

Panel Presentations

Baylor Symposium on Faith and Culture 2021

Anger, Accountability, and Justice

Rainey Johnson, Tarleton State University

Nicole Sulak, Tarleton State University

A'dayr Shewmaker, Tarleton State University

While anger may seem like an obstacle to accountability, some see anger as inspiring the pursuit of justice. This Tarleton State University student panel considers contemporary cases in which anger motivates holding others—or systems—accountable.

Rainey Johnson begins by surveying Aristotle's account of anger as a virtue. For Aristotle, anger is positive when directed to the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way. Too much or too little anger is a moral vice. Johnson uses this account as a framework for understanding how a virtuous sort of anger can fruitfully contribute to contemporary political speech. She contrasts the excessive anger of former U.S. Representative Ted Yoho with Representative Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez's righteously indignant response. Anger is not an incidental element of Ocasio-Cortez's address, but central to both its form and content.

Our second presenter, Nicole Sulak, discusses a central disagreement between Aristotle and Seneca. While these philosophers' share a commitment to justice, they remain juxtaposed in their views of anger. Stoics like Seneca seek mental tranquility and see anger as a threat to that tranquility. The new stoic movement has remained steadfast in the four traditional pillars of virtue, which include wisdom, temperance, courage, and justice. These pillars of virtue for stoicism align with the traditional Aristotelian virtue ethics, leaving application as a significant point of contrast. The preponderance of sociopolitical movements aimed at the pursuit of justice prompts us to question the value of rejecting anger in the political sphere. Contemporary stoics' reticence to pursue justice may allow others—and perhaps also themselves—to avoid being held accountable.

In our final paper, A'dayr Shewmaker shows how anger has played a pivotal role in the American environmental justice movement—from its origins in the 1970s to present-day environmental justice organizations and the projects they pursue. The environmental justice movement was, and still is, fueled by anger, such as the anger stemming from low-income or minority neighborhoods tired of living through environmental segregation. This anger has helped bring attention to environmentally racist issues throughout America, such as the “sewage Chernobyl” in West Harlem, NYC. West Harlem is predominantly home to low income Black and Latinx persons, and sits right next to The North River Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility that treats raw sewage. Fumes from the facility waft throughout the neighborhood, exposing residents to foul odors and toxic chemicals in the air they breathe. The recent flooding of parts of NYC's subway system has increased the public outcry and prompted calls for new approaches to city planning as well as further restoration of the areas specifically affected.

We contend that these discussions of contemporary applications of anger to civic life collectively suggest that virtuous anger can support accountability and prompt moral action.

Accountable Hermeneutics

Julie Ooms, Missouri Baptist University

Lauren Roe, Baylor University

This panel considers two models of accountable interpretation: of literary texts and of study broadly construed.

Holding the Past Accountable?: Learning to Listen to Texts from the Past

When considering the teaching of texts from the past—particularly "problematic" ones—the battle lines are quickly drawn between two camps. One holds the texts of the past accountable to the standards of the present. Identifying these texts' problems, blind spots, and potential harmfulness, it casts them out of the syllabus. The other wishes to hold the whims of the present accountable to the venerable standards of the canon. It scorns the idea of "problematic" texts as offensive to tradition and critical thinking. In this paper, Julie Ooms suggests a third option, one based on pedagogical practices from my literature courses. Using examples from writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mary Wollstonecraft, Chinua Achebe, and W.B. Yeats, Ooms proposes practices of listening to texts from the past that neither venerate them nor practice chronological arrogance. Instead, she encourages listening to texts as a practice of charity, in which readers and texts hold each other to account.

Accountable Study

Simone Weil argues that study accountable to God also fosters attentiveness to others. Lauren Roe applies Weil's argument to the contemporary university. She describes the elegant double movement of the contemplation of God and focus on the neighbor that Weil describes. She then contrasts Weil's understanding of study with rival accounts. Creating a space where students are accountable to both their object of study and the neighbors they encounter is important for any university. But it is essential for institutions that share Weil's dual emphases. Roe concludes by considering two correctives for such institutions. First, she introduces Berg and Seeber's *The Slow Professor* to discuss how universities might give students time for reflection. Next, she contrasts the university's linear focus on progressing towards deliverable outcomes with Hans-Georg Gadamer's fusion of horizons. This sort of study forms students that are accountable to both their study and the others whom their studies might serve.

Ordering God's Polis: Ecclesial Accountability in Biblical, Historical, and Current Perspective

Andrew Bobo, University of Dallas

James Rogers, Texas A&M University

Ben Peterson, Abilene Christian University

There has been a notable and marked decline in ecclesial belonging. Church membership in the U.S. has declined below 50 percent for the first time since Gallup first measured it in 1937. It would appear that the "fuzzy fidelity" of European churches (Voas 2009) has crossed the Atlantic. This panel seeks to return to the biblical and historical roots of ecclesial accountability in order to inform a discussion about how the church can be reformed and strengthened today. This pursuit is informed by two basic commitments that each of our panelists shares: renewal of the church can lead to renewal in our culture, and renewal in the church requires accountability.

Biblical Perspective

Jim's paper is entitled "Ecclesial Accountability in the Scriptures: The Juridical Presence of God in the Church." Jim will draw upon both New and Old Testament Scriptures to discuss the expectation and implications of God's continuing juridical presence in and with the people and leadership of the Church. The Divine Presence in and with the Church creates a unique form of deep and mutual accountability that can be experienced on earth only within the Church. This ecclesial accountability reflects and fosters the ontological union of church members not only with Jesus Christ, but with each other as well (Rom. 12:5, Eph. 4:25). These relationships are a means by which Christians encounter the living God through the day-to-day corporate life of the Church.

Historical Perspective

Andrew's paper is entitled "Ecclesial Accountability in Early Christianity: How the Church Kept Itself Faithful." The paper will explore the informal habits and practices for accountability that existed in the early church. Many of these began in the New Testament period and continued or developed as time went on. Most scholarly reflection on this period focuses on the formal accountability provided by ecclesial

leadership structures. As important as these discussions are, many significant forms of accountability in the early church operated informally through other means within the congregation and in the early liturgy itself. Recent literature has pointed to the importance of communal memory in the Jesus tradition (Bauckham 2006, Bird 2014), creeds and hymns (Hurtado 2003, Gathercole 2015), communal reading (Wright 2017), and even music art, and architecture (Jensen 2000, 2012, McGowan 2014). These early developments offer fruitful sources for reflection that can help the church today strengthen ecclesial accountability through a “thick” practice of church culture.

Current Perspective

Ben's paper is entitled “Ecclesial Accountability Today: Membership and Two-Way Accountability in Congregational Polity.” This paper will ask: What is the meaning and function of church membership? While it is declining in the United States, the institution of membership is a common practice designed to encourage accountability among churches and other religious congregations. Congregational membership ostensibly generates a two-way system of accountability in the sense of being held to account or responsible for keeping a set of common commitments and upholding a rule of life. Membership is a basic accountability-oriented institution in contemporary congregations, in some ways the hallmark of institutionalized religious life. Yet, ideas about church membership have changed over time, and churches vary with regard to the meaning of membership and the degree to which they formalize or require processes of membership and the manner in which they do so. Different ways of structuring these elements of congregational polity have a profound effect on the character of life in a church and the sort of accountability it entails. This paper enters into dialogue with recent literature on church polity and its implications for accountability, treating Edward LeRoy's *Patterns of Polity* (2001) and John S. Hammett and Benjamin L. Merkle's *Those Who Must Give an Account: A Study of Church Membership and Church Discipline* (2012) as touchstones. The paper will also paint a picture of membership and decision-making processes today by investigating local churches in Abilene, TX, one of the most “churched” cities in the United States. This will provide a basis for speaking about the current state of membership as a form of two-way accountability in the church today.

Subversive Lessons on Human Flourishing from the Parable of the Good Samaritan

Kathleen Boozer, Baylor University

Sahr Mbriwa, Baylor University

Todd Herman, a management consultant, once defined personal accountability as “being willing to answer ... for the outcomes resulting from your choices, behaviors, and actions” (Chisienya, 2021). To be accountable or hold another to this standard, a person must first recognize and understand the different facets that are incorporated into this complex concept which include individual and communal roles.

In this panel discussion, Sahr Mbriwa, DMin, Chaplain for LHSON, and Kathleen Boozer, DNP, APRN, FNPC, Assistant Clinical Professor at LHSON, will introduce the Parable of the Good Samaritan found in Luke 10:25-37, as a case study to explore contemporary issues of accountability.

This presentation will provide a historical overview of culture and community dynamics in the Biblical Parable as the topic of accountability is dissected and explained through the characters of this story. In addition, the speakers will seek to disseminate the lessons learned from the Parable in response to the following questions:

Is our normative view of Human Flourishing holistic? Unpack how Healthcare (Kathy) and Spiritual Life (Sahr) relates to this discussion.

What does Human Flourishing look like in the classroom? Campus life? Faculty-Staff Meetings? Etc.

Who are you in the story of the Samaritan? To take Christ seriously is to acknowledge that our default in work and life is not to act as the Samaritan. Discuss how the parable of the Good Samaritan challenges our preconceived answers to the question, “to whom are you accountable?”

Reference:

Chisienya, C.I. (2021). Developing Personal Accountability Taking Responsibility to Get Ahead. Retrieved from

https://www.academia.edu/6952769/Developing_Personal_Accountability_Taking_Responsibility_to_Get_Ahead_By_How_Personal_Accountability_Helps

Individual Accountability in the Face of Systemic Data

Nancy Brickhouse, Baylor University

Jonathan Tran, Baylor University

Elise Edwards, Baylor University

Gaynor Yancey, Baylor University

Gia Chevis, Baylor University

Jason MacGregor, Baylor University

Lori Baker, Baylor University

Meaghann Wheelis, Baylor University

The words data and accountability are often thought of strictly in terms of compliance. This panel suggests that we should rethink that framing and consider circumstances where introspection and action should be called forth.

In a world of plentiful data, we can “know” much more than ever before. For example, the proliferation of surveys at universities, on campus climate, faculty and staff satisfaction, and more, produce a wealth of data that could provide insights into the varying experiences of individuals across campus. However, the mere existence of even the most reliable data does not guarantee improvement. It can be tempting to leave all effort to address revealed issues to those with the formal power to make systemic policy changes, consistent with the idea that ‘responsibility is a necessary component of the process of holding people accountable for their conduct’ but ignoring most individuals’ moral agency. It can be tempting to not investigate further, to not gather additional, detailed data about an issue suggested by initial findings; if we do not know, there is nothing for us to do. And it can be tempting to focus only on that which can be readily quantified, resulting in a dehumanized focus on manipulable outcomes that perpetuates the myth of meritocracy.

James 4:17 tells us that when we know the right thing to do, we must do it; to paraphrase Maya Angelou, when we know better, we should do better. Once we have created a data-rich environment and there is clear and compelling evidence that different campus groups have vastly different experiences, what are our responsibilities to each other? How do we avoid creating a culture of performative accountability or, alternatively, of perceived helplessness?

Using Baylor’s ongoing experience with climate surveys as an example, this panel will discuss how we can all act with authentic accountability to each other.

Accountability on Campus: Findings from the Baylor Faith and Character Study

Kevin Dougherty, Baylor University

Perry Glanzer, Baylor University

Sarah Schnitker, Baylor University

Juliette Ratchford, Baylor University

The mission statements of Christian colleges and universities make them accountable for more than the measures of matriculation and graduation analyzed by accrediting bodies. Christian Higher Education has loftier ambitions. These faith-based educational institutions seek to cultivate in students ways of thinking, feeling, and being that reflect and extend the Christian tradition. The purpose of this session is to explore aspects of accountability in Christian Higher Education pertaining to faith and character. An interdisciplinary team of established and emerging scholars from Baylor University will share findings from the Baylor Faith and Character Study. This mixed methods, longitudinal study includes surveys and interviews with first year students, juniors, seniors, and alumni. Data collection began in 2018 and is ongoing. The Baylor Faith and Character Study’s research design and findings offer important insights for accountability applicable to other Christian colleges and universities.

