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Christian Cosmopolitanism: The Church between Refugees and Nation-States

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Christian Cosmopolitanism: The Church between Refugees and Nation-States

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An abstract of
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Abstract

Christian Cosmopolitanism: The Church between Refugees and Nation-States
By David Roth

My thesis topic concerns the role of the American church in responding to refugees and asylum-seekers. In a world defined by nation-state borders and rising levels of displacement, my purpose is to articulate a role for American Christians to play in the protection of refugees. In four chapters, I engage this task at the level of theory, biblical foundations, political challenges, and practices. Throughout this engagement, I describe, use, and recommend the paradigm of Christian Cosmopolitanism for American Christians seeking to respond compassionately and justly to those fleeing violence or danger. Integrating the insights of each chapter, I offer a practical theology of Christian Cosmopolitanism that is simultaneously rooted in the biblical witness, responsive to contemporary political challenges, and able to recommend specific actions for Christians and church leaders. Using Christian Cosmopolitanism as a frame, I describe the theological foundations, political relevance, and specific character with which American Christians can offer hospitality and advocacy on behalf of refugees and asylum-seekers. I also consider how these practices simultaneously relate to the established communities of which American Christians are a part. My hope is that this paper will provide future church leaders with a better foundation from which to engage contemporary concerns about refugee protection and immigration.

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Christian Cosmopolitanism: The Church between Refugees and Nation-States

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Introduction

Displacement in our world is on the rise and has reached record-breaking levels.[1] Within the global context of a political order defined by nation-states, what role can and should Christians play in refugee protection? This question necessitates attention to biblical theology, political theory, and ecclesial practices. My own experiences in Christian congregations suggest that many Christians in America are removed from discussions of refugee engagement at all three of these levels. It is even more rare to find a careful integration. This thesis attempts to rectify this by putting these disciplines in conversation with one another. My hope is to harmonize and systematize the insights of all three disciplines in order to enable and inspire a more robust Christian response. I am guided throughout by a threefold concern for displaced refugees, faithful Christian witness, and the relative stability and security available in modern states.

My primary audience is Christian American citizens and their church leaders. My reasoning throughout the thesis consistently makes use of Christian frameworks and my recommendations are for an American context. Although I respect and value methodologies other than my own, in this paper I consciously try to avoid my primary focus falling on either attempting to paralyze operations of power or relating to my own assumed starting principles.[2] In light of the painful tragedies that refugees face, I propose neither revolution

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[1] UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency, "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016" (UNHCR, June 19, 2017), http://www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34.pdf.

[2] See Nicholas Wolterstorff's recommendations concerning "praxis-oriented scholarship" in chapter VIII, "Theory and Praxis" in Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice & Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 162–77. Wolterstorff argues for the integration of Christian social commitments and theorizing by way of the commitment becoming the governing interest of the theorizing. Rather than a critique of domination in the service of the radical liberation of the autonomous individual (which Wolterstorff identifies with the critical theory of the Frankfurt School), Wolterstorff offers a critique of deprivation and injustice in the service of shalom. I intend to operate in this thesis in a similar manner.

nor acquiescence. Rather, I evaluate nation-states as better or worse rather than as wholly good or bad.[3] I ask how churches might compassionately move toward those who are fundamentally marginalized by the international political order and enable nation-states to become the best versions of themselves by offering peace and justice for refugees and asylum-seekers.

In order to address these issues for this audience, my thesis focuses substantively on Christian cosmopolitanism. I believe that many of the Christian scholars who are working on issues of immigration and refugee protection that I would recommend for American Christian audiences are operating inside of a framework that can be identified broadly as Christian cosmopolitanism. In the first chapter, I use the work of Mark Amstutz, William O'Neill, and Luke Bretherton to develop my own political theology of Christian cosmopolitanism and situate this discourse in relation to communitarianism and liberal cosmopolitanism. These other two approaches exert significant influence on the political, social, theological, and ecclesial conversations around immigration and refugee protection. While gleaning insights from both communitarianism and liberal cosmopolitanism, I ultimately argue against them both in favor of Christian cosmopolitanism.

To recommend this political theology of Christian cosmopolitanism to American Christians, I need to give a convincing account of its biblical foundations. In chapter 2, I discuss the biblical foundations of Christian cosmopolitanism by discussing the biblical view of community. I argue that the exilic literature in the Bible makes two important points about community: community exists for the good of those beyond its boundaries and community is inherently fragile. I use these insights to support Christian cosmopolitanism's effort to combine a communitarian understanding of human persons with a cosmopolitan

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[3] See Luke Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics: The Conditions and Possibilities of Faithful Witness* (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K. ; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 126.

understanding of moral norms. I demonstrate that the New Testament letter of James affirms this ethic by integrating the calls to both intentional personal formation in the community and simultaneous compassionate social engagement with particular attention to those who have been cut off from the mechanisms by which the political order is sustained.

To discern who is cut off from (and by) the definitions that legitimate today's political order, a dive into political theory is required. In a world of nation-states, refugees and asylum-seekers lose their connection to the state. There is no "no man's land" or "state of nature" in which they can attempt to create a new state. Their displacement is more profound than usually realized. Seyla Benhabib's work suggests the possibility that the political ties from which refugees and asylum-seekers have been cut off might be reestablished in a democratic society through "democratic iterations." Benhabib's work addresses the political dimension that James calls the church to attend to and holds out hope for the possibility of political integration. Other scholars, however, remind us of the necessity that we consider the other associative ties from which refugees have been disconnected and the potential costs of a democratic iteration that stops at political integration. David Miller in particular shows us that the preservation of social trust in the midst of a diversifying political community is necessary if generous refugee protection and asylum policies are to be created and maintained.

These claims from political theory are engaged in chapter 3. I suggest that many Christians in America who support generous refugee protection and asylum policies tend to stop at the question of normative welcome. I believe that this reveals the influence of liberal cosmopolitanism. The biblical foundations for Christian cosmopolitanism, on the other hand, necessitate further questions of how this normative welcome will affect democratic constituencies and institutions. Asking these questions is in the interest of future refugees

and asylum-seekers because they are likely to be admitted into the democratic state only if social trust has been cultivated and preserved.

What practices, then, can enable American Christians to live out the biblical witness, address the preservation of social trust, and support the conditions on which refugee protection regimes can thrive? In chapter 4, I answer this question by suggesting that when the practices of hospitality and advocacy are empowered by the distinct contributions of Christian cosmopolitanism and strategically pursued in tandem, they give Christians a role to play in protecting refugees in our inhospitable world of nation-states. The practices of hospitality and advocacy, when taken together and embodied with the character of Christian cosmopolitanism, form a practical theology of Christian cosmopolitanism that is biblically rooted, politically effective, and personally relevant.

Chapter 1: The Political Theology of Christian Cosmopolitanism

In the era of Trump, few topics polarize American churchgoers as deeply as immigration and refugee protection. Admissions decisions are deeply intertwined with the human rights claims of the asylum-seekers on the one hand and the established community's concerns about integration and the preservation of social trust on the other. Too often, in the context of political debates over immigration and refugee protection, the value of respecting human rights and the value of cultivating social trust can seem to pull in opposite directions and yield different conclusions. On the one hand, you have communitarian voices that privilege the rights, needs, interests, and desires of the local, established community over those of newcomers. On the other hand are liberal cosmopolitan voices that insist on the universal dignity of all humanity while neglecting the necessity of cultivating social trust at local levels. The average Christian in America remains locked into either narrowly communitarian or liberal cosmopolitan perspectives and practices. These approaches inhibit not only our ability to engage in dialogue with each other but also to extend hospitality to newcomers.

Christian cosmopolitanism offers a third way forward. As Luke Bretherton has suggested, in Christian cosmopolitanism "there should be no necessary incompatibility between welcoming refugees and the pursuit of the common life of the polity."[4] Although the necessity of Christian cosmopolitanism has been articulated by increasing numbers of Christian scholars, large swaths of the Christian population in America remain unconvinced of its biblical foundations, its political functionality, and its practical character. Each of these issues will be addressed in subsequent chapters but in this initial chapter, I describe the contemporary categories of communitarianism and liberal cosmopolitanism and then

[4] Bretherton, 135.

develop a political theology of Christian cosmopolitanism as a distinct alternative to both. I recommend this Christian cosmopolitanism to American Christians today who are seeking to respond justly to the claims of refugees and asylum-seekers.

Those within receiving communities who seek to respond justly to arriving refugees and asylum-seekers find two major theoretical frameworks available to them: communitarianism and liberal cosmopolitanism. The communitarian perspective starts from the position that it is permissible to show partiality to those nearer or more closely related to oneself. On the other hand, the cosmopolitan perspective asserts that all people should be treated equally.[5] A decision for one of these values rather than the other will have significant ramifications for how one responds to the presence of newcomers in need. While many of us will no doubt have an initial preference for one or the other of these values, it is important to see both the contributions and the pitfalls of each. While the cosmopolitan approach undoubtedly gives voice to central commitments, the communitarian approach also articulates important insights. Each approach involves both a descriptive anthropological starting point and then normative values that affect how one should engage with newcomers. In the sections that follow, I first explain liberal cosmopolitanism and communitarianism before then making the case for Christian cosmopolitanism.

Liberal Cosmopolitanism

As Serene Jones has stated, "The model of political community with which most people in North America are familiar, if not in theory then at least in practice, is the liberal

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[5] For a brief and accessible introduction to this framing, see Mark Amstutz, "Two Theories of Immigration," *First Things*, December 2015, https://www.firstthings.com/article/2015/12/two-theories-of-immigration. For a more in depth analysis, see the chapters on Impartiality and Partiality in Matthew Gibney, *The Ethics and Politics of Asylum: Liberal Democracy and the Response to Refugees* (University Press, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

model of political life."[6] She explains how liberalism starts with the individual human person: "Liberalism gives primacy to a theory of the self in its definition of ideal community."[7] She then goes on to articulate four "key features" that characterize liberalism in "its classic form."[8] She writes that,

> *Liberals' account of the self has four features. First, they believe there is a core or essential structure of personhood (the essential self) that analytically precedes the social development of persons. Second, this presocial self has a proclivity toward self-determination and self-creation (freedom). Third, this presocial self promotes its own perceived interests (self-interestedness). Fourth, this self is appropriately capacitated, prior to its social interactions, for common-sense, rational reflection on how to efficiently determine and pursue these ends (reason).[9]*

Liberals then begin to consider a vision of community by extrapolating from these four starting points.[10] "They imagine what it would be like for these presocial, free, self-interested, rational creatures to meet one another in an original state of nature."[11] The community is then constructed through a "social contract." Ideally, the social contract will promulgate mutually agreed upon rules/laws that guarantee "procedural fairness to all."[12] As liberals envision community, the desire is to imagine the social contract to ensure that "as diverse people gather to form community, all voices will be heard, and basic rights and freedoms will be protected."[13]

So far, this system has described liberalism but not yet cosmopolitanism. From this starting place, various routes can be taken to differing conceptions of political order or the state. What marks a liberal cosmopolitan approach to issues of immigration and refugee protection, however, is the claim that "an equal duty of care" is required from all humans to

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[6] Serene Jones, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace*, Guides to Theological Inquiry (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 136.
[7] Jones, 136.
[8] Jones, 136.
[9] Jones, 136.
[10] Jones, 136.
[11] Jones, 136.
[12] Jones, 136.
[13] Jones, 136.

all humans.[14] From the starting place of all humans as individual presocial selves, no distinctions can be drawn between human beings born in one territory and human beings born in another. When liberal cosmopolitans consider Rawls' famous "veil of ignorance" thought experiment, they include the fact of ignorance about whether they will be the refugees doing the fleeing or members of the established community to which they appeal for refuge.[15] In doing so, they push for borders that are more open and policies that safeguard the rights of all who flee violence.

