

BRACH S. JENNINGS

Transfiguring a  
Theologia Crucis  
through James Cone

*Dogmatik in der Moderne*

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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48





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through James Cone

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for Dr. Carol Ruth Jacobson  
(December 19, 1956–July 17, 2021)  
beloved teacher and mentor



## Foreword by Reggie L. Williams

In the over century and a half since Harriet Tubman described feeling propelled by her faith to return multiple times to Southern United States to lead over three hundred enslaved Black people from bondage to freedom, scholars have taken up the task of making sense of her faith tradition. When one looks at this tradition, one is not simply examining the faith of Christians who happen to be black, but of the faith of a people who had an embodied theological epistemology that challenged white supremacy in all its forms. Though Harriet Tubman is rarely named explicitly, the tradition to which she belonged has been the subject of scholarly inquiry through the disciplines of Black Church studies, Black Liberation theology, Black Social Gospel studies, or more commonly, Black theology. Such is the case with this study by Dr. Brach S. Jennings, which proposes a contemporary *theologia crucis* through the founder of Black Liberation theology, James H. Cone. The tradition of the Christian faith that is invoked in this study through referencing Dietrich Bonhoeffer's encounter with the black Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem and culminating in James H. Cone's Black Theology of Liberation, explores a *theologia crucis* as a theological epistemology to challenge global white supremacy, and to thus propose a new hermeneutic at the intersection of academy, society, and church, in a tradition going back to Harriet Tubman.

When it is done well, an interaction with black theology opens researcher and reader alike to an embodied epistemology that critiques the sacred/secular split that is so often seen in theologies related to the so-called Lutheran "Two Kingdoms" doctrine. As Jennings's study argues, then, the soteriological claims of Christ encompass all areas of life because they must do so if Christ is risen to the glory of God the Creator in the all-encompassing power of the Holy Spirit. The healing work of the Gospel must then become embodied in this world where sin is social, political, and structural, in addition to giving hope for the world to come. Otherwise, the Gospel is merely a soporific aid for evil principalities and powers of this present darkness. There is no middle ground.

Jennings's study further addresses how the black church tradition that Bonhoeffer met in New York, and that reared James Cone in Bearden, Arkansas, connected Jesus Christ to the concrete personal and political suffering of black bodies. Not as a celebration of suffering, but in recognition that Christ was crucified in a way analogous to those who know oppression in a society structured

by white supremacy. Therefore, while James Cone did not claim to have a seamless connection to the Protestant Reformation as a study on the *theologia crucis* might imply, Jennings carefully and critically explores how a *theologia crucis* can be transfigured through Cone's theology, by beginning in Martin Luther's *Heidelberg Disputation*, transforming the theme through Karl Barth's *Erwählungslehre* in 2.2 of the Church Dogmatics, further developing and critiquing Barth's *Erwählungslehre* through Dietrich Bonhoeffer's later theology and Jürgen Moltmann's *Crucified God*, and concluding by reading James Cone's Black Theology of Liberation as a transfigured *theologia crucis*. Throughout the project, Jennings explores the thematic transformation and transfiguration of a *theologia crucis* as it takes shape in relationship to different twentieth-century theologies, and how hermeneutics and material dogmatics relate to an embodied, cruciform epistemology in a transfigured *theologia crucis* through Cone. Jennings thus shows how a contemporary, transfigured *theologia crucis* through James Cone's Black Theology of Liberation is a scholarly argument for addressing God's relationship to oppressed humanity worldwide, and the community of the body of Christ that is responsible for sharing the gospel with a hurting world, the Church.

Luther's distinction between the *theologus crucis* and *theologus gloriae* in the *Heidelberg Disputation* makes clear the kind of theological project that he thought meaningful for the proper knowledge of God in relation to the question of predestination. One was to look no further than the wounds of the crucified Christ to know experientially that one was justified in the sight of a gracious God. Jennings's constructive transformation of a mystical *theologia crucis* from the early Martin Luther through Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Jürgen Moltmann, which then culminates in a constructive transfiguration through James Cone, shows how a *theologia crucis* morphs from the question of individual sin and guilt in the early Luther into political advocacy for and solidarity with the oppressed as the hermeneutical ground for a *theologia crucis* today through Cone's Black Theology of Liberation. Therefore, the notion of recognizing the hidden things of God through suffering and shame in Luther's *theologia crucis* indebted to late medieval passion mysticism is "transfigured" through Cone to a moral imperative for Christians in the world. Bonhoeffer's concept of *Stellvertretung* (vicarious representative action) is where this moral imperative begins to be found in this study, and where we see a concrete connection to Cone's ethical and political concerns. This is also why Cone refers to Bonhoeffer often throughout his theology, culminating in *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*.

Jennings's study thus helps us to see how Reformation theology beginning with Martin Luther is transfigured by Cone's black theological emphasis on embodied encounter as the departure point for determining moral faithfulness to the Triune God today. Jennings shows how Cone argues for an ethical interweaving of faith and politics by reference to what I call the "nefarious incongruity" of Christianity's central symbol, the cross. Christ's sacrificial death be-

came identified with the crucifixion of the negro, as illustrated by the burning cross of the Ku Klux Klan, or the Christian efforts to manufacture and maintain whites-only spaces. Not unlike the German efforts to secure *Lebensraum*, the Christian moral efforts to secure exclusively white Christian spaces include the practice of scapegoating the social and political “bio-contaminates,” black bodies.

Practically, it meant that the actual symbol of white racist Christianity was not the savior Jesus on a cross for the sins of the world, but black people themselves on crosses, in ropes, and incarcerated, to secure idyllic white spaces free from the “sin” of racial bio-contamination. This history shows the need to recognize Christ in the suffering of those placed in harm’s way by oppressive political regimes. If God was with Christ on the cross, then God was and is with black people who suffer oppression and injustice from global white supremacy. The goal here, then, is not simply to acknowledge the suffering of God in the world, but to act in opposition to it. Thus, Christians are called to intervene for the oppressed. As Jesus says, “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me” (Matt. 25: 35–36, NRSV).