Presentations:

Diminishing and Enhancing Collegiate Moral Accountability and Expertise: What Works and Does Not Work

Perry Glanzer, Baylor University

Religious Behaviors, Beliefs and Identity Alone Do Not Provide Accountability: Profiles of Religiosity and the Dark Triad Among College Undergrads

Sarah Schnitker, Baylor University

Mason Ming, Baylor University

Juliette Ratchford, Baylor University

Political Accountability in Christian Higher Education: Perceptions of Belonging for Students from the Political Right, Center, and Left

Michael Ryan, Baylor University

Kevin D. Dougherty, Baylor University

A Ranked Order Approach to Values: Exploring How Values Related to Accountability Encourage Flourishing

Juliette Ratchford, Baylor University

Sarah Schnitker, Baylor University

UMHB Undergraduate Panel

Brent Gibson, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

This panel will consist of around 6 undergraduate short papers on various aspects of accountability and community.

Accountability and Opposite-Gender Christian Friendship

Ian Gravagne, Baylor University

Katie Calloway, Baylor University

Lori Kanitz, Baylor University

Ebenezer Adu-Gyamfi, George W. Truett Theological Seminary

We can probably all remember when, as children, we played outside with other boys and girls with hardly a care about one another's gender. As adults, gender is a touchstone issue in many facets of life, including churches and faith-oriented communities. In a typical church context, the subject of friendship between men and women immediately raises the issue of accountability—and, often, a discussion about self-imposed regulations for interaction with the other gender. But does this rule-based approach actually promote holiness? Has fear of sin, or fear of each other, displaced fear of God?

Fear of the Lord, properly understood, is a “recognition of our accountability to God” according to Steve Evans; “we do not obey Christ and seek to follow him out of fear of punishment.” And yet, like the slothful servant of Matthew 25, fear of the master's wrath often seems to be the prime motivating factor behind Christians' approach to opposite gender friendship. More than one preacher has fated such relationships to end in either “fornication or family” (i.e. the only possible outcomes are sin or marriage). This deeply impoverished point of view leaves no room for a third way—virtuous, lasting, and fulfilling Christian friendship—and condemns close friends through presumption of guilt.

Our central thesis is that accountability in these relationships begins with a confession of what we believe: that Christians form a communion of saints; that we are spiritual siblings and God intends for brothers and sisters to share close, chaste relationships; that our view of one another should not be “stumbling block”, but rather “gift”. From there we assert that accountability to Christ, through the embrace of these confessional precepts, is the key that unlocks the freedom to engage in meaningful friendship with our brothers and sisters, to love and edify one another, and to grow in faith together. Lastly, we will also explore other tangential issues such as the language of safety and risk that is commonly appropriated by well-meaning Christian leaders when talking about accountability in opposite-gender relationships; historical perspectives on friendship between sexes in America; practices Christian friends may find edifying and useful; and ways in which church communities may encourage virtuous Christian friendship between genders.

Religion, Spirituality, and Accountability in America: Exploring Their Relationships with Psychological Well-Being and Human Behavior

Sung Joon Jang, Baylor University

Charlotte Witvliet, Hope College

Matt Bradshaw, Baylor University

Joseph Leman, Baylor University

Accountability as a Bridge connecting Religion and Spirituality to Civic Engagement and Political Participation

Charlotte Witvliet will present findings from the Study of Spirituality in America (SSA), a nationally representative study conducted in January 2020 by the NORC in collaboration with the Fetzer Institute. Most U.S. adults agreed that they were accountable to a higher power for their impact on other people and on the natural environment. Accountability functioned as a mediator linking the importance and influence of spirituality and religion to civic engagement behaviors, volunteering, and donating. An additional mediator, perceiving that one's spirituality or religion leads one to hold politicians accountable, further predicted political engagement and voting frequency.

Transcendent Accountability and Psychological Well-Being in the US

Matt Bradshaw will present findings on the correlation between transcendent accountability and psychological well-being from two national surveys: (1) the 2017 Values and Beliefs of the American Public Survey (VBAPS), also known as the Baylor Religion Survey (Wave 5); and (2) the Religion, Aging, and Health Survey (2001 and 2004). Results suggest that transcendent accountability is positively associated with happiness, sense of mattering to others, dignity, meaning, self-esteem, life satisfaction, and optimism. Several of these associations are stronger among individuals who pray frequently, suggesting that real or perceived interactions with God or some transcendent being or force amplifies the effects of accountability on well-being. Potential indicators of transcendent accountability from two additional surveys, SoulPulse and the Portraits of American Life Survey, will also be discussed.

Transcendent Accountability in the Baylor Religion Survey (Wave 6)

Joseph Leman will present findings on a new variable, transcendent accountability, included for the first time in the 2021 Values and Beliefs of the American Public Survey (VBAPS), also known as the Baylor Religion Survey (Wave 6). Results suggest that transcendent accountability is positively associated with religiosity, well-being, mental health, and civic engagement. Models for direct and indirect effects of transcendent accountability on relevant variables will be discussed. In addition, the link between transcendent accountability and religiosity variables such as God-Image and Attachment to God will be explored.

Religion, Accountability, Identity Transformation, and Misconduct among Prisoners

Sung Joon Jang and Byron Johnson will present preliminary results from a survey with 234 male inmates at two maximum-security prisons in Texas. They hypothesize that prisoner religiosity is positively associated with the prisoner's transcendent accountability, which is in turn positively related to his human accountability. It is also hypothesized that both accountabilities are positively associated with prisoner identity transformations, which is inversely related to a risk of interpersonal aggression. Results generally support both hypotheses. Prisoner religiosity is likely to increase transcendent accountability, which in turn enhances human accountability, while controlling for other correlates of religiosity (e.g., presence of meaning in life and other virtues). Both accountabilities are likely to contribute to prisoner identity transformation, which is expected to reduce the risk of prison misconduct.

Accountable Culturally Responsible Teaching

Angelle Jones, Mt. Vernon Nazarene University

Within the hallowed halls of its academic towers, academicians find themselves once again in the whirlwind of the controversial topic of racial inequality. I posit Christian universities and seminaries should be leading the way in embracing CRT. I believe accountable and culturally responsible teaching is the only way for a

Christian institution to model the living Christ in the midst of today's cultural war. In living into the reality of Christian community, racial accountability is essential. As a result, teaching historical truth should be non-negotiable. As Christian administrators and professors we should be ultimate truth bearers.

Called to the Christian tradition of "community" I believe we have the opportunity to be the light of virtuous and accountable living to a dying world. Intentional counter cultural teaching of authentic American history in a biblical and culturally responsible way affords us the privilege to reflect genuine accountability to our students. Living accountably to God and to those we teach, is not only what we're supposed to do, it's who we should be. More importantly, I postulate that we must be accountable culturally responsible truth tellers holding Christian students, faculty and staff accountable to genuinely love one another first to God as well as to one another of all races, cultures and ethnicities.

I believe to change the racial narrative in America, one must be willing to become uncomfortable. As uncomfortable as it may be, being intentional about the pedagogy offered in academic institutions is as important as how it is taught. Learning about, and living accountably to one another is the epitome of the Christian faith. The intersection between teaching biblical and historical truth allows for Christian institutions of higher education to hold space for historical accuracy and presentation in ways other institutions without Christ consciousness cannot.

Accountable culturally responsible teaching allows history to be taught in a way that brings conviction not condemnation. Ours becomes a pedagogy of hope, not fear. As culturally responsible educators may we hold one another accountable as we live into the reality of teaching biblical and historical truth in our classrooms as well as in other Christian institutions where we serve.

Practicing Accountability in Health Care

John Peteet, Harvard Medical School

Gerrit Glas, Vrije Universiteit and Dimence Groep

Benjamin Frush, Vanderbilt University Medical School

Charlotte Witvliet, Hope College

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) names accountability as central element in the core competency of professionalism, but leaves the concept undefined. Existing literature on accountability in medicine distinguishes those to whom clinicians are accountable, content for which they are accountable, and procedures for holding them accountable, but has paid less attention to what it means to practice accountability within the complex world of health care.

In the first presentation of this workshop, Gerrit Glas will suggest that the legitimacy of the professional's societal role is not solely based on the ability to fulfil the expert role, but also on the ability to balance one's roles in light of the perspectives of other stakeholders (insurance companies, administrative bodies, civil servants with responsibilities for public health, patient groups, etc.) - a perspective explored in detail in his book *Person-Centered Care in Psychiatry*. The presentation will draw attention to the 'societal contract' as source for the legitimacy of the medical profession.

Ben Frush will acknowledge that while the importance of accountability is instilled early in medical training as trainees are reminded of their professional accountability to patients, co-workers, and their superiors among other parties, trainees are ill-prepared to face the myriad and constant ways in which these objects of accountability compete and sometimes directly conflict in the course of their daily work as residents. He will seek to delineate these multiple, constant conflicting objects/loci of accountability for medical residents and argue that contemporary medical training often powerfully forms residents to prioritize accountability to institutional loci over accountability to their patients and their own well-being, despite its explicit claims to the contrary.

John Peteet will then present several case scenarios to explore showing how factors such as hierarchical cultures, personal narcissism, deficient communication, institutional competition, and work stress can combine to undermine the practice of accountability. While medicine contains venues for reviewing and improving care, such as M&M conferences, QA/QI reviews, and supervision, individuals need to bring to these an awareness of themselves as accountable, including their visions of an ideal, e.g. beloved work community, supported and shaped by reference to their faith traditions. More explicit discussion of the core

values of health care organizations, and conscious evaluation of their worth in relation to these moral ideals can help guard against lapsing into comparative valuing with the pressure in creates for productivity and/or reputation, and a culture of stress, burnout, misplaced priorities in decision-making, and moral injury.

Finally, Charlotte Witvliet will share findings from her research into the trait of accountability, including its associations with empathy and self-regulation, raising the question for open discussion of how these characteristics can be identified, assessed and promoted in clinicians in training.

Thinking Theologically about Student Success: Higher Education with a Higher Calling

Sinda Vanderpool, Baylor University

Ted Cockle, Baylor University

Student success has become a buzz word in higher education, and, given national demographic trends within the high school population today, this is sure to continue to be so in the coming decade. This panel proposes that current definitions of student success, commonly boiled down to metrics such as board scores, graduation rates, or even salaries upon graduation, are incomplete. The aims of higher education should certainly include things like degree completion and career readiness, but aren't faith-based people and institutions called to something higher? We unpack in this panel the implications of foundational assertions in the Christian theology: that human beings are made in the likeness and image of God and the telos of our lives is to serve God. If we begin with these basic theological tenets, we work toward a much more aspirational view of what a Christian university is for. Can theology actually animate student life on campus? What would that look like? Can we truly develop students “holistically” without ever speaking of purpose? Come and explore with us how starting with these fundamental assumptions might lead us to focus more on developing character in and among students, encouraging students to discern vocation and reflect on their lives as calling, and fostering virtues such as patience and courage.

Embodying Accountability through Self-Regulation and Empathy: From Genetic and Cardiac Connections to the Influence of Mindsets

Charlotte Witvliet, Hope College

Lindsey Root Luna, Hope College

People with the virtue of welcoming accountability are (a) “willingly responsible for their attitudes, thoughts, emotions, and actions” and (b) “willingly responsive to people across relationships with those to whom they rightly owe a response” (Witvliet et al., 2019).

This session focuses on two of the important psychological capacities that undergird accountability: (a) self-regulation as the process or capacity to modulate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, towards goals, which acts as an underpinning mechanism for virtues (Root Luna et al., 2017), and (b) empathic concern and perspective taking, which facilitate the relational dimension of accountability.

This session will focus on studies of accountability which also investigate physical variables that are associated with self-regulation and empathy. These studies examined accountability as a disposition, and additionally as a particular response to a real-life supervisor when anticipating corrective feedback.

Charlotte Witvliet will present research conducted in collaboration with Gerald Griffin, Ashley Hayden, Katrina Beltz, and additional students on a particular genetic variation that previous research linked to relational virtues via empathy. She will present the indirect association this virtue has to accountability, via both predicted and surprising pathways.

Lindsey Root Luna will present research done in collaboration with Charlotte Witvliet, Ashley Hayden, Anna Hagner, Katrina Beltz and additional students on cardiovascular variables, especially one linked to regulating responses, which is important for carrying out one’s relational responsibilities.