For the liberal cosmopolitan, borders are arbitrary at best and "an impediment to international justice" at worst.[16] "The cosmopolitan envisions the direct application of moral principles on a global scale, and regards the nation-state as an impediment to human rights and global justice."[17] Peter Singer writes that, "A global ethic should not stop at, or give great significance to, national boundaries. National sovereignty has no intrinsic moral weight."[18] Liberal cosmopolitanism emphasizes the rights of individuals and the duties these rights impose on others to respect these rights. "For the cosmopolitan, the only community with moral standing is the human community as a whole."[19] Liberal cosmopolitanism, then, offers us an anthropology that begins with the presocial individual but a morality that universally encompasses all of humanity. Liberal cosmopolitans seek to "universalize the rights" of individuals[20] and tend to see "middling institutions" as getting in the way of individual rights that should apply across all

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[14] Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*, 129.
[15] Rawls, himself, however, neglects to consider his thought experiment's implications outside of a bounded political community.
[16] Mark Amstutz, "Two Theories of Immigration."
[17] Mark Amstutz.
[18] Peter Singer, *One World: An Ethic of Globalization* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2002), 148.
[19] Mark Amstutz, "Two Theories of Immigration."
[20] Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*, 136.

humanity. Liberal cosmopolitans, then, as I will be using the term throughout this paper, begin with an individualistic anthropology but operate with a universalistic morality.

Communitarianism

Although the term refers to a wide range of theoretical positions, communitarianism begins from a different anthropology and arrives at a different morality than what is on offer in liberal cosmopolitanism. Communitarians begin their analysis by examining particular communities. What makes a perspective communitarian is a "rejection of liberalism's isolated individualism in favor of more community-centered understandings of human life."[21] Communitarians turn their attention to the "actual communities in which we live and work."[22] It is there, "In the nitty-gritty texture of these everyday communities," that communitarians believe, "our visions of ideal community originate; here, politics has its origin and hope."[23] Communitarians assert that we are "intimately interconnected beings" (not originally isolated individuals or a contracted collection of presocial selves) "whose personhood emerges out of complex engagements with the persons, places, practices, discourses, and traditions into which we are born and within which we live."[24] Communitarians, then, prize thick descriptions of particular communities and local contexts because, "according to communitarians, we find that persons are profoundly determined by the specific character of their communities."[25]

Rather than emphasizing an abstract conception of the presocial individual or general humanity taken as an abstract whole, communitarians attend to the mid-level, corporate institutions that order and structure our lives. Where liberal cosmopolitans envision a

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[21] Jones, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace*, 144.
[22] Jones, 144–45.
[23] Jones, 145.
[24] Jones, 145.
[25] Jones, 145.

borderless world, communitarians emphasize the actual diversity that exists at the level of family systems, cultures, theological commitments, and political particularities. "Personhood entails relationality… It is not possible to address the human condition apart from the truth that the person is in the world with others. The isolated individual is an abstraction."[26] It is also important to note that communitarians recognize the overlapping, competing, and inherently complex communities of which we are a part. "Society is made up of many groups and institutions, and a healthy society embraces a wide array of communities that stand between the individual, the family, and the state. The essential pluralism and diversity of communities is a central feature of communitarian thinking."[27]

Jones has identified four basic types of communities often identified as significant by communitarians:

> *1) Communities based on kinship ties, such as family; 2) communities of shared culture, language, and ethnicity; 3) communities marked by geographic proximity that permits face-to-face interaction, such as a neighborhood or region; and 4) communities that share a religion or a tradition of values.*[28]

Communitarians consider these communities as deeply formative but also overlapping and interacting in complex ways. "In many cases, formative communities are a combination of these types. What makes them formative is the constitutive role they play in developing a worldview and instilling the values that govern our interactions. This formation of worldviews and values occurs as we learn in community how to reason and make meaning."[29] In considering communitarianism as it relates to issues of immigration and refugee protection, Amstutz adds the community of the nation-state as another important

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[26] Kenneth Himes, *Christianity and the Political Order: Conflict, Cooptation, and Cooperation*, Theology in Global Perspective (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2013), 197.
[27] Kenneth Himes, 199.
[28] Jones, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace*, 145.
[29] Jones, 145.

site of community formation.[30] All it takes is the admission that "community cannot exist without structure, some ordering and governing mechanism that provides for the proper functioning of the community" to begin to see this implication and its possible normative dimensions.[31] "The state is necessary for well-ordered community, and community is necessary for human well-being."[32]

When taken not just as a description of the way things are but also as a normative commitment or value, communitarianism "identifies an obligation to maintain our own societies as stable and well-governed. That means political communities must regulate their borders… This requires that we give priority to the needs of the most vulnerable in our political community."[33] Communitarians, then, tend to be more sensitive to how a people are relating to the geographic place in which they live and how traditional communal practices are being maintained (or not). They recognize the power of these modes of analysis and the central importance of sustaining a common life of a community for making meaning and developing holistic and healthy persons. Their moral analysis tends to concentrate on the moral ties that exist in the context of thick community life. Communitarians worry about the erosion of social trust and are more likely to recognize diversity as a potential threat to community stability. They tend to believe that traditions can helps us maintain a stable sense of right and wrong and inculcate us from drastic shifts in public values. Wild deviations from communal norms are unsettling and suspect. Communitarians, then, as I will be using the term throughout this paper, begin with a communal anthropology and operate with a communal morality.

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[30] "In its purest form, the cosmopolitan approach rightly insists that, from a moral perspective, people are more important than states. The communitarian ultimately agrees. They differ, however, in their judgment about the role of the nation-state." Mark Amstutz, "Two Theories of Immigration."
[31] Kenneth Himes, *Christianity and the Political Order: Conflict, Cooptation, and Cooperation*, 198.
[32] Kenneth Himes, 198.
[33] Mark Amstutz, "Two Theories of Immigration."

Christian Cosmopolitanism

        Christian cosmopolitanism attempts to navigate between communitarianism and liberal cosmopolitanism; recognizing in each approach certain features as valuable and others as problematic. Specifically, Christian cosmopolitanism rejects liberal cosmopolitanism's vision of the presocial self in favor of a communitarian anthropology. But Christian cosmopolitanism simultaneously rejects a communitarian morality that stops at the borders of the community in favor of liberal cosmopolitanism's universal vision of rights and moral norms. In this section, I examine the work of theologians, ethicists, and Christian scholars to develop this political theology of Christian cosmopolitanism and argue for its usefulness. Christian cosmopolitanism can provide a welcome resource for thinking about the values that should guide Christian responses to refugees and asylum-seekers in the context of nation-states.

        Mark Amstutz, whose works we have already engaged in laying out the communitarian/cosmopolitan divide, is a helpful place to start when seeking to articulate the necessity of Christian cosmopolitanism. Although Amstutz does claim that the "communitarian worldview" provides a better approach to the analysis of global migration, he does so because he believes it better matches the current political arrangements of the global order of nation-states.[34] This is a realist argument that acknowledges Aristotelian insights about humanity's social nature rather than a decided ethical value.[35] We see this most clearly in the places where Amstutz discusses cosmopolitanism. Both his misgivings about cosmopolitanism and his acknowledgement of its contributions clarify his own attempt to navigate between the Scylla of communitarianism and Charybdis of liberal cosmopolitanism.

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[34] Mark R. Amstutz, *Just Immigration: American Policy in Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William BEerdmans Publishing Company, 2017), 222.

[35] Mark R. Amstutz, 230.

Amstutz affirms that the Christian worldview aligns with cosmopolitanism in the belief in "the priority of persons and their inherent right to dignity."[36] He echoes liberal cosmopolitanism when he writes that "the humanity of persons overrides any boundaries that divide people."[37] Amstuz affirms that "the cosmopolitan ideals of human dignity, global solidarity, and freedom of movement are important because they are essential in defining and pursuing justice."[38] These are core convictions that the Christian cosmopolitan must endorse. Why then does he avoid affirming liberal cosmopolitanism whole cloth? Like O'Neill and Bretherton whose theories we will examine shortly, he has key concerns with the liberal cosmopolitan framework.

While cosmopolitanism may capture central tenets such as "the inherent dignity and equality of all persons," Amstutz argues that the communitarian approach reminds us that humans "achieve their full humanity through social interaction in specific communities … ennobled by our sense of belonging within families, neighborhoods, and nations." [39] Because of his beliefs about the natural sociality of human beings and the importance of particular histories and cultures, Amstutz arrives at the position that, "A Christian approach to migration should be rooted in both the universal ambitions of cosmopolitanism and the concern for solidarity we find in communitarianism."[40] Building on Amstutz here, I mean to suggest that Christian cosmopolitanism should strive to combine the communal anthropology of communitarianism with the universalistic morality of cosmopolitanism.

William O'Neill is a Jesuit scholar whose work contributes to this project. Like Amstutz, he too critiques both communitarianism and liberal cosmopolitanism but his

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[36] Mark R. Amstutz, 97.
[37] Mark R. Amstutz, 97.
[38] Mark R. Amstutz, 99.
[39] Mark Amstutz, "Two Theories of Immigration."
[40] Mark Amstutz.

criticisms are different. Against the liberal cosmopolitan perspective, O'Neill suggests that "liberal respect for the 'generalized other' fails to generate positive moral obligations." He suggests that, when a "concrete other" arrives, the "generalized respect" of the cosmopolitan fails to materialize into tangible action. The communitarian approach, on the other hand, may generate positive moral obligations but these extend to "members only." The communitarian approach, then, denies respect to those not already within the community (here, the nation-state). This means that both the cosmopolitan approach and the communitarian approach fail in the event of the arrival of a concrete migrant. O'Neill argues that "respect of the generalized other without recognition is empty while recognition of citizens or members only is blind."[41]

This dynamic is all too recognizable in many American churches today. It is the difference between those who care deeply about the common life of the polity but are generally opposed to the admission of newcomers and those who, on the other hand, are enthusiastic about admitting refugees and granting asylum requests but whose enthusiasm seems mostly confined to social media posts. To correct this dynamic, O'Neill believes Christians should learn to speak the language of human rights (a form of cosmopolitanism) from their particular scriptural identity. Biblical narratives structure Christian identity in such a manner that Christians are able to engage in the discourse of human rights in unique ways. O'Neill makes the case that the scriptural memories of slavery in Egypt and exile in Babylon should compel a distinctly Christian solidarity with "concrete others" that manifests in welcoming and compassionate engagement. While communitarian reasoning may bar immigrant presence from the polity and cosmopolitan reasoning may fail to address the relationship between the immigrant and the polity at all, the Christian approach to the norm

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[41] William O'Neill, "Rights of Passage: The Ethics of Forced Displacement," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 27, no. 1 (2007): 123.

of human rights elaborated by O'Neill offers a way for American Christians to welcome the immigrant while also offering tangible support with reference to the polity. In this way, O'Neill too can be seen to be attempting to chart a new course between communitarianism and liberal cosmopolitanism. He bases his theory on the Christian community's beliefs and practices while also affirming human rights discourse. O'Neill then uses biblical reasoning to combine a communitarian anthropology with a universal normative framework. This is a welcome contribution to the political theology of what Luke Bretherton calls Christian cosmopolitanism.

