



The Biblical Story and the Stories of Academic Disciplines

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SOPHIA:
Cultivating Redemptive Influence
in Pluralistic Universities

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By Rolex Cailing, Stephen M. Garrett, and Amos Winarto

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‘All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ.’
Colossians 2:3

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‘The image reflects the triune God engaging all his creation in love for its flourishing.’

Each study guide reflects the opinions of the authors and does not necessarily represent those of the editors or the Society. The editors welcome both unsolicited and recommended proposals that fit with the study guide’s purpose. Manuscripts, queries, and other communications may be addressed to Stephen Garrett at sgarrett@global-scholars.org

The *SOPHIA Study Guide Series* explores ideas, themes, and practices to equip Christian academics in pluralistic universities for redemptive influence among students, colleagues, and the various disciplines of the academy. By nurturing the competencies, capacities, and characteristics discussed in these guides, we hope users will transform their teaching, research, and service in ways that reflect the mind of Christ in their cultural contexts. Such efforts not only reveal God's wisdom but participate in God's redemptive and liberative purposes for the university and society.

What might it mean to serve as Christian academics in a pluralistic university?

Christian academics desire to live out the Christian faith, grow in Christlikeness, practice spiritual disciplines, and evidence the fruit of the Spirit. As part of the community of faith, they seek to further their knowledge of the Scriptures, being guided by the Church's great tradition. As such, they affirm and embody the historic Christian faith, found in such biblical summations as the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

Christian **academics** delight in the learned life. They love the pursuit, acquisition, and dissemination of knowledge, and they carry out this work with excellence. They are committed to the noblest aims of the academy: discovering, cultivating, and advancing truth, goodness, and beauty. In doing so, Christian academics promote wisdom oriented to God's glory, and their dedication to God is reflected in their inspired teaching, imaginative research, and humble service.

How might Christian academics love God and neighbour in a pluralistic university context?

While there are many possibilities, Christian academics should consider how to have **redemptive influence** among students, colleagues, and their academic disciplines as a way to love God and neighbour. Such influence seeks change oriented towards the reconciling and liberative purposes of the *missio Dei* (God's mission in the world). By doing so, Christian academics witness to the human flourishing found in God's kingdom.

Human flourishing is inextricably bound up with God's presence. It is characterized in the Scripture as *shalom* (Jer. 29:4-7) and blessedness (Mt. 5:1-16). Such notions are not experienced in their fulness in this fallen world, but are tasted in Christ as Christian academics seek to renew, reclaim, and (re)create the good, the true, and the beautiful in the pluralistic university context. As such, we encounter the awe, wonder, and delight of creation while longing for and seeking its restoration (Col. 1:19-20).

Overarching Themes

Our study guides are designed to elaborate on the mission described above and to provoke thought, encourage action, and lead to transformations in teaching, research, and administration. They are organized around five overarching themes:

1. Integration of Faith and Scholarship
2. Spiritual Formation
3. Interaction with Cultures and Society
4. Pursuit of Vocational Excellence
5. Relational and Leader Development

Integration of Faith and Scholarship

The integration of faith and scholarship is the process by which Christian academics from every discipline seek to discern how ‘all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ’ (Col. 2:3). Integration is about discerning how various aspects and concepts of particular academic disciplines hold together, not only within their respective academic fields but across academic disciplines. This happens through a dialogical process with God, ourselves, others, and the world.

Study guides under this theme seek to bring a living faith, grounded in biblical and theological resources, to bear on the assumptions, practices, and purposes of various academic disciplines while exploring how our academic disciplines might shape our understanding of God, the world, ourselves, and others.

Spiritual Formation

Christian academics recognize the intertwining of scholarship with the spiritual life. They know that the fruit of the Spirit is essential to their vocation. Because the pluralistic university is filled with countervailing ideologies and idols, Christian scholars must be attuned to the Holy Spirit so that they can discern what is true and resist what is not (Phil. 4:8-9). Practicing spiritual disciplines in community with other Christ-followers refreshes and sturdies the soul.

Study guides under this theme explore the ways in which the habits of spiritual disciplines inform our scholarly practices. These study guides open conversations about how to nurture the fruit of the Spirit in our teaching, research, and service in our institutions and communities. They also reinforce the communal nature of the spiritual journey as opposed to isolation, as we bear one another’s burdens.

Interacting with Cultures and Society

If Christian scholars are to engage cultures effectively with humility, boldness, and sensitivity, attaining a measure of socio-cultural understanding, whether of one's home or host culture(s), is crucial. Acquiring such understanding is no easy task. It takes time, patient study, keen observation, and humble listening to God and others.

Study guides under this theme examine communication strategies and how to create 'thick', interdisciplinary descriptions so as to locate human actions and cultural artefacts within broader socio-cultural narratives and contexts, and ultimately within the biblical context. Socio-cultural understanding is essential to make possible loving, culturally appropriate interactions with students, colleagues, and communities.

Vocational Excellence in Teaching, Research, and Service

Christian academics pursue vocational excellence so as to bring God's wisdom to bear in the pluralistic university. These vocational efforts seek to weave *shalom* into their teaching, research, and service so that God is glorified in human beings who are fully alive (Jn 10:10). All work that lifts up, liberates, and empowers humanity is understood to be of value and worth, bringing dignity to the work and the worker.

Study guides under this theme explore the habits, practices, and virtues needed for vocational excellence, including a variety of approaches to weaving biblical truth into syllabi, philosophies of education, research agendas, university-community relationships, and other aspects of university life.

Relational and Leader Development

Christian academics are relationally attuned to others and are ready to serve as leaders in their universities. Being attuned to others requires, first, an understanding of self that is rooted in the knowledge of God and in growing relationships with others. To lead others effectively, one must first understand how to discipline and lead oneself.

Study guides under this theme investigate the triad of God-self-others in the world and how these relationships lead to wisdom. Such wisdom is crucial for engaging the university community with truth and love, whether in personal evangelism, the classroom, service to colleagues, or one's local socio-cultural context.

How to Use the Society's Study Guides

These guides are not intended to be read in one sitting. They should be treated more like Bible devotionals – read a relatively short passage and then reflect or meditate on it over the next day or two. If you decide to use the study guides individually, you can read sections on a daily or weekly basis, allowing for reflection during the week and perhaps even incorporation into your academic practices. Consider keeping a journal or writing a blog on how God is transforming you for redemptive influence in the university context.

If you decide to meet with a small group, perhaps monthly, the study guides can provoke insightful conversations through which you can share and encourage others, either orally during the meeting or in writing afterwards. If you're leading the small group, consider the following steps:

1. Prepare before the meeting by praying and studying the material.
2. Be hospitable, welcoming, and open to new ideas.
3. Listen to the group and allow everyone to participate if they so choose.
4. Stay in contact with group members. Become a learning community where you can grow and support each other.

The study guides might also be useful in workshops, seminars, or retreat settings where Christian academics have set aside several hours for intense discussion and reflection. They may be helpful in generating academic conference themes and ideas, or they could be used in small-group discussions to explore the conference themes in greater depth.

The Power and Importance of Story

Everyone loves a good story. It's how we connect with one another and the world around us. When told well, stories can invoke laughter, tears, anger, empathy, sorrow, joy – the whole range of human emotion. They are part of the existential fabric of human existence.

Jessica Hooten Wilson maintains that stories shape our imaginations as to how we know ourselves, God, others, and the world. In fact, she says,

'We participate in our world based on how we see ourselves situated within it, what it is, how it functions, how it began, to what end we have been called, and so forth. In other words, we imagine ourselves within a story in a certain way that affects our dispositions, loves, and behaviors.'¹

What are we to make, though, of the story Christians tell through the Scriptures, church practices, and traditions? And how might we relate the Christian story to the stories that our academic disciplines tell?

Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), a 17th-century German mathematician and astronomer, once said in a letter to his tutor Michael Maestlin,

'I wanted to become a theologian, and for a long time I was unhappy. Now, behold, God is praised by my work even in astronomy.'²

Studying God's creation to discover its inherent harmony and rational order was Kepler's calling, although as a Lutheran he had studied theology at the famed University of Tübingen. Such discovery, awe, and wonder ultimately glorified God as his study of the stars opened a window into the beauty and majesty of the triune God. How did his love of God's good creation lead him to upend the laws of planetary motion and ignite a scientific revolution that changed how the world was previously understood?

Kepler believed in a story, the Christian story, that shaped his understanding of the world and how he acted in it. Stories shape in large part how we know and how we make sense of particular human actions.

¹ Jessica Hooten Wilson, *The Scandal of Holiness: Renewing Your Imagination in the Company of Literary Saints* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2022), 4–5.

² Letter to Michael Maestlin, 3 October 1595. *Johannes Kepler Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 13, letter 23, 256–7.