These studies also suggest that accountability can be facilitated or impeded by the mindsets people adopt in response to real-life supervisors. Specifically, welcoming or resisting corrective feedback impacts states of empathy, self-regulation, and accountability. These findings have implications for an array of supervisory relationships in which fostering the capacity to receive and respond well to evaluative input is important to accountably carrying out responsibilities in relationships.

Plenary, Featured, and Paper Presentations

Jay Beavers, Union University

“Of this is the Judge Judge”: Prophetic Authority in Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*

The notion of accountability, and the related concept of authority, is central to a clear understanding of Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*. McCarthy’s most fascinating character, Judge Holden, seems to dominate this novel from the moment he appears. One key question in the novel is, “what is he the judge of?” The novel suggests that the judge’s ultimate goal is to become the “suzerain” of all creation, to become the final authority to whom everything and everyone else is accountable. A larger and more important question, however, is to what, if anything, is the judge himself accountable. Who can judge the judge? Here, my reading of prophetic themes and characters in McCarthy’s novels can shed some important light. I suggest that, in *Blood Meridian*, the dominant narrative of the judge is quietly but persistently challenged by a “counter-narrative” that undermines and resists the judge’s powerful authority.

I borrow the concept of a counter-narrative from the theology of Walter Brueggemann, who reads in the Old Testament prophets this same resistance to the dominant ideologies that prevailed in the kingdoms of the ancient near east, including the nations of Israel and Judah. Where the dominant narratives insist on the authority of state power, sanctioned by a co-opted, and often corrupted, religion, the counter-narrative of the prophets consistently reminds kings that their authority is not absolute and their kingdom not ultimate. Though the Old Testament prophets frequently gave voice to their counter-narrative, they also enacted prophetic drama or merely refused to obey the laws of temporal authorities when they were at odds with the law of Yahweh. In *Blood Meridian*, I argue that the prophetic role is taken up, reluctantly and feebly, by the unnamed “kid,” who alone resists the authority of Judge Holden for most of the novel. I see the kid as a kind of Jonah, running from the call on his life to challenge an overwhelmingly powerful authority, but partially fulfilling his calling, even in his flight from it. Though the kid fails more completely than Jonah, I argue that the novel does not conclude fatalistically with the triumph of the judge, but persists through its epilogue to gesture towards a counter-narrative that challenges the secular authority the judge represents.

This paper will be of interest to those who want to better understand the religious dimension of McCarthy’s novels as well as to those curious about the methods and motivations of prophets more generally. Authority and accountability are intrinsic to the role of the prophet, and by understanding how McCarthy makes use of this archetype, we can better understand the biblical examples he draws on as well as how prophets may continue to speak in various ways in the current day.

Sean Benson, The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

Zie/Zim/Zir: Preferred Pronouns and Divine Accountability

I wish to make the case that the use of preferred pronouns is an exercise in philosophical anti-realism, and as such an attempt to make us unaccountable before God. Realism is the view that things in the world we observe exist and have mind-independent properties. Gender anti-realists deny biological sex as an objective reality beyond one’s control. They assert that gender is a fluid, mind-dependent property of our humanness. This creates several problems.

First, the availability of preferred pronouns denies the order of creation, specifically the literal claim by the writer of Genesis that “male and female he created them” (5:2). Gender activists regrettably want us to redefine our sex and to deny the reality and blessing of our creation as men and women. Second, and to their great harm, people are increasingly employing hormone therapy or, worse, sex-reassignment surgery in the vain attempt to change their biological sex. Surgically mutilating one’s genitals routinely results in sterility and thus frustrates the good gift of procreation.

Third is the linguistic problem: pronouns have evolved into wonderfully succinct and accurate function words that help us to communicate. Pronouns are premised on a stable, given biological sex: he or she, and neuter forms such as one. But if we destabilize this wonderful nomenclature and add arbitrary variants such as zie/zim/zir, we create semantic confusion and render us unaccountable to one another. If a man adopts androgynous pronouns, for instance, I have to think very hard each time I refer to him/zim, and when I adopt his/zir's preferred pronoun of zie, then I become complicit in zir's denial of zir's biological givenness, and find myself athwart creation. This is no position to be in for the linguistically challenged, let alone a mere Christian.

And when I adopt zir's preferred pronoun that differs from the pronoun that corresponds to zir's biological sex (i.e. he), then I participate in a lie, or at least a distortion of reality so as to make zie feel good about zir's misperception of his God-given sexuality. I don't want to be cruel to zir by calling zir him, but I am also accountable to God and must respect and acknowledge his having created zie a he rather than a zie. Plus, the linguistic "herd immunity" we all gain when we take the usual dose of pronouns in our daily speech, she/her/hers, is lost when we have to start asking someone what their preferred pronouns are. Soon we will need to ask for one's preferred species.

I draw upon a number of examples from the Babel-like confusion that attends our cultural moment, including the disconcerting use by a book editor who pretended not to know I am a he and described me instead as a they to others. In effect, and for the sake of political correctness, she denied my creation as a man. Preferred pronouns make living accountably before God and our fellow human beings difficult.

Owen Brown, Baylor University

Daniel Shallcross, Baylor University

Marty Stuebs, Baylor University

The Virtue of Accountability

The importance of accountability is drawing increased interest in professional and business settings, with much of this attention focused on improving accountability systems (Bloomfield, 2021). In this paper, we explore the importance of a person's virtue of accountability which can serve as a "cornerstone virtue" to equip individuals with a moral mindset to marshal other virtues within accountability systems. The virtue of accountability is a state of mind that internalizes accountability, embraces moral obligations to others on a voluntary basis, and views accountability as a foundational part of a virtuous life (Bradshaw et al., 2020; Johnson and Leman, 2020a; Johnson and Leman, 2020b; Evans, 2019; Frink & Klimoski, 1998; Hall et al., 2017; Tetlock, 1985; Tetlock, 1992). Those who embody this virtue welcome being accountable as desirable and beneficial. They are answerable, transparent, and honest about their behavior, adjust their efforts based on feedback, want to be pushed to do their best, and recognize they improve by being accountable.

Our initial focus is within the context of the accounting profession because the effectiveness of many accountability and reporting systems in business rely on effective accountants and, as a result, on the character and virtues those accountants possess. While these accountability and reporting systems can take several forms (e.g., the financial reporting system, the tax reporting system, and many internal reporting systems that facilitate managerial decision making), they often follow the same general structure.

We examine the role of human accountability and transcendent accountability on accountants' ethicality judgments and their whistleblowing intentions. Human accountability is the recognition of one's voluntary accountability to member(s) or group(s) in society (Johnson and Leman, 2020a, p. 6). Transcendent accountability is the recognition that one's relationship with God and their religious beliefs function as a mechanism of voluntary accountability in a virtuous manner (Johnson and Leman, 2020a, p. 3).

In our study, undergraduate and graduate accounting student-participants were provided with two independent vignettes depicting an unethical act. One vignette was a university setting in which a student used an acquired instructor test bank to cheat on an exam. The other vignette was a professional setting in which an audit staff member falsified required audit documentation. Preliminary results indicate that both human accountability and transcendent accountability are positively associated with judgments of ethicality and intentions to blow the whistle on observed unethical acts. Participants possessing higher levels of either human accountability or transcendent accountability were more likely to evaluate the unethical acts as being

unethical and were more likely to report them. Our results for whistleblowing intent also persist after controlling for participants' ethicality judgments, indicating that participants possessing higher levels of either human accountability or transcendent accountability were more likely to both identify a questionable act as unethical and, *ceteris paribus*, were also more likely to report it. Our findings extend ethics and accountability research by introducing two new constructs to these literature streams, human accountability and transcendent accountability, and demonstrating their positive influence on ethical judgment and decision making.

Todd Buras, Baylor University
Accountability in the Thought of Martin Luther King, Jr.

During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 60's, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., constructed a complicated case for nonviolent resistance to race-based oppression. He consistently argued for a middle way between acquiescence to oppression and violent resistance grounded in hatred of the oppressor. The arguments embedded in his writings against both alternatives to nonviolence, but especially the acquiescent option, rely upon a rich understanding of moral accountability. King was specifically concerned about modes of acquiescence, which he called incrementalism, commended both by black intellectuals, like Booker T. Washington, and white moderates. Incrementalists were concerned that, under King's leadership, the Civil Rights movement was moving too fast. They advised a slower and more cautious pace, based on what they thought "the times" would permit. King's response, in documents like "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and *Stride toward Freedom*, is that the time is always right to do right. The problem with the incrementalist's attitude toward "the times," according to King, is that it ignores our own accountability for the way in which we exercise our agency in the brief period we have on this earth. He takes it as foundational that we are accountable for the way we respond to the times in which we live. In particular we are accountable for whether or not we respect the dignity of our fellow human beings by working toward what he called the Beloved Community. In his response to the incrementalists, King connects moral accountability with a proper understanding of human agency. To accept incrementalism (and thereby acquiescence) would be to deny accountability and embrace a deficient understanding of human agency. This paper will explore these connections in King's thought, with a focus on his understanding of the foundational notion of accountability, and its role in King's overall case for nonviolent resistance to race-based oppression. A key question to be addressed is whether (and, if so, to what extent) King's understanding of accountability is inherently Christian or more generically theistic; and therefore the extent to which King's case for nonviolent resistance is well-suited to a non-Christian or non-theistic appropriation of King's legacy.

Paul Carron, Baylor University
Seeing with the Eyes of Faith: A Kierkegaardian Response to Situationism

Kierkegaard understands the profound influence that social groups have on an individual's identity, perceptions, and actions. The crowd is untruth because social comparison gives rise to concerns and emotions that the individual otherwise wouldn't have. Kierkegaard anticipates the fundamental tenet of situationism, namely, that social forces often have a greater causal impact on the agent's action than agential forces (Miller 2014). Kierkegaard's strategy for dealing with situational forces is unique in the literature for several reasons. First, Kierkegaard takes seriously the affective roots of our (im)moral behavior, something that some recent empirically informed virtue-cultivation strategies ignore (Upton 2017). Emotions and perceptual construals (the way the individual immediately grasps features of the situation) drive behavior, but these affective qualities are socially constituted: both the individual's self-conception and her perceptual interpretations of other members of her social group are constructed based on social comparison. In other words, social forces can never be fully evaded or overcome by the individual. For this reason, the individual cannot simply engage in meditation or introspective emotion regulation techniques. Rather, the socially constituted individual must focus on a new object of social comparison. If the individual focuses on God and practices social attentional deployment, she can develop the social courage to overcome the situational forces of the crowd. For instance, Kierkegaard states, "courage is one person holding out alone, as a single

individual, against the opposition of the numerical [...] courage increases in proportion to the number, and the longer the opposition is endured the more inward the courage becomes” (JP 3, 341/SKS 26, 258). Furthermore, due to the individual’s sin and the power of social forces, virtues such as love must be continually renewed (see Welz 2007). The work of acquiring the virtues is a never-ending quest for the human, but by focusing on the eternal and practicing emotion regulation, the individual can overcome the optical illusion of the crowd and cultivate the courage to become an authentic individual.

Brian Clayton, Gonzaga University
Pride, Prejudice, and Accountability

Alasdair MacIntyre famously wrote of Jane Austen that she was “the last great effective imaginative voice of the tradition of thought about, and practice of, the virtues” that MacIntyre discussed in *After Virtue* (240). Whether or not one agrees with MacIntyre’s assessment, it is certainly the case that Austen’s novels, in particular, provide a wealth of resources for thinking about the nature and practice of the virtues. Thus, in this paper I propose to use her novel *Pride and Prejudice* as an occasion for thinking about accountability. I will argue that accountability is neither an Aristotelian moral virtue nor an Aristotelian moral quasi-virtue, and yet it is clearly crucial to the development of virtuous character. Austen will provide us with material for thinking about the role that accountability does play in this development. She will help us to identify those to whom I am accountable and the nature of that accountability. In particular, she will help us to see how accountability is crucial for the moral self-knowledge that is at the heart of the development of good moral character.