Luke Bretherton, a professor of theological ethics at Duke Theological Seminary, provides the most full-throated and explicit articulation of "Christian cosmopolitanism." He too positions his theory between communitarianism[42] and liberal cosmopolitanism.[43] Bretherton begins by admitting both that "the status of the liberal, capitalist nation-state as an instance of Babylon should never be underestimated" but also that "Nation-states do maintain an earthly peace, which can be better or worse rather than wholly good or bad."[44] Earthly peace and legal justice, Bretherton suggests, forms the *raison d'etre* of the nation-state. A basic understanding of the nation-state system is necessary if we are to properly grasp the significance of the political theology of Christian cosmopolitanism and the context in which people become refugees in today's world.

The ideology of the nation-state emerged after the 30 Years War in Europe as an attempt to secure peace by establishing separate territories of legal justice. As the nation-state ideology has become the dominant way that the global political order is organized and

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[42] Seen in his use of Walzer and Gibney.

[43] As represented in thinkers such as Carens and Singer.

[44] Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*, 126.

legitimated, it leaves no place for those who are displaced across borders.[45] All the habitable

territory of the planet is carved up into specific nation-states. If and when someone finds

themselves in a situation of political danger in their home and they flee across their nation-

state's border, they enter into another nation-state that has sovereign discretion over whether

or not to admit that person. Refugees, then, are left to the discretion of the sovereign of the

territory they enter.[46] Given the way this has played out, this is a morally unacceptable status

quo.[47]

     Refugee identity in our time is predicated on these definitions from the nation-state

system. Only against the backdrop of the political theory of nation-states can the illegality of

migration and migrants take the shape that it has in the modern world. Contemporary

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[45] "The conception of human rights, based upon the assumed existence of a human being as such, broke down at the very moment when those who professed to believe in it were for the first time confronted with people who had indeed lost all other qualities and specific relationships—except that they were still human. The world found nothing sacred in the abstract nakedness of being human." Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1979), 299.

[46] If it is true that our centuries-old political order systematically disenfranchises refugees and then fundamentally handicaps the church's ability to respond to refugees in the manner that God calls us to, then we should be able to trace some kind of political developments that have arisen in response to these pressing issues. And we can. Many of these issues came to a head in response to the denationalization crises, violence, and displacement caused by the World Wars of the 20th century. In the aftermath of World War I, many European states began a policy of denaturalizing and denationalizing their citizens who shared an ethnic affinity with those states with which they had just fought. For more on this, see Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*, 138. Mass statelessness ensued as different groups within these states were increasingly denied political rights. This crisis, alongside colonial precedents of dehumanization and displacement of indigenous populations, forms crucial but often-overlooked backdrop for what was to come in World War II. After World War II, as the West attempted to come to grips with the horrors of Germany's implementation of the "Final Solution," a number of important developments in international law attempted a response to the systematic marginalization of stateless persons. These efforts, which began with the Nuremburg trials, took shape through a series of international law conventions and the founding of key intergovernmental organizations. In 1948, the recently formed UN General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration of Human Rights. In Article 14, this document asserts that everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution (so long as they are not fleeing the consequences of their own non-political crimes or acts contrary to the principles and purposes of the United Nations). While the Geneva Convention of 1949 also updated and constructed new bodies of international law that addressed wartime considerations related to the treatment of civilians and noncombatants, the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which was adopted in 1951 and expanded in the 1967 Protocol, remains the foundational document for refugee law.

[47] "The refugee must be considered for what he is: nothing less than a limit concept that radically calls into question the fundamental categories of the nation-state, from the birth-nation to the man-citizen link." Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 134.

refugee experiences would be unthinkable in any period prior to the 16th century. [48] In a

world of nation-states, connection to a state through nationality is necessary for access to a

political arena responsible for the maintenance of justice and peace. Silas Allard writes that

"To be a refugee is to have lost the vestiges of social belonging, group affiliation, and

associative identity."[49] If the government of an individual's country of nationality or country

of origin becomes incapacitated as a safe arena of justice and peace, then that individual's

only recourse is to seek such an arena elsewhere. In our current system, another nation-state

is the only other option available to them. As Luke Bretherton has articulated, "The liberal

democratic nation-state represents a form of precisely what the refugee needs: a stable arena

of law and order."[50] The need that refugees have, then, which is decidedly political, coincides

with the fundamental purpose for which nation-states exist.[51] Whatever earthly peace and

legal justice a nation-state is able to maintain becomes the basis from which the needs of a

refugee might be met.

After examining this nature of modern states, Bretherton faults liberal cosmopolitans

for underemphasizing "the value of the common life of the nation." [52] While both

Christianity and liberalism share the cosmopolitan outlook that seeks to universalize rights,

Bretherton is concerned with liberalism's tendency to "subsume the particular to the

universal."[53] What I believe Bretherton is concerned with here is liberal cosmopolitanism's

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[48] Snyder, Marquardt, and Vasquez cite Elie Wiesel to suggest that the "contingent and fabricated nature of the category of illegality … is not an essence or a fixed natural condition. Rather, it is a political and juridicial category connected to the historical emergence of the nation-state." See Marie Marquardt, Susanna Snyder, and Manuel Vasquez, "Challenging Laws: Faith-Based Engagement with Unauthorized Immigration," ed. Dan Kanstroom, *Constructing Immigrant "Illegality" : Critiques, Experiences, and Responses*, 2014, 277.
[49] Silas Allard, "Reimagining Asylum: Religious Narratives and the Moral Obligation to the Asylum Seeker," *Refuge* 29, no. 1 (2013): 122, http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/issue/view/2147.
[50] Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*, 140.
[51] Bretherton, 135.
[52] Bretherton, 131.
[53] Bretherton, 131.

tendency to erode local community in the name of some larger universalistic outlook. Christian cosmopolitanism's communitarian anthropology, which Amstutz helped us develop, prevents this tendency from taking root among Christian cosmopolitans.

But Bretherton has criticism for communitarianism too. He criticizes communitarians for overinvesting the common life of the nation with self-subsisting significance that it cannot live up to.[54] Concerning communitarianism, Bretherton worries about that system's tendency to forgo the universal in preference for the particular.[55] Here, I take Bretherton to be worried that universal claims of human dignity might be ignored by the communitarian tendency to see moral claims as only having merit within the borders of the community. Bretherton's Christian cosmopolitanism denies this alternative too by seeking to order the particular in relation to the universal.[56] The Christian confession's ability to give an account of how "the common good" of a particular nation-state only finds its fulfillment "beyond itself" is crucial for understanding the scholarly consensus around Christian cosmopolitanism.[57] In combining a robust communitarian anthropology with liberal cosmopolitanism's vision of universalized rights, Bretherton is able to argue persuasively that in Christian cosmopolitanism "there should be no necessary incompatibility between welcoming refugees and pursuit of the common life of the polity."[58]

Secular nation-states, especially when understood from a communitarian perspective, typically don't see their community as existing for any larger purpose outside the boundaries of the nation-state. Liberal cosmopolitans, however, have in human rights discourse a larger end (a kind of universalist faith) to which nation-states might be held accountable. At issue,

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[54] Bretherton, 131.
[55] Bretherton, 136.
[56] Bretherton, 136.
[57] Bretherton, 131, 136.
[58] Bretherton, 135.

is the way in which liberal cosmopolitans may unintentionally erode the very community necessary for robust human rights protections. As I seek to argue in this paper, Christian cosmopolitans are sensitive to this dynamic. While following liberal cosmopolitans in seeking to establish a larger purpose for which the nation-state exists (the protection of those who have lost their connection to a state), Christian cosmopolitans also follow communitarians in remaining eager to support and develop the kind of local communities capable of fostering rich human life that goes beyond just having one's human rights respected. Only out of an abundant cultural milieu does the likelihood of robust human rights protections increase. By combining a communitarian anthropology and a universalistic morality, Christian cosmopolitanism offers us a promising way forward for responding to refugees and asylum-seekers.

This conclusion is a welcome contribution that helps us to escape the sharp horns of a difficult dilemma. The Christian cosmopolitan refuses to decide between cultivating the common life of the community and welcoming the stranger. Both are necessary and form guiding values for the Christian cosmopolitan. Although it can often look or feel like these two values are in fatal tension, the Christian cosmopolitan's theology refuses to admit that this is necessarily the case. The Christian cosmopolitan speaks truthfully by recognizing two critical points. When communitarians and liberal cosmopolitans try to pull the Christian cosmopolitan into their respective camps, the Christian cosmopolitan resists strategically. Agreeing with cosmopolitans, the Christian affirms the universal, equal human dignity of all people but also agrees with communitarians that humans are inherently social beings who can only flourish in the context of community. The Christian cosmopolitan speaks truthfully by articulating both.

Although the necessity of Christian cosmopolitanism is increasingly recognized among scholars, many churchgoers in America remain largely unconvinced and/or divorced from this theoretical discourse. A careful, convincing, and substantive biblical theology of Christian cosmopolitanism is necessary if more Christians are to embrace this guiding value for public life and the issue of refugee protection. In the chapter that follows, I confront this challenge head on and provide a biblical foundation for Christian Cosmopolitanism.

Chapter 2 – Biblical Foundations for Christian Cosmopolitanism

The communitarian/liberal cosmopolitan debate is in many ways a debate about the goals and limits of community.[59] This is a conversation that the texts of the Bible deal with quite explicitly.[60] Our scriptural texts preserve the memory of a community in conversation about itself, about those outside the community, and about their relation. In this section, I explain why Christian prepolitical commitments derived from the Bible obligate Christians to refugees in today's world. I ground claims of universal normativity in Christian theological commitments derived from scriptural history and texts, in particular Israel's response to the crisis of exile.[61] In this section, I trace the biblical history to show how these biblical perspectives on community are continually being voiced, reiterated, and integrated. I do so in order to reinforce the foundations of Christian cosmopolitanism and to provide a Biblical justification for the political theology of Christian cosmopolitanism laid out in Chapter 1.

Answering contemporary concerns about community with the biblical witness must surely start with Genesis 1 and the *imago Dei*. Human beings were and are made in the image of God. As we see when Cain kills Abel, the premature suffering and death of a bearer of the image of God is no small thing. Recognizing the image of God in one another, even in those who are different from us, compels the church toward learning to act as "my brother's

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[59] The language and framing for this section is significantly indebted to Serene Jones' chapter on Community in *Feminist Theory + Christian Theology*.

[60] Amstutz suggests that one of the major shortcomings of much of the immigration work done by Christian groups and churches is "the uneven and unbalanced use of scriptural norms." This chapter directly addresses this criticism. Mark R. Amstutz, *Just Immigration*. 131.