Human beings embody and live out complex, integrated stories drawn from encountering the historical, socio-cultural narratives of the societies into which they were born.³ Stories do not simply illustrate some broader principle or point of fact; rather, they are irreducible narratives that express how human beings see the world, or what some call ‘worldviews’.⁴

Story is the fundamental, basic category that provides shared meaning. Stories have the power to change how people think, feel, speak, and act.⁵

What, then, are the basic structures of a story? How do these elements connect with the basic elements of a worldview?

At the most basic level, stories have a beginning, middle, and end. The beginning sets forth a difficult or problematic task, mission, or assignment the hero or heroine seeks to resolve. The intervening middle portrays the various attempts (with all the twists and turns) through which the main character seeks to accomplish the seemingly impossible task, leading eventually to a sometimes unexpected solution. The end of the story conveys the successful completion of the initial assignment.⁶ This basic internal structure is typically enhanced by any number of complexities and adaptations with multiple layers, plots, plots-within-plots, characters, patterns, conflicts, tensions, ironies, tragedies, resolutions, and so on.

Consider the compendium of West African tales of Ananse, a ‘spider-man’ character who leads people to truth through unexpected means and turns of fate. Some have called these stories ‘trickster tales’.⁷ In ‘Ananse and the Ear of Corn’, the story begins with the seemingly impossible task of turning a measly single ear of corn into 100 servants for God. As the story unfolds, Ananse transforms himself into a human and dupes various village leaders by convincing them that the ear of corn he is offering them is ‘sacred’. He then manufactures a crisis in the middle of the night by feeding the corn to the community’s chickens. The next morning, the frightened villagers insist that Ananse take the best of what they have to offer as an apology. This cycle continues until the end of the story, at which point Ananse returns to God with 100 servants, showing that what may seem impossible is indeed possible if one is clever enough.

³ Alister MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1985), 211.

⁴ See David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002). This excellent work traces the history of the term ‘worldview’ denominationally, philosophically, theologically, and in various academic disciplines.

⁵ N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992), 38–9.

⁶ Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 69–71.

⁷ Jay Edwards, ‘Structural Analysis of the Afro-American Trickster Tale’, *Black American Literature Forum* 15, no. 4 (Winter 1981): 155–64.

These Ananse tales, like all stories, do not exist in isolation but, rather, interact with other stories within societies that often overlap, compete, and at times conflict with each other.⁸

In their original Ghanaian context, the emphasis is on how Ananse transforms his weaknesses into virtue or on how the world came to be.⁹ In an 18th-century African-American or Caribbean context, these stories functioned ‘to reflect upon the moral dilemmas imposed upon them under the conditions of servitude and economic bondage’ as Ananse overturned, through his ingenuity, an oppressive power dynamic in a courageous display of resistance.¹⁰ Interestingly, similar ‘trickster tales’ have been told throughout the world’s cultures, yet they differ in ways that accentuate the social values and norms of each particular group, tribe, people, or society.¹¹ To what extent, though, do these cultural norms resonate with God’s story as told in Jesus Christ by the Spirit?

Cultural differences can certainly explain some of the variance, but the primary explanation lies in the accompanying worldviews that function as normative in each culture. This normativity, communicated through varying symbols, practices, fundamental questions, and answers, seeks to understand the whole of reality.¹²

Hence, everyone, whether they acknowledge it or not, has a normative, comprehensive story that claims to explain the way things really are, how we understand the world, and how we live in relation to others and the world.

For Christians, the story God tells in and through Jesus of Nazareth by the Spirit as attested to in Scripture and witnessed to by the church is normative.

The church, throughout its history, has unfortunately manipulated the biblical storyline to harass, abuse, marginalise, and oppress people. As a result, it has weakened the transforming power of the biblical story.

Undeniably, the church should not operate to dominate others but instead to transform this fallen world through the Spirit of Christ who is at the centre of this biblical story.

⁸ Anthony Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), ch. 15.

⁹ Peter Eric Adotey Addo, *Ghana Folk Tales: Ananse Stories from Africa* (New York: Exposition Press, 1963).

¹⁰ Edwards, ‘Structural Analysis of the Afro-American Trickster Tale’, 160.

¹¹ Josepha Sherman, ed., *Trickster Tales: Forty Folk Stories from Around the World* (Little Rock, AR: August House Publishers, 1996).

¹² Wright, *New Testament and the People of God*, 40–1.

While rightly lamenting and acting to rectify these injustices, we should also understand how the biblical story helps us make sense of our stories and our vocation as Christian academics, and how our lives fit within (or are not aligned with) the norm of the Christian story.¹³

Returning to Kepler's life story – he had a deep, abiding love for God's creation. He once remarked to his Catholic friend, Hans Hohenburg, about how God had created a well-ordered world with 'most excellent' laws that human beings could understand by reason,

'since he created us in his image, so that we might think the same thoughts God has revealed to us, and thus commune with God through reasoned thought'.¹⁴

And yet, *un-creation* – the world as affected by sin – has produced dissonance between God and human beings such that human beings lost their immortality but did not lose (as Philip Melanchthon noted) their ability to have 'the same opinions as God' with respect to the mathematical laws of the universe. This belief influenced Kepler's 'top-down' view of science as pure mathematics.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Kepler believed that Jesus' resurrection inaugurated a new order, a *re-creation*. As such, Christ's resurrection reaffirmed the harmony found within the universe, which points to the previous harmony between God and humanity and implies that creation has its ultimate meaning in Christ.¹⁶

This study guide seeks to follow Kepler's intellectual and spiritual insight. First, we unfold God's redemptive story following the basic story pattern with a beginning (creation), a middle (un-creation), and an end (re-creation).

Understanding the whole of Scripture in this way enables readers of the Bible to connect the various parts of the story to this broader whole, plot, or storyline. In doing so, this part-whole understanding of Scripture provides the normative lens through which we live out our academic vocations and discern and advance truth, goodness, and beauty in our academic disciplines.

¹³ See Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004).

¹⁴ Edward B. Davis, 'A World of Love and Light: Christian Theology Shaped Modern Science through the Work of Johannes Kepler and Richard Boyle', *Christian History* 134 (2020): 33.

¹⁵ Davis, 'A World of Love and Light', 36.

¹⁶ Johannes Kepler, *Harmonies of the World* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1995). See also Bruce Stephenson, *The Music of the Heavens: Kepler's Harmonic Astronomy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994). Kepler's example should not be considered as paradigmatic, but it shows how his Christian faith influenced his view of science and how his view of science influenced his theology.

In turn, as we study the Scriptures, a number of biblical themes emerge, such as faith, hope, love, peace, reconciliation, justice, and redemption.

These and other such themes can serve as important ‘bridge’ concepts into our academic disciplines. When understood within the context of the biblical story, these themes facilitate our relating of our academic disciplines to God’s story, positioning us to discuss the stories of these disciplines and their accompanying worldviews, core beliefs, and assumptions.

Engaging our academic disciplines at this level is crucial if we are to find common ground; expose falsehoods; discover and renew God’s truth, goodness, and beauty; and ultimately give witness to how human beings might flourish amidst the ruins of a broken world for the glory of God.

Reflective Questions and Practical Exercises

1. If you're conducting this study with a group, share with your group what drew you to this study.
2. Does the description of story given above fit your understanding of story? What do you agree with and what would you change?
3. Reflect on the power of story by considering how Jesus often told stories that invited his audience to see their world differently with the intent of adopting this new outlook. (See Matthew 13 for some useful examples.)
4. In this section, the focus is not on academic disciplines but on the importance of story. Think of one Bible story you know that you have found personally impactful. What elements of that story have made an impact on you and why?
5. All academic disciplines share stories. As we pointed out, a story's hero usually has some kind of mission to accomplish. What kind of shared mission is your discipline trying to accomplish? For example, Kepler's field of science has the mission of achieving knowledge of the natural world, and his personal calling included understanding the natural world, particularly the relationship of planets and stars. What aspect of mission are you called to explore?
6. You have probably heard stories of mentors or scholars in your field whom you have admired. Can you identify a story of someone you found to be particularly Christ-like and who served as a model of how you want your story in your academic field to go?

The Basic, Storied Structure of Scripture

The Bible is full of stories: about the beginnings of Israel and God’s covenantal promises with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; about Yahweh saving Israel from an oppressive Egyptian pharaoh and their long journey through the wilderness to the promised land; about prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, and Amos who would forthtell of God’s call to repentance and foretell of the Messiah who would redeem Israel from her oppressors; about Jesus the Christ – God incarnate – the Jewish Messiah who lived, died, and rose again for the redemption of the world; and about the extension of God’s love through his followers, most notably the apostle Paul who took the gospel to the ends of the ancient world. But is there a single overarching story, a metanarrative, that holds all these stories together?