Jason Crawford, Union University
Accountability, Tragic Accountability: Shakespearean Reflections

Comedy is centrally concerned with problems of accountability. Comic plays such as *The Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night* dramatize vice, visit retribution upon transgressors, and teach us through their mockeries to beware of transgressing. Shakespeare’s friend Ben Jonson wrote that the comic dramatist’s job is to punish sinners, “it being the office of a comic poet to imitate justice, and instruct to life.” No surprise that Shakespeare’s comedies, like so many comedies before and since, end with scenes of judgment: courtroom disputes, confrontations with parents, sins and secrets disclosed. Where, then, is the line that separates comedy from tragedy? Tragedy, after all, is also centrally concerned with the consequences of sin and the workings of justice; it, too, calls sinners to account and promises to “instruct to life.” Shakespeare throughout his career tested the unstable boundaries between comedy and tragedy, and in 1603-4, when he wrote *Measure for Measure* and *Othello*, he seems to have turned away from comedy altogether, or to have crossed the line beyond which comedy itself becomes tragic. This paper will claim that Shakespeare, in these negotiations between comedy and tragedy, thinks deeply about problems of accountability. When do the mechanisms of accountability—examination, confession, judgment, punishment—redeem? When do they destroy? And how have the conditions governing Shakespeare’s drama changed when, in the plays of 1603-4, he finds the old mechanisms of comic accountability collapsing into the violence of tragedy?

John Davis, Hardin-Simmons University
To Whom Is Management Accountable?

In 1960, management philosopher Ernest Dale published his major work, *The Great Organizers*. In this book Dale began with an evaluation of the (then) current state of organization theory and followed it with case studies of owner-managers at Du Pont, General Motors, National Steel, and Westinghouse Electric. He ended with a chapter with the intriguing title of “To Whom Is Management Accountable.” That same year, he published a parallel article in *Harvard Business Review* with the even more compelling title, “Management Must Be Accountable.” Sixty-plus years before this symposium—and long before much of today’s emphases on accountability and transparency—Dale struggled with questions that are relevant today. The answers are no easier today than in 1960.

The first question in the “Living Accountably” Call for Proposals is “What might it mean to embrace being accountable?” The third question is “And to whom are humans accountable?” Now, based on some individuals’ firsthand experiences, it is possible that some might think that there is no overlap between the categories of “humans” and “management.” Those people are wrong. As I tell my students who ask why they should study management, “Sooner or later, each of you will manage or be managed or both. Wouldn’t you like to be prepared to do your best possible work?” Management History encourages the pragmatic investigations into the historical evolution of managerial thought and action” (Academy of Management, 2021). This presentation investigates some of the questions that Dale raised and some of the answers that he found and considers, however briefly, how both scholars and practitioners have thought about these same questions since then.

After acknowledging the decline of the kinds of owner-managers he considered in the case studies in *The Great Organizers*, Dale considered the consequences, both moral and economic, for business organizations of an absence of accountability. He then addressed two alternatives then commonly suggested as checks on an otherwise unchecked management: (1) professional managers, and (2) social responsibility.

Who or what might stand in for absent owner-managers? Dale evaluated small stockholders; proxy fights; independent board directors; financial institutions; and a national panel of independent, professional directors, before settling, however tentatively, on the latter.

An obituary of Ernest Dale named him as being a proponent of the “Does it work?” school of management thought (Almanac, 1996). He frankly gave short shrift to the possibility that virtuous managers would be sufficiently accountable. I am going out on a limb here, but I suspect many presentations at this symposium will find virtue to be the answer. Come hear from one of Ernest Dale’s students (i.e., me) and consider why that might not be so.

Keith Dow, Christian Horizons

Jean Vanier and Joe Arridy: Account-Ability in Christian Confession and Witness

Jean Vanier, the late founder of worldwide L’Arche communities with people with intellectual disabilities, was a tall, well-respected Canadian who lived in France for much of his life. Vanier was a persuasive and eloquent speaker and writer with a PhD in Philosophy. As it turns out, over a period of several decades of sexual misconduct he also drew on his Catholic spirituality to manipulate and emotionally abuse numerous non-disabled women. Vanier died as an esteemed and charismatic leader, before these allegations and their verification came to light.

In contrast, Joe Arridy was a little-known child of Syrian immigrants who grew up in Colorado. His parents could not speak English, and he spent one year at elementary school before his principal sent him home, advising his parents that Joe was incapable of learning. In today’s terminology, Arridy had an intellectual or developmental disability. Where Vanier was never called to account for his manipulative and abusive actions toward women during his lifetime, Arridy was framed, gave a false confession, and was executed for the rape and murder of Dorothy Drain for which he was later pardoned.

Confession and witness in Christian community cannot be considered apart from the ways in which they are bound up in dynamics of account-ability, determined by elements such as charisma, body capital, and real or perceived human limitations. Each account is pre-conditioned and implicated in systems of power and perception, pre-judged in relation to one’s intellectual prowess and eloquence and one’s very presence and physical form. Each person “is recognized and confers recognition through a set of norms that governs recognizability” [Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 25]. While not sole determinants in the cases of Joe Arridy and Jean Vanier, conditions of account-ability shaped the very conditions under which each was - or was not - called to give an account.

While each Christian is shaped by relational dynamics and conditions of accountability in light of their embodied limitations, this is not to say that confession and witness are only subject-to and a products-of prevailing norms. Christ’s subversion of the norms that govern recognizability both call us to reconsider the terms and conditions of “accountability” and to look to Christ’s example in setting a more humble and expansive frame for the diverse manifestations of Christian confession and witness.

This paper does not propose a conclusive framework for confession and witness in Christian community. Rather, it introduces elements that subvert the often-unrecognized conditions of accountability itself. Questioning the norms that govern recognition and prevailing notions of justice permits an expansion of possibilities within Christian community. In a spirit of epistemological humility, Christians are called to pay equal and respectful attention to the witness of the “greatest” to the “least,” each person being created in the image of God. We must not neglect the demands of justice but reconceive justice itself as Christ’s domain and not our own. In reclaiming the virtue of courageous humility, confession and witness are submitted to the reign of Christ in the context of Kingdom community.

Katherine Ellis, Baylor University

Shared Anger: Thomas Aquinas & Affective Accountability

Accountability is guided and prompted by individuals’ and communities’ passions. Emotions witness to and attend to the formation, deformation, and reformation of relational norms. Scholars disagree about the role of sympathy and anger in moral accountability. Thomas Aquinas’s treatment of the passion of anger and the virtue of misericordia helpfully distinguish how anger and sympathy can be deemed good, even virtuous. Thomas’s account of anger and misericordia provide space for a new virtue, shared anger.

Praised by eighteenth-century British sentimentalists for its role in moral formation, contemporary accounts of sympathy deem it to be unreliable, a sometimes dangerous moral emotion. Thomas Aquinas offers an account of the virtue of misericordia whereby one is rightly drawn to share in another’s suffering and sorrow. While guises of the virtue are easily directed toward cruel and self-deceptive ends, Misericordia is listed among the virtues, in part, because it is difficult.

Like sympathy, there is little consensus in contemporary academic debates of the goodness of anger. For some, anger is praised on account of its sensitivity to injustice. Following Aristotle’s tempered defense of anger and later the British sentimentalists, anger’s apologists point to the passion’s role in moral accountability. However, borrowing from the Stoics, most Christian thinkers in antiquity and the Middle Ages regarded anger to be morally destructive. Following Seneca’s insistence that anger is a form of madness, Basil the Great described anger as a type of mental incapacity while Pope Gregory I listed anger among the capital sins.

Contrary to many of his contemporaries, Thomas Aquinas resisted the stoic rejection of the passions. For Thomas, anger may be sinful and destructive; however, in other instances lacking anger is a vice. In some circumstances, anger may be “deserving of praise.” When ordered by reason’s influence, anger directed toward the right agent, with the correct amount of intensity and extended for the proper amount of time, can perhaps approach virtue.

Shared anger should be considered virtuous insofar as it draws the community toward greater moral accountability. My account of shared anger seeks to distinguish good anger from its false look-alikes and the virtue of misericordia from malformed sympathy. Like misericordia, rightly sharing the anger of another lightens the burden of the individual who has been wronged. Shared anger is virtuous insofar as it draws the community toward moral accountability. Witnessing to injustice and bearing the accompanying burdens or sorrow and anger, shared anger has the capacity to repair and reform the moral community.

Richard Eva, Baylor University

The Moral Limits of Politicization

In Michael Sandel’s *What Money Can’t Buy: The Moral Limits of the Markets*, he highlights the ways that market values can crowd out nonmarket norms in important aspects of life. For example, selling tickets to a papal mass, cash for sterilization programs, and the international trading of refugee obligations can all corrupt the nature of the goods, activities, or practices involved. However, the economic approach to everything has a sinister complement: the political approach to everything. In this paper I argue that the politicization of goods, activities, and social practices can also have a similar corrupting effect. Turning a concert into a partisan fundraiser or using a philosophy class to promote one’s political agenda can tarnish the goods involved in these activities (i.e. music and philosophy). Politicization can creep into and overtake our lives if

we do not hold each other accountable to preserving limits on our political advocacy. Holding each other accountable may look like encouraging participation in intrinsically good activities and not using those activities as mere means to political ends. Ultimately, this paper does not trivialize the importance of political pursuits, but advocates for a moral limit to politicization.

Travis Fletcher, Bethany Community Church
Total Depravity and Accountability

The theological concept of total depravity forms the foundation for a lifelong commitment to accountability. If we assume that the biblical witness is true, and that all human beings are subject to the sin of our ancestors, Adam and Eve, then we can view accountability (structures, relationships, expectations) as positive and even essential for human life, not merely as a reaction to the inevitable brokenness of our hearts. To live accountability to God and within His beloved community, the church, is to reject humanistic notions of mortal perfection and pursue a counter-narrative of truth-oriented living in the context of grace and mercy.

Nick Hadsell, Baylor University
The Gratitude Account of Divine Authority

Christians believe God holds everyone accountable for the way they live. In any accountability relationship between two parties, one party must have the authority to judge aspects of the other party in relation to some shared project or goal (Torrance 2021, 309). Authority plays a prominent role in the accountability relationship between God and human beings, especially if fear of the Lord, something we ought to have upon recognizing God's authority over us, is essentially what constitutes accountability to God (Evans 2021, 316-7).

So, in a full description of the accountability relationship between God and human beings, something should be said about why God has authority. Surprisingly, this is not an easy task. For example, unlike many common accountability relationships (e.g., between a trainer and an athlete), God's authority is not explained by our consent to the accountability relationship. Further, Mark Murphy has plausibly argued that God's authority is not explained by any of the divine perfections (2001). Giving an account of divine authority, then, is a difficult task.

The goal of this paper is to attempt this task by offering an account of God's authority that appeals to our debt of gratitude to him. This account begins with the plausible idea that those who receive gifts are obligated to express gratitude in some way to the one who gave the gift. It then suggests that, because God is the ground and source of all goods, every good gift is ultimately grounds for gratitude to God (Evans 2013, 64; Roberts 2014, 65). Because of this, our debt of gratitude to God is so great that we owe him full submission to his authority, which is precisely what grounds our accountability relationship to him, or so I'll argue.

The paper will proceed in three parts. First, I'll describe in further detail the role authority plays in the accountability relationship between God and human beings. Second, I'll give the account of divine authority from gratitude. Third, I'll address the worry that gratitude to God is not sufficient for grounding his authority over us. This worry can be articulated in at least two ways: first, the standard prior obligation objection, which holds that expressions of gratitude are not morally binding because there is no prior obligation that we ought to fulfill our obligations of gratitude. Second is the insufficiency objection, which argues that even if gratitude morally obligates us to submit ourselves to God's authority, it does not follow from this alone that we are therefore under God's authority; instead, there must be something else that explains how we are under God's authority (Murphy 2001, 118-120).

I'll conclude that the account of divine authority from gratitude can answer back both worries, and that it is therefore a promising way of understanding how God comes to hold us accountable.

Patrick Haley, Princeton Theological Seminary
'Heretics,' 'Heathens,' 'Apostates': Problems of Authority and Accountability in Contemporary American Protestantism

Contemporary Protestant moral theology struggles to speak cogently about accountability, even and perhaps especially when addressing other Christians. Having disavowed its cultural hegemony (which was declining anyhow), mainstream Protestantism views terms such as “heretic,” “apostate,” and “heathen” with well-earned suspicion. Throughout history, these categories have been used to subserve domination. Yet there are present challenges that demand a response. Christians ought to hold other Christians to account, but we lack the norms to understand how and when to do so. What responsibilities do we have to speak against Westboro Baptist and similar groups? How do these obligations differ from those who do not claim to be our coreligionists (e.g., Islamic fundamentalists)? What in these various relationships grounds the particular practices of accountability that we ought to take up? These questions must be answered, if Christians are to resist oppression in our own midst, and if we are to witness to God’s liberating work in the world.