To engage the black Christian tradition represented by the theology of James Cone is to enter a space where the meaning of Bonhoeffer’s “Life Together” is derived from the practice of embodied reasoning about God and life today. Therefore, the starting point for theological knowledge is embodied human life with the Triune God and one another, in opposition to every injustice and oppression. This is where we must locate the research that Dr. Brach S. Jennings offers to us in *Transfiguring a Theologia Crucis through James Cone*.

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## Preface

“If you want to be a systematic theologian like myself and others, you *better* be reading Barth and Tillich and Bultmann!” His voice sounded just as I imagined it would from reading his theology for three years at that time, but that did not make his tone any less intense. I had just asked James Cone what he thought of me doing additional master’s level work in English literature on Stephen King before proceeding to a doctorate in systematic theology. After admonishing me to read the authors that are arguably Cone’s “big three” of twentieth-century dialectical theology, he told of his own love of literature, particularly Joyce Carol Oates and James Baldwin. But literature (Stephen King or otherwise) was not work I was to do at that moment; according to him, I was to be a systematic theologian and “stay on the path.”

We then proceeded to the topic of Martin Luther. “Lutherans domesticate Luther! I read a lot of Luther in graduate school because of my teacher Philip Watson! Luther was so radical they wanted to kill him!” Cone’s admonishments in October 2016 set me on my way to working on a contemporary *theologia crucis* for the twenty-first century. They also compelled me, a white, Queer Lutheran, to avoid domesticating the radical potential of a Lutheran *theologia crucis*. My first published journal article was a constructive *theologia crucis* from Tillich, and my second a constructive *theologia crucis* from Bultmann’s demythologizing essay. This left only Barth untouched from Cone’s “big three,” a rather large gap which the present study attempts to address by exploring Barth’s *Erwählungslehre* in 2.2 from the *Church Dogmatics* as a transformation of a *theologia crucis* in texts from the early Luther on the way to a transfigured *theologia crucis* in Cone. My engagement with Barth in the present study is thus indebted to Cone for setting me on the way to a contemporary *theologia crucis* through Cone’s Black Theology of Liberation, which has hopefully come to fruition in the present study.



## Acknowledgements

This study is a revised version of my doctoral dissertation in systematic theology, accepted by the Protestant Theology Faculty of the University of Tübingen in Summer 2022. I am grateful to Professor Dr. Christian Danz, Professor Dr. Jörg Dierken, Professor Dr. Hans-Peter Großhans, and Professor Dr. Friederike Nüssel for including my study in the *Dogmatik in der Moderne* series from Mohr Siebeck Publishers in Tübingen. Thanks also to my editor Tobias Stäbler, and to Dr. Katharina Gutekunst, who first considered this project for publication with Mohr Siebeck.

This study could not have been written without the encouragement, guidance, and challenge of many people who supported me along the various stages of research and writing. Deep appreciation first goes to my doctoral advisors Professor Dr. Jürgen Moltmann, Professor Dr. Volker Leppin, and Professor Dr. Linda E. Thomas. I never dreamed I would write a doctoral dissertation under Jürgen Moltmann, and the experience of doing so is the honor of my life. He showed me not only the theological and pastoral riches of Karl Barth's *Erwählungslehre*, but also how to live the sapiential *theologia crucis* I have written about in this study. When I found myself struggling from the demands of doctoral research as well as life's trials and tribulations in Spring 2021, Professor Moltmann pointed me to the resurrection of the crucified Christ. I then experienced a theology of hope rooted in a sapiential *theologia crucis* for the first time. Nearly every month during my doctoral studies, Professor Moltmann would also give me "just for fun" theological reading, which nourished me in both mind and spirit. Finally, due to Professor Moltmann's influence, I have seen my theology expand toward an ecumenical Christian theology, while still being broadly situated within the Lutheranism I treasure.

Ranging from debates early in the morning to late at night, Volker Leppin was my constant intellectual sparring partner and companion on the journey of writing this study. He never ceased giving me recommendations for excellent historical, theological, and philosophical literature that broadened my intellectual horizons beyond what is written in this study, and he led me to an appreciation for Wolfhart Pannenberg. This is in addition to the many resources he introduced me to for an historically sensitive constructive theological investigation and interpretation of Martin Luther's *theologia crucis*. While we do not share an interest in Karl Barth, it is due to our many debates and exchanges over

the last four years that I have written this study as a constructive contribution to fundamental theology. Finally, Professor Leppin is responsible for officially leading me to the United Protestant Church in Baden, which has given me a pastoral future in Germany. This is his greatest gift to me.

Linda E. Thomas began as my mentor at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, upon the death of my first doctoral advisor Vitor Westhelle. She introduced me to Womanist theology, the relationship between theology and anthropology, and deepened my appreciation for James Cone's Black Theology of Liberation. Professor Thomas was not only a wonderful academic resource, but also a true mentor in that she taught me as much about life as about academic research during my studies. Our frequent conversations together about James Cone, the Womanist tradition, theological anthropology, and current events, all in spiritual connection with Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, have sharpened my work to always attempt to be attuned to concrete human suffering and liberation. Professor Thomas's influence thus helped give me the confidence to shape this study around James Cone.

My three doctoral mentors formed a network of support around me to help me become the best systematic theologian and future pastor possible, and for this I am immensely grateful. They are, in my estimation, the best doctoral committee one could have wished for, and I hope this study shows the influence of all three of my trinity of advisors.

Thanks also to Professor Dr. Oswald Bayer, who graciously served as a "method consultant," when I was struggling with the question of how to read Luther responsibly from an overall constructive lens. Professor Bayer opened his Tübingen apartment to me just before the COVID-19 pandemic began for an evening discussing Luther's theology, twentieth-century systematic theology, and the music of Johann Sebastian Bach over red wine and Swabian pretzels. We later connected again at the Lutherakademie in Sondershausen in Fall 2021, where I was privileged to hear him lecture about his understanding of promise in Luther's theology. While I have gone my own way in this study, I hope Professor Bayer's influence on my interpretation of Luther's own theology is apparent, even where it is not stated explicitly.

A special note of thanks goes to Professor Dr. Gesche Linde, who very graciously stepped in with only five days' notice to examine me in systematic theology for the doctoral Rigororsum in July 2022, and who has encouraged me toward future scholarly work in systematic theology.