There are, of course, many ways to tell how and why Scripture’s mosaic of stories fits together.¹⁷

But it is vital to understand this overarching story; otherwise, we may integrate the parts of Scripture with other broader ideological stories (even stories told by our academic disciplines) in ways that are contrary to the biblical narrative, thereby distorting their meaning and missing God’s purpose.

We propose using the basic structure of creation, un-creation, and re-creation to convey the main plot of Scripture and then to connect that storyline (and its major themes) with our academic disciplines for redemptive influence.

Creation

Barbara Drossel contends that the laws of physics are idealizations with a limited range of applicability. Her contention contrasts with those who believe that the laws of physics are determinative of the way things are (i.e. physicalism). The systems described by these physical laws, Drossel maintains, are causally open in that they are influenced by their particular contexts, whether material, biological, psychological, or immaterial (e.g. human intentions, logic, ideas, values, goals). The laws of physics, then, enable everything in the physical world, yet they do not determine everything. As such, they do not preclude God’s normal, non-miraculous action in the world, such as answering prayers and guiding persons and circumstances.¹⁸

¹⁷ Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007); Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006); Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, ‘How to Read the Bible’, in *The Orthodox Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 762–70; Esau McCaulley, *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020); *Dei Verbum*.

¹⁸ Barbara Drossel, ‘[How the Laws of Nature Leave Room for God’s Action in the World](#)’, *Sapientia* (6 July 2021), For further exploration, see [Drossel’s Society of Christian Scholars webinar](#).

The story of creation is crucial to Drossel's understanding of physics and to our academic work, because it discloses not only how God is actively involved in his world but also how he orders, limits, and establishes the world's parameters. Within this diversely ordered, harmonious framework, which God calls 'good', he identifies humanity as 'very good' and gives us our most fundamental reason for being – that is, to image the (triune) God (*imago Dei*) through the care and creation of culture.¹⁹ In this way, 'God is glorified in a human being fully alive', as the early church father Irenaeus wrote in his *Adversus Haereses*.

In the beginning, God created by speaking all that is into existence, creating *ex nihilo* (out of nothing; Gen. 1). Who is this creator God? As in most stories, it's vital to understand the main characters, the setting, and the interplay among them. The book of Genesis first identifies this creator God by the name *Elohim*, which was the general name for God used throughout the ancient Near East (ANE) as they told their own creation stories about how the world came to be. In fact, it was likely surprising for them to hear about the *Elohim* of Genesis, as God's many characteristics and actions were in contradistinction to their deities' self-serving interests. For example, ANE gods often intermixed with human beings and enslaved them. In turn, human beings often worshipped creation (e.g. the sun, moon, and stars) by crafting idols and telling stories of power, influence, and servitude about them. The Bible, though, makes a clear distinction between God the Creator and his creation, most notably at the outset of Genesis when 'the Spirit of God hovered over the waters' (Gen. 1:2) and identified the sun and moon as created entities (Gen. 1:14-19), not divinities.²⁰

In keeping with these distinctives, the Genesis story discloses another name for God: Yahweh Elohim, the Lord God (Gen. 2:4). This association would have evoked a powerful memory for Jewish readers as Yahweh is the covenant Redeemer, the one who saved Israel from her Egyptian oppressors (Exod. 6:1-13).

God is, thus, both Redeemer and Creator! He is the one who saves and creates.

This connection is vital for the Christian story because as we come to know Jesus as Saviour (1 Jn 4:14; Acts 13:23), we find out that he is also Creator (Jn 1:1-5; Col. 1).

¹⁹ See Makoto Fujimura, *Culture Care: Reconnecting with Beauty for our Common Life* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2017); Ken Gnanakan, *Responsible Stewardship of God's Creation* (New York: World Evangelical Alliance, 2014); and C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000 [1952]).

²⁰ See Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), and any number of commentaries on Genesis for further context that enhances the powerful message the Genesis narrative is meant to convey. These parallels to the ANE also make an implicit methodological point that Christian academics should consider when engaging their disciplines: use disciplinary concepts to build bridges to biblical and theological truths.

Yahweh Elohim is a personal God as well, one who cares for his beautiful and good creation (Ps. 104) and expresses his desire for communion and personal relationship with the pinnacle of his creation – human beings (Gen. 1–2).

Human beings as male and female are a unique part of God’s good creation. Being created in God’s image (*imago Dei*; Gen. 1:26-31), they are fully human only when in communion with God, each other, and the world. Their special status imbues humanity with the vocation of caring for, developing, exploring, and extending God’s good creation for his glory, whether through agriculture, the arts, politics, science, engineering, business, the family, the local community, or any other aspect of life (Gen. 2:18-25; Ps. 8:6). Humanity’s responsibility implies, then, a freedom *coram Deo* (before God) that requires accountability to God and each other.²¹

The Lord God, therefore, is eternal, with no beginning and no end. In his divine freedom, he creates in time and space through language to bring *everything* that exists into being. He is thus radically distinct from his creation and yet in continuity with it through his Word. Because God is good, he designed and made a beautiful, well-ordered, and very good world, teeming with diversity as it finds harmony in its purpose of symphonic praise of God (Ps. 19).²²

God’s good and beautiful creation is a habitat that provides the conditions where human beings flourish and where God’s peace or *shalom* – that ‘rich, integrated, relational wholeness God intends’ – reigns.²³

Un-Creation

Recent social movements such as decolonization and anti-racism in various parts of the globe have accentuated discussions of the inequalities and biases prevalent in higher education and even within academic publishing. The dominance of North America and Europe is usually explained away by sympathetic scholars as resulting from the limited English proficiency or academic cultural awareness displayed by multilingual writers in the Global South. They overlook, however, other material and structural inequalities such as limited access to the latest research, inadequate pay requiring faculty to work multiple jobs, and burdensome teaching loads, all of which inhibit quality research and publishing.

²¹ See Jean-Pierre Ibucwa Lipanda, ‘[Congo’s Christians Confront a Climate Crisis](#)’, *Plough*, 17 May 2022, and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *Scholarship and Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020) for more in-depth accounts of these claims.

²² Jeremy Begbie, *Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts* (London: T&T Clark, 2009).

²³ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 42.

Suresh Canagarajah experienced these inequalities while working in his home country of Sri Lanka and connects these material and structural inequalities – aspects of un-creation – with the brokenness and sinfulness of the world.²⁴

In Genesis 3, the middle part of the biblical story, the tension rises as the serpent tempts Adam and Eve to deny the reality of the created order by persuading them to eat of the ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil’. In their relative freedom, Adam and Eve choose to believe the lie that they will not die and will instead be enlightened like God (Gen. 3:1-5), thereby becoming the ones who can determine what is good. Consequently, God’s *shalom* is disrupted, corrupted, and undone. Humanity is no longer in right relationship with God, others, and the world and has become separated from God and his good purposes. Evil has entered God’s good world and distorted, deformed, and disordered it, in what Augustine identifies in his *Confessions* as ‘the deprivation of the good’.²⁵

It is imperative, then, for Christian academics to account for and address in their teaching, research, and administration the death, destruction, despair, and dissonance brought about by the entrance of sin into God’s good creation.

Sin is, thus, part of the origin story of humanity and the origin or root of all that entangles us today (Heb. 12:1-3). Human sin or brokenness is thus universal, for no one always does (*actus*) what is good and right. Sin is ubiquitous (Rom. 3:10, 23). It is prevalent in all times and in all places because human beings share in Adam’s sin, bringing death and shame to humanity (Rom. 5:12-21). By sharing in Adam’s original sin, human beings have a predisposition (*habitus*) or proclivity for sin (Ps. 58:3). All humanity has this sinful condition from the beginning, and it is the condition into which we are born. We cannot alter this state of affairs on our own (Eph. 2:3). In addition, we have inherited Adam’s guilt and shame (*status*), burdening us with a debt we cannot pay (Lk. 13:4).

All our actions (*actus*), then, are rooted in this diseased, sinful disposition (*habitus*), leaving us condemned before God (*status*) and in need of redemption, renewal, and restoration.

²⁴ See Suresh Canagarajah, *The Geopolitics of Academic Writing* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002). For further exploration, see [Canagarajah’s Society of Christian Scholars webinar](#).

²⁵ Augustine, *Confessions*, 7.11–13.

This sorry state of affairs is reflected in the book of Genesis as humanity's diseased condition extends throughout every aspect of God's good creation, from the murder of Abel by his brother Cain (Gen. 4) to the desire to be a law unto oneself at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11). As the story unfolds further, we see Israel perverting justice and desiring to be like all the other nations by wanting their own king (1 Sam. 8) and eventually worshipping the gods of the surrounding nations (Deut. 29:26). Israel's disobedience leads to banishment from the promised land (parallel to Adam's and Eve's exile from Eden), while the prophets rebuke Israel and call God's people to repentance and renewal (2 Chron. 36:14-21). Similar states of affairs also appear in the New Testament, as Jesus chastises religious leaders for their hypocrisy (Mt. 23) and Paul calls God's people through his various letters to imitate Christ and abandon their former ways of life (e.g. Eph. 5:1-2).