This paper explores the thought of Thomas Aquinas as a resource for navigating these relationships. Thomas understands that our obligations to those who claim to belong to the community of Christians (“heretics”) differ from those who make no such claim (“heathens”). He even appraises those who used to belong to the community but no longer do (“apostates”). Thomas reminds us that we owe each group different things. What Thomas lacks is a full explanation for these differences. Thomas needs to be supplemented with recent work from theorists of representation such as philosopher Philip Pettit. Pettit shows how representation concerns authority claims, often on the basis of tacit rather than explicit consent. Thus, we must explicitly disavow the claims of “heretics” who claim the authority to represent us, lest we grant tacit consent to their oppressive practices, while we need not make such disavowals toward those “heathens” outside the community. This distinction explains why we denounce Christian nationalism/extremism, without likewise taking up the task of policing other religious communities. Then there are those “apostates” who no longer claim to represent the community, but whose past involvement grants them their own kind of authority. Contemporary fascination with “exvangelicals” and their deconversion narratives is a prominent example.

Of course, we need no reminders how these categories can go awry. If accountability is a virtue that has recently suffered from its deficient vice (negligence), historically its excessive vice (inquisition) prevailed. This is why we need a particularly Protestant reappropriation of Thomas. What Thomas does not have, and what Protestant history offers, is the role of the dissenter. The dissenter stands outside the community to speak to the community, not as a representative but nevertheless for the community’s reformation. Puritanism, Pietism, Methodism, all began with these aims in mind. In turn, healthy majority communities have learned to tolerate dissenters and reincorporate their insights. In pursuit of the virtue of accountability, we would do well to tolerate virtuous dissenters, while maintaining an ardent moral witness against our fellow Christians whose words and deeds demean and oppress others.

Christina Hitchcock, University of Sioux Falls
“We’ll Stay Until They Kick Us Out”: Egalitarian Christians in Complementarian Churches

“We’ll stay until they kick us out.” This was my parents’ slogan back in the 1960s when they were young, idealistic missionaries for the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, a small denomination descended from the Scottish Covenanters. In 2018, exactly 50 years after their first year of service in the denomination, they got kicked out.

In the 1990s my mother, and then my father, changed their minds on “the women’s issue,” leaving behind a complementarian view in favor of an egalitarian view. My father was an ordained pastor, and while he agreed not to teach or preach against the standards of the denomination, he also made it clear he had changed his mind. My mother, who of course was not ordained, was under no such restrictions. She began a gentle but persistent campaign for the full inclusion of women in the denomination. In 2018 it all came to a head, and my father was stripped of his ordination and effectively kicked out of the denomination he and my mother had belonged to for over 70 years.

This personal experience has forced me to confront the questions that have always lurked at the edges of my theological and ecclesial consciousness: What are the obligations and responsibilities of an egalitarian Christian who belongs to a church which is, to one degree or another, complementarian? To whom is such a Christian accountable—their church (either local or denominational) or their understanding of Scriptural teaching on this issue? Or both?

This paper will explore those questions in dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, particularly his essay “After 10 Years” and his book *Life Together*. While neither of these deals with the question of women in ministry or the contemporary debate stemming from that question, and while Bonhoeffer himself was a man of his time and simply assumed a certain restricted field of influence and ministry for women, his thoughts in these sources can nonetheless be helpful. “After 10 Years” asks, “Who stands fast?” What does it mean to live responsibly in a situation that seems to offer no clear or good choices? What does it mean to take the Word of God more seriously than the word of friends, family, or even enemies? *Life Together* asks, What does it mean to live in community, even (and especially) a community which is not perfect and continues to struggle with sin? The questions Bonhoeffer deals with in these essays are at the heart of the struggle egalitarian Christians feel as they live within a complementarian structure and community.

Eric Howell, DaySpring Baptist Church **The Place of Church Grounds in a Geography of Hope**

Church grounds occupy an unusually promising space in a modern era of disconnection of humans from their environments. For those who know and love them, church grounds shape our spirituality in important and healing ways.

Church grounds are unique. The land “belongs” to the congregation but isn’t ours to exploit or monetize as a resource. It is space set apart as sacred ground but is also intimately hospitable to congregants through kickball games and ice cream socials. It is a place of meaningful human activities but not valued for its economic potential in a capitalistic system. For these reasons and others church grounds are different from most other spaces in our lives. As such, they may be where we relearn how to participate in the goodness of creation.

By considering a case study of one central Texas Baptist congregation, this paper considers the unique role church grounds play toward ecological healing as a congregation listens for the call the grounds speak to the community. Critical questions of accountability arise, such as: What responsibility as worshippers do we have to God on the grounds? What responsibility do we as fellow creatures have to the biodiversity of the grounds? What responsibility do we as ministers have toward our neighbors with the grounds? These key questions frame a reassessment of overlooked church grounds as integral for the material and spiritual reconnection of humans and their environments.

Jean Humphreys, Dallas Baptist University **Accountability in Public and Private Life or Would Martin Luther Have Given up his Shot?**

We are emerging from an uncertain time. The world has been ravaged by Covid-19, with 602,000 deaths in the U.S. as of June 20, 2021. The rate of deaths has diminished since the release of vaccinations, but the vaccination rate is slowing. Vaccination rates along with earlier rates of mask wearing have consistently lagged among evangelicals, who are commanded to do good to the “least of these” and “love their neighbor as themselves.”

When we look at vaccinations both economics and social psychology can be used as descriptors. In economics, negative externalities are the cost one’s behavior imposes on other people. Vaccinations both protect the individual and help to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 to others. For example, if David chose not to get vaccinated, he may affect the health and well-being of others who are more vulnerable. In economics and social psychology, we talk about free-riding and social loafing. If David choose not to get vaccinated, he depends on others’ vaccinations to protect him through herd immunity.

Accountability means that I should be responsible for my own behavior and not impose the cost on others. I should “pay my own way” if possible and not depend on the group to allow me to free-ride. Martin

Luther describes the Ten Commandments. Concerning the seventh commandment, we are to not just abstain from stealing from but care of our neighbors. “First, we are forbidden to do our neighbors any injury or wrong in any way imaginable, whether by damaging, withholding, or interfering with their possessions and property. We are not even to consent to or permit such a thing but are rather to avert and prevent it. In addition, we are commanded to promote and further our neighbors’ interests, and when they suffer any want, we are to help, share, and lend to both friends and foes” (p. 340.)

Are the negative externalities of our choice not to get vaccinated doing harm to others? Are we stealing from our neighbor when we free-ride? How can we be accountable in this time? Luther also lived through a pandemic and gave us these words.

“They are much too rash and reckless, tempting God and disregarding everything which might counteract death and the plague. They disdain the use of medicines; they do not avoid places and persons infected by the plague, but lightheartedly make sport of it and wish to prove how independent they are.

It is even more shameful for a person to pay no heed to his own body and to fail to protect it against the plague the best he is able, and then to infect and poison others who might have remained alive if he had taken care of his body as he should have. He is thus responsible before God for his neighbor’s death and is a murderer many times over.”

These are harsh words and would probably not be appreciated from the pulpit, but this paper will focus on the need to live accountably during a pandemic.

Margaret Kamitsuka, Oberlin College **Accountability and God’s Providence After Prenatal Testing**

To whom or to what should believing parents be accountable in decision-making when facing an adverse prenatal diagnosis? This essay addresses some complexities of moral and spiritual accountability when a prenatal diagnosis raises the question of selective abortion. Some disability ethicists argue for accountability to the principle of a fetus’s right to life and to the expressivist claim that selective abortion devalues all disabled persons (Asch and Wasserman 2005). Some Christian ethicists and theologians also hold that moral accountability falls under a doctrine of providence. That is, believers are ultimately accountable to accept God’s will for their lives and to trust that “all things work together for good for those who love God” (Rom 8:28). This essay focuses on the epistemological aspect of the believer’s accountability to divine providence.

Brian Brock suggests that disabled persons are a kind of “revelatory annunciation” of God’s particular grace to parents who welcome an affected child (2019, 239). To reject the coming into being of such a person after a prenatal diagnosis is to reject “a sign of benevolent divine involvement in human affairs” (Brock, 28). Brock allows for little epistemological uncertainty regarding what is the moral path, based on the revelatory aspect of disability, which makes clear God’s will.

Hans Reinders, on the other hand, does not support the view that one can be assured that “everything that happens is part of God’s plan” (Reinders, 142). Reinders advocates for a doctrine of providence that admits of epistemic uncertainty regarding human events, including the birth of a disabled child. Parents may never understand why their family’s suffering is part of God’s plan, but they can be encouraged to trust “how God’s Spirit may guide their understanding” (Reinders, 160). One might say that the epistemological gaps in one’s understanding of sometimes inscrutable divine providence is filled in by what Amos Yong calls “pneumatological imagination” (Yong, 12).

Reinders does not apply this understanding of providence to prenatal testing, but I would argue that it does illumine moral accountability and decision-making in this situation. I would caution against invoking God’s sovereign will as an answer to bioethical challenges such as selective abortion after a prenatal test, as if whatever is always manifests God’s will. Equating God’s inscrutable will with a biological event is theologically and pastorally questionable. Holding parents accountable to that understanding of providence

erases epistemic uncertainty and makes moral agents accountable to biology rather than to the guidance of God's spirit.

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Caitlin Maples, Baylor University

Medical Ethics for Patients: Accountability as a Virtue

In the medical sphere, accountability is often thought of as pertaining only to physicians. It is, after all, typically enforced hierarchically or legally on medical professionals, who are held accountable for their actions both by their peers in the medical community and by those outside the profession. Physicians are held legally accountable for how they treat (or fail to treat) patients. Institutional structures such as managed care facilities, insurance providers, and governmental regulators enforce top-down hierarchical accountability in which physicians are held accountable for their actions, including use of medical resources and adherence to ethical norms. But health care providers represent only one side of the equation.

In this paper, I explore the need for a more detailed look at the other side of medical ethics, medical ethics for patients. Each one of us assumes the role of patient, yet relatively few of us assume the role of physician. However, little attention is given to what it means to be a virtuous patient, and, indeed, what it means to assume the role of patient in the first place. I argue for a virtue-based approach to medical ethics for patients, beginning with the virtue of accountability. I address the question of to whom patients are accountable, and for what. This question has become increasingly pertinent in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic as we question what it means to be a patient as distinct from citizen, which decisions we can be held accountable for, and who holds us accountable for them. I explore the relationship patients have with one another, friends, family, physicians, and society, arguing that patients are positioned in a web of accountability in which others are held and hold one another accountable. Finally, I delve into the grounding for accountability as a virtue and its relationship with other virtues in my larger project.

Natalia Marandius, Southern Methodist University

Accountability to the Oppressed and God's Love

Accountability is often conceptualized in contexts of power. Within this framework, power differentials are significant, as people are being held accountable to those who have some power over them. Employers can terminate jobs—and thus, sources of income, law enforcement can put a hold on certain dimensions of a person's freedom, and donors can withhold contributions to political candidates. Yet conceiving accountability in terms of what is owed to entities with a larger power than one's own contrasts with Jesus's words at the final judgment: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40). This paper argues that the incarnation of Christ generates a vision for living accountably to "the least of these" by striving for justice and equity for those who have little power under systems of oppression. In the gospel according to Matthew Jesus performs the eschatological judgment by identifying with the poor, the sick, the immigrants, and the incarcerated. To be accountable to God means to be accountable to those with whom the incarnate God identifies: the oppressed and the marginalized. Women and people of color have been historically more impoverished, less able to access health care, and rendered powerless on multiple intersecting grounds: on account of sex, gender, race, and economics. The immigrants and the incarcerated are predominantly people of color. To be

accountable to God and to “the least of these”—rendered so by oppressive systems for being women, people of color, or immigrants, are two dimensions of a singular act. This mirrors the two dimensions of Christ’s greatest commandment: to love God and to love human beings. Extending Kierkegaard’s argument that loving the unseen God at the cost of the exclusion of concrete, embodied, earthly relationships would be illusionary, this paper shows that accountability cannot be uncoupled from Jesus’s double love commandment. Love always manifests itself as a redoubling, according to Kierkegaard. Love for God simply does not exist in abstraction from loving human beings, but rather, true love for God inevitably outpours itself in love extended to human persons. The two expressions of love are not in competition with each other, but form an irreducible intertwinement. Neither is accountability to God in competition with accountability to the least of our human neighbors. Jesus’s call to love is equally a call to participate in earthly justice, as the final judgment vividly portrays. This paper shows that God, the ultimate lover of creatures, does not absorb human love for God’s own use, but, even as we are called to love God, God remains the lover and we are the beloved. In dialog with Kierkegaard I argue that God resends our love for God to our human neighbors. Like a letter sent with a forwarding address, our love for God reaches its destination, the most oppressed people, via God. Life lived accountably to the oppressed engages simultaneously in works of justice and the love of God.