Professor Dr. Guillermo Hansen, Professor Dr. Lois Malcolm, and Professor Dr. Patrick Keifert from Luther Seminary are also to be warmly acknowledged, as the ideas about Luther's *theologia crucis* in relation to consolation and justice-seeking I first articulated in my Master of Theology oral thesis defense in April 2017 have finally come to fruition in the present study.

Deep thanks and appreciation go to Professor Dr. Heinz-Dieter Neef. Professor Neef gifted me almost all of Jürgen Moltmann's books in German, as well as dozens of texts dealing with dialectical theology from his personal library, both in December 2021 and February 2022. Professor Neef's generosity strengthened this study's use of German sources and has given me intellectual and spiritual nourishment for my ongoing theological and pastoral work. Further appreciation goes to Professor Dr. Reggie Williams, who graciously sent me a copy of his book *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus*, enabling me to write the chapter on Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Professor Williams is also to be thanked for honoring me with a Foreword to this study. Finally, warm thanks and appreciation goes to Barry Hopkins and the JKM Library in Chicago, for graciously finding secondary sources for me that were difficult to obtain in Tübingen.

Financially this study would have been impossible without the support of several organizations, both in Germany and the United States. The Claussen-Simon-Stiftung in Hamburg, Germany awarded me the Dissertation Plus Scholarship for three years, which granted me the financial resources to pursue doctoral research full time. Special thanks to Dr. Lukas Hoffmann and Tim Hoff for believing in my project from its inception. Professor Dr. Volker Drecoll and the Evangelisches Stift in Tübingen welcomed me originally as an exchange student from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and then as a doctoral student in Tübingen, providing a place to live for my first 2.5 years in Tübingen, and an ecumenical scholarship for my first year as a Tübingen doctoral student. I also had the opportunity to teach the theologies of James Cone and Eberhard Jüngel to undergraduate and master's level students in the Stift, which was a true joy. The Eric W. Gritsch Memorial Fund awarded me the Fellowship for Reformation Studies in 2019, which originally enabled me to come to Tübingen to study with Jürgen Moltmann. One semester abroad turned in to me transferring from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago to the University of Tübingen to complete my doctorate, and toward integration into Germany long-term. Therefore, I am deeply grateful for the Gritsch Fund's initial support of my work. Finally, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America awarded me two grants during my studies at LSTC, and then one in Tübingen, which also supported me. For the printing costs of this monograph, I am grateful for the support of the Eric W. Gritsch Memorial Fund, the United Protestant Church in Baden, and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD).

Several friends from Germany and the United States further supported me as I embraced the long and often lonely journey of bringing this study to life whilst simultaneously restarting my life in Germany. The many conversations, exchanges, and debates with these friends from both sides of the Atlantic will remain with me long-term as I continue in pastoral work and academic theology. Angela Baggarley taught me about the differences and similarities between Ger-

man theology and US seminary theology, as well as German and US culture overall, both during our time together in the Evangelisches Stift, Tübingen and after. She became my “methodology midwife,” and I would not have made it through the writing of the Introduction of this study without her. We also became flat mates outside of the Evangelisches Stift, and I am glad to have again shared a space with her, including yet another “unmotivated wall,” as we called it. Paul Wellingerhof became my constant companion for adventures in Tübingen and in his hometown of Marburg, both for study sessions and late-night movie nights having as little to do with theology as possible (which can be difficult when one is friends with me). He does not study theology, and I think every theologian needs a best friend who lives and operates outside of theology circles. This outlet was much needed, and so appreciated. If I might have piqued his interest in what I consider to be the endlessly fascinating world of systematic theology, this would be a bonus.

David Schmalzhaf, my first friend in Germany, was not only an intellectual debate partner about systematic theology and church history for multiple-hour sessions, but also someone to recharge from academia with through watching *The X-Files* together and discussing art, music, literature, and life. Johannes Wilhelm helped me to pass my Hebrew, Greek, and Latin exams through several weekly study sessions, and introduced me to Swabian culture and tasty homemade Swabian cuisine. Simon Gottowik helped make life in the Evangelisches Stift, Tübingen fun and memorable. Even though we have both moved on from the Stift, he remains one of the reasons I will always think fondly of that community. Theodor Sinner confronted me with a theology both similar to and far away from my own, thus helping to sharpen my arguments in the present study. In addition, I shared many fun times with him over beer and wine. My friend and sparring partner Josia Sturm is responsible for causing me to admit I do ultimately have some form of metaphysics around the existence of God and the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, even as I have been critical toward metaphysics in the present study. Further “Stiftlers” who accompanied me during the research and writing of this study are Benjamin Waldmann, Kilian Schrenk, Marco Elischer, Jonathan Krauter, Lorenz Walch, Aaron Albrecht, Nils Kassing, Danilo Panteleit, Miram Wien, Leander Köpnick, and Jan-Christoph Schowalter. Through meals, discussions, walks, and taking part in social gatherings, these friends helped me further realize that even when I felt lonely as a foreigner in Germany, I was not alone. Finally, the members of Volker Leppin’s Church History Doctoral Colloquium are to be thanked for many late nights of fun debate, and encouragement of my work, especially Dr. Jonathan Reinert, Anja Bork, Alex Gripenotrog, and Alex Heindel.

On the other side of the Atlantic, Dr. David Congdon became my academic “big brother” by challenging me to express my ideas clearly and thoroughly, as well as introducing me to many new publications about dialectical theology. I

have learned so much from him and have found future directions for my theological work thanks to his gracious engagement with me. Stephen Morrison and I share many common intellectual and personal interests, and our conversations since Spring 2021 have been some of the richest theological exchanges I have had throughout my studies with a peer. He is a dedicated laborer in Karl Barth's theology, and I am grateful for his companionship as I, too, labored in this theological world for this study. Ole Schenk and I conversed by Zoom almost weekly once the pandemic hit. His theological insights about Lutheranism, and particularly the theology of Vitor Westhelle, have been invaluable to my work, especially related to hermeneutics. I am grateful our friendship from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago has continued long-term. River Cook Needham is a dear friend from LSTC, and she has been a continuous source of support since I came to LSTC in 2017. Our frequent, and now trans-Atlantic, conversations have been a source of delight on the good days, as well as consolation during the hard times involved with emigrating to a new country. Dr. Jeffrey Meyers is another friend from LSTC who came along with me virtually to Tübingen, and challenged me to relate my intellectual observations to the life of a teacher. Further, he graciously corrected several typographical errors in parts 2 and 3 of this study for me. Tracy Bradley and Dan and Amelia Collins are all to be thanked for their care of my two cats when it became clear I was not returning to the US, as well as for finding the cats new homes. These were not easy responsibilities to take on, and I am grateful to them for their willingness to see this through on my behalf. Dr. Christine Wenderoth, Dr. Tom Haverly, and Dr. Kadi Billman are also to be thanked for initial cat care at LSTC during my first semester as an LSTC exchange student in Tübingen.