The biblical witness makes it clear that all humanity suffers the consequences of sin. Death has entered the world, both physically and spiritually. While Adam and Eve did not immediately die physically, physical death was a consequence of their denial of God's good creation: 'to dust you shall return' (Gen. 3:19). Death represents the unnatural division of soul from body, through which one is cut off from the body and thus from the possibility of acting in the world (Lk. 16:22-31). Sin brought about spiritual death, which leads to eternal death (Rev. 20:6), a separation from God's presence and fellowship marked by contradiction (Rom. 1:16-32; 7:7-25) and alienation (2 Cor. 5:1-4).

Individually, sin renders us incapable of rectifying our sorry state and unable to please God (Tit. 1:15; Heb. 11:6), leading to despair as we suffer sin's guilt and shame. We also suffer socially from sin, whether from the sin embedded in socio-cultural structures that dehumanise us (Rom. 8:38-39; Col. 2:8-23) or from the 'principalities and powers' that seek to dominate and destroy life (Eph. 6:12).

Re-Creation

In this cosmic distress, is there any hope for humanity? Yes, there is! Robert Chao Romero finds hope for humanity in the re-creation found in Christ and seeks to bring that hope into his academic work. This is evident in his engagement with Tara Yosso's highly influential theory of education called 'community cultural wealth', defined as 'an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and used by Communities of Color to survive and resist racism and other forms of oppression'. Drawing upon Revelation 21:26-27, Romero argues that each culture has its own distinct cultural sin (Rev. 21:27)

but also retains its cultural wealth that will be ultimately redeemed in the new creation (Rev. 21:26).²⁶

By taking seriously the brokenness and fallenness of humanity, Romero is able to identify why knowledge, skills, and abilities in and of themselves are futile to resist racism. In contrast, he observes, the hope of new creation empowers students to recognize their cultural limitations, while envisioning their cultural heritage as valuable in shaping their identity in Christ, and hence to act accordingly. Thus, the building tension of humanity's sinful condition in the biblical story and its horrific, destructive consequences finds complete resolution at the end of the story in the person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

From the beginning, God takes the initiative and promises to eradicate sin, evil, and death, though at great cost to himself. In pronouncing judgement on Adam's and Eve's sin (Gen. 3:8-24), God declares that, even though Satan will deal a crippling blow to humanity by 'striking the heel', he will crush sin, evil, and death by 'striking the head' of the serpent.²⁷ God even provides clothing for Adam and Eve, a symbol of his provision and a sign that he had not given up on his purpose for them and his creation.

Human beings are still created in God's image and are charged to discover, develop, and extend God's good creation (Gen. 4:17-22), although we now do so in distorted, deficient, and often destructive ways due to sin.

Nevertheless, the God of promise remains committed to his good creation by taking the initiative, evidenced by his covenantal relationship with his chosen people, Israel.

We see the Lord God's commitment to his creation (Rom. 8:21) when he instructs Noah to build an ark for the salvation of his family and the animals (Gen. 9:8-17). God further reveals his intent through Abraham and his descendants, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 25-36), by turning Abraham's line into a great nation, providing land, and offering his personal presence so that they can in turn extend these good and perfect gifts to other nations (Gen. 12:1-3). God's people are thus part of the restoration project and begin to thrive in the land of Egypt (Exod. 1:6-7).

²⁶ See Tara J. Yosso, 'Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth', *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 8, no. 1 (March 2005): 77; and Robert Chao Romero, *Brown Church: Five Centuries of Latina/o Christian Social Justice, Theology, and Identity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, May 2020).

For further exploration, see [Romero's Society of Christian Scholars webinar](#).

²⁷ These details of the story would have resonated with the Israelites, as they were familiar with the hostility between humans and snakes found in the ANE serpent omens. See H.W.F. Saggs, *The Greatness That Was Babylon* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1962), 309.

Israel, however, becomes oppressed and enslaved by a new pharaoh who did not remember Joseph. In response, God calls Moses to lead the Israelites into the promised land (Exod. 2:24). At this point, God further discloses his identity by the name Yahweh, 'I am who I am' (Exod. 3:14), signifying his continuing covenant and the great lengths to which he will go to redeem his people (Exod. 15).

As God sets his people free from bondage, he comes to live with or 'tabernacle' among them (Exod. 40:34-38), signifying the importance of place and suggesting that further progress has been made in restoring God's presence within his creation. His presence, though, is not as it was in the garden; rather, it is completely new in the sense that living with a holy God amidst sinful humanity requires maintaining a right relationship with the Lord God through acts of atonement (Lev. 4:27-35). As the nation of Israel enters into the wilderness, the Israelite wanderings become a preamble to the struggles they will face with regard to remaining faithful to Yahweh Elohim once they enter the promised land.

These struggles are cyclical, in that the Israelites continually fall into sinful patterns that violate their covenant with Yahweh and provoke him to anger. He allows Israel to suffer the consequences of their sin, usually at the hands of foreign oppressors, leading to despair and cries for mercy. Since God is merciful, he raises up leaders, whether judges (Judg. 2:11-19), prophets (Ezra 1; Neh. 1-7), or kings (2 Sam. 5:17-25), to deliver his people. The Lord God has not forgotten his covenantal promises and will renew his good creation in due course through Israel to draw all nations, tribes, and people to himself. When, though, will the Lord God finally set his people free from sin and their oppressors? When will the Messiah, whom Isaiah and other prophets have foretold, come to usher in God's renewed kingdom?

The story of Jesus of Nazareth is the climactic moment that resolves the tension of humanity's sinful condition and subsequent consequences.

Up to this point, the God of promise has been working to renew the *shalom* of his good creation, gesturing toward a counterintuitive re-creation that takes shape in the person of Jesus Christ.

As such, Jesus Christ as prophet tells us what the kingdom of God is like (Mt. 13; Mk. 4), and how the power of God heals and brings about new life through his vivifying presence in word and deed. This freedom does not come by might, decree, or construct but rather unexpectedly through humility and meekness (Mt. 5).

How could God conquer death by death? The answer lies in the story of God's covenant relationship with Israel, in which acts of atonement enabled the sacrificed animal to take the place of the shamed or guilty so as to restore fellowship with the Lord God (Lev. 12:17). Jesus Christ as priest, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29), takes God's judgement upon himself and atones for humanity's sin (Heb. 10:10-12). His subsequent resurrection and ascension reveal Jesus as a victorious king who inaugurates re-creation (Lk. 24), God's final act for us and the world that will bring *shalom* to his creation. Christ has thus conquered death by death, bringing the kingdom of God near to us and closer to the day when there will be no more death, pain, tears, or suffering (Rev. 21). But his work is not yet finished.

As the new Adam, Jesus is recreating humanity and the world through the power of the Holy Spirit, to fulfil the Father's desire to make all things new (Rev. 21:5).

Just as the Lord God intended Abraham and his descendants to be a blessing to the nations, God calls his people to expand his kingdom, extend his redemptive, reconciling love into the world, and work to bring the truth, goodness, and beauty of the new creation to places where death, destruction, despair, and dissonance reign.

Reflective Questions and Practical Exercises

1. How well do you know the basic, storied structure of Scripture? What parts might you need to study and reflect upon further? Based on your cultural context, how might you describe the overarching storyline of Scripture differently?
2. Barbara Drossel sees the laws of physics as part of God's good creation, yet she does not absolutize them by insisting that they determine everything. Rather, because they are good, these laws are limited and do not explain or determine everything. What aspects of God's good creation do you see in your academic discipline? Have they been absolutized? How might you bring more attention to the goodness of God's creation, while noting its limitations or where there is brokenness?
3. Suresh Canagarajah saw how the structural nature of sin was preventing Global South academics from participating more fully in research and publishing. As editor of a prominent journal in his field, he sought to address this problem by diversifying the editorial board and changing how they consider articles for publication. In your own academic discipline, are there sinful structures that limit participation, especially by those who might be disadvantaged because of resources? In what other ways might sin affect your academic discipline?
4. While acknowledging that cultures do exhibit sinful tendencies, Robert Chao Romero ascribes worth and value to cultural heritage because of the hope he identifies in re-creation. This allows for an honest discussion about the positive and negative aspects of culture that encourage people to become or hinder people from being who God made them to be. What aspects of your academic discipline keep people from realizing their God-given potential? Where might you incorporate the hope of re-creation into your teaching, learning outcomes, or practical exercises?

Major Themes
in the Story of Scripture

Several major themes emerge when we reflect on the basic, storied structure of Scripture as creation, un-creation, and re-creation. At the centre of this story is Jesus Christ, through whom God has revealed his fullest purpose and meaning for the world, including human history and hence our existence.²⁸ When understood within the context of the biblical story, these themes, such as faith, hope, love, peace, reconciliation, justice, and redemption, facilitate our engagement with our academic disciplines as ‘bridges’ helping us discover and communicate God’s truth, goodness, and beauty.²⁹ They also prepare us to engage the stories of these disciplines and their accompanying worldviews with their core beliefs and assumptions, all of which we’ll explore in the final section.