Sahr Mbriwa, Baylor University

Parrhesia and Pneumatology: Speaking Truth with Power, Love, and Self-Control

Accountability presumes certain epistemic claims on truth. From a Judeo-Christian perspective, truth is not an arbitrary concept, a nebulous social construct, or the exclusive domain of any single discipline. Rather, truth is rooted in the character and revelation of a triune God. It is this trinitarian-shaped foundation regarding who and what constitutes truth that ought to both liberate and limit the Christian’s relation to truth. In Greco-Roman culture, parrhesia, or free speech, was the act of boldly speaking the truth however difficult or uncomfortable the content might have been to its hearers. In other words, it was speech that, among other objectives, openly confronted and critiqued individuals, and systems. Although the term is by and large obscure in contemporary settings, the practice of parrhesia is often on display, and increasingly with intent to shame and dehumanize. As a result, parrhesia can function less as a catalyst that inspires change and more as a contour of condescension. In contrast to a culture of parrhesia that would perpetuate humiliation, what might it entail to speak truth in humility and love? Related, what are the rhythms of accountability that manifest in which truth is spoken and lived out under the direction of the Holy Spirit? Using Michel Foucault’s lectures on parrhesia as a starting point, this paper explores the relation between parrhesia and pneumatology, with select examples from the Book of Acts and the Pauline Epistles. The writer argues that in an age of lasciviousness and vilification, the voice and community of the people of God, as they discern and submit to the movement of the Holy Spirit, can illuminate a path to speaking and living in truth, with power, love, and self-control.

Miriam McElvain, University of Dallas

How Laws Are Accountable to the People: Thomas Aquinas’s Argument for the Reasonableness of Custom

If Aristotle is right, that human beings are naturally social and form political communities, then humans are accountable to others because they have moral obligations to the persons in their community. Since a person’s actions are public, he is accountable to act morally with a will ordered toward the good. One way in which accountability is practiced in a community is through custom, in which persons living together participate in the same actions. In the Treatise on Law, Thomas Aquinas argues that as human beings act rationally, their actions are ordered toward a good; furthermore, because their actions are public, custom arises as others imitate them. Although some customs can be evil, custom which is morally ordered toward the good requires that those who create it and participate in it be accountable to the community by pursuing the common good. Aquinas argues that custom which is reasonable and aims at the common good has the force of law because it is a just and moves a person’s will toward the good. Once good custom is established,

it is a means of accountability not only for individuals in the community, but also for political rulers and enacted law. Because of its reasonableness, custom interprets human law and has the power to change or abolish it; therefore, political leaders and law are accountable to the people through custom. In this paper, I argue that because people's actions reveal their reason ordered to the common good, to the extent that the custom of a people is rational, Aquinas argues that custom has the force of law and can correct or abolish human law.

Dwight Nordstrom, PRI
Spiritual Accountability in Business in China and Central Asia

This presentation will address best practices of integration of business and faith in countries that are hostile to Christian faith expressions, based on thirty years of experience owning and/or managing over thirty operations with historically several thousand employees in more than fifteen locations in China and Central Asia.

The presentation argues for a positive correlation between quality of products and services delivered from these operations and spiritual accountability. The speaker will address best spiritual accountability practices drawn from dealing with more than one hundred non-national Christians from about ten countries.

Evelyn Ofong, George W. Truett Theological Seminary
The Accountability of Empathic Listening

This proposal results from my doctoral study entitled "Empathic Listening: The First Step to Leaders Cultivating Unity in a Politically Divided Church." Landmark events have inadvertently shaped the writing of this dissertation. They include the Trump administration, bookended by the Charlottesville riot of August 2017 and the Capitol insurrection of January 2021 (with three-quarters of Republicans still believing that Trump won the 2020 election), and the COVID 19 pandemic that has killed more than 600 thousand people in America (revealing a significant number of social, racial, and ethnic disparities). They are among the political issues that have flamed the fire of polarization and tribalization in our nation, and more importantly, our evangelical churches.

Some people we share a pew on Sunday mornings feel like strangers, while others sit suffering in silence beside us. Likewise, our friends and family feel like enemies as each side (with their opposing political views) demonizes the other. If ever there was a need for our church members to listen with compassion to one another, it is now. However, we do not know how to listen emphatically. More problematic is that we do not desire to listen to others with a different political orientation. As Christians, we are accountable to one another to listen with empathy. To understand the speaker's experience by putting on the heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience; to extend grace and appreciation for the speaker's humanity. Christ's love gives us the desire to listen (Colossians 1:17, 3:12, 14).

We must learn how to recognize the internal barriers (empathy blockers) that turn our villain stories (we internally tell ourselves) into human stories. One is anger. Is the tendency to get angry while discussing political issues rooted in our sense of vulnerability and fear? Are there other vices, like envy, which prevent empathic listening or unity, as a whole, in the community of Christ? If accountability is a virtue, then the inability to hear is a spiritual problem. Empathy blockers can be overcome first through spiritual discipline and then training. Through Scripture and theory, we can employ strategies that Christian leaders can use in church leadership. We combine worldly wisdom with God's Wisdom because the social sciences and humanities can only take Christians so far.

This research challenges Christian leaders (pastors) to reimagine themselves as spiritual sage leaders who guide their congregations through learning to live in the tension and face the political conflicts within the church not as something extraordinary but natural to the Body of Christ. As witnessed by the Old and New Testaments, conflicts are part of a church family. Ultimately, as representatives of Christ, our political conversations must reflect our love for God, each other, and our witness to the world. Or our Christianity has no merit. Our witness is the most significant accountability, and it is to God.

David Parrish, College of the Ozarks
Mission-Focused Curriculum and Assessment: Moving Beyond “Student Learning”

Institutional mission statements are a vital means of expressing identity and purpose. However, far too often there is an unintentional disconnect between the stated mission and curriculum, either general education or departmental. This disconnect might be the result of any number of issues including ambiguity, competing or contradictory ways of defining, expressing or achieving the mission, or even a failure to imagine how a non-academic mission could be translated into a coherent, purposeful curriculum. Fortunately, there is a process by which institutions can begin to repair this disconnect. This process is assessment. The stated purpose of assessment, however, is often too limited. Many books about academic assessment claim that the primary function of assessment is to improve student learning, which is true, but that assumes that the learning has a guiding purpose. If learning is a “multidimensional process of meaning making” (Maki 2010), then if there is no well-defined meaning, learning becomes a fractured attempt to bring coherence to competing meanings. Without a clearly-defined guiding purpose, assessment can become a frustrating enterprise in which faculty buy-in becomes difficult to achieve. When done well, however, assessment can be a form of curricular metacognition or reflection that reorients curricula toward a guiding telos, contributing to a shared image of a holistically-educated graduate. This shared image can foster collaboration between faculty and administration in the assessment process.

Thomas Pearson, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Against Accountability: Or, On Social Practices as Moral Communities

Over the past several decades there has been a renewed emphasis in moral philosophy on revisiting and re-working fundamental themes in Kantian ethics, including themes involving moral accountability and justification for providing “reasons for action” on the part of rational moral agents. Stephen Darwall, in his widely reviewed text, *The Second-Person Standpoint*, argues that when such moral agents encounter each other in any context, each must regard the other from this second-person perspective, as moral agents with the authority to require accountability of each other. This reciprocal accountability is universal; all human persons are to treat all other human persons as members of a single moral community, and can therefore legitimately hold all other human persons morally accountable. More recently, Henry Richardson, in *Articulating the Moral Community*, reinforces the argument that the proper designation of a moral community is the “open-ended set of all individual persons.” Both authors stress the authority of the members of this universal moral community to demand ethical accountability from each other.

But this unrestricted notion of moral accountability soon runs into serious difficulties. Such a version of normative accountability appears unable successfully to address two issues. First, in an “open-ended set of all individual persons,” how is the authority to require accountability distributed? Where do we locate that authority? Under such conditions, by what authority can anyone in fact be held accountable? Second, under these conditions, what may a moral agent be held responsible for? The agent’s public actions, of whatever sort? The agent’s private actions? The agent’s beliefs? The agent’s dispositions or attitudes? In an “open-ended set of all individual persons,” there seem to be no boundaries limiting that for which accountability may be summoned.

What is needed is a more supple yet precise way to define the identity of a “moral community” within which normative accountability may be exercised. The problem noted above results in locating moral authority in the status of rational agents themselves, rather than in the specific moral goods that may be obtained by the individual moral agent through inhabiting a network of sustained social practices, and expressed through the relationship with other agents who are members of these social practices embodied in a given community. Relying on the work of moral philosophers such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Pierre Bourdieu, this paper will argue that accountability can only be maintained as a coherent ethical concept when such accountability is embedded within identifiable social practices, and when such practices themselves are then treated as fundamental moral communities. What is argued against here is the proposal that an “open-ended set of all individual persons” can serve as the authoritative basis for defining and requiring moral accountability.

Adam Pelser, United States Air Force Academy
Accountability and Moral Knowledge

In *The Disappearance of Moral Knowledge* (Routledge, 2018), Dallas Willard chronicles and laments the disappearance from our society of moral knowledge as a publicly available good. In this paper, I will argue that learning to live accountably in our relationships with God and others—and helping others to do likewise—is key to the revival of moral knowledge. In the final chapter of his book, Willard suggests what is needed for a revival of moral knowledge and one of the key resources on which he draws is the phenomenological recognition of “the other.” Likewise, in her recent book defending *Moral Knowledge* (Oxford UP, 2020), Sarah McGrath argues that the attitudes and expectations of moral communities are one of our most important sources of moral knowledge. Here, I explain how the insights of Willard, McGrath, and others lend support to the claim that learning to live accountably in moral communities (including academic, professional, and religious communities), is key to a revival of moral knowledge. I will also argue that a sense of accountability toward God, which Stephen Evans has identified with “the fear of the Lord” (Evans, “Accountability and the Fear of the Lord,” *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 2021), is the ultimate foundation for moral and spiritual knowledge, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7, English Standard Version). Theistic, and specifically Christian, communities thus have an important role to play in the revival of moral knowledge in our society. For, while some moral knowledge is possible without an explicit commitment to theism, a revival of moral knowledge in our society will not be complete apart from a revival of the life-transforming and life-giving knowledge of our ultimate accountability to God.

Lyn Prater, Baylor University
Shelby Garner, Baylor University
Cheryl Riley, Baylor University
Lori Spies, Baylor University

The Conscience of the Global Nurse: Critical Attributes of Accountability

Nursing has a rich history of men and women choosing to care for those who are injured, infirmed, or dying. Nurses have taken on the role of caring for others since Florence Nightingale first brought the profession of nursing to the public's attention through her work in the Crimean War. Today, nurses continue to work the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis in hospitals and clinics across the world and are being called heroes and held accountable for the health and well-being of vulnerable and ill people. In this role, nurses know many private details about the patients they care for, develop relationships that must remain within professional boundaries and because of the intimate nature of their work, become partners in their patients' healing. As such, with this privileged information and knowledge, nurses are accountable to safely protect and advocate for each patient.

This paper will bring the questions of how we, as nurses and faculty teaching nursing students live in accountability to God, to ourselves, to the nursing profession and to our patients.