My now 16.5-years-and-counting conversation with Dr. Phil Jones continues to enrich me, even as it has become less frequent due to my relocation. From my first history professor in college at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, to now long-term mentor and friend, I remain deeply shaped by Phil, both academically and personally. Ryan Jerome is a friend from my Luther Seminary days who continues to enrich my life from afar by keeping me up to date with parish life in the US and engaging in a theological exchange that has now been going for over seven years. Peter Clark has also been a good friend since my time in St. Paul, Minnesota, and I am grateful for our continued discussions that have broadened beyond systematic theology.

Returning to this side of the Atlantic, I was pleased to meet Thorben Hennig at Jürgen Moltmann's 95th birthday symposium in October 2021, and we enjoyed several late-night conversations together over Zoom as I was finishing this study. Finally, Beate Fülle and I enjoyed many walks in the Tübingen hills, and many laughs, from Christmas 2021 until the end of my doctoral studies. She reminded me that I had a future beyond university, and was thus a source of encouragement on the days when I thought this study would not see an end.

Perhaps no doctoral study would be complete without a significant setback, and mine came near the end of writing my doctoral dissertation in January 2022 when I accidentally spilled water on my laptop and short-circuited it. The generosity of the following people enabled me to buy a refurbished computer in excellent condition and to finish writing: Pamela Johnson Davis, Cora Rose, Stephen Morrison, Lisa Goodenough, Peter Clark, Dr. David Balch, Eric Clarkson, Phil and Donna Jones, Thorben Hennig, Christine Wenderoth, Morgan Gates, Gabriel Nicolae, Paul Wellingerhof, Beate Fülle, and Bonnie Ring.

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This study is dedicated, in loving memory, to my teacher and mentor, Dr. Carol Ruth Jacobson (1956–2021). Carol served as my advisor at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California for my Master of Divinity degree, was the person who first introduced me to Jürgen Moltmann's theology in Spring 2013, and was a tireless advocate for me to pursue a doctorate in systematic theology. She died tragically on July 17, 2021, just after her retirement from PLTS from an intense and short battle with stage 4 ovarian cancer. While I am deeply saddened Carol cannot read the results of this study, I am comforted by the hope that she has been resurrected into eternal life with Jesus Christ. I trust I shall see her again one day in the New Creation when the Lord Jesus will wipe away every tear from the eyes of all who grieve the loss of their loved ones (Cf. Rev. 21:4).

Pforzheim, 13 May 2023

Brach S. Jennings

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### Part 3

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## List of Abbreviations

CD	Karl Barth, <i>Church Dogmatics</i>
KD	Karl Barth, <i>Kirchliche Dogmatik</i>
DBW	Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke
DBWE	Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, English Edition
CG	Jürgen Moltmann, <i>The Crucified God</i>
GG	Jürgen Moltmann, <i>Der Gekreuzigte Gott</i>
LW	Martin Luther's Works, American Edition
WA	D. Martin Luthers Werke, Weimarer Ausgabe
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version of the Bible



# Introduction

## 1. Methodology

### *Research Question*

This study is a constructive investigation of the theme of *theologia crucis*, and attempts to answer the following research question: “how is the theme of *theologia crucis* in the early Martin Luther transfigured through James Cone’s Black Theology of Liberation?”<sup>1</sup> This question is posed for reading a *theologia crucis* in texts originating from the early Luther as transformed through selected twentieth-century theologians (Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Jürgen Moltmann), in order to propose a contemporary transfigured *theologia crucis* through Cone’s Black Theology of Liberation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Selected texts from Luther will be examined with an emphasis on Luther’s pastoral application of the theme of *theologia crucis*. To ensure a manageable amount of material, the phrase “the early Martin Luther” is used principally to denote the years from the *Heidelberg Disputation* of 1518 to *Freedom of a Christian* in 1520, with the study additionally examining *On Bound Choice* of 1525 in relation to themes from the earlier texts.

<sup>2</sup> The term “transformation” is used here to signify a change in the theme of *theologia crucis* through Karl Barth’s *Erwählungslehre*, which is then developed and critiqued further through Bonhoeffer’s and Moltmann’s theologies. The term “transfiguration” is used to signify how a *theologia crucis* is further re-shaped by James Cone’s theology from a transformed *theologia crucis* through Barth, Bonhoeffer, and Moltmann. By exploring the transformation of a *theologia crucis* through Barth’s *Erwählungslehre*, the developments and critiques of Barth through Bonhoeffer and Moltmann, and Cone’s theology as a transfigured *theologia crucis*, the study explores where “traces” (see below, n. 6) of the theme of *theologia crucis* beginning with Luther’s *Heidelberg Disputation* can be found in the arguments for a contemporary transfigured *theologia crucis* through Cone. The term “transformation” is indebted to Volker Leppin’s historical thesis about the relationship between the Middle Ages and the Reformation and is adapted for the present study. See Volker Leppin, *Transformationen: Studien zu den Wandlungsprozessen in Theologie und Frömmigkeit zwischen Spätmittelalter und Reformation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), and Volker Leppin and Stefan Michels, eds., *Reformation als Transformation? Interdisziplinäre Zugänge zum Transformationsparadigma als historiographischer Beschreibungskategorie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022). The term “transfiguration” is indebted to Vítor Westhelle and is explained below in the section addressing hermeneutics for the theme of *theologia crucis*. Finally, the term “constructive theology” and related synonyms is used throughout this study to denote an approach to fundamental theology at the intersection of hermeneutics, material dogmatics, historical theology, and ethics that is concerned with the contemporary construction and development of a theological theme.