Faith

Sarinah Lo conducted empirical research on what Indonesian Christian academics understood about the integration of faith and learning. She discovered that much of the literature on integration focuses on North America, which sees integration primarily as a cognitive process. Although some of these cognitive tendencies do characterize academics in other parts of the world, Lo noted that Indonesian Christian academics focus mostly on a pietistic integration of faith. While not intending to downplay the value of piety, she contends for a holistic approach that encompasses faith-integrated being, knowing, and doing. As such, her threefold matrix suggests that Indonesian Christian academics need more equipping on how to integrate the Christian faith into their academic disciplines (knowing) and their educational practices (doing). Such equipping would include biblical-theological and philosophical foundations, educational theories and practices, critical reflective practices, and a structure of support for personal growth, ideally comprising a community of Christian academics.³⁰

Examining the meaning of faith in light of the storied structure of Scripture discloses the contours of Lo’s holistic understanding. Scripture emphasises the priority of divine grace (Exod. 34:6-7; cf. Deut. 5:9-10), as God takes the initiative in all his dealings with humanity. Divine grace always calls for a human response, as seen in both the Old and New Testaments (hereafter OT and NT). Since sin is the barrier that separates human beings from God, the human response to God’s grace must begin by acknowledging sin (Isa. 53:6; 1 Kgs 8:33-34) that leads to repentance (2 Sam. 12:13), for only then can God’s forgiveness be received (Isa. 55:7).

²⁸ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Pictures at a Theological Exhibition: Scenes of the Church’s Worship, Witness and Wisdom* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2016), 167.

²⁹ For a conversational approach, see Sean Gladding, *The Story of God, the Story of Us: Getting Lost and Found in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010), 9–13.

³⁰ Sarinah Lo, *Faith-Integrated Being, Knowing, and Doing: A Study Among Christian Faculty in Indonesia* (London: Langham Press, 2020). For further exploration, see [Lo’s Society of Christian Scholars webinar](#).

This acknowledgement comes by faith in the God of promise. The result is a restored relationship with God, others, and the world as it was in the beginning.

There are several significant differences between how the Hebrew Scriptures and the NT conceive of faith. The Hebrew Scriptures primarily address God's people, Israel, who have already experienced his saving power and have been called into a unique, covenant relationship with him. Israel frequently goes astray and hence needs to be called to turn away from their sins (Joel 2:12-13; Ezek. 18:21-22; Lev. 26; Deut. 28). In light of Christ's life, death and resurrection and the inauguration of God's kingdom (Jn 12:31; Rom. 3:21; Lk. 21:31), the NT re-narrates the OT by claiming that all human beings, Jews and Gentiles alike, are called to (re)turn to the Lord God in a new and radical way. This human response to the gospel involves a total transformation of the self that includes a dying to a former, wayward life and a rebirth that encompasses mind, body, soul, and strength (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2; Rom. 12:1-8; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:17-32; Rom. 7).³¹ Faith, therefore, takes on new dimensions as the means of participating in the activities of God's kingdom inaugurated in Christ.

Hope

One prominent challenge facing West Africa is the lack of capacity in the STEM disciplines, which often inhibits economic development and contributes to despair. Heather Beem noticed these challenges during her graduate work. Motivated by the hope of the gospel, she set out with local partners to create the Practical Education Network (PEN). The professional development program is infused with learning-by-doing science, in ways that can overcome resource constraints. PEN's materials and resources allow participants to discover key concepts and harness them to engage in projects relevant to their daily lives. Such efforts contextualise the hope of the gospel as teachers are empowered, students acquire new skills, and the region flourishes from utilising this education for the common good through the construction of roads and bridges.³²

Examining the meaning of hope in light of the storied structure of Scripture fleshes out Beem's motivations to bring hope to West Africa. In the Hebrew Scriptures, hope is closely related to God's character and his promises. Because God is the hope of his people, they can expect good things from God and wait patiently for his help and deliverance (Isa. 40:31; Ps. 71:14; Mt. 7:11). The God who has fulfilled his promise to Israel in the past will continue to be faithful in the present and the future (Gen. 12, 17; Exod. 33; Deut. 7; 1

³¹ J. Brian Tucker and John Koessler, *All Together Different: Upholding the Church's Unity While Honoring Our Individual Identities* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2018), 55.

³² For further details about PEN, see their [website](#). For further exploration, see [Beem's Society of Christian Scholar's webinar](#).

Kgs 8; Jer. 14:22). Hope that is not linked to trusting in God is false hope, which will not last. In the Psalms and the prophets, we are reminded not to trust ultimately in riches, idols, foreign powers, military princes, or even other humans. Present hope in God is also hope in God's future, his eschatological intervention, which will put an end to all earthly pain, suffering, and death (Rev. 21). This eschatological hope, expressed as a conviction that all history is under God's sovereignty, rests in the fact that God will fulfil his promises to establish David's throne forever (2 Sam. 7; Ps. 89; Lk. 1:32-33).³³

Whereas Israel hoped that a Messiah would come in military style to establish God's kingdom, Yahweh Elohim came riding in on a donkey to claim his throne upon a cross – something wholly unanticipated.

This contrast illuminates Christian hope as God says 'Yes!' in Christ who is the fulfilment of his previous promises and in the age to come and 'No!' to the principalities and powers of the day (Eph. 6:12).³⁴

Christians today live between the times of the resurrection of Christ and his second coming. In this 'already but not yet' time period, they belong to a community of faith – the church – inspired by the reality of a future that has already begun but is still awaiting its final form. Christian hope is, therefore, the source of present strength,³⁵ grounded in what God has done in Christ (Rom. 5), experienced in the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8), and moving towards the glory yet to be revealed (Col. 1; Tit. 2:13; 1 Cor. 15). Christian hope stands in contradiction to present hopeless realities yet leads these realities towards the promised transformation (Rom. 8; Rev. 21–22; 1 Cor. 15), when God will ultimately set all wrongs right on earth as it is in heaven.

Love

Yohanna Katanacho, a Palestinian Christian scholar, began his academic journey as an atheist who despised the idea of God and hated his Jewish neighbours. Through a divine encounter, the love of God transformed his life and his academic journey. As a Palestinian Christian, through a close reading of Scripture, he has come to observe how the kingdom of God is not of this world even while still being in it.³⁶ His scholarship now seeks to

³³ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 163–4.

³⁴ Scot McKnight, *A Fellowship of Differents: Showing the World God's Design for Life Together* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 34; N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008).

³⁵ M.M. Dana, 'Suffering, Endurance, Character, Hope: Romans 5:1-11', *Journal for Preachers* 28, no. 2 (2005): 33–36.

³⁶ Yohanna Katanacho, *Praying through the Psalms* (London: Langham Press, 2018) and *Reading the Gospel of John through Palestinian Eyes* (London: Langham Press, 2020).

address complex faith and socio-political issues in the Palestinian context – issues related to the land, restorative justice, and achieving a holistic peace that extends beyond the cessation of violence.³⁷ Christ’s self-giving love, exemplified in his love even for his enemies, compels Katanacho to participate in local peacemaking efforts between Palestinians and Jews as well as between Israel and the church (Rom. 9–11).

Examining the meaning of love in light of the storied structure of Scripture reveals the kind of self-giving love Katanacho seeks to embody as he desires to love God and neighbour, including those whom many would identify as the enemy. The OT discloses God’s love of all ethnicities, of all peoples. It is seen in his relationship with the nation of Israel (Deut. 6; 7:6-8; 10:15; 14:2; Isa. 54:10; Ruth 1:16; Pss. 69:15-16; 88:11; 103:3-4; Mal. 1:1-5). His love also extends to groups such as strangers, widows, orphans, the poor, and refugees. God also loves virtue and righteousness, and those who actively pursue it. A simple reading of the OT conceives of God as one who loves his (very) good creation.

While the NT affirms God’s affections for his creation, the NT authors disclose a far more robust understanding, claiming that God is love (1 Jn 4:7-21). But what exactly does love mean, and what are the implications of this kind of love?

A trinitarian understanding of God reveals love as sacrificial, self-giving, and transformative.³⁸ It focuses on God the Father’s love for his Son and the Son’s self-giving love for the Father and the Spirit as the gift of love between them.