[61] For a clear and convincing account, see Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 74–78. He writes that, "It is now increasingly agreed that *the Old Testament in its final form is a product of and a response to the Babylonian exile*" and that "the Old Testament materials, understood normatively, are to be taken precisely in an acute crisis of displacement." He states further that members of the interpretive community who have "never been physically or materially displaced must, … understand and imagine themselves as displaced." He argues that this task is especially relevant in today's "world political economy" which is "actively engaged in the production of exiles, as was the old Babylonian empire… In such a world situation as the present one, it is of enormous importance to have a theological literature that is candid about exile". This perspective has exerted enormous influence on my own reading of the Old Testament literature and the points I argue in this chapter.

keeper."[62] A belief that all people are made in the image of God broadens our outlook past

just those "like us." God's pronouncement of shalom, his benediction in Genesis 1 that all

creation is very good, leads to what Wolterstorff calls the "Each and Every Principle."[63] God

desires for each and every one of God's creatures to flourish and live their full life. Further,

the Lord desires for each of us to desire this for ourselves and for each and every other

human being as well.[64]

But where did this creation narrative come from? What history lies behind this

scriptural text? Could this history help us further explore the biblical understanding of the

goals and limits of community? Israel's experiences of exile in Babylon form a crucial

context[65] for interpreting much of the Old Testament,[66] including Genesis 1.[67] Much of the

biblical material contained in the Old Testament likely came into its final form and was first

latched onto as scripture during the exile.[68] Post-exilic writings that addressed new

experiences facing Israel often served as a kind of referendum on what should have been

learned from the exile and how it should be applied to a contemporary context.[69] This is true

about the texts of Daniel, up through the ministry of Jesus, and into the New Testament

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[62] Genesis 4:9

[63] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Hearing the Call: Liturgy, Justice, Church, and World* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011). 90-92.

[64] Nicholas Wolterstorff, 90–92.

[65] "Migration, along with the human and spiritual issues it raises, has been an intimate part of the biblical saga from the beginning." Senior, Donald. "Beloved Aliens and Exiles: New Testament Perspectives on Migration" in *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Reflections on Migration*. Ed. Daniel Groody and Gioacchino Campese. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2008. 20.

[66] Carl Byker and Mitch Wilson, *Kingdom of David: The End of Days*, vol. 3, 4 vols., An Empires Special (PBS, 2003), http://www.pbs.org/video/empires-kingdom-of-david-the-end-of-days/.

[67] John Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 41. See also Daniel L. Smith, *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* (Bloomington, IN: Meyer-Stone Books, 1989), 139–40.

[68] See the Chapter "Biblical Theology: On Matters of Methodology" in Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, Overtures to Biblical Theology. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002). Esp. pg. 26.

[69] In the foreword to Smith-Christopher's book, Walter Brueggemann writes that "Old Testament scholarship has advanced to see that the Old Testament itself, in its canonical form, arises from and responds to the crisis of exile." Smith-Christopher, vii.

letter of James. In this chapter, I examine the exilic writings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel to introduce two contrasting biblical insights about community; namely, that community exists for goods beyond itself and that community is inherently fragile. Although these two lessons about community are somewhat in tension, the Bible insists on speaking truthfully about community by speaking both. I trace these two insights into the genres of court tales and apocalyptic literature and then demonstrate that in integrating these two genres, the text of Daniel recommends a social ethic that refuses to let go of either insight. The gospels portray the ministry of Jesus as living out this basic dual insistence of Daniel. The Epistle that bears the name of James recommends a similar social ethical stance for the church: one of personal moral formation in the community of faith alongside compassionate social engagement that is especially concerned for those who are marginalized by the definitions on which the political order of the day is legitimated.

Israel in Exile and Lessons about Community

As Judah went into exile, they heard the prophet Jeremiah exhort them to "Seek the welfare of the city, … and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare will be your welfare."[70] This is an astounding proclamation. These are the enemies and the oppressors who are coming to burn Jerusalem to the ground and carry off her inhabitants into a strange and foreign land.[71] And yet Jeremiah is counseling the people to build houses, plant gardens, pursue peace, and generally seek a positive relationship with the dominant society, even if (perhaps especially if) it is oppressive.[72]

Jeremiah initiates what becomes an important lesson about community that Judah was to learn in exile in Babylon. This is the notion that the goal of community exists beyond

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[70] Jeremiah 29:4-7
[71] Psalm 137:4
[72] See also Smith, *The Religion of the Landless*, 132–38.

itself. Community doesn't exist for its own sake but for a larger end or purpose. For Judah in exile, the common good of Judah was to be intimately tied up with the common good of Babylon. Israel's purpose as God's chosen people was now to be realized from the new social location of diaspora in Babylon. This demanded attention to the needs and interests of Babylon and their Babylonian neighbors. Bretherton writes, "The challenge of Jeremiah 29 is to repentance and to relearning obedience to God. However, the place and manner of this learning is somewhat counterintuitive: the Israelites were to learn obedience through pursuing the welfare of Babylon and through forming a common life with pagans and oppressors."[73] As the Jews attempted to answer Jeremiah's high call, the prophets and poets of a new era in theological history increasingly found creative ways of re-articulating Jeremiah's important lesson about community.[74] But there were other voices alongside Jeremiah's that offered a contrasting perspective on community that must be heard as well.

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[73] Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*, 5.

[74] The book of Jonah, for example, is a satirical narrative that reverses the typical depiction of the relationship between the prophet and his audience. If the typical prophetic depiction was that of an enthusiastic prophet delivering the word of the Lord to an obstinate and unrepentant Israel, in Jonah we find a begrudging prophet sharing the word of the Lord among hilariously responsive pagans. In the text of Jonah, from the least to the greatest, from the sailors to the Ninevites, from the animals to the king, every Gentile that Jonah meets becomes exemplary in their repentance and enthusiastic in their worship of Israel's God. Jonah's mission looks like colossal failure if you are watching Jonah. But if you are watching the Gentiles around Jonah, you see only dramatic success! In the person of Jonah, Israel is depicted critically and the Gentile nations are portrayed generously. This is due to God's kindness rather than Jonah's faithfulness. The text demonstrates a self-critical posture that attempts to takes one's own faults more seriously than the faults of others, but takes God's kindness most seriously of all. The text of Jonah exemplifies an amiable attitude toward Gentiles in its positive portrayal of their response to the God of Israel. Further, the text hints at the possibility of God's kindness to Gentile nations through Israel's witness and even in spite of Israel's disobediences. In this way, Jonah offers evidence of Israel's growing belief that community exists for a good beyond itself.

In Second and Third Isaiah, too, Jeremiah's lesson about community is reiterated and built on. In Second Isaiah, we begin to hear a proclamation that reverses the typical dynamics of integration that the exiles would have faced in Babylon. Typically, a subjugated and displaced minority group within the Babylonian empire would face enormous pressure to assimilate unidirectionally. The process of accommodation would not be mutual, reciprocal, or symmetrical. The centripetal forces of Babylonian society would have been unrelenting and difficult to resist. But, suddenly and unexpectedly, in Second Isaiah, we begin to hear that rather than Israel integrating into the nations, the nations will now come to integrate into Israel! In Isaiah 42 we hear the Lord proclaim that, "I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, to open blind eyes" (See Isaiah 42:1-7). In chapter 56, Israel's duty is to offer a "house of prayer for all

Jeremiah's exhortation to the exiles rang out from Jerusalem as the people were about to be defeated and carried off. One of the first deportees was a priest named Ezekiel. Ezekiel wrote from a different vantage point than Jeremiah because Ezekiel saw life firsthand in Babylon.[75] Ezekiel offers us the beginnings of a different but not necessarily contradictory insight into the nature of community.[76] In the book of Ezekiel, the fragility of Israel's community is what is emphasized.[77] The posture of the text that bears the name of Ezekiel is much more adversarial than what we find in Jeremiah. Ezekiel, who is already in Babylon, is much more worried about his people losing their faith and their identity in the face of the dominant culture. Ezekiel is more cautious about Israel's witness and sets about demonstrating that the LORD is in fact the one who is in charge, even here. Ezekiel is doing his best to covertly undermine the dominant narrative that Marduk, the god of Babylon, has put to the sword forever the god of Israel.[78] Ezekiel is fortifying his people in the face of a Babylonian onslaught that is threatening to disintegrate his people and destroy their unique witness.[79]

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people" and to refuse to separate out the foreigners from their worship (See Isaiah 56:1-8). God has chosen to accept Gentile worship through the mediation of Israel and to gather those from beyond the house of Jacob. In chapter 60, we hear that "Nations will stream to the brightness of your dawning" (See Isaiah 60:1-22). No longer will the Jews have to attempt to recommend themselves to the dominant Gentile nations from a position of fundamental weakness. Instead, the light of the glory of the Lord will shine out from Israel to lighten the darkness of the Gentile nations. Nations will stream to the new light in a nonviolent reversal of the exile. These themes and motifs emphasize that Israel's community is fundamentally related to the good of other communities beyond its own boundaries. See also: John Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 198.

[75] John Collins, 185.

[76] My reading of Ezekiel is heavily influenced by the reading put forward in Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*.

[77] This section is also much indebted to lectures on Ezekiel given by Ashley Mathews at Trinity Anglican Church in Atlanta, GA in summer of 2017. I appreciate having had the opportunity to collaborate in teaching that class. Much of this section of the thesis is the fruit of further reflection on those lectures.

[78] For more on this, see C. A Strine, *Sworn Enemies the Divine Oath, the Book of Ezekiel, and the Polemics of Exile*, Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin ; Boston: De Gruyter, 2013).

[79] For more on these dynamics and a trauma-informed analysis of Ezekiel, see Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*.

These two messages, the message of Jeremiah and the message of Ezekiel, are different but not necessarily mutually exclusive. As the Jews sought to live out these two messages,[80] Jeremiah's exhortation to maintain a positive relationship with the dominant society on the one hand and Ezekiel's exhortation to preserve their unique faith and identity on the other, two new genres began to emerge; the court tale and apocalyptic literature.[81]

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[80] Both while in exile and then again during the Seleucid persecutions after the end of the exile.

