or community in Locke's theodicy is in order to maintain a certain level of individual autonomy.

Furthermore, Locke also redefines the relationship between the state and the Church as a way of dealing with the issue of irrationality among humanity. Locke discusses the issue of religious violence and intolerance among various groups of people, and decides to use the state as a means of solving this issue. In his *Letter Concerning Toleration,* Locke argues for toleration among various Christian denominations, excluding Catholics and atheists due to the fact that Locke views both of these groups as insubordinate to the ruling magistrate of the state. He states, "That [Catholic] Church can have no right to be tolerated by the magistrate which is constituted upon such a bottom that all those who enter into it do thereby ipso facto deliver themselves up to the protection and service of another prince [the Pope]."[96] For Locke, allegiance to the state must be the priority of its citizens, and anything that threatened that allegiance should be dismantled.

Lastly, we look to the Apostle Paul for his response to the issues of evil and sin in the world. For Paul, the questions of identity, orientation, issues, and solutions are comprehensively intertwined. The ultimate solution to the issue of evil is the death and resurrection of Christ. As previously mentioned, this is also Paul's defining marker of the ages. Christ's death and resurrection is what justifies those who believe in him, and therefore those who are justified are also made a part of the family and promise of Abraham. As formerly discussed, the question for many of the early Christians, particularly those who were Jewish, was who was able to receive the promise and blessing of Abraham. This question ties into the issue of identity as well. Again, Paul points to the resurrected Christ as both the means of justification and the blessing that was promised to Abraham and his descendants. Furthermore, Paul contrasts his discussion over the

[96] John Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2002), 145.

"deeds of the flesh" and sin with his description of a life defined by the Spirit. Paul states, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do" (Gal. 5:16-17). For Paul, walking by the Spirit is a life defined by love, kindness, and harmony with one another. As mentioned throughout this project, one of Paul's primary concerns for the Church is the issue of community. Paul views community as the image of the new creation and the practical tool of the gospel of Christ. To be in community with one another is to realize and fulfill the calling of Christ.

The last piece of Paul's answer to the problem of evil is the principle of faith. As previously discussed, the traditional view of Paul's discussion over faith in Galatians understands faith as something that humans place *in* Christ. However, I have previously shown, there is reason to believe that Paul was discussing the "faithfulness *of* Christ" instead of "faithfulness *in* Christ." If this phrase is examined in this new manner, different implications and perspective emerges. Throughout his theodicy, Paul's emphasis has been the death and resurrection of Christ. It is sensible to assume that this would be another area that Paul would place the emphasis on Christ instead of individuals. Paul's theodicy, as opposed to Locke's, is defined by Christ, community, and humility. Understanding that we are saved by the faithfulness of Christ vs. our attempts at faithfulness presents a vision of Christ that emphasizes his love and perfection instead of our feeble attempts at righteousness. I believe this a critical area of comparison between Locke and Paul. Locke empowers the individual, portraying him to be the master of his own life. Paul, on the other hand, throughout his theodicy continually emphasizes the weakness of humanity in the light of Christ's love and strength.

Conclusion

The ideas presented and argued in this project concern the integration of Lockean and Pauline anthropology in the modern-day Church in America. As previously mentioned, I argue that the Church has compromised a biblical or Pauline theodicy by integrating it with Lockean principles and ideals. As I have demonstrated, the theodicies of Locke and Paul represent opposing values and perspectives, both politically and spiritually. The attempt by the American Church to assimilate these two opposing worldviews has resulted in a divided and confused church when it comes the issues of public life. When approaching the various issues of culture and evil, the Church must have a clear vision of identity and purpose in order to be relevant and effective. Therefore, I argue that the Church in America, in order to understand its role in the cultural, spiritual, and political spheres, it must return a theodicy shaped by Pauline theodicy.

The proposition of returning to a Pauline theodicy for the Church still raises the question of what engagement with culture and public life should look like for the American Church. Although this question is not the concern of this project, I believe it is important to end this project with a small discussion of what is next for the discussion of the Church and public life. There are many different philosophies regarding this topic, but I would like to emphasize two perspectives in particular, which represent how varied and controversial this issue is.

The first is Christian Reconstructionism. This theory was created by R. J. Rushdoony in response to the loss of cultural influence and relevance the Church has experienced in the last several decades. Christian Reconstructionism advocates for an overhaul of the social and political structures of the United States in accordance with Old Testament Law in an effort to establish a society completely shaped by Christian values and beliefs.[97] Christian

[97] Michael J. McVicar, *Christian Reconstructionism; R.J. Rushdoony and American Religious Conservatism,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 8.

Reconstructionism has a comprehensive perspective on life and salvation, believing that all aspects of living must be brought under biblical authority, including culture, politics, entertainment, etc. This represents an eschatological understanding termed "Kingdom Now" theology, in contrast to the previously discussed concept of "inaugurated eschatology."[98] Christian Reconstructionism holds that we are living in the Kingdom of God, and therefore we should attempt to bring all things under the reign of Christ. The concept of Christian Reconstructionism attempts to integrate the Bible with public law, and calls for the construction of a theocratic form of government. This, along with many others, is one example of the Church's various perspectives regarding the issue of engaging with and shaping our world.

The second idea I would like to discuss is the "Benedict Option." This perspective was presented and discussed by Alasdair MacIntyre and later by Rob Dreher, and is inspired by the values and story of St. Benedict.[99] St. Benedict is credited with founding the order of the Benedictine monks whose lives were devoted to prayer, service, and living in community with one another. These monks were able to preserve their faith and civilization in the midst of the cultural and spiritual darkness during the Middle Ages through faithful and intentional living. The Benedict Option takes the story of the Benedictine monks and adapts them to a 21st century context. The Benedict Option views culture and secular society as something from which the Church must retreat. The Church must unite within its walls and live intentionally for the gospel of Christ. According to the perspective, the Church's greatest influence is the testament of their faith, exemplified by their love for one another and their service to the community. The Benedict

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[98] Ervin Budiselić, "The Problem of 'Kingdom Now' Theology Challenge," *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology* 9, no. 2 (July 2015): 143-70.

[99] Rob Dreher, "Benedict Option FAQ," The American Conservative, October 6, 2015, accessed August 28, 2016,http://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/benedict-option-faq/.

Option emphasizes society as temporary and fleeting, and the need for community and discipleship among believers. Many have criticized the Benedict Option for supporting an isolationist approach to evangelism. These critics argue that in order to influence society and share the gospel, one must be a part of society. However, proponents of the Benedict Option have responded with Paul's simple commandment of Galatians 6:10—"do good to all, especially to those of the household of faith."

In conclusion, the issues of Christianity, modernity, culture, politics, and evil all present serious challenges for the Church and Christians. It has always been a difficult task for the Church to understand its relationship with society. As demonstrated, there is a diverse collection of opinions and approaches regarding the issues of evil and culture. However, before the Church can realize and establish a biblical vision of engagement with these issues, we must return to a theodicy shaped by cross of Christ and scripture.

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