This sacrificial love reveals the beauty of God’s actions in Christ by the Spirit as an atoning sacrifice for the redemption of the world.³⁹

The cross of Christ reveals God’s love as the culmination and pinnacle of his care for and his providential actions in creation. God’s love revealed in Christ is not just a self-giving love, but a jealous love that desires complete commitment by God’s people to him and his ways. Redemptive, sacrificial love (consider the story of Ruth as a powerful example) may thus be construed as the highest form of love. It is covenantal.⁴⁰ It recognizes that judgement is due, but instead it gives mercy. The cross of Christ is the quintessential expression of God’s great love as he chose to cancel our debt and transfer his judgement for

³⁷ Yohanna Katanacho, *The Land of Christ: A Palestinian Cry* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013). For further exploration, see [Katanacho’s Society of Christian Scholars webinar](#).

³⁸ See Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed., *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001).

³⁹ See Stanley Hauerwas’ chapter, ‘Suffering Beauty: The Liturgical Formation of Christ’s Body’, in his *Performing the Faith: Bonhoeffer and the Practice of Nonviolence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004), 151–68.

⁴⁰ Susan Ackerman, ‘The Personal Is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love (Aheb, Ahaba) in the Hebrew Bible’, *Vetus Testamentum* 52, no. 4 (2002): 437–58. See also C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves: Affection, Friendship, Eros, and Charity* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960).

our sin by placing it upon his only Son so that we might be set free from sin's bondage. Such love is without limit, restriction, condition, or qualification. God offers this transformative love to us, his church (1 Jn 4:8-9; Jn 3:16-17; Tit. 3:4-7; Eph. 2:1-5), and indeed to all creation (Jn 3:16) as he fulfils his promise to reconcile all things to himself.⁴¹

Peace and Reconciliation

As a young lawyer thirty-three years ago, Olajide Olagunju endeavoured to settle his cases amicably. He was not a Christian; indeed, at one point, he considered himself an atheist. Early in his vocation, the seed for resolving disputes and building global peace through local capacity was planted, eventually leading to an understanding that 'peace is not possible anywhere except if it is built everywhere.'⁴² Yet Olagunju believes today that even when he did not know God personally, God still guided him, providing opportunities to research conflict in the Niger Delta region, the status of internally displaced persons in Nigeria, and conflict and corruption in the country's oil and gas industry. After becoming a Christian, he became increasingly aware of God's direction in his life. He came to view his research, mediation, and conflict resolution efforts as participating in the reality of God's peace, justice, and reconciliation, even though he had not recognized or understood God's activity and presence when he embarked on this work.⁴³

Examining the meaning of peace and reconciliation in light of the storied structure of Scripture traces the contours of this divine reality, helping us attain an understanding of that innate human longing to be at peace with God and neighbour.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, peace or *shalom* is rooted in the creation story, such that when creation is and does what God designed and created it to be and do, then it flourishes in a right relationship with God, others, and the world.

This 'righteousness' implies a covenantal relationship involving all areas of life (Gen. 18.25), even though the prophets place greater emphasis on the juridical and ethical aspects of the covenant as they associate righteousness with accomplishing justice (Amos 5:7, 24; 6:12; Hos. 2:19; 10:12) and making right decisions (Isa. 1:26; 16:5; 26:9).⁴⁴ Hence, when the

⁴¹ See C. René Padilla, *What Is Integral Mission?* translated by Rebecca Breekveldt (Oxford: Regnum, 2021).

⁴² Olagunju is an internationally recognized mediator; see a brief biography in footnote 1 of Olagunju's, '[Seven Secrets of Conflict Resolution](#)'.

⁴³ See Olajide Olagunju, *How to Resolve a Conflict: Principles, Practice and Procedure in Conflict Resolution—the Mediator's Handbook* (Abuju: Corporate Mediators, 2020); Olagunju, 'Industrial Conflict Mediation in Nigeria: Principles, Practice and Procedure', *International Journal of Industrial Arbitration* 1, no. 1 (June 2021): 12–21. For further exploration, see [Olagunju's Society of Christian Scholars webinar](#).

⁴⁴ Cf. Walter J. Houston, '[Social Justice and the Prophets](#)', n.p.

covenant is broken, reconciliation is required to restore peace and be in right relationship with God, the world, and others.

The NT builds on this understanding of peace by specifying God's 'righteous' action in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the main subject of reconciliation as the sustainer and reconciler of the created order (Col. 1). The object of reconciliation is the whole world, including those who are estranged from God. As such, God in Christ by the Spirit graciously and lovingly restores and justifies human beings by faith (Rom. 3, 5; 2 Cor. 5; Phil. 3:9) so that they might fulfil their proper vocations as 'righteous' human beings.⁴⁵ Christ's sacrificial work on the cross is the means by which reconciliation is achieved; his purpose is to attain peace (Eph. 2) and to create a new humanity by reconciling Jews and Gentiles into one fellowship.

Reconciliation, therefore, has a vertical and downward component as God in Christ suffers death to attain peace through the cross (vertical) and thus effects a horizontal peace by eliminating hostility between human beings (Col. 2).⁴⁶ However, hostility still exists as we live between the two advents of Christ. As Christ-followers, we are charged by God to be the hands and feet of Christ's reconciliation, seeking to bring peace (*shalom*) and justice to the places that are fraught with death and despair. In doing so, we participate in God's reconciling of all things to himself.⁴⁷

Redemption

Rooted in a biblical understanding of redemption, Rebecca Samuel Dali researches and seeks to address the effects of violence on women, children, and families in the context of ethnic unrest, especially in northwest Nigeria near the border with Cameroon.⁴⁸ Her research gives voice to those caught in horrific circumstances, while her activism seeks to bring healing, solidarity, peace, education, and awareness. To facilitate these goals, Dali founded a non-governmental organisation, the Centre for Caring, Empowerment, and Peace Initiative (CCEPI), to redeem traumatised and displaced victims of terrorist groups through emergency response, psychological care, community integration, and

⁴⁵ Max Turner, 'Human Reconciliation in the New Testament with Special Reference to Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians', *European Journal of Theology* 16, no. 1 (2007): 37–47.

⁴⁶ For a discussion of the theme in a pluralistic world, see Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Christian Theology in the Pluralistic World: A Global Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019), 284–319. By implication then, Christ-followers are called to transcend *polarities* in an either-or world.

⁴⁷ See Thomas A. Tarrants, *Consumed by Hate, Redeemed by Love* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2019) for the implications of redemptive discourse for church and world. See also Paul N. Alexander, ed., *Christ at the Checkpoint: Theology in the Service of Justice and Peace* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2012).

⁴⁸ See Frank Rameriz, *We Have Walked in Each Other's Shoes: Rebecca Dali's Story* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 2020), for a detailed biography of this internationally recognized scholar's work to redeem the lives of women and children who have suffered from ethnic violence.

peace-building.⁴⁹ These efforts seek to restore a sense of wholeness and bring deliverance to the afflicted.

Examining the meaning of redemption in light of the storied structure of Scripture provides a fuller framework for the kind of redemptive influence Dali seeks to have in her region through her research and activism. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Exodus narrative – God’s deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian servitude to become God’s covenant community – is essential to understanding divine redemption (Exod. 8:23). God’s act of deliverance in the Exodus story through his emissaries notes the means of redemption (Deut. 7:8; 9:26; Pss. 74:2; 77:15).⁵⁰ As the object of God’s redemption, Israel was expected to redeem or deliver others (Lev. 25:47-49), including property (Exod. 21:29-30). Moreover, the ancient practice of prisoners being set free from captivity by payment of a ransom further illumines God’s divine redemption (Ezra 1; Isa. 45; 52:3) in that release from captivity by ransom is understood as a new Exodus, an event likened to God’s redemption of his people from Egypt (Isa. 43:1-4, 14).

The NT draws, somewhat provocatively, upon this rich Hebraic understanding of redemption when John the Baptist announces Jesus of Nazareth as the coming Messiah of Israel and the fulfilment of God’s kingdom (Mt. 3:12). Throughout his life and ministry, Jesus affirms John’s announcement, at great peril, saying that he came to give his life as a ransom for many (Mt. 20:28). Paul develops the concept of redemption primarily to speak of the saving significance of the death and resurrection of Christ, seeing salvation, in part, as a process of redemption.⁵¹ Drawing on the creation narrative, Paul sees humanity as enslaved to sin, death, and its destructive consequences (Rom. 6). Christ through the cross paid the debt (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23) as a ransom that frees people from slavery (1 Tim.2:6), which acquitted individuals in a legal sense and freed peoples from oppression in a communal sense. Christ also sets captives free (Rom. 3:24) from the shackles of sin to live out their vocation as human beings.

Nevertheless, we live within the tension of the already and the not yet, since Christ inaugurated the kingdom of God but we still await its final fulfilment when Christ returns.

Thus, in this life, followers of Christ experience redemption but not in totality, until Christ fulfils God’s promise to make all things new in the age to come (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 4:30).

⁴⁹ For more details, see CCEPI’s [website](#).

⁵⁰ Israel is formed by God’s mighty act of redemption. See Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 8–75.

⁵¹ Michael F. Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification, and the New Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 40–59.