Accountability to God

As nursing faculty we have the opportunity to help our students in their formation of character while also teaching the subject of nursing. Some nursing students feel called by God to serve others as a nurse (Prater and McEwen, 2008). God calls us to use our gifts and talents (1 Peter 4:10) and to be accountable to Him in all aspects of our lives (Romans 12:1-2).

Accountability to Self

If we are to live our authentic self, and live out our calling by God as nurses, we must be accountable for our self-care. Nurses work hard at taking care of others, but have historically done a poor job of taking care of themselves. Living a healthy life, physically, emotionally and spiritually requires that we make accountable choices. Living life with continuous reflection, using mindfulness, prayer and a grateful heart can help the nurse nurture self so then be able to care for others.

Accountability to the Profession and Peers

Nurse's work as part of a collaborative multidisciplinary team and are accountable, not only to the patients and families in their care, but also to their nursing colleagues, other providers and health care personnel. The nurse's teaching and treatment is determined by comprehensive consideration of hospital, regional, and national standards of care. In the United States nurses are legally accountable to the public and must practice within professional guidelines (BON, 2021). Globally there is significant diversity in the laws that guide practice.

Accountability to Patients

Nurses are known for their trustworthiness; in fact nurses were ranked the most trusted profession by Press Ganey for the 19th year in a row (Gaines, 2019). Nurses are charged to care for patients in an ethical manner, maintaining confidentiality and being an advocate for the patients' wishes. The ethical concepts of fidelity, non-maleficence, veracity, autonomy and beneficence are critical for nurses to follow when being accountable for practicing with their patients' best interest in mind.

Avery Rist, Indiana University

Lear's Liability: Accountability and Tragedy in William Shakespeare's King Lear

The Tragedy of King Lear by William Shakespeare tells of a dysfunctional family whose father renounces his youngest daughter only to be mistreated by his other daughters, and descends into a seemingly mentally insane state. Lear rejects his proper role as parent and king, deluding himself out of any concept of accountability to others. Literary scholar and former archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams discusses Lear in his book *The Tragic Imagination*, and how Lear's misconceived idea of debt contributes to Lear's problems that the play covers. This paper will incorporate Williams's discussion of *Lear* to explore the issue of accountability, which ultimately leads to the tragedies of this play. In one sense the suffering of the play is caused because Lear does not act accountably, even though he is king and thus holds more responsibility that entails more accountability. Yet he also rejects his accountability as a parent and father. This paper will explore the implications of Lear's rejection of his accountability to others, if he ever accepts it throughout the course of the play, as well as the implications for readers or viewers of this tragedy, drawing from Williams for discussion of the audience of tragedy.

Robert Roberts, Baylor University

Pride, Humility, and Practicing Accountability Virtuously

I argue that to practice accountability virtuously requires the virtues of pride and humility on the part of both parties.

I distinguish three senses of 'accountability' and 'accountable': 1) accountability as a social status to which a person may be "held" (George is accountable to his foreman for turning out flawless whichamagiggers); 2) accountability as a practice governed by rules (parents are accountable to their children and children to parents; we make ourselves accountable to one another by agreements; we are accountable to one another in virtue of our common humanity; and so forth); the practice establishes and evokes the status as a central element; 3) accountability as a trait of persons who recognize and honor the status of accountability in themselves and others and thus pursue virtuously the practice of accountability.

The practice of accountability (being accountable, being persons to whom others are accountable, and holding one another accountable for attitudes and actions), like other important social practices, requires, for its own excellence, excellence of character of those who practice it. Among the virtues that make possible the excellence of the practice are truthfulness, fairness, practical wisdom, courage, and perseverance. The present paper focuses on the relevance of the virtues of humility and pride.

I begin with an account of the practice of accountability. It involves at least two roles, the one who is accountable and the one to whom the first is accountable, and a matter: what the one is accountable to the other for. For the practice to be fully virtuous, all three of these nodes must be virtuous. The sub-practice of

holding accountable seems to be a stop-gap that arises because of a deficit of accountability, that is, of the virtuous practice thereof. In shorthand, I speak of the who, the to whom, and the for what.

Servility and domination are co-functional vices that counterfeit humility and pride. Interactions of servile with domineering persons counterfeit the practice of accountability. The common moral fault in servility and domination is disrespect of the human dignity of the parties to the interaction. The analogous virtuous interaction requires mutual respect (self-respect and other-respect on the part of both parties). But self-respect is a virtuous form of pride, and other-respect requires humility. This is why virtuous accountability requires pride and humility, and why accountability is spiritually corrupted by servility and domination.

Donald Roth, Dordt University
Accounting for the Spirits of the Age

Accountability calls to mind not only who we are accountable to but how we go about developing our ability to give account. Put differently, thinking about accountability also pushes us to think about what method of accounting we're using. That is, how do we know when our books are rightly balanced? This right ordering is classically called virtue, and when it comes to discerning virtue in conversation with our cultural context, a common construction that we use is "the Spirit(s) of the Age." The institution that I serve charges the faculty to help students "be able to discern, evaluate, and challenge the prevailing spirits ... of our age in light of God's Word" as part of its *Educational Framework* document. However, while we often talk about specific "spirits," it's not as clear that we've developed a sufficiently robust vocabulary for taking account of the whole.

Several years ago, I started trying to work toward closing this gap by asking students in the capstone to my institution's Core curriculum to articulate answers to three key questions: How do we know if something is good? How do we achieve our goals? And what is possible for us? Through a process of refinement and continued engagement with the answers offered by both my students and important scholarly works, I have grouped the Spirits of the Age according to their relation to these questions as Metrics, Methods, and Messages, respectively.

In this presentation, I will explain this framework in more detail, and, by sharing some examples from each category, situate the whole in light of the metaphor of a switching station. In a switching station, a train enters on one track. In the station, that track merges with another, and, along the way, the lines diverge, and the train leaves the station headed in a new direction. The actual change can be subtle, as the tracks run together for a time, but the result is significant. In a like manner, the "Metric" spirits are relevant in both a life lived for Christ and one lived for the World. That is, virtue may merge with vice. However, along the way, most of the "Method" spirits make a subtle change, usually raising something to a role of undeserved ultimacy. Ultimately, a shift occurs such that we end up seeing the more plainly false "Message" spirits as plausible, and we can leave the station on a path to vice instead of virtue. I will argue that using this vocabulary and paying attention to this mechanism can empower us to become more aware of where and how vice takes hold of our hearts. In short, I will offer the Spirits of the Age as both a vocabulary and a mechanism that can help us account for the pull of vice. In doing so, I offer this framework as a tool for holding ourselves accountable before a God who calls us to a life more rightly ordered.

Casey Spinks, Baylor University
Nostalgia or Accountability? Lasch, Bonhoeffer, and the State of Theological Retrieval

In his 1991 work *The True and Only Heaven*, the last book published in his lifetime, Christopher Lasch argued for a revival of elements of the classical republican tradition in American culture. Perhaps the most intrinsic element of this tradition is its priority of accountability: duties precede and ground rights, our traditions hold us to their obligations of citizenry, and thinking from the past deserves neither scolding critique nor misty nostalgia but rather the respect that puts our own mores in the present day to its accountability. The sweeping range of Lasch's intellectual history and his treatment of such thinkers as

Jonathan Edwards, Reinhold Niebuhr and Martin Luther King Jr. also suggests that Lasch's work is not just a populist-republican polemic but also a distinctly American political theology.

The aim of my paper is to put Lasch's work of political theology in the context of how Christians hold ourselves accountable to our own traditions. I will argue that much of current theology working for the revival of patristic and Nicene orthodoxy may be in danger of falling into the 'nostalgia' of which Lasch warns: a looking-back which serves in the end only to justify the current state of Christian theology and practice rather than call it to genuine account to its forebears. Instead, for Christian theologians to rightly engage with the thought preceding us, we must hold to it as 'memory' in the way Lasch describes.

Doing so will require holding each other more accountable to the thought of theologians before us, particularly in matters of Christian cultural norms like sexuality, family, and marriage. Much of Christian theology today is happy to recover the theological import of past thinkers, while it brushes whatever the present age considers embarrassing 'social conservatism' in their thought aside or reinterprets it as somehow aligned with current trends. But a truly accountable Christian theology should not do so. Instead, for Christian theology to practice accountability, it must see all these elements in past thinkers as intrinsically tied together, with the so-called 'social conservative' aspects having as much to say to our moment as the 'theological' ones.

To illustrate this issue, I will conclude with an observation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's comments on the family throughout his work, including *Sanctorum Communio* and *Ethics*, and the treatment of them by contemporary scholars as a hint of his own cultural bias of "northern German paternalism." I will argue, however, that his views arose foremost from his doctrine of *Stellvertretung* ("standing in for another"), which holds that a Christian represents Christ on behalf of the other in his or her station and vocation. Bonhoeffer's "paternalism," therefore, will come to light as a theological position, not a mere cultural assumption. And only by treating it as theological will today's interpreters of Bonhoeffer be able to grapple with how his theology as a whole does (or does not) hold us accountable today.

Jill Swisher, Concordia University Irvine

Lori Doyle, Concordia University Irvine

Quantifying Accountability: Contemporary Insights for Living Accountably Following an Empirical Study of Nehemiah as Servant Leader

Twenty-first-century organizations are leaning again on social responsibility as a necessary tool for success (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). One attribute of responsible leadership is accountability, yet this phenomenon is unquantifiable when discussed in terms of philosophical, relational, historical, or even theological examples. The authors posit that an empirical leadership scale can be applied to a biblical and historical figure to discover implications for living accountably in modern society. The validated eight dimensional measure, Servant Leadership Survey (SLS), was administered for Nehemiah with dimensional observations derived directly from the text of the English Standard Version of the Bible. Nehemiah was scored on the attributes of empowerment, standing back, accountability, forgiveness, courage, authenticity, humility, and stewardship. While accountability was only one attribute-of-interest, the practice of living accountably inherently borrows from supporting qualities such as those measured alongside evidence of accountability. The use of the empirical instrument in this study was supported by qualitative research methods to affirm Nehemiah's servant leadership attributes, including the quantification of an accountability dimension. This study also showed that the SLS can be used as a third-party observer instrument based on written text as observer data. In a time and place where accountability was devalued, Nehemiah's servant leadership attributes set him apart as an exemplar. From literal servant to literal leader, Nehemiah's behaviors showed how accountability to God and society was and still is a primary aspect and lived reality of servant leadership. This research-driven approach highlights contemporary implications for living, leading, and serving accountably.

Jerry Terrill, Houston Graduate School of Theology
Living Accountably in a Post-COVID-19 World

It is my purpose to show from scripture, ministers, priests, psychiatrists, poets, and writers how we can live accountably in the 21st Century.

In the year 1624, John Donne was meditating on the question of why an individual should be held accountable or should even be concerned regarding the death of a stranger (Meditations for Emergent Occasions). His insight is simple, clear, and as relevant today as it was 397 years ago. As humans living accountably, we mourn because:

No one is an island,
Entire of itself,
Each of us is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
...
Each person's death diminishes me,
For I am involved in humankind,
Therefore, do not send a neighbor to find out
For whom the death bell rings.
It rings for you.

As we are all children of God; we are all citizens of the world. Because we are all part of the world family, we are called by God to live accountably by loving one another. This means we are called to be as concerned for the safety, health, and happiness of others as we are concerned for our own health, safety, and happiness. In the Covid-19 era, we must remember the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), who as a stranger lived accountably by personally paying for the medical care and healing of a man from a different race and faith community.

To paraphrase psychiatrist Harry Stack Sullivan the definition of love is “that whenever you are as concerned about the safety, the satisfaction, or the happiness of another person as you are about your own safety, satisfaction, and happiness, there the state of love exists.” This is a wonderful definition of accountability.

Accountability does not mean that that we are perfect individuals. God will use us despite our imperfections. Mary Ann Evans, writing as George Elliot, stated: “The important work of moving the world forward does not wait to be done by perfect men.” This was certainly true of men such as King David, as seen in the parable of the ewe lamb told by Nathan to David in 2 Samuel 12:1-14.

The Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus was born a slave. He wrote, “People are distributed not by events, but by the views which they take of them.” As Epictetus put it, “Men feel disturbed not by things but by views which they take of them.” Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, who survived the Nazi death camps, wrote that “everything can be taken from a man except the greatest of the human freedoms, the freedom to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances.”

The intrusion of the unexpected is familiar to all of us. Such intrusions range from minor inconveniences to major catastrophes. From the breakdown of an automobile to the sudden illness or death of a loved one, we know what it means to have the unexpected happen to us. Who among us has not experienced some unexpected event that makes us remember the Scottish poet Robert Burns' famous line about “the best laid schemes of mice and men”? The American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr used to call such unexpected intrusions “the vicissitudes of life.” These vicissitudes provide an opportunity to live life accountably.

There is a Hassidic story about a man who went for a walk in the forest and got lost. He wandered for hours, unable to find his way back to town. He followed one dead end path after another. Finally, he came to another man walking in the forest. He cried out, “Thank God for another human being. Can you show me the way back to town?” The other man replied, “No, I'm lost too. But we can help each other in this way.” In this way we can live and share accountably with others which paths we have already tried.

Accountably we move from being inner-directed to outward-directed. Accountably we change from being self-centered to being other-centered.

The poet William Blake in the poem “Auguries of Innocence” writes how we can live accountably:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour

We grow accountably from scripture: NKJV Isaiah 45:3.

To live accountably reminds us of the disciple Dorcas, known as Tabitha, the Gazelle (Acts 9:36-46). She emphasizes to us that whatever our gender, whatever our work, we can live a life of accountably and perform miracles in the world that we are called to be a part of.

Kyle Thompson, Merion Mercy Academy

Sagely Accountability: A Necessity to Spiritual Success, a Truth Revealed through Psychology, History and the Star Wars Mythos

In this modern era, we seem to be faced with a crisis that stems from our ease of access to knowledge and information. With the advent of the Internet, we have become deluded into thinking that all one’s answers can be googled. Consequently, our society/culture has gravitated away from the need, or desire, for mentors. Rather than seeking wisdom and direction from another, many have embraced the fallacious notion that they can do it on their own. Ignorant to the fact that knowledge and wisdom are not identical, many miss valid and essential guidance that would aid them on their journey. This truth is even more relevant regarding one’s spiritual journey, or quest towards authenticity. A quest that cannot be completed without the aid and guidance of a trusted sage. A sage you are not only willing to listen to, but also be accountable to, for without accountability growth and progress will be stifled.

My research and analysis of the psychological, historical, and mythological aspects of obedience has led me to recognize a direct correlation with obedience and accountability, particularly when applied to one’s spiritual quest. Through an analysis of these areas one can recognize not only the importance of embracing a mentor, but the necessity of being accountable to them. Drawing upon figures like Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell you will see how there is a subconscious desire for a sage, and the necessity of being accountable to them if one wishes their journey to be successful. Along with the psychological perspective these truths can also be found within the rules of religious orders, for those entering religious life, or within the notion of spiritual direction, which is accessible to all. Finally, this truth is also found within myths, both ancient and modern, and will be illustrated through the modern mythos of *Star Wars*. By drawing upon these three areas, one will begin to recognize the value and importance of seeking out and obtaining a trusted mentor as well as the necessity of being accountable to them if one wishes to be successful in their journey to spiritual awakening and their authentic self.

With the notion that all answers can be googled it is no wonder that many have diverted their attention from finding a sagely guide to believing that information equates to understanding, and misunderstanding knowledge for wisdom. This presentation will bring awareness to the pitfalls of this mentality, but more importantly draw upon the truth that one’s success is not only tied to the guidance of another, but also being accountable to them. Bringing awareness of this truth to the surface will hopefully lead more individuals to seek out a sage, follow their guidance and thus further progress forward on their spiritual quest towards authenticity.

Kenneth Van Treuren, Baylor University

Professional Engineers and Accountability

Engineers make things that improve peoples' quality of life. How does the public have the confidence that the car they drive or the plane they fly on or the bridge that they cross is safe? We use these

things every day and do not even think about it. Why? It is because engineering is a profession and those in engineering are held to higher standards.

The high standards come with accountability. To be certified, a professional license is required. The requirements for licensing are controlled by the state, district, or country in which the engineer practices. Thus, engineers are held accountable by these governing bodies. Only a licensed engineer can sign off on blueprints or building plans. Their signature assures that the plans have been certified to follow any US Codes or Regulations. While there are engineering disciplines where this is required, there are many engineering disciplines, such as the auto or aviation industry, where licensing is not required. What then?

Most engineers begin their career by attending an academic program that has been fully accredited by an accrediting organization, such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). Periodic evaluations by this organization using experienced engineers assures the public that anyone who graduates from an accredited institution has the necessary foundational knowledge to be engineer in that discipline. Often, upon graduation, students will take the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) Exam which, if passed, also indicates that the individual has achieved an acceptable level of basic and applied knowledge. Most engineers never take this step of the FE test and licensing. What guides these engineers?

One such area is that of standards and codes which assure the quality of something being designed or made. These standards are published by an engineering discipline and outline procedures that should be followed.

Engineers are also required to uphold the professional ethics of their discipline. Most engineering professional societies have a series of statements that engineers must follow if they are to be part of the profession. These are minimum standards that cover their professional behavior.

If engineers do not follow these guidelines or topics, accountability is usually left to the courts to decide. The courts will address both accountability and responsibility. How much responsibility must we take for our actions as engineers? What is the right thing to do as opposed to what is legally required?

Where does this fit in the Christian tradition? Since we Christians who enter the profession of engineering see this as a calling from God, this presents and even higher standard to which we are held. Approaching our work as an engineer with this Christian mindset should guide all our actions. Our Christian foundation might also be influential in deciding what areas of engineering in which to work. Accountability to God with our vocation and our lives becomes the foundation for how we live our lives and the legacy we leave for those who come after us.

William Whitmore, University of Gloucestershire/Mercersburg Academy

A Shared Task: Sports Chaplaincy and the Need for a Communal Approach to Accountability

In recent years, the field of sports chaplaincy has grown exponentially, both in terms of practical engagement and academic analysis. In turn, the structures underpinning the role of the sports chaplain have come under increased scrutiny, including those concerning accountability. Drawing upon empirical (qualitative) findings from a small-scale, cross-national research project of sports chaplains in elite football (specifically the National Football League and the English Premier League), this paper discusses how a lack of formal accountability structures played out in the everyday lives of respondents. The paper focuses on NFL-based chaplains and the support structures and reporting protocols that were in place in terms of personal accountability.

Emphasizing the collective nature of Christian ministry and the need for communal accountability, the paper is framed around Jesus' sending of His disciples (Luke 10:1-23), a task that was not done in isolation. Findings demonstrate that accountability for respondents was largely 'informal', be it from host organizations or sending bodies, such as para-church organizations and/or congregations. A typical feature of which was a lack of engagement or understanding around host organization reporting protocols. The paper discusses potential factors and forces that led to the emergence of these informal accountability structures, the potential shortcomings of this approach for the chaplains concerned, and the wider consequences for sports chaplaincy per se. In conclusion, the paper suggests that for sports chaplaincy to reach its full potential, both pastorally and missionally, accountability must be seen as a shared task, between chaplain, sending body and host organization.

John Wolfe, Dixie State University

Rethinking the Pinnacle of Academic Excellence: Should We Be Accountable to Novices?

What is the highest goal of academic appointments? To put it another way, what expectation do we have for philosophers, theologians, and other traditional academics who have reached the highest level of their discipline? A generalized response would be that the ‘pinnacle’ academic position is one at an R-1 institution. This job would carry with it a high research and publication expectation, and have a teaching load that is focused on teaching upper division or graduate students. It is not unreasonable to expect that this position would have, at most, a responsibility to teach two classes. More likely, they are teaching less, with regular research sabbaticals as part of their routine. This path seems reasonable when it is assumed that the academic achieving these heights has a primary obligation, or is accountable, to other members of the discipline or the discipline itself. The ‘best of us’ should be focused on the work in the discipline we practice. We are accountable to our colleagues and peers.

In contrast, one might suspect that there is a stigma associated with teaching courses that focus on those either just beginning discipline studies, or outside the discipline altogether. Consider the attitudes surrounding GE classes. GE classes are disproportionately taught by junior faculty, graduate students, part time instructors, and/or visiting/temporary positions. At DSU, my institution, only 29% of GE Biology courses are taught by tenure track faculty. Philosophy courses fare worse, with only 17% of GE philosophy courses being taught by tenured faculty. Introductory level classes are reserved often for a certain group of educators, and positions that predominately focus on this type of classes or student group is seen as, at minimum, less prestigious. If ‘the best of us’ focus predominately on research and discipline specific teaching, what does that mean for the overall ‘health’ of the disciplines we practice? To frame the question in another way, would our disciplines (and ourselves as practitioners) benefit by holding ourselves accountable to the well-being novices and those outside the discipline?

This discussion attempts to explore these questions in three general ways. First, I attempt to explore the possibility that there is a flaw in how we hold ourselves accountable to our discipline. As suggested in the opening paragraphs of the proposal, there seems to be a distinct notion of academic success that is represented in the expectations we have for junior faculty and distinguished professors. Lower division classes, and the students in those classes, are often considered to be less of a priority for discipline specific success. We’ve ‘made it’ when we are distant (and therefore less accountable) to those outside the discipline.

Second, I explore the possibility of a Christian approach to discipline accountability. Using scripture and the larger historical Christian tradition, I explore how figures such as Thomas Aquinas, Peter Cantor, and Augustine of Hippo perceived the role of discipline practice (such as Theology) with relation to novice engagement (preaching). I suspect that when accountability shifts from simply “duty to discipline” to “duty to God through discipline” there is a need for a fundamental reevaluation of how we perceive success.

Finally, I examine the pragmatic benefits of a “success shift” in the discipline. By rethinking what success looks like for our academic disciplines we provide the opportunity for new interdisciplinary interactions, new pedagogy for upper division and graduate classes, and a greater connection to God. By holding ourselves accountable to the students who are ‘the least of these’ we provide the opportunity to grow the discipline, and improve our own spiritual walk.

Gibran Zogbi, Warner Pacific University

Embracing Accountability through Virtue in Accounting and Finance

Embracing accountability as creatures of God suggests a theology of work. A creature made in the image and likeness of God is accountable to God to become all that he or she can be. That is virtuous. Plato and Aristotle discerned how to acquire virtues through practice. Accountability has evolved dramatically in the post-modern era. Business professions like accounting and finance were born in recent history and are products of post-modern evolution. If they are to endure, these professions must embrace much more than their somewhat extreme deontological and utilitarian philosophies. They must discover and embrace the virtues. Classic virtues profess that who we become is more important than what we have or what we do. A

utilitarian or deontologist might initially think that reverting to virtues in business somehow lowers productive standards due to a lack of compatibility with scientific measurement or cost-benefit analysis. This study suggested just the opposite. It suggested that virtue ethics raised the bar for individuals, their respective organizations and professions. Furthermore, this study suggested that capitalism, which is under scrutiny in modern times, may not be the obvious source of economic turmoil. Rather, the lack of virtue within capitalism may be the culprit. This qualitative narrative study set out to explore the vision that accounting professors had of teaching virtue ethics in their courses. The study sample consisted of eight professors who have taught accounting and related finance courses full time for at least 2 years at an institution that grants four-year (bachelor) degrees in Accounting. Participants included professors from two public and one private university. The methodology allowed for the discernment of meanings that emerged from participants' lived experiences of virtue ethics and ethics in general. Analysis of resulting themes and constructionist perceptions created a narrative conclusion that was a joint creation between the participants and the researcher. Interviews with each participant around guiding questions were the source of the narrative text. Descriptive themes included overall instabilities around ethics, inconsistent understandings of professionalism, and some uneasiness discussing conscience and religion. Catalysts for change were also identified that related to former students facing "Enron moments" and some current successes with virtue ethics. The study concluded that the vision of virtue ethics in accounting was a consequence of the true purpose of accounting and the true purpose of higher education. Accounting's best purpose extended beyond deontology and utility and the traditional purpose of higher education extended beyond technical information and employment opportunities. At the time of this study the researcher was not aware of any narrative style investigation of virtue ethics directed at accounting professors.