[81] One of the most important opportunities for further research that has come out of this thesis concerns the relationship between the Christian cosmopolitanism articulated here and a robust theology of place like the one articulated by Willie James Jennings in Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010). It was in exile that Israel's monolatry shifted toward a more insistent and consistent monotheism. For Second Isaiah and Ezekiel, the content of revelation is God's own deity. Israel's belief that the LORD made heaven and earth left no room for rival creation stories or rival creator gods. The proclamation in Duetero-Isaiah is that the one true God was going to reveal God's own self among the nations through dealings with Israel. The exilic prophets anticipate that God's revelation will demonstrate that the God of Israel is the God of all the nations, indeed of all creation. After the exile, Israel would return with the knowledge that God is not only the God of the land of Israel. This represents an important theological development that has had enormous implications for world history. Prior to this shift, a deep connection between place and theology was the theological norm. Gods were the gods of geographic areas and the inhabitants therein. Israel's interpretation of their experiences of exile broke this theological system. The proclamations of Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah asserted that the LORD is God over all places, over the whole world and all the peoples therein. Indeed Tillich argues that through the people of Israel and the theology that developed in the exile, we discover that "bondedness to place, immediacy, and paganism are not the truth of human experience." Tillich, quoted in an article by Jon Levenson, writes, "Our history does not allow itself to be taken back, the polytheism of coexistence in space will not return." Levenson's take on Tillich's perspective is instructive here: "From Jerusalem, it is roughly the same distance to London as to Nairobi: the God of Abraham is no more native to the Angles and the Saxons than to the Kikkuyu and the Kamba. Whether any of these groups ought to have put away their traditional gods to accept Him is a matter of legitimate debate, as is the perennial question of whether either Jerusalem or Athens ought to have attained cultural hegemony over the other. Without resort, however, to a biological essentialism … appeal to ethnicity alone cannot resolve these knotty issues." Levenson adds that the faith of Abraham, who (somewhat anachronistically) became the father of monotheism to the exilic Jewish community, "dislodged 'bondedness to place.'" Through his journey from Ur to a land the Lord would show him, Abraham set out to transcend his origins. This interpretation of exile, then, asserts the possibility of reasoned discourse across cultural boundaries because the one, true God is capable of crossing cultural boundaries. YHWH is Lord of all creation and so our social ethic must also respect all of creation. But Jennings suggests that dislodgedness from place is a crucial ingredient that can give rise to oppressive missionizing, colonialism, and, not only racism, but also the very way that racial identity itself has become understood in the modern era. Jennings' work represents an important perspective for Christian cosmopolitanism to engage. While committed to cultivating local soil and local community, there is simultaneously a commitment to a certain level of dislodgedness to place that the Christian cosmopolitan embraces. This is a safeguard against "Blood and Soil ideologies" and the dangers they represent. But how then to understand the proper relationship between the commitments of Christian cosmopolitanism and place? This question falls outside the scope of this paper but offers a significant opportunity for further exploration. For many of the insights in this footnote, I am indebted to Dr. Steffen Lösel and his Fall 2017 lectures on Wolfhart Pannenberg in his Systematic Theology course at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University as well as multiple conversations with Silas Allard. See also Jon Levenson, "The God of Abraham and the Enemies of 'Eurocentricism.,'" First Things, October 1991, https://www.firstthings.com/article/1991/10/003-the-god-

The court tales told of Jews who managed to accomplish both Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's exhortations simultaneously while serving on the court of a foreign king. The social stance of the court tales is generally optimistic or moderate with regard to the dominant society and the ability of wise Jews to find faithful ways of promoting the good of both the Jewish community and the good of the dominant society in which they live. In blessing the nation in which they found themselves, the heroes of the court tales are models of Jeremiah's exhortation to seek the welfare of the city in which the Lord has placed you.[82]

Apocalyptic literature also examines the relation between Israel and the surrounding nations by building on the insights of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. But it does so in a way that is very different than the court tale genre. Apocalyptic literature takes seriously the reality of evil and the possibility of significant conflict between community interests. Boundaries are drawn clearly and decidedly in apocalyptic.[83] In its dimensions as a literary genre, an apocalypse is a form of narrative in which otherworldly beings disclose a theological interpretation of history to human beings.[84] But forces outside of human control determine that historical trajectory and the narrative uses figurative and esoteric language to create a polyvalent symbolic world for the reader to visualize but which is difficult to understand.[85] Apocalyptic tends to emphasize the vindication of Israel rather than cooperation across

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of-abraham-and-the-enemies-of-eurocentrism. Levenson quotes from Tillich's "The Early Hegel and the Fate of Germany" but I have so far been unable to locate this article.

[82] For an interesting and related analysis of the court tales of Esther and the court tales of Daniel, see Benjamin Hertzberg, "Daniel, Esther, and the Minority Politics of the Hebrew Bible," *Polity 47 (3): 397-416*, accessed January 25, 2018, http://www.academia.edu/11759202/Daniel_Esther_and_the_Minority_Politics_of_the_Hebrew_Bible. His work suggests that the book of Esther may be combining the worldview of apocalyptic literature with the literary form of the court tale narrative.

[83] Gregory Stevenson, *A Slaughtered Lamb: Revelation and the Apocalyptic Response to Evil and Suffering* (Abilene, Texas: Abilene Christian University Press, 2013), 19, 93–94, 98.

[84] Gregory Stevenson, 91; David Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1 (New York, New York: Doubleday, 1992), 280.

[85] Gregory Stevenson, *A Slaughtered Lamb: Revelation and the Apocalyptic Response to Evil and Suffering*, 96.

community boundaries. It is less optimistic about the goods of various communities fitting together in harmony. The good of community according to apocalyptic is neither within itself nor necessarily outside itself but is instead located somewhere in the transcendent providence of God. Apocalyptic, then, fits closer to Ezekiel's emphasis on the fragility of community and the necessity of maintaining internal social cohesion and communal values.

One of the most fascinating things about these two genres, however, is the way that they are combined in the book of Daniel. In the book of Daniel, chapters 1-6 are court tales and chapters 7-12 are apocalyptic literature.[86] In Daniel, we have the longest continuous section of court tales contained in the Hebrew Bible right alongside the longest sustained section of apocalyptic literature. The two approaches put forward in these genres, which can feel in tension, have been woven together and integrated into one text. The book of Daniel, then, while emphasizing the necessity of wisdom, recommends both the emphasis of Jeremiah and the emphasis of Ezekiel; that is, both the posture of the court tale and the posture of apocalyptic. The court tales moderate apocalypticism's propensity to slip into exclusionary practices or violent extremism. Apocalypticism forces the court tales to wrestle with the possibility that rather than the king being an incompetent but largely well-meaning friend; he may be an extremely competent foe to the community. From the Bible, then, we are to learn that the good of community exists beyond itself but also that community is inherently difficult to maintain. Our social posture in the midst of diversity should entail both optimism and realism. The Bible speaks truthfully by speaking two things, care for

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[86] For helpful commentary on the book of Daniel and the apocalyptic visions contained therein, see Collins, John. *Daniel: A Commentary of the Book of Daniel*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. and Collins, John. *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel*. Scholars Press, 1977.

those who are different and the preservation of unique community goods. In the book of

Daniel, these are artistically wed together as one.[87]

This biblical historical framing of our belief in the *Imago Dei,* suggests important

implications about the goals and limits of community. Israel learned at least two important

lessons about community while in exile in Babylon. First, Israel learned that the goal of

community is decidedly beyond itself. The goal of Israel's community is not only the

preservation of that community but also to be a light to the Gentiles. Israel's focus, then, is

not only on pursuing the "common good" of Israel proper but also on the common goods

that include other nations as well.[88] This conclusion may be reinforced by later Christian

interpretations of exile but I believe that this position is already present in the prophecies of

Duetero-Isaiah and in the rhetorical thrust of Jonah. Somehow the people of Judah

recognized, even in their oppressors, the image of God. And they determined among

themselves to respect that image no matter what.

The other important lesson about community that Israel's exilic literature points to

concerns the limits of community. In exile, the Jews saw firsthand the fragility of

community. Community is inherently delicate and easily lost, especially when threatened by

an oppositional dominant society. It takes constant work, commitment, and diligence to

maintain community. Even if the goal of Israel's community stretched beyond itself, the

maintenance of Israel's community was no less difficult. The particularized reflection on

community we find in Ezekiel testifies to this reality. Communities need "to appreciate the

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[87] For further commentary on Daniel see Hartman, Louis, and Alexander Di Lella. *The Anchor Bible Commentary on the Book of Daniel*. Vol. 23. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1978. and Davies, P.R. "26. Daniel," in *The Oxford Bible Commentary,* ed. Barton, John, and Muddiman, John. Oxford University Press Inc., New York, 2001.

[88] This focus is well reflected in the Wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible in its insistence that the sources of wisdom are myriad, even among nature and the nations. See Proverbs 1 or Proverbs 6:6-11 for examples.

formative power of the structures and traditions within which they exist."[89] This was especially true for the exilic community if it was to preserve the communal values that made it unique.

These two insights, that community exists for a good beyond itself and that community is inherently fragile, can often feel in tension. And yet under the Seleucid persecutions, the book of Daniel tied these perspectives together through its integration of court tales and apocalyptic literary devices. No doubt these two poles may pull the community in different directions. And yet these are the poles that define community, at least within the biblical tradition. Before we attempt to bring this understanding of community into conversation with contemporary concerns about community, we must first examine how the New Testament makes use of this understanding of community and what it means for the church's present-day mandate to care for refugees.

The Church's Mandate to Care for Refugees

In the New Testament letter of James, we read that "Religion the Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: To look after the orphan and widow in distress and to keep one's self from being polluted by the world." Why would the author (from this point on, James) claim this for the early followers of "the Way?" Why is visiting orphans and widows so important to the character of this religion? What is distinct about orphans and widows in particular? These are important questions with important implications for how the New Testament envisions the character of the church.

In his definition of "pure and faultless religion," James posits two important components. First, there is visiting orphans and widows in their affliction. Second, there is maintaining purity in a corrupt world. In the first, the emphasis is on compassionate social

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[89] Serene Jones, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace*, Guides to Theological Inquiry. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 152.

engagement. In the second, the emphasis is on personal morality and implies a more robust

emphasis on formation in the community of faith. These two models of social ethics, which

James brings together, can be mapped onto two distinct communities that were active in the

century prior to the writing of this epistle. On the one hand, were the followers of Hillel and

on the other were members of the Qumran community. These two communities can be

understood as representing the two poles of the biblical understanding of community.

The followers of Hillel emphasized Jeremiah's injunction to maintain a positive

relationship with the dominant society and the court tale's optimism about Jewish ability to

align the goods of various communities. The important Jewish Pharisee Hillel counseled the

Jews to love their neighbors, including even their Roman oppressors.[90] Hillel minimized the

importance of who was ruling Israel at the time and emphasized instead compassionate

social engagement.[91] Hillel lived before Jesus and his teaching likely had an influence on the

Messiah, the early community of believers, and certainly the Synoptic Gospel writers.[92] In a

tradition that stretched back through the court tales and to the prophet Jeremiah, Hillel

emphasized that the Jews should maintain a positive relationship with the dominant society.

Speaking generally, Hillel moderated his insistence on the strictness of Torah observance in

favor of a more gentle, winsome, and conciliatory stance in relation to the pluralistic

environment in which the Jews found themselves.[93] Hillel insisted on caring for the orphan

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[90] Carl Byker and Mitch Wilson, *Kingdom of David: The End of Days*.

[91] "Especially to Hillel, this [*The Book of Enoch*'s sectarianism] contrast of black and white was incompatible with his Hasidic concepts of neighborly love and mercy and his attempts to win the common man." Nahum Glatzer, *Hillel the Elder: The Emergence of Classical Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), 41.

[92] Carl Byker and Mitch Wilson, *Kingdom of David: The End of Days*.

[93] Carl Byker and Mitch Wilson. See also the discussion of Torah in Nahum Glatzer, *Hillel the Elder: The Emergence of Classical Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), 52-53, 56.

and widow but, at least in the eyes of some of the Jews at that time, may have been faulted for a perception that his followers didn't "keep themselves unstained by the world."[94]

Hillel's midrash on Leviticus 19:18 offers the dictum "What is detestable to you do not inflict upon your fellow man."[95] Hillel taught, "Be among the disciples of Aaron— love peace and pursue it, love all men and draw them close to the Torah."[96] Our Lord's own use of the story of "the good Samaritan" in Luke 10, which emphasizes the universality of ethical obligations, can be seen in continuity with the teachings of Hillel. Glatzer tells us that "Among the stories that illustrate Hillel's regard for the poor, is the one of Hillel and his wife preparing a meal in honor of a guest and then giving it to a poor man who happened to appear at the door."[97] This story illustrates Hillel's insistence on caring for those in need, even if they weren't a part of one's own community.