Reflective Questions and Practical Exercises

1. How might these major themes of faith, hope, love, peace, reconciliation, and redemption connect to your vocation as a Christian academic similar to the stories of the other Christian academics like Sarinah Lo, Heather Beem, Yohanna Katanacho, Olajide Olagunju, and Rebecca Samuel Dali?
2. How might these themes shape your understanding of your academic discipline similar to how Rebecca Samuel Dali's view of redemption and reconciliation shaped her research? How does your academic discipline resonate (or not) with these major themes similar to what Yohanna Katanacho does through an understanding of the 'land' based on the sacrificial love of Christ?
3. The major themes articulated above are not exhaustive. What other themes, concepts, or motifs of Scripture might you consider important for your academic discipline?

Relating the Story of
Scripture and the Stories of
Academic Disciplines

Looking back on the basic, storied structure of Scripture as creation, un-creation, and re-creation, including its major themes, we see how the New Testament re-narrates the Hebrew Scriptures to demonstrate that familiar Jewish stories find a more fitting climax in Jesus of Nazareth. The stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of the Exodus, of the prophets, and of exile and restoration are all re-narrated in and through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. This re-narration is captured well in Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36) or when Paul reconfigures the purpose of the law from pedagogue to promise (Gal. 3).⁵² Why did this re-narration so deeply upset the political and religious leaders to the point that they wanted to kill Jesus and his apostles?

Jesus' and the apostles' retelling of the Jewish story struck at the core of Second Temple Judaism. They challenged Jewish identities of the day – their core beliefs and assumptions, power structures, and practices. More positively, they offered an overlapping yet fundamentally different worldview, a similar yet distinctly different way of being in the world. Their stories questioned the deepest parts of human understanding related to perceptions about God, the world, ourselves, and others.⁵³

More than merely illustrative or theoretical, Jesus' and the apostles' stories challenged the Jewish understanding of the meaning and purpose of their lives, shaking the 'fundamental orientation of their hearts'.⁵⁴

The prevailing Jewish worldviews were functioning on the level of dispositions and presuppositions, those pre-cognitive assumptions that often lay hidden and unnoticed until they clash or contrast with a markedly different understanding of the way things are and of being in the world.

Understanding the Relationship between Story and Worldview

Worldviews are lenses through which human beings understand the world and are often the shorthand of stories.⁵⁵

⁵² Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 77–80.

⁵³ Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959); cf. David Kelsey, 'Paul Tillich' in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David F. Ford (London: Blackwell, 1989).

⁵⁴ James Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 5th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 6.

⁵⁵ Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 77–9.

Stories give texture to worldviews and provide events with meaning, depending upon how the events are arranged and conveyed through a particular story.

Embedded within these stories are basic worldview questions and assumptions that constitute human existence and provide a sense of identity, meaning, and purpose.⁵⁶ How these questions are answered depends on the society and culture into which we are born and the sources of authority to which we subscribe.

Consider the well-known and often told story of the rise of modern science. In the beginning, technological advances during the Italian Renaissance laid the groundwork for Nicolas Copernicus' scientific revolution that placed the sun at the centre of the universe rather than the earth. Copernicus' theory led to subsequent advances by Galileo, Johannes Kepler, and Isaac Newton, all of whom challenged the ancient Aristotelian, medieval, and Cartesian understanding of the cosmos.

The middle of the story saw further progress with the onset of the Industrial Revolution, as science took on the problems of industry. Further major advances came from Michael Faraday and James Prescott Joule in the field of electromagnetism. Despite lagging behind physics and chemistry, naturalists employed keen observation and the scientific method to upend biology – especially Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection, which provided the mechanism for evolutionary adaptation.

At the turn of the 20th century, Max Planck and Albert Einstein transformed modern science through quantum theory and the theory of relativity, respectively. Human mastery over nature with its ability to dispel human ignorance and ameliorate human suffering seemed to culminate in what Francis Bacon had previously described as the 'New Atlantis', a utopian society benefitting from scientific discovery.⁵⁸ But two World Wars would crush this sentiment, leading to what some thought was the 'end of science' – the end of the story – and the onset of postmodern despair.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Here are some questions following Sire that are commonly asked, or to which answers are tacitly assumed, at the worldview level: 1. What is of ultimate concern? What is really real? 2. Who are we? What does it mean to be human? What happens when we die? What's the meaning of human history? 3. Where are we? What do we make of the world around us, those things that are not-human? 4. Why are we and the world so broken? What's wrong with us? Might there be a solution, a way to live forward? 5. Why do the world and others captivate us at times and compel us to wonder and mystery? 6. Why and how are we able to know anything at all? How do we know what's right and wrong? (Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, chs 1–2); cf. James Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1989).

⁵⁷ The origins of modern science are highly contested. See R. Hooykas, 'The Rise of Modern Science: When and Why?' *The British Journal for the History of Science* 20, no. 4 (January 1987): 453–73 and '[The Rise of Modern Science](#)', *Encyclopedia Britannica* for further discussion.

⁵⁸ Francis Bacon, *The New Atlantis: An Unfinished Work*. [Book](#) available at Project Gutenberg.

⁵⁹ See John Horgan, *The End of Science: Facing the Limits of Knowledge in the Twilight of the Scientific Age* (New York: Basic Books, 2015); Gerald Holton, 'The Rise of Postmodernisms and the "End of Science"', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 61, no. 2 (April 2000): 327–41.

Rooted in the telling of its story, modern science, like most academic disciplines, discloses aspects of its underlying worldview through a common set of beliefs, practices, and purposes germane to the discipline.⁶⁰ These core commitments often find their way into the everyday conversations of the classroom without much consideration. For example, consider the basic beliefs of modern scientific naturalism. According to this worldview, the cosmos, as a closed system, is all there is and exists of fundamental building blocks that relate to one another in a cause-and-effect relationship. Human beings are ‘machines’ that consist of chemical and physical properties, progressing forward in a linear view of time without any sense of meaning or purpose. Although some may contest and alter the particulars of these naturalistic commitments, the disagreements are often on secondary matters and do not propose any substantive change to the underlying materialist or physicalist assumptions about the way things are.⁶¹

As previously mentioned, Barbara Drossel, in contrast to this causally closed system, argues for a causally open one where the systems described by these physical laws are influenced by their particular contexts, whether material, biological, psychological, or immaterial. As such, the laws of physics are not completely determinative of everything and are idealizations with limited applicability.

At this level, Drossel is contesting physicalists’ core beliefs, currently at the centre of her academic discipline. These contrasts allow Drossel to raise questions among her students and colleagues as to why this is the case, leading her into conversations about theoretical and empirical advances regarding chaos theory and quantum physics.

As these conversations continue, they often open up discussions regarding external material influences (such as biology) and immaterial ones (such as philosophical ideas) on how scholars do physics.

These contrasting core beliefs are rooted in a particular understanding of the world. In most instances, debates about core beliefs still assume that the underlying worldview is shared, unless debates become deadlocked and force a reconsideration.⁶² In a case of intellectual deadlock, dispositions and presuppositions – those pre-cognitive assumptions that often lie hidden and unnoticed – are exposed.

⁶⁰ These common sets of beliefs, practices, and purposes are referred to by philosophers like Nicholas Wolterstorff as ‘control beliefs’. See Wolterstorff’s *Reason Within the Bounds of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984) for a more detailed discussion.

⁶¹ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, ch. 4.

⁶² Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 126.

By engaging her academic discipline at this level, Drossel is able to tell a different story and demonstrate how the materialist assumptions of naturalism or physicalism are false.

Her efforts reveal the world as an open, dynamic system that leaves room for God's action in the world. By making these connections, she can engage colleagues and students in organic ways with the truth of the gospel, opening their minds to consider a biblical worldview that conceives of the world as dependent, interconnected, and created by a personal God who acts for his creation in self-giving love.⁶³

Therefore, critical reflection and discernment of our own worldviews, of the cultures in which we live, and of the academic disciplines in which we inhabit are a must. We must engage in this ongoing interpretive process to ensure that our understanding of the world fits with God's story.

We must achieve a deep understanding of our academic disciplines by reflecting upon the stories they tell, the core beliefs they hold, and the worldviews they envision.

In doing so, we'll be able to engage the pluralistic university and the surrounding culture organically with the gospel of Christ.⁶⁴ How, then, might we relate God's story to the stories of our academic disciplines so that we can engage in these kinds of conversations?

Relating the Story of Scripture to our Academic Disciplines through 'Bridge' Themes

Recall Yohanna Katanacho, a Palestinian Christian scholar, whose life and academic pursuits were changed by God's self-giving love. In his book *The Land of Christ*, Katanacho challenges preconceived notions pertaining to questions surrounding the divine promise concerning 'the land'. He exposes nationalist impulses that are contrary to Christ's teachings about the kingdom of God.⁶⁵ In his account, Katanacho demonstrates how this nationalist ideology on both sides of the dispute has embroiled the land in deep suffering. The situation seems

⁶³ Drossel, 'How the Laws of Nature Leave Room for God's Action in the World', elaborates further on these connections, though not using the same terminology as well as her Society of Christian Scholars webinar. See note 18 for both links.

