

IN THIS ISSUE

We are pleased to present the latest issue of *Bible and the Contemporary World*, which includes dissertations by Mildred Hamill, Katie Ormerod, and Misty Krasawski, and a research note by David Conway.

Leading off the issue, however, is Eric Stoddart's tribute to Mark Johnson, who was so important a part of the distance learning program for many years. Mark, who died in 2022 after a short illness, had a way of being both a mentor and a friend to all who came in contact with him, myself included, and Eric's remembrance brings smiles to our faces even as we continue to miss Mark. And, fittingly, each of the pieces in this article has its own seditious tint, by proposing new, theologically based, ways of looking at cultural, social, or legal phenomena, which would have Mark himself smiling.

PROPHETIC IMAGINATION IN AMANDA GORMAN'S *THE HILL WE CLIMB*

Amanda Gorman thrilled us with her original poem "The Hill We Climb," delivered at President Joe Biden's inauguration in January 2021. The popular press celebrated the poem as a tribute to and call for a renewed inclusive democracy, and it is certainly that. Hamill's article, however, draws on the work of Walter Brueggemann, Abraham Heschel, and others to demonstrate how Gorman infused the poem with a rich prophetic imagination, falling squarely within a long tradition of poetry as theology.

A QUEER THEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO FAT FLOURISHING

Katie Ormerod's article takes Lisa Isherwood's queer theology and applies it to a completely different context: the problems, prejudices, and challenges faced by people deemed "fat." Ormerod's article identifies four ways in which Isherwood's ground-breaking work on queerness provides insights that could lead to a higher level of flourishing for fat people, as well as ways in which liberation theology and disability theology might be similarly useful.

TOWARD A CHRISTIAN MATERNAL FEMINIST THEOLOGY

Misty Krasawski's article poses a subversive question: "*Is there a means by which we might move past patriarchy toward a Christian feminist theology that is pro- rather than anti-maternal?*"

Krawsawski posits a uniquely theological virtue in the quality of *vulnerability* to develop a “theology of the womb” that attempts to unite fundamental concerns held by feminists, theologians, and mothers.

RESEARCH NOTE – THE FUTURE OF AI IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Honorary Research Assistant David E. G. Conway tells us about his current research into the use of Artificial Intelligence technology in the criminal justice system, prominently (but not exclusively) in sentencing decisions. David poses the question whether the use of such technology sacrifices Christian virtues of justice, mercy, and redemption in the name of economic efficiency.

Daniel Rentfro
Managing Editor