### *Method*

This study examines a chosen theme from within selected texts and authors to explore the chosen theme's possible contemporary ethical and political relevance. The theorists drawn from for this study's method are Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, and all relate to deconstruction in literary studies.<sup>3</sup> The present study has sought to remain broadly related to deconstruction for a method of textual analysis rather than only drawing from Jacques Derrida, in order that all three theorists named above can be incorporated for this study's application of deconstruction.

The present study applies textual deconstruction through a method of close reading to examine where the chosen theme being investigated for the present study can be found in primary texts, as well as how a text might be interpreted in ways different than an original author intended. Said close reading as a basis for textual interpretations that might be different from an author's original intention corresponds to Roland Barthes' work about texts and authors.<sup>4</sup> Secondary sources are then drawn from to show how others have critically read and understood a primary text for insights both congruent to and different from the original author, with the realization that absolute authorial intent is elusive.<sup>5</sup> This admission corresponds to Jacques Derrida's concept of the "trace" in relation to the "erasure of concepts" in *Of Grammatology*.

What I call the erasure of concepts ought to mark the places of that future mediation. For example, the value of the transcendental arche [archie] must make its necessity felt before letting itself be erased. The concept of arche-trace must comply with both that necessity and that erasure. It is in fact contradictory and not acceptable within the logic of identity. The trace is not only the disappearance of origin – within the discourse that we sustain and according to the path we follow it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by a nonorigin, the trace, which thus becomes the origin of the origin.<sup>6</sup>

Related to Derrida's notion of the "trace," written texts are emphasized in the present study, understanding an author's intention for a text as one among numerous possible textual readings, per Derrida's argument of "there is no outside text."<sup>7</sup> The arguments presented here are based on a close reading of primary

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<sup>3</sup> The overview of literary theory consulted for the present study is K.M. Martin, ed., *Twentieth Century Literary Theory: A Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill & Yang, 1977), 142–48.

<sup>5</sup> As well as Barthes, this understanding relates to Jacques Derrida's notion of textual deconstruction. See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>7</sup> This phrase is also translated into English from French as "there is nothing outside of the text." *Ibid.*, 158.

texts and a synthesis of secondary sources in order to propose how said primary texts might be understood in relation to the present study's chosen theme, and how the chosen theme can then be interpreted for contemporary ethical and political concerns from a close reading of primary texts and synthesis of secondary sources.

Derrida's phrase "there is no outside text" is further incorporated here to explore how authors and contexts might contribute to textual analysis, in order to attempt to avoid arbitrary textual and thematic interpretations. These considerations then help show on the whole how textual authors' intentions might correspond to or differ from an argument exploring contemporary ethical and political concerns, and how a thematic argument based on a close reading of written texts might be supported and/or challenged by various contexts.

Finally, the research pursued in the present study explores how language (in this case, language surrounding a particular theme) functions in an imaginative and liberating capacity for marginalized persons in the struggle for justice. Linda Tuhiwai Smith articulates the importance of imaginative language in relation to critical research:

Although in the literary sense the imagination is crucial to writing, the use of language is not highly regarded in academic discourses which claim to be scientific. The concept of imagination, when employed as a sociological tool, is often reduced to a way of seeing and understanding the world, or a way of understanding how people either construct the world or are constructed by the world. As Toni Morrison argues, however, the imagination can be a way of sharing the world. This means, according to Morrison, struggling to find the language to do this and then struggling to interpret and perform within that shared imagination.<sup>8</sup>

Imaginative language is connected to the possibility of envisioning a better world for marginalized persons, meaning language can become liberating when connected to struggles for social justice at the margins of society.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the research in this study explores how language surrounding the study's chosen theme might relate to struggles for justice by marginalized persons.

## 2. Hermeneutics for the Theme of *Theologia Crucis*

This study proposes a contemporary transfigured *theologia crucis* through James Cone's Black Theology of Liberation for three interdependent theological publics: academy, society, and church. Therefore, this study closely reads theological-

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<sup>8</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (London: Zed, 2012), 39.

<sup>9</sup> "Imagining a different world, or reimagining the world, is a way into theorizing the reasons why the world we experience is unjust, and posing alternatives to such a world from within our own world views" (Ibid., 204).

academic texts, examines the possible ethical and political relevance of the main theme for society, and attempts to be grounded in critically reflected theological language originating in the church, all the while having its primary public as the academy.<sup>10</sup> To achieve this study's purpose of proposing a contemporary transfigured *theologia crucis* through James Cone's Black Theology of Liberation, then, an overall hermeneutic is necessary for interpreting the theme of *theologia crucis* as it relates to Luther and Cone, as well as the transformation of Luther's *theologia crucis* through Karl Barth and the further development and critique of Barth through Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Jürgen Moltmann.

Two theologians have been chosen as hermeneutical guides for interpreting the theme of *theologia crucis*: Vitor Westhelle (1952–2018) and Oswald Bayer (b. 1939). Westhelle is chosen for his notion of Luther as a *figura*, in which the early Luther's *theologia crucis* beginning in the *Heidelberg Disputation* can be transfigured for the twenty-first century in contexts far removed from sixteenth-century Germany. Bayer's hermeneutical work on Luther is chosen to show how a study incorporating Westhelle's transfiguring hermeneutic might contain "traces," in the Derridean sense of this term, of Luther's own theology. Through incorporating Bayer as an additional hermeneutical guide to Westhelle, the present study attempts to avoid arbitrary interpretations of the early Luther's theology, as well as to be aware of continuities and differences with Luther's own *theologia crucis* in Barth, Bonhoeffer, Moltmann, and Cone.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.1 Interpreting Martin Luther for a Contemporary Transfigured *Theologia Crucis* through James Cone

The present study's concern with proposing a contemporary transfigured *theologia crucis* through James Cone relates hermeneutically to the theme of *theologia crucis* when Martin Luther is seen as a *figura*, an historical figure whose ideas transcend their original context and find new expression and validity in global contexts. Vitor Westhelle uses this concept (indebted to literary scholar Erich Auerbach as well as postcolonial studies) to enliven Luther's theology in the 2016 book *Transfiguring Luther: The Planetary Promise of Luther's Theology*. Related to seeing Luther as a *figura*, Westhelle writes,

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<sup>10</sup> The concept of "three interdependent publics" for theological reflection is indebted to and developed from Jürgen Moltmann and David Tracy. See Jürgen Moltmann, "Die Zukunft der Theologie," in Jürgen Moltmann, *Christliche Erneuerungen in schwierigen Zeiten* (Munich: Claudius, 2019), 106–24, and David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 3–46.