⁶⁴ Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 124; cf. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). See also the work of the [Global Faculty Initiative \(GFI\)](#) that seeks to engage research universities using common themes like justice, human flourishing, virtues, etc. to shape research agendas, practices, and outcomes. GFI, through Terry Halliday, has been an important conversation partner in the development of this series.

⁶⁵ Katanacho, *The Land of Christ*, ch. 2.

bleak, but Katanacho offers a more hopeful alternative based on his understanding of Christ's self-giving love, a love that is exemplified in 'love of enemy' (Mt. 5:43-48).

At one point, Katanacho recounts his participation in an academic conference at Lund University in Sweden where several Jewish scholars from Israeli universities began spewing forth a number of false accusations and diatribes against Palestinians. During the question-and-answer session, he stood up and said,

'I am a Palestinian Christian. I empathise with your pain, even though I have different convictions, and I am sorry that you had to go through so much pain. I just want to tell you that I love you.'⁶⁶

The presenters were astounded! One of them approached him afterwards to express his perplexity but also his awe of the central tenet of Christianity, Christ's sacrificial love. This love, Katanacho argues, compels him 'to promote a biblical view of the land that is rooted in biblical love ... and that seeks justice for both Palestinians and Israelis'.⁶⁷

In his book, Katanacho engages his Jewish and Palestinian colleagues by identifying one of the central issues in the dispute, that of the land. He proceeds to illumine one of the areas of disagreement, that of divine promise, and begins a conversation about the underlying nationalist ideology. He then offers a different understanding of the land by rooting it in Christianity's core belief, namely that God is love.

Hence, one way to relate the story of Scripture to our academic disciplines is to identify key themes, motifs, or concepts that overlap, such as design, order, time, place, love, forgiveness, justice, human flourishing, peace, and law.

After doing so, we must discern where the Christian faith says yes and where it says no to the disciplinary understanding of these 'bridge' themes and why. We are then prepared to engage the core beliefs of our academic disciplines through these bridge themes and start conversations about often-unexamined assumptions and ultimately about fundamental questions related to how we understand the way things are.

⁶⁶ Katanacho, *The Land of Christ*, 6.

⁶⁷ Katanacho, *The Land of Christ*, 6. For a fuller understanding of Katanacho's concerns and perspective, see the '[Kairos Palestine](#)' manifesto to which he made substantial contributions. See also Katanacho's Society of Christian Scholars webinar, referenced in note 37.

Relating the Story of Scripture to our Academic Disciplines at the Level of Core Beliefs and Assumptions

Recall Robert Chao Romero's dialogical engagement with Yosso's educational theory. Romero identifies the core beliefs in Yosso's educational theory by examining the definition of community cultural wealth.⁶⁸ He affirms the notion that education should approach students of colour as people who possess cultural wealth rather than emphasising their presumed cultural deficit. Romero is not content, though, with merely identifying skills and abilities to 'survive and resist'; rather, he seeks to nurture the necessary dispositions and capacities so that students can 'thrive and persist'. Romero engages these core beliefs from the hope of the new creation and a biblical understanding of cultural diversity as seen in Revelation 21:26-27. On this basis, he critiques Yosso's view by arguing that each culture has its own cultural sin that needs redemption. In other words, it is not enough to see the 'cultural wealth of nations' but also their need for redemption.⁶⁹

Romero's argument not only challenges the core beliefs of his academic discipline but also begins to elucidate its underlying assumptions. For Yosso, community cultural wealth assumes a socio-cultural understanding of human persons that either omits, compartmentalises, or devalues the spiritual. Romero notes Yosso's omission and argues that 'spiritual capital has been a central component of Latina/o community cultural wealth' for over 500 years.⁷⁰ His efforts, though, are not merely socio-historical as he introduces an alternative, in the form of René Padilla's understanding of the gospel as 'integral mission' in which God seeks to reconcile *all things* to himself. Such reconciliation includes

'our personal emotional brokenness and dysfunctional family relationships, but also poverty, racism, slavery, human trafficking, oppression of immigrants, warfare, lack of clean water, AIDS, gang violence, and lack of educational opportunity'.⁷¹

Hence, Romero proceeds to engage his academic discipline on the assumption that God is one who reconciles, which then informs his core belief that community cultural wealth not only has a spiritual aspect but also a sinful aspect that needs redemption.

⁶⁸ Yosso, 'Whose Culture Has Capital?', 77.

⁶⁹ Romero, *Brown Church*, 11-19, 38-9.

⁷⁰ Romero, *Brown Church*, 11.

⁷¹ Romero, *Brown Church*, 12. See also Romero's Society of Christian Scholars webinar, referenced in note 26.

Another possible approach, then, is to examine the core beliefs and assumptions of one's academic discipline with Scripture's core beliefs and assumptions.

Scripture's core beliefs and assumptions are found in the stories told but are also encapsulated at times in passages such as Acts 2:14-39, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, or Galatians 1:11-17, and more formally in common confessions such as the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds. Comparing and contrasting these core beliefs will drive us to consider competing answers to fundamental questions about God, the world, ourselves, and others.

No matter which approach is taken, critical, interpretive story-telling in dialogue with others is crucial, not only because we 'see through a glass darkly' (1 Cor. 13:12) but also because we are limited by our own cultural contexts and are thus in need of one another's constructive critique and correction.⁷² For such dialogues to be effective, Christian academics should have a firm understanding of God's story and the stories told by our academic disciplines, both of which are located in the stories told by various societies and cultures. To engage in this interpretative process well, we as Christian academics must become

'a community capable of hearing the story of God we find in Scripture and living in a manner that is faithful to that story',

not only in our personal lives but in our vocations as Christian academics.⁷³

⁷² Consider these examples from Western scholars who approach various academic disciplines from a Christian worldview: David S. Dockery and Gregory Alan Thornbury, *Shaping a Christian Worldview: The Foundations of Christian Higher Education* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2002); David Lyle Jeffrey and C. Stephen Evans, eds., *The Bible and the University* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007).

⁷³ Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1981), 1.

Reflective Questions and Practical Exercises

1. Discuss how the story of Scripture is told in your cultural context. How might the story compare not only to your academic discipline but also to how other Christian academics from different cultural contexts might tell the story?
2. Modern science has a particular story to tell, as previously mentioned, that often conveys how science is making progress, often breaking away from religious teachings. That story has made great contributions to humanity. However, the roots of modern science are highly contested as to whether they spring from or reject Christian assumptions. How is the history or theory of your academic discipline told? Who are the major figures and why are they included while others are not highlighted? What values or ideals are espoused by championing these great figures? What are their personal biographies? Do they provide a full picture or only select aspects that fit with the chosen narrative?
3. How do the stories told by your academic discipline shape the basic knowledge of the discipline? What parts of these stories relate to the Christian story, and which parts do not? How might the Christian story retell the story of your academic discipline and thus express how the knowledge gleaned is understood?
4. Identify, write down, and discuss your academic discipline's commonly accepted set of core beliefs. How do these core beliefs compare and contrast to the core beliefs and assumptions of the Christian faith? One way to identify these core beliefs might be to examine the themes of the major conferences in your discipline over the course of its history. Which themes are missing?
5. Using the common worldview questions above in footnote 56, begin to identify the fundamental assumptions told by your academic discipline in your cultural context. How might they compare to the those of Scripture? Another approach to identifying your academic discipline's assumptions would be to consider what you can and cannot say openly at an annual meeting of an academic society. What comments might be considered illegitimate in your field and why?

In addition to the resources above, consider the following for further study:

Anderson, Paul M., ed. *Professors Who Believe: The Spiritual Journeys of Christian Faculty*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

Bediako, Kwame. *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience*. Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana: Regnum Africa in association with Paternoster, 2000.

Chalk, Jack Pryor. *Making Disciples in Africa: Engaging Syncretism in the African Church through Philosophical Analysis of Worldviews*. Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2013.

Escobar, Samuel. *In Search of Christ in Latin America: From Colonial Image to Liberating Savior*. Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2019.

Green, Gene L., Stephen T. Pardue, and K. K. Yeo. *Jesus without Borders: Christology in the Majority World*. Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2015.

Mburu, Elizabeth. *African Hermeneutics*. Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2019.

Padilla, C. René. *What Is Integral Mission?* Translated by Rebecca Breekveldt. Oxford: Regnum, 2021.

Sugirtharajah, R. S. *Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism: Challenging the Interpretations*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Wilson, Jessica Hooten. *The Scandal of Holiness: Renewing Your Imagination in the Company of Literary Saints*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2022.

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