

ANZATS 2021 *Theological Ethics*

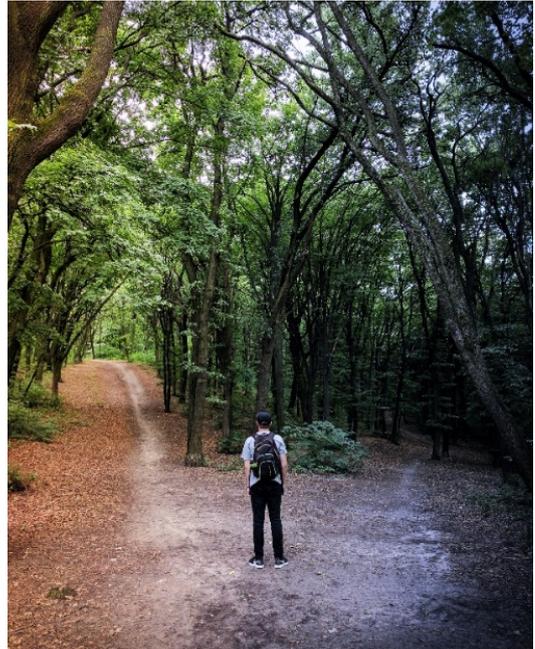
Elective Session Proposals – Catholic Epistles

	Presenter 1	Presenter 2	Presenter 3
Session 1	Laura J. Hunt	Travis B. Williams	
Session 2	Christopher Seglenieks	David M. Shaw	

1. **Presenter** Laura J. Hunt
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Honouring the Disobedient: Identity and Leadership in 1 Peter

Theological ethics includes respect for the other. But how does that play out when we are members of a group that is generally dishonoured? A social identity analysis of 1 Peter shows its author offering members of the community honour by writing them into the story of Israel, giving them honourable epithets, and appropriating and revaluing dishonourable ones. First Peter's approach will be contrasted in this paper with that of Paul in 1 Corinthians 7. Social identity analysis shows that Paul, rather than seeking to revalue the identity of a whole community, instead re-engineers the valuation of the subgroups within the larger Christ-following group. Whereas in 1 Peter, the tension is between Christians and non-Christians, and the challenge for the author is to validate the Christians while still leaving them open to outsiders joining them, in 1 Corinthians the tensions are between husbands and wives, the married and the unmarried, the circumcised and the uncircumcised, slaves, freed persons, and free elites, and the challenge is to create in the community a scale of honour that contrasts with that of the greater world of Corinth. The author of 1 Peter, however, engages in practices in his letter that cohere with that of an ideal social identity entrepreneur, demonstrating prototypicality, advancing the identity of the group, and creating a sense of identity as well as a sense of importance for the group.



2. **Presenter** Travis B. Williams
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The Connection between Suffering and Sin in 1 Pet. 4:1b: Breaking the Interpretive Impasse

All agree that 1 Pet. 4:1a encourages a group of persecuted Christians to adopt the mindset of Christ as they attempt to negotiate their conflict situation. To support this exhortation, the Petrine author notes an important connection between suffering and sin in v. 1b. But exactly how this relationship is to be construed has long been debated. Some interpreters have understood the verse as providing a theological basis for the instructions, with the author referencing the suffering and death of Christ which broke the power of sin ('... because the one who suffered in the flesh put an end to sin'). Others contend, instead, that the verse provides a further elaboration on the mindset with which Christ approached suffering, a recognition that suffering demonstrates a

person's commitment to avoid participating in sinful acts ('... namely, that the one who suffers in the flesh has ceased from sinning'). Within the relevant literature, many of the arguments used to support these (and other) views have been volleyed back and forth for years, and as a result, the discussion has grown somewhat stale. This paper seeks a way through the impasse by focusing on the difficult phrase *πέπαυται ἁμαρτίας*. Through comparative syntactical analysis, the meaning of this construction becomes clear, and it, in turn, serves as the foundation for reconstructing the relationship between sin and suffering.

3. **Presenter** David M. Shaw
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The Devil in the Details: The Role of the Devil in the Development of Christian Social Identity and the Missional Posture of the Church in 1 Pet 5:8

When one considers the background and context of 1 Peter—namely the suffering that may be endured on account of hostile family, neighbours, colleagues, or various other opponents—the surprise that comes in 1 Peter 5 is that the Petrine author does not identify any of these people as the ones who are ultimately responsible for the church's suffering. Instead, he points his finger squarely towards a spiritual source of suffering, specifically, the Devil—the accuser who opposes God's people. The question is: Why would Peter communicate in such a way?

Utilizing Social Identity and Narrative Transportation Theories, this paper examines the role of the Devil in 1 Pet 5:8 for the formation of Christian social identity and subsequent missional posture of the church. I seek to demonstrate how, at various points, the strategies employed within 1 Peter refute the usual social identity processes expected in the pursuit of positive social identity. By applying OT exodus motifs for positive identity formation and naming the Devil as the true enemy of the church, Peter refuses to incriminate directly opponents of the early church, thus avoiding the propagation of any "us versus them" mentality. In so doing, he clears the way for believers to engage with their wider communities not as enemies to be defeated, but as fellow bearers of God's image to be loved.

4. **Presenter** Christopher Seglenieks
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Conquering Faithfulness: The Rhetoric of Faith in 1 John

1 John uses *πίστις* to evoke a desired response to key concerns in 1 John that encompass both doctrinal and ethical issues. The letter begins with an ethical focus, with the description of God as faithful (1:9) giving the model for human faithfulness. Then *πιστεύω* is used in the construction of an out-group, opponents who are deceivers and not to be trusted (4:1–6). In chapter 5, 1 John turns to the sort of *πίστις* that the audience should have. 1 John 5:1–5 is framed by encouragements to continue believing in the identity of Jesus, the central doctrinal issue. The use of perfect tense verbs (4:16; 5:1) indicate an audience who already believe, thus a rhetorical function to encourage continued adherence. The statements of propositional belief bookend ethical material. In the context of both the propositional and ethical instructions, there is a goal which is to conquer the world (5:4–5). While the one who believes rightly is the one who conquers (5:5), it is *ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν* that is the victory (5:4). To understand this simply as continued adherence to right doctrine overlooks the shift from verb to noun. The semantic range of *πίστις* encompasses both trust/belief and faithfulness (see Gupta 2020). In this context, the noun is better understood as 'faithfulness', including not merely continued adherence to doctrine but ongoing ethical action

in accord with such faith. Its polysemy allows the author to tie together two key purposes of encouraging ethical action and doctrinal perseverance.