<sup>11</sup> For an explanation of the concept "trace," see n. 6 above. Bayer has been chosen as a hermeneutical guide for interpreting texts from the early Luther as an attempt to apply Derrida's notion of "there is no outside text" for an overall awareness of authorial intent and historical contexts in ongoing textual interpretations of Luther's *theologia crucis*. See n. 7 above and n. 19 below.

Luther as *figura*, as a figure, is something to be understood apart from, or before other specialized doctrinal aspects may be scrutinized and discerned. At least it needs to be acknowledged as a dimension of Luther research that in-depth textual and historic-critical analysis often overlooks or simply ignores, having unexplained its enduring significance and recurring effects. The *figurae* have *Wirkungsgeschichte*; they work. The more immersed Luther studies become in the profundity of the thought of the Reformer, the more obscure and neglected becomes his figural significance. The call for a closer reading of the text may arrest the inquiring gaze into historical and philological frames of a picture whose “aura” – to use Walter Benjamin’s helpful notion – has long taken flight.<sup>12</sup>

Westhelle argues Luther’s ideas need to be re-thought and revived for the twenty-first century, as Lutheranism migrates out of its traditional homes in the North Atlantic (the United States, Germany, and Scandinavia) to the Planetary South.<sup>13</sup> Understanding Luther as a *figura* thus allows for a transfigured *theologia crucis* in the twenty-first century, in diverse contexts removed from sixteenth-century Germany.

Transfiguration tells the history of how the past comes alive, is metamorphosed into the present contexts. The malady of the archive does precisely the opposite – dissolves the present into a dead past. In Luther, Paul and Augustine were indeed transfigured, but he did not *repeat* them; he took upon himself their mantle, but on his own skin, in his own context, in order to preach Christ for the people of his time .... Luther’s example, his figure can be emulated insofar as he preached the precious good news, the words of novelty, even when some of his teachings given to his ‘dear German people’ are not for us, even as the example is useful.<sup>14</sup>

A *theologia crucis* (through Luther’s incisive Christological hermeneutic, *Was Christum treibet*) becomes the center from which Luther becomes a *figura* for the twenty-first century in Westhelle’s interpretation.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the present study incorporates Westhelle’s *figura* hermeneutic for proposing a contemporary transfigured *theologia crucis* through James Cone beginning in the early Luther’s *Heidelberg Disputation*.<sup>16</sup>

A difference between historical theology and constructive systematic theology related to Luther now needs to be clarified. This study understands historical

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<sup>12</sup> Vitor Westhelle, *Transfiguring Luther: The Planetary Promise of Luther’s Theology* (Eugene: Cascade, 2016), 7.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 96–97; 178; 181–95; 241; 294.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 190. Italic in original.

<sup>15</sup> See LW 35: 396; WA DB 7, 384: 25–28, and Westhelle, *Transfiguring Luther*, 111–23; 190; 318–19.

<sup>16</sup> Westhelle elaborates his hermeneutical approach to Luther’s theology, writing: “Luther’s texts, each distinct, with its own hue and shape, are all in movement not synchronically but each at its own pace toward what for Luther was the core – the knowledge of Christ or justice of Christ. To this end I have nudged some of Luther’s texts in their movement, taking care not to change their hue or shape but translating them for our times, all the while acknowledging that I might have been a traitor in the process, which I cannot but be.” Westhelle, *Transfiguring Luther*, xi–xiii.

theologians to place Luther within his own context, and to not be concerned outright with a contemporary re-interpretation of Luther's theology. The question of original authorial intent is then a primary concern in this way of approaching Luther's theology.<sup>17</sup> The present constructive theological study reading Luther for a transfigured *theologia crucis* through James Cone, on the other hand, inquires primarily about the contemporary ongoing relevance of a *theologia crucis*. Here, textual interpretations that might be independent of original authorial intent and historical context are proposed and developed.<sup>18</sup> Thus, a constructive transfiguration of the theme of *theologia crucis* in the present study will expand beyond strictly historical theological readings of Luther, although it will still draw from them for textual argumentation and understanding to explore how a *theologia crucis* originating in texts from him is transfigured by Cone. Overall, then, the present study's constructive orientation allows the theme of *theologia crucis* beginning in the early Luther's *Heidelberg Disputation* to be transformed through twentieth-century theologians, with the purpose of proposing a contemporary transfigured *theologia crucis* through Cone's Black Theology of Liberation.

## 2.2 Finding Traces of Martin Luther's Theology in a Contemporary Transfigured *Theologia Crucis* through James Cone

Although this study proposes textual interpretations that expand beyond historical theology, the study still uses an additional hermeneutical framework for attempting to interpret what the chosen theme for research meant originally in specific (con)texts (in so far as that can be known) before exploring transformations and transfigurations of said theme. This framework helps show how contemporary readings of historical theological texts might contain elements of the original author's understanding, even as the original author's (con)texts are transformed and transfigured in the present constructive theological study.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Of numerous possible examples that could be cited, Heiko Oberman's watershed Luther biography is particularly noteworthy for insisting on Luther's historical difference from contemporary theology, and that it is thus important to emphasize Luther's foreignness to modernity. See Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Mensch zwischen Gott und Teufel* (Berlin: Severin und Siedler, 1981). The present study is indebted to what can be called the "Oberman school" of historical theological research on Martin Luther, even while expanding beyond this school for this study's constructive purposes. Further, Bayer's hermeneutical work on Luther relates to the Oberman school of Luther research, even as this revisionist school critiques Bayer's historical arguments about Luther's "Reformation breakthrough."

<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the present study incorporates Westhelle's *Transfiguring Luther* as a hermeneutical guide for the theme of *theologia crucis* related to a method of textual deconstruction in literary studies.