The Qumran community, on the other hand, heeded Ezekiel's call to maintain their unique identity and spiritual heritage. Qumran was more influenced by the apocalyptic genres and texts. The Qumran community took a different stance toward the pluralistic, Hellenistic culture and the realities of Roman imperial rule. They insisted on maintaining purity from the corruption of the world and so they chose withdrawal as their primary method of social ethics. The Essenes, for whom Qumran may have been a prominent outpost, were more apocalyptic than the followers of Hillel and sought the Lord's dramatic intervention on behalf of the "sons of light" (themselves) against the "sons of darkness"

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[94] James 1:27. Translation from *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2001).
[95] See the entry on Hillel: Isaac Gottlieb, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, ed. Adele Berlin and Maxine Grossman, 2nd ed. (Online: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[96] See Isaac Gottlieb's entry on Hillel in the Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion. *Avot* 1.12.
[97] Nahum Glatzer, *Hillel the Elder: The Emergence of Classical Judaism*, 44.

(everyone else).[98] These Jews stood for "keeping one's self unsullied by the world"[99] but offered a less compassionate posture to those outside their community.

The community of Jewish believers in Jesus dispersed[100] throughout the Roman Empire in the first century to whom James wrote would likely have already been familiar with each of these community's distinct approaches to social ethics as well as the biblical legacies that they represented.[101] So in stating that pure and faultless religion requires both keeping oneself from being polluted by the world *and* caring for orphans and widows in distress, it is notable that James is bringing the two approaches together even though one can imagine that these two priorities may have tended to pull in opposite directions. James states explicitly what I have already suggested the book of Daniel does in its very text. James restates both insights about community and refuses to decide between them.

While the religious and political landscape of first century Judea was undoubtedly more complicated than what is presented in this dichotomy,[102] there is New Testament evidence, particularly in the synoptic gospels, that Jesus' ministry sought to combine the insights of these two groups.[103] In Matthew, for example, we recognize Hillel's influence on the Sermon on the Mount as Jesus counsels his followers to "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."[104] But we also hear the apocalyptic hopes of Matthew 24-25

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[98] Carl Byker and Mitch Wilson, *Kingdom of David: The End of Days*.

[99] James 1:27

[100] See James 1:1. Biblical quotes are generally from the NRSV or ESV translations. *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989).

[101] For an informative and accessible introduction to the period in focus and the characters of Hillel and the Essenes, see Carl Byker and Mitch Wilson, *Kingdom of David: The End of Days*.

[102] The followers of the Pharisee Shammai as well as the Sicarii (and related rebel groups) stand out as important players not engaged here.

[103] For a popular level defense of this assertion, see Ross Douthat, *Bad Religion : How We Became a Nation of Heretics* (New York: Free Press, 2012), 152–53.

[104] Matthew 5:44

and note how much more at home these texts would be among the Essenes at Qumran.[105]

Jesus refused political simplicity by denying the poles of the religious divide.[106] He chastises

and recommends both options.[107]

James picks up this dual insistence of his Lord and recommends it as the defining

characteristic of those who would follow in Jesus' name. You must unequivocally care for

the orphan and the widow while *simultaneously* keeping yourself pure in a wicked and

adulterous age. You must be as compassionately engaged as Hillel and as faultless and

undefiled as Qumran. This is a high standard but one that is absolutely binding on those

who would follow in the footsteps of "our glorious Lord Jesus Christ."[108] And yet we still

haven't answered the question proposed at the outset; namely, "What is so unique about

orphans and widows in particular?" Bearing in mind this broader context, why does James

recommend visiting orphans and widows in particular as the central positive task to "pure

and faultless religion?"[109]

In the times of the Apostles, the dominant political order was legitimated and

defined through patriarchy.[110] Male heads of families connected the whole family to the

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[105] "Not one iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until it is all accomplished" (5:18). "The Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect and he will gather his elect from all the corners of the earth" (24:29-31). The sheep who cared for the weak and destitute will be welcomed into the kingdom while those who neglected those in need will be banished into eternal fire in Matthew 25 all as prominent examples.

[106] "Christianity is a paradoxical religion because the Jew of Nazareth was a paradoxical figure… He's an apocalyptic prophet one moment, a wise ethicist the next." Ross Douthat, *Bad Religion : How We Became a Nation of Heretics*. 152-153.

[107] Jesus' favorite title for himself in the gospels, the Son of Man, is taken from the book of Daniel. It is beyond the scope of this paper and would necessitate wading into contentious scholarly debates about the Son of Man title, but I think that this title could itself be a kind of nod to Jesus' preference for affirming both biblical insights about community.

[108] James 2:1

[109] James 1:27

[110] "The most significant feature of the Roman household (*familia*) was that its power was concentrated in the hands of the male head, the *paterfamilias*… Jews typically adopted the marriage practices of the larger culture… Christian families probably looked a lot like Jewish and pagan families… Jewish and Christian families would have constituted weakened patriarchies." James Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 238.

polis.[111] The economic, political, and cultural obligations were primarily channeled through

adult men.[112] It was primarily through adult males that women and children gained access to

the whole.[113] Paternalistic expectations, the duties that adult men had to the women and

children perceived as "under" them, while by no means a faultless system, held weight to a

degree unimaginable to most Americans in 2018. Women and children relied on these

associative obligations as determined by the patriarchal political system. If, however, a

husband and father passed away, his widow and orphan became suddenly vulnerable.

Widows and orphans in a patriarchal political arrangement are threatened with disconnection

from all of the associative obligations by which they sustain their lives. The very presence of

a widow or orphan contradicts the premises on which the whole is founded and by which

the system is legitimated. While exceptions can certainly be found, widows and orphans are

by definition marginalized in a patriarchal society.

It is into this context, that we hear the author of James proclaim that, "Religion the

Father accepts as pure and faultless is to look after the orphan and widow in distress."[114] We

should not be surprised to find this kind of exhortation from one who worships the God of

Israel. The Old Testament is filled with references to the LORD as the God who protects

the defenseless and those who cannot argue their own case on their own behalf.[115] James

takes what he knows of his God, assesses the political order of his day, and prescribes that

the church be especially sensitive to the needs of those who were systematically

disenfranchised by the very mechanism by which the political order was legitimated. The

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[111] Seen in Fiorenza's phrase "the dominant cultural ethos of the patriarchal household." Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 251.

[112] "The old Roman ideal was for women to pass from subjection of father to husband… The Jewish woman was the mistress of the home." Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 78.

[113] "The decisive dividing line between childhood and adulthood (the most important social event) was marriage for a girl and being registered as a citizen (at seventeen) for a boy." Everett Ferguson, 80.

[114] James 1:27

[115] See Psalm 146 for one example of many that could be given.

New Testament author exhorts the early church to solidarity with those whom the dominant political order systematically marginalizes. This is a call to join the God of Israel in standing up for those who have been handicapped by "the principalities and powers"[116] and rendered unable to protect themselves. This a practical means for how to "resist the devil" and refuse "friendship with the world."[117] This is a call that recognizes what we would call the "human rights" of orphans and widows but it also goes beyond that. It is a covenantal obligation that engages the economic, political, and cultural dimensions of a more thick and holistic solidarity. The church is called, in a very demanding and real way, to provide for the orphan and widow that which the deceased husband/father no longer can.

As we turn our attention to our own day, we find a political order defined and legitimated by nation-states. The individuals who are marginalized by the definitions that legitimate this political arrangement are refugees, asylum-seekers, the stateless, and the denationalized.[118] Contemporary political theory will be further discussed in following sections but for now it is enough to point out that in the same way a woman who lost her husband in the first century lost her connection to the *polis*, a refugee in today's world who flees her country of nationality loses her connection to the state and, thus, her political community; thereby handicapping her ability to live a flourishing life.[119] In the same way that a child in the first century who lost his or her father becomes threatened with chronic insecurity and liminality, so too a refugee who flees across a border becomes inducted into a new life of insecurity and liminality. The structural arrangement of a global order defined by

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[116] Ephesians 6:12

[117] James 4:4-7

[118] See Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees," *Menorah Journal* 31, no. 1 (January 1943): pp 69-77. Also available at Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees" in *Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile*, ed. Marc Robinson, n.d. or online at http://amroali.com/2017/04/refugees-essay-hannah-arendt/.

[119] The implications of losing one's connection to the state in today's world (where the state is one's *de facto* political community) are as severe as losing one's connection to the *polis* in the ancient world."

nation-states—the arrangement itself—defines the marginalization of these refugees.[120] If in a patriarchal context, the Apostle counseled the church to move toward orphans and widows in an intentional way, what does that suggest for the church today that lives in a context defined by nation-states? I propose that in the same way pure religion in the first century had a special concern for orphans and widows, in the twenty first century the LORD desires his people to have a special concern for refugees.

At issue, of course, is the reality that neither individual Christians nor the church *qua* the church can provide the fundamental need that refugees or asylum-seekers have. The refugee or asylum-seeker's need is fundamentally political.[121] Not only do they need to reestablish the cultural and economic associative ties by which they might live their lives, they first need access to a territory in which approximate justice and peace are enforced by a lawful government. If neither individual Christians nor the church are responsible for enforcing approximate peace and justice within a geographic territory and if access to that territory is the primary need that refugees and asylum-seekers have, then Christians must consider the state's role in refugee admissions and the adjudication of asylum-seeker requests. This necessitates significant attention to contemporary political theory.[122]

This is an important point for Christian leaders to consider. Sometimes pastors may hear from congregants that biblical injunctions to welcome the stranger are directed at the community of the church or to individual Christians, not the nation-state or the government. This has valid hermeneutical weight and should not be dismissed outright. But refugees and

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[120] See Agamben's analysis of Arendt's important work in Giorgio Agamben, "We Refugees," trans. Michael Rocke, *Symposium* 49, no. 2 (1995): 114–19. http://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary_zabel/Courses/Phil%20108-08/We%20Refugees%20-%20Giorgio%20Agamben%20-%201994.htm

[121] As I argue throughout this thesis, the needs of refugees are *more* than just political but they are certainly not less.

[122] This reality also justifies my recommendation of the practice of advocacy in chapter 4.

asylum-seekers fundamentally need a solution that only states can offer. Without a comprehensive foray into ecclesiology, it is enough to admit that neither individual Christians nor the church enforce approximate peace and justice on a geographic territory by a monopoly on force. Since that is both what refugees need and what states exist to do, Christians have to consider the state's role in refugee admissions and the adjudication of asylum-seeker requests.

<u>Summary</u>

To conclude this chapter on the biblical foundations of Christian cosmopolitanism, both the Old and New Testaments provide evidence that a biblical understanding of community acknowledges both the inherent fragility of community and that the goal of community exists beyond itself. These biblical insights reveal the way in which Israel discovered and then insisted not only that all humans are equally made in the image of God but also that particular communities are necessary sites for human formation and prospering. These twin insights form a foundation for and justify the political theology of Christian cosmopolitanism.

Although cultural communities in the Bible have boundaries, the *imago Dei* means that the ethical community does not. All humanity, both Jew and Gentile, is on the same ethical plane before God.[123] The ethical community doesn't stop at any specific community boundary.[124] Our ethical obligations before God extend past family, past nation, past even

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[123] "Before God all are one. Here is the bulwark against an ideology of racial superiority, here is the challenge to the absolute claims of national or cultural boundaries, here is the basis for all human dignity, including the dignity of the stranger in the land." Donald Senior. "Beloved Aliens and Exiles: New Testament Perspectives on Migration" in *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Reflections on Migration*. Ed. Daniel Groody and Gioacchino Campese. (University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2008.) 32.

[124] "The stranger who migrates across one's borders is also a sign of the full scope of the human family, a scope that, within the New Testament vision, transcends bloodlines and national boundaries." Donald Senior. "Beloved Aliens and Exiles: New Testament Perspectives on Migration." 30. See also Acts 10:34 and Romans 3:29.

religion. The moral obligations God imposed on Israel extended to the Gentiles in their

midst, to their non-Israelite neighbors, and even to the oppressive, non-Israelite powers in

whose midst they lived while in exile.[125] The New Testament takes up this tradition and

declares it true for the church as well.[126] The ethical community is universal. The church

must affirm with the human rights protestor: "No human being is illegal."[127] And yet cultural

communities continue to provide meaningful categories for formation, identity, and

particular flourishing. The Bible acknowledges this and exhorts us to not let go of either

emphasis.[128]

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[125] It is also important to note here the biblical tension between the LORD as the God of Israel and the LORD as the God of all peoples. For a helpful discussion, Brueggemann's excellent analysis in "Chapter Eleven: YHWH as God of the Nations" in Walter Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology: An Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 245–61. He quotes Jon Levenson at length to argue that: "The universal rule of God was not displaced by a more particular commitment" and "God's attachment to Israel is in some sense instrumental to the larger divine purpose" but also that "The divine choice of Israel was not fully understood as instrumental to a larger purpose, but was itself marked by an ultimacy that is not in the service of anything else" (247).

[126] See Paul's thesis in Romans that God shows no partiality. Jew and Gentile are on the same ethical plane before God. Through his theological history, Paul can assert in Romans 10 that "there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him" (Romans 10:12). Jews and Gentiles are on equal playing field before God. God shows no distinction or partiality. Jews have sinned and Gentiles have sinned. Jews who are saved are so by the one true God and Gentiles who are saved are so by the one true God. Paul unequivocally lays out a universal scheme in line with the lessons Israel learned in exile in Babylon but he simultaneously is at pains to maintain the individuality and particularity of Israel. This is the mark of Christian universalism. It is unrelenting in its insistence that all are alike in the possibilities of sin and salvation before God. Since there is one God who is above all cultural barriers, the possibility of discourse and exchange across barriers is possible and our ethical obligations to one another are indivisible. Simultaneously, it is recognized that not all are alike in their specific cultural and civic histories nor the history of a relationship with God. Christianity doesn't subsume the particular into the universal. Nor does it elevate the particular at the expense of the universal. Rather, it seeks to relate the particular and the universal under God. So Christians are bound to a universal ethic that equally respects the dignity of all people. But simultaneously the Christian pursuit of universal rights or transcendent norms refuses to necessitate the abandonment of all particular loyalties and interests. See Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*, 136–37. I am indebted at this point to Dr. Susan Hylen's lectures in a New Testament course I took at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in the Fall of 2017.

[127] "The marginalization and exclusion of migrants has become one of the most dangerous trends in the world today… The now common usage of the term 'illegal migrant' or 'illegal alien' reinforces this. By definition, this term criminalizes and dehumanizes human beings; it by a word renders people legally non-existent. For Christians, no human being is illegal" World Council of Churches. 1998. Cited in Marie Marquardt, Susanna Snyder, and Manuel Vasquez, "Challenging Laws: Faith-Based Engagement with Unauthorized Immigration," 276–77.

[128] Among cosmopolitans that affirm that "universal human rights exist without regard to borders," there are still differences about "whether to reject borders completely or to acknowledge them as part of the contemporary political and legal architecture while still advocating for government and employer conduct

But before we can address how the church might fulfill her mandate to refugees in the final chapter, it is first necessary to examine the given constraints of contemporary politics. Before answering how our theological and ethical commitments should find expression in today's world of particular nation-states, we must first examine the dynamic opportunities and political challenges of our current reality in time and space. Pluralistic, modern democratic nation-states are presenting new challenges to the political theology of Christian cosmopolitanism and the biblical foundations on which it is based. Responding to these challenges wisely and faithfully necessitates engagement with the relevant political theories that address issues of refugee protection alongside issues of political and community membership. This two-fold emphasis, on both the common life of the polity as well as the needs of those who flee violence is necessitated by biblical views of community and the value of Christian cosmopolitanism. It is to this political theory that we now turn.

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that respects universal as well as national rights." I am suggesting that liberal cosmopolitans tend to the former while Christian cosmopolitans should embrace the latter. For more discussion, see Josiah Heyman, "Illegality and the US/Mexico Border: How It Is Produced and Resisted," ed. Dan Kanstroom, *Constructing Immigrant "Illegality" : Critiques, Experiences, and Responses*, 2014, 127.

Chapter 3 – Political Challenges to Christian Cosmopolitanism

As a human community, we are displacing one another faster than we are finding durable solutions for those who are displaced. This problem must be analyzed both in terms of the various, multi-layered *causes* of displacement as well as in terms of the *responses* that those who are displaced receive. The focus of this chapter is on the latter; the responses that refugees receive and the solutions that are made available to them. What determines the responses that refugees receive? To answer this question, we must begin with basic definitions and contextual considerations before critically examining the insights of the political theory.

The Refugee Convention, which is ratified by 145 states, defines a refugee as an individual who is outside their country of nationality or habitual residence and unwilling or unable to return due to a "well-founded fear of persecution based on political opinion, race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group."[129] Core to the Convention is a commitment to "non-refoulement" that "asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threat to their life or freedom."[130] This principle of non-refoulement forms the basis of current refugee international law and was enshrined into US law in the 1980 Refugee Act.[131]

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[129] For more on this definition, see Matthew J. Gibney, *The Ethics and Politics of Asylum Liberal Democracy and the Response to Refugees* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 6. The 1951 Convention on Refugees document can be found here: http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/3b66c2aa10

[130] For more on UNHCR's current understanding of the Convention, see http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/1951-refugee-convention.html. Bretherton notes that, "The Refugee Convention is in the odd position of being the only major human-rights treaty that is not externally supervised." Bretherton 138. He adds that "While UNHCR strives for durable solutions and seeks to promote the asylum rights of displaced persons, many observers have argued that the principle of non-refoulement is dead letter in much of Africa and completely lost in spirit in Europe and North America where restrictive policies may allow states to 'uphold their commitments to the Convention' while pushing migrants to states with less commitment to human rights" Bretherton 138.

[131] Gibney, *The Ethics and Politics of Asylum Liberal Democracy and the Response to Refugees*, 152. In our current world order, only the decision of a nation-state can solve the problem refugees face. Through no fault of their own, refugees face a situation that is hopelessly out of their control.

In our era of globalization and mass displacement, it can be tempting for Christian cosmopolitans to begin to wonder about the possibility of supra-national solutions.[132] While global compacts on safe and orderly migration or refugee protection do seem like an important step forward that should be engaged enthusiastically and hopefully, some have been tempted to imagine globally interconnected political relations replacing the nation-state as the primary system that structures our political identities and common lives. But attention to immigration controls indicates that this is a premature conclusion.[133]

Although our day has observed the relevance of territorially-bounded political community collapsing in certain respects, nation-states can and do still assert themselves in significant ways, in particular with regard to immigration. Nation-states have jealously guarded their authority over border controls and population movements. Immigration controls remain one of the most "notable exceptions" to the general trend toward international integration.[134] As Koser has noted, "In a number of destination countries, host societies have become increasingly fearful about the presence of migrant communities, especially those with unfamiliar cultures that come from parts of the world associated with extremism and violence."[135] Steger adds, "Many governments seek to restrict population flows, particularly those originating in the Global South."[136] Bretherton's conclusion to all of

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[132] The frequency of terms such as "post-national" or "global citizenship" especially within liberal cosmopolitan discourses, suggest just such a future.

[133] Luke Bretherton, "The Duty of Care to Refugees, Christian Cosmopolitanism, and the Hallowing of Bare Life," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 19, no. 1 (April 1, 2006): 39–61, https://doi.org/10.1177/0953946806062268.

[134] Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*, Very Short Introductions ; 86 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 67.

[135] Khalid Koser, *International Migration: A Very Short Introduction*, A Very Short Introduction (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 11.

[136] Steger, *Globalization*, 67.

this evidence is that "nation-states will remain the primary location of political belonging and organization for the foreseeable future."[137]

Given that supra-state solutions are not forthcoming, our political analysis must respond to both the claims of refugees and the claims of nation-states. But there are further reasons why we should consider the claims of both refugees and nation-states. Christian cosmopolitan commitments value *both* the inherent dignity of every person *and* the value of preserving fragile community. Too often, communitarians prefer the claims of the nation-state and liberal cosmopolitans prefer the claims of refugees without either group attempting to hear the claims of the other. An inability to put these claims into conversation weakens both refugee protection and the common life of the polity. When American Christians are influenced by liberal cosmopolitanism to stop at the question of normative welcome without proceeding to the next question of how that welcome does or does not promote the functioning of healthy democratic institutions, then we forfeit half of the biblical conversation about community and handicap our ability to address questions of what our practical response should be.

This chapter on the political challenges to Christian cosmopolitanism engages two political theorists to help get us to the question of practical theology. While using political philosophers to make a move toward practical theology may seem counter-intuitive, it is necessary in this case because of the challenges currently facing Christian cosmopolitanism in the political arena. The theorists I engage, Seyla Benhabib and David Miller, are important because we can not move from Christian cosmopolitanism in theory to Christian cosmopolitanism in practice without first considering the political context that affects how

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[137] Bretherton, "The Duty of Care to Refugees, Christian Cosmopolitanism, and the Hallowing of Bare Life."

refugees become refugees and how established communities respond to newcomers.[138]

Benhabib and Miller are key thinkers for these questions because their theoretical

commitments obligate them to consider both the claims of states *and* the claims of refugees.

Benhabib does so to argue for porous borders while Miller does so to claim a qualified right

of nation-states to restrict access to their territories and prioritize who may enter.

Seyla Benhabib and a Normative Political Framework for Today's World

We will consider first the work of Seyla Benhabib as a helpful conversation partner

for Christians considering the politics of refugee protection and political membership in

pluralistic democracies. Benhabib's efforts to "rejuvenate liberal theory by making a place

within it for particularized reflections on community" represents a kind of third way forward

that attempts to combine the best aspects of both liberal cosmopolitanism and

communitarianism.[139] The scriptural history examined prior calls for just such a path

forward; one that "values the liberative potential of both normative rigor and historical

openness."[140] Like Benhabib, the biblical foundations already laid out suggest that Christians

too should be attempting to include both "rights and care in their assessment of healthy

communities."[141] Because of these shared values, I argue that Benahabib offers a helpful

normative political framework for interpreting today's world of refugees and states.

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[138] This is a point made over and over again by Amstutz in Mark R. Amstutz, *Just Immigration*. See especially 224-227. He argues that the "avoidance of domestic political constraints" is a significant limitation for many Christian groups and churches seeking to engage with immigration policy in America. He also faults Christian groups and churches for their "failure to acknowledge and assess the political conditions in which global migration occurs." This chapter is explicitly grappling with these two concerns while Chapter 1 can be seen as addressing Amstutz' worry that many Christian groups and churches fail to "develop a robust political theology of immigration."

[139] Jones, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology*, 152. I have found Jones to be a lucid commentator on Benhabib. Her characterizations of Benhabib's work are often pithy and clear and her recommendations for how Christians can engage Benhabib have also been helpful to me. This can be seen in my quoting of Jones in this introductory section on Benhabib.

[140] Jones, 152.

[141] Jones, 152.

In a way that should remind us of the tension between communitarian values and cosmopolitan values, Benhabib admits a real and inherent tension in democratic states between the demands of global justice and democratic process. She follows Habermas in taking "universal human rights" and "popular sovereignty" as "two indispensable foundations" of the democratic nation-state.[142] Her work sees these two foundations in "irresolvable contradiction," maybe even "fatal tension."[143] She explores this tension by highlighting examples of how one's responsibilities to one's political community (which is the *demos*) can conflict with one's responsibilities to one's ethical community (which is all humanity). What are we to make of this reality that our moral obligations transcend our borders but our political obligations do not?[144] This framing makes visible the possibility of a democratic polity safeguarding its own interests even if it means compromising the human rights of non-citizens. Benhabib takes the starting premise that "No human being is illegal," puts it in conversation with the "institutional and normative necessities of democracy," and attempts a reconciliation.[145]

While Benhabib admits that the tension between universal human rights and political loyalty to one's democratic citizenry may be irreconcilable, she believes that the harmful effects of this tension can be "mitigated through a renegotiation and reiteration of the dual commitments" (to both democracy and human rights).[146] In her argument for "porous, but not open, borders," she outlines an optimistic case for the ability of democracies to accommodate increasing levels of pluralism.[147] She believes that this can happen through the

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[142] Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens*, John Robert Seeley Lectures ; 5 (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 18–19.
[143] Benhabib, 19.
[144] Benhabib, 37.
[145] Benhabib, 221.
[146] Benhabib, 47.
[147] Benhabib, 221.

discursive nature of democracy and the way this discursive context remains open to what she terms "moral advocacy."[148] This moral advocacy can be undertaken even by those not (yet) included in the *demos*.

From these observations, Benhabib suggests that democracies may undergo "democratic iterations" by which they republish and recreate themselves to include new groups that had previously been excluded.[149] She argues that "new modalities of political agency" are increasingly being asserted by those who do not possess full membership.[150] Over time, these voices find sympathetic audiences within the democratic voting citizenry. Some of these modalities may eventually be codified by democratic majorities, possibly creating pathways to political membership and citizenship. This creates in democracies categories of immigration status much more complicated than what is captured by the traditional alien-citizen dichotomy. Benhabib points to this reality as evidence of democratic iterations.

Benhabib's approach has much to recommend it to the Christian cosmopolitan. She articulates much of the cosmopolitan elements that I have identified within the Christian tradition when she affirms the universal moral equality of all humans. She writes that, "The project of postnational solidarity is a moral project that transcends existing state boundaries."[151] But she simultaneously attempts to privilege local political traditions and, through the way in which she employs the term "federalism," seeks to remain sensitive to the particularities of local communal character. Benhabib offers a compelling political framework for Christians seeking to address the plight of refugees without fundamentally abandoning the institutional norms of contemporary statecraft. Her normative political

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[148] Benhabib, 14.
[149] See especially Chapter 5 in Benhabib, *The Rights of Others*.
[150] Benhabib, 1.
[151] Benhabib, 17.

theory can provide Christians with a political framework for fulfilling our obligations to refugees. But there may be a caveat to this recommendation that deserves more careful attention. To begin to see it, we need to explore more thoroughly Benhabib's understanding of integration and then turn to David Miller for a theoretical counterpoint about the way democracies actually function.

Benhabib suggests that as long as newcomers are willing to integrate politically, giving their assent to generalizable and abstract political principles, cultural integration is not necessary.[152] She views the modern state as presupposing a "plurality of competing as well as co-existing worldviews" and she suggests that only political integration is necessary for the legitimate functioning of the state and the economy.[153] This picture that Benhabib paints is one of a pluralistic and multicultural society made up of constituent groups that have agreed to a system by which political decisions will be made but which aren't necessarily in agreement on the content of what those decisions should be. She reminds us that even the constituent groups within the society will include their own levels of diversity and complicated internal self-identities among the individuals that make up the group. Of course this diversity varies greatly across nations but her comments are especially pertinent to an American context.

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[152] Although Benhabib operates from a more continental and critical perspective, one hears echoes of John Stuart Mill in Benhabib's position: "Society can and does execute its own mandates; and if it issues wrong mandates instead of right, or any mandates at all in things with which it ought not meddle, it practices a social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression, since, though not usually upheld by such extreme penalties, it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into the details of life, and enslaving the soul itself. Protection, therefore, against the tyranny of the magistrate is not enough; there needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling, against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them; to fetter the development and, if possible prevent the formation of any individuality not in harmony with its ways, and compel all characters to fashion themselves upon the model of its own. There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence; and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs as protection against political despotism." John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, ed. Elizabeth Rapaport (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1978), 4–5.
[153] Benhabib, *The Rights of Others*, 121.

That this type of coexistence and cross-pollination is both possible and healthy for modern states is an important point throughout her work. She writes that "Cultural traditions consist of narratives of interpretation and reinterpretation, appropriation and subversion. The more alive a cultural tradition is, the more contestation there will be about its core elements."[154] She is skeptical about any political rhetoric that uses "we" to suggest a "unity without 'fissure.'"[155] Instead, "there cannot be nor is it desirable that there ought to be an uncontested collective narrative of common sympathies."[156] Benhabib suggests that newcomers and established communities should negotiate integration along political lines but she rejects the need for any kind of unified national identity.

But Christian cosmopolitans might wonder about how Benhabib's multi-cultural society will be able to generate a form of hospitality capable of actually welcoming asylum-seekers into anything more robust than abstract political principles.[157] Does Benhabib's cosmopolitan vision threaten to encourage respect for the "generalized others" identified by O'Neill while ignoring or even avoiding the "concrete others?" Might cognitive assent to abstract political principles, if not combined with more robust engagement and encounter, actually threaten to erode the very associative ties so needed by refugees and asylum-seekers? These are concerns brought up by David Miller that I believe are currently being further exacerbated by certain dynamics associated with the processes of globalization. It is to these concerns that we now turn.

David Miller's Caveat: A Concern for Social Trust that Cannot Be Ignored

David Miller engages the claims of nation-states and refugees to provide a political philosophy that defends a qualified right of states to determine who enters and exits their

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[154] Benhabib, 120.
[155] Benhabib, 121.
[156] Benhabib, 82.
[157] Benhabib, 120–21.

territory. In doing so, Miller chastens Benhabib's ideal theory with a theoretical counterpoint about the way in which democracy functions. Benhabib's political framework is complicated by Miller's concern about the effect of social trust in a democracy. Miller is worried about the erosion of social trust in a society like the one described by Benhabib and he is concerned about the negative consequences of this outcome. Because of Miller's concerns about social trust and community formation, Christian cosmopolitans who are attempting to speak truthfully by "saying two things" must lean in.

Miller argues that deliberative democracies can only function in the presence of high levels of social trust. If social trust is lost, the democracy will become less and less deliberative and more and more gridlocked. Identity blocs will begin to prefer to bargain from a position of self-interest rather than with a confidence in mutuality and reciprocity.[158] This divisive politics of continual sectioning off will have destructive cultural and even ethical ramifications. The state's ability to contribute to social welfare policies and provide public goods will decrease as politics finds itself in perpetual paralysis.[159] The nation-state as a safe arena of legal order that ensures justice and peace is threatened by this trajectory.

Immigration, Miller believes, contributes to this net decrease in social trust by increasing diversity. This belief unfortunately finds significant sociological support in the work of Robert Putnam. Drawing on almost a decade worth of sociological research, Putnam speaks to the question of how diversity affects social trust. The results are not

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[158] Although Miller operates from a more Anglo and analytic tradition, one might discern in his concerns echoes of Rousseau's conceptions of popular sovereignty and the general will: "The manner in which general business is taken care of can provide a rather accurate indication of the present state of mores and of the health of the body politic. The more harmony reigns in the assemblies, that is to say, the closer opinions come to unanimity, the more dominant too is the general will. But long debates, dissensions, and tumult betoken the ascendance of private interests and the decline of the state." Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings - On the Social Contract, Book IV, Chapter 2*, trans. Donald A. Cress, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis / Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2011), 226.

[159] David Miller, *Strangers in Our Midst: The Political Philosophy of Immigration* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), 64.

encouraging. Putnam finds that as racial diversity increases, the level of social trust

plummets. He writes that, "[W]e hunker down. We act like turtles. The effect of diversity is

worse than had been imagined. And it's not just that we don't trust people who are not like

us. In diverse communities, we don't trust people who *do* look like us."[160] In *Bowling Alone:*

The Collapse and Revival of American Community,[161] Putnam argues that there is "an ongoing

decline in social cohesion and long-established forms of civic association."[162] Community is

fragile and as social trust erodes, alienation from a strong sense of community becomes the

new norm. This is a concern that cannot be ignored, especially in the light of rising anxieties

about the negative effects of globalization.

Oliver O'Donovan suggests that mass economic harmonization associated with the

economic processes of globalization has caused many individuals around the world to

become alienated from their own local environments and from many of the associative

obligations by which they have traditionally made sense of their lives.[163] This effect extends

to many native-born Americans who are increasingly alienated from any secure sense of

community or belonging. We feel less and less confident about a public moral vocabulary for

engaging contemporary challenges.[164] O'Donovan argues that the uniqueness of all particular

locales is eroding as an increasingly transient employment market pushes people from their

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[160] Putnam, Robert D. *(June 2007)*. "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and community in the twenty-first century". Scandinavian Political Studies. Wiley. *30 (2): 137–74*. doi*:*10.1111/j.1467-9477.2007.00176.x. The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture. Italics mine.

[161] Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone : The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

[162] This is Luke Bretherton's summary of Putnam's work. Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*, 7.

[163] See especially "The Loss of a Sense of Place" in Oliver O'Donovan, *Bonds of Imperfection: Christian Politics, Past and Present* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Pub, 2004).

[164] For an early analysis of these dynamics from a diverse set of signatories, see Council on Civil Society, "A Call to Civil Society: Why Democracy Needs Moral Truths" (Institute for American Values, 1998), http://americanvalues.org/catalog/pdfs/call_civilsociety.pdf.

homes.[165] Technological advancements have created powerful individualistic virtual realities

where citizens can opt for cyberspace rather than the public sphere. Constant access to

virtual realities further contributes to this unsettled feeling of being both everywhere and

nowhere at the same time. O'Donovan suggests that an increasingly common inability to

identify "local interests" and "the weight they carry" prevents those of us in established

communities from subjecting these interests to scrutiny.[166] Imbalanced, unacknowledged,

and unexamined; these allegiances simmer just below the surface. The arrival of a migrant

prompts the surfacing of all these complex insecurities and uncertainties.

To