<sup>19</sup> This consideration does not mean the present author is directly attempting an historical-genetic reconstruction of Luther's theology and/or biography, but rather that he is engaging in

Therefore, related to texts dealing with the theme of *theologia crucis* in Luther himself, Oswald Bayer's book *Theology the Lutheran Way* is incorporated as an additional hermeneutic to complement and strengthen Westhelle's *figura* hermeneutic, which is carried throughout the study in terms of being aware of what from Luther's theology is being transformed through the twentieth-century theologians drawn from, and then how James Cone's Black Theology of Liberation can be read for a contemporary transfigured *theologia crucis*.<sup>20</sup>

Bayer is noteworthy in systematic studies of Luther for admitting outright Martin Luther's foreignness to today's world in relation to contemporary theological questions, and for considering Luther's own monastic context in the sixteenth century before engaging in contemporary systematic interpretations of Luther's theology. His work is thus a helpful supplement to Westhelle's interpretation of Luther as a *figura*, for seeing where "traces" of Luther's own theology can be found in a contemporary *theologia crucis* through James Cone that Westhelle's hermeneutic transfigures. Bayer's reading of Luther's theological hermeneutics centers in what he sees as Luther's understanding of theology as *sapientia* ("wisdom," which includes *scientia*, or "science"), where, for Bayer, Luther's sapiential theology urges something onto the contemporary situation.<sup>21</sup> Bayer writes:

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a constructive exploration of a principal theological theme by closely reading primary sources. Arguments from secondary sources are then consulted and evaluated that emphasize Luther is not a contemporary and/or postmodern person, including sources emphasizing historical context(s). Additionally, secondary sources related to the history of doctrine and ethical and political matters pertinent to James Cone's Black Theology of Liberation are drawn from throughout the present study. The overall purpose of secondary sources in this study is to show how the present study's constructive arguments might be supported and/or challenged by various contexts. These premises attempt to again relate to Derrida's notion of the "trace," and argument that "there is no outside text" (see nn. 6 and 7 above). Therefore, the present study explores "traces" of Luther's own *theologia crucis* beginning in the *Heidelberg Disputation* (in so far as this can be known) in the twentieth-century theologians studied here, culminating in the work of James H. Cone. Cf. Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in Human Sciences," in Richard Macsey and Eugenio Donato, eds., *The Languages of Criticism and The Sciences of Man: The Structuralist Controversy*, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 247–65.

<sup>20</sup> While the present study is indebted to Bayer's book on Lutheran theological hermeneutics, it differs from Bayer overall in its assessment of a transformation of Martin Luther through Karl Barth's *Erwählungslehre*, and by addressing the question if the *theologia crucis* can be considered an important hermeneutical theme throughout Luther's theology. See Oswald Bayer, *Theologie* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1994)/ET: Oswald Bayer, *Theology the Lutheran Way*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey G. Silcock and Mark C. Mattes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). The English translation is cited in this Introduction, but the German original should be consulted as well for Bayer's comparison of Luther's hermeneutics with other Reformation-era theologians, and for his account of Luther's theology in relation to selected twentieth-century systematic theologians. This rich comparative work was left out of the English translation.

<sup>21</sup> In his later study of Luther's own theology for today's world, Bayer argues: "When we contemporize Luther with a *systematic* intention – namely, posing the question about what is true – we discover that he speaks to our contemporary situation at the same time; we might say that he imposes himself upon us. This does not happen primarily because of his forceful

Wisdom does not exclude science but includes it. Wisdom takes account of the connection between science and the pre-scientific life-world. Wisdom is a path that unites theory and practice and grounds both in a third thing, an experiential life (*vita experimentalis*), understood in the sense of a receptive life (*vita passiva*). Since Aristotle, science operates with necessary principles (*principia*) and ultimately a single principle (*pricipium*). According to the Aristotelian taxonomy of science, rational theology or theologic is the highest science. This theologic science is embedded in the philosophical concept of God. Wisdom, on the other hand, has to do with experience, understood in a non-Aristotelian sense. But experience is incomplete, without being vague and indefinite (*vage*). If wisdom (*sapientia*) encompasses science, science cannot become an end in itself, it cannot turn itself into a religion or make absolute claims for itself, but it must take its bearings from the pre-scientific life-world and be informed by it.<sup>22</sup>

Luther, then, would not divide academic theology and experiential theology, but integrates both into his approach to being a theologian. Especially important for the Reformer are the “three rules” for the study of theology, which Bayer argues is the key to understanding Luther’s approach to theology.

Luther’s ‘three rules’ for the correct way to study theology: prayer, meditation, and spiritual attack (*oratio, meditatio, tentatio*) best show us why he defines theology as ‘wisdom,’ or, more precisely, as ‘experiential wisdom.’ This definition also shows that in Luther’s thinking, liturgical ‘monastic’ theology and academic ‘scholastic’ theology are inextricably connected. The former, however, is constitutive, in that it provides the content of theology, while the latter is purely regulative in that it orders, analyzes, and reflects on its subject matter, making the necessary distinctions and connections.<sup>23</sup>

Bayer’s interpretation of Luther’s “three rules” for the study of theology provide a framework for interpreting the theme of *theologia crucis* originating in texts from the early Luther that Westhelle’s *figura* hermeneutic transfigures through Cone as a re-shaping of the transformed *theologia crucis* from Barth, Bonhoeffer, and Moltmann. Overall, then, the present study will explore how James Cone’s Black Theology of Liberation transfigures Luther’s emphasis on theology as “experiential wisdom” for a contemporary sapiential *theologia crucis*. We will be especially concerned with Luther’s notion of *Anfechtung* (spiritual attack) in relation to the hidden God and a mystical *theologia crucis*. A summary of the “three rules” based on Bayer’s reading of the *Preface to the Complete Wittenberg Edition of Luther’s German Writings* (1539) now follows.<sup>24</sup>

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personality, but because of what his theology urges upon us.” Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther’s Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), xix–xx. *Italic in original.*

<sup>22</sup> Bayer, *Theology the Lutheran Way*, 28.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 32. The understanding of Christian theology as *sapientia* is an ancient tradition, with Augustine of Hippo giving it particular prominence in the Western church. See Benjamin T. Quinn, *Christ, the Way: Augustine’s Theology of Wisdom* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2022).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. LW 34, 283–89; WA 50, 657–61. For the historical context of the “three rules,” see Volker Leppin, “Wie legt sich nach Luther die Schrift selbst aus? Luthers pneumatische Hermeneutik,”

*Oratio* addresses what can be called the “epistemology” of the Bible’s wisdom in contrast to other texts. Bayer understands Luther to be arguing for a wisdom that cannot be found in other knowledge, based on the Reformer’s statements in 1539. “Firstly, you should know that Holy Scripture is such a book as to make the wisdom of all other books foolishness, because it is the only book that teaches about eternal life.”<sup>25</sup> Here the Bible as Word of God shows divine Wisdom and goodness, in contradistinction to human sin and foolishness, and, in Bayer’s words “turns practical godlessness into faith where faith knows and believes from experience that God is the creator and I am his creature.”<sup>26</sup> Said knowledge is the beginning of true knowledge of God and confidence in God’s goodness, demonstrated particularly, according to Bayer, in the materiality of the Lord’s Supper.<sup>27</sup>

*Meditatio* is a reading aloud of the Scriptures in a worship service or individually. The external Word is emphasized, even as the Holy Spirit indwells in the Christian who recites the Word.<sup>28</sup> Bayer argues that, for Luther, a distinction between public and private, as well as religion and theology, as has occurred since the eighteenth century is not possible.<sup>29</sup> Conversely, Luther’s insistence on meditation means “the Holy Spirit has bound himself to a specific form of language.”<sup>30</sup> “The decisive thing about [Luther’s] understanding of the Holy Spirit is that it excludes pure outwardness just as much as an exclusive inwardness. For this reason, he opposes Rome as well as the fanatics.”<sup>31</sup>

However, “anyone who meditates can expect to suffer,” and thus the final rule for Luther’s understanding of the study of theology is *Tentatio*.<sup>32</sup> Here is the heart

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in Stefan Alkier, ed., *Sola Scriptura 1517–2017. Rekonstruktionen – Kritiken – Transformationen – Performanzen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 83–102.

<sup>25</sup> LW 34: 285; WA 50, 659: 5–7. Cf. Bayer, *Theology the Lutheran Way*, 43.

<sup>26</sup> Bayer, *Theology the Lutheran Way*, 44.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 45–46.

<sup>28</sup> Bayer describes Luther’s understanding of “meditation” as related to the external Word more fully in his study on Luther’s theology in relation to today’s world: “Luther uses the word ‘meditation’ in an uncommon way when he specifically refers to meditation on the external Word. He does not just hasten to use some chance brainstorm. Instead, he harkens back to an insight of the ancient church and to its practice, which has faded away more and more as time has passed, if it has not indeed been relegated to what has been forgotten all together. This involves the practice of reading and praying out loud and, what is still more important, that such activities are practiced with regard to Scripture, particularly that one would have an especial acquaintance with the Psalter.” Bayer, *Martin Luther’s Theology*, 35.

<sup>29</sup> “We miss the point of Luther’s understanding of theology as meditation if we buy into the modern distinction between ‘private’ and ‘public,’ which first arose in the eighteenth century, and its related distinction between religion and theology, and use that as an interpretative lens to set up an antithesis between ‘private reflection on Scripture’ and the ‘public sermon and doctrine that are bound to the words of the gospel.” Bayer, *Theology the Lutheran Way*, 54.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 60. The theme of *tentatio* in Bayer’s constructive development of Luther’s theology is explored in depth in Joshua C. Miller, *Hanging by a Promise: The Hidden God in the Theology of Oswald Bayer* (Eugene: Cascade, 2015), and John T. Pless, Roland Ziegler, and Joshua C. Miller,

of theology as an apocalyptic battle between God and Satan, in Bayer's reading of Luther's theological hermeneutics. "Nothing is left untouched by the great apocalyptic battle that rages through time and, simultaneously, deep in the heart of every individual, for this battle is universal."<sup>33</sup> The Latin *tentatio* is written in German as *Anfechtung*, and it is the "touchstone of God's word, which demonstrates its credibility and power in times of spiritual attack and the fight against it."<sup>34</sup> *Anfechtung* means theology is an experiential endeavor, where the Christian learns the Word of God through spiritual attack. From this *Anfechtung*, the Bible is then seen as "life-giving words that stimulate our senses and emotions, our memory and imagination, our heart and desires."<sup>35</sup>

There is one final aspect of Bayer's interpretation of Luther's theology that is of importance here: "Catechetical systematics."<sup>36</sup> This notion is Bayer's term for how Luther kept cloister, pulpit, and classroom together as an integrated whole. Luther's foreignness to much of contemporary academic theology since the eighteenth-century now becomes apparent, since the latter often neither begins nor ends in the church directly, but instead reflects about the question of God in pluralistic contexts.<sup>37</sup> Conversely, Luther

took up the catechetical tradition of the medieval church's spirituality and combined it with the liturgical spirituality of monasticism, based on meditation, and its emphasis on the affects (which include the emotions, the senses, the desires, and the imagination) to produce a thoroughly pastoral theology.<sup>38</sup>

Realizing Luther's difference from and foreignness to much of contemporary academic theology helps to clarify similarities and differences from Luther's own theology in the twentieth-century theologians being incorporated into the present study, so that the present study can propose a transfigured sapiential *theologia crucis* through James Cone for the three interdependent theological publics of academy, society, and church today.<sup>39</sup>

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eds., *Promising Faith for a Ruptured Age: An English-Speaking Appreciation of Oswald Bayer* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2019).

<sup>33</sup> Bayer then continues, "This same universality that characterizes Luther's understanding of meditation is also the mark of the third rule. The battle affects not only pastors in their special office but also every Christian. In fact, from the standpoint of the theology of creation and the doctrine of sin, we can say it affects everyone." Bayer, *Theology the Lutheran Way*, 61.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 63. Bayer's emphasis on *Anfechtung* as an apocalyptic struggle between God and Satan in Luther's theology is what connects his hermeneutical work most fully to Oberman. See Oberman, *Luther*, 223–40.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>37</sup> See again n. 27 above, as well as *Ibid.*, 83–84; 139–42. For a pertinent understanding of the difference between the church and the university in the context of secularization, see Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (London: SCM, 1965), 217–37.

<sup>38</sup> Bayer, *Theology the Lutheran Way*, 67.

<sup>39</sup> The present study does not begin or end in the church directly, but does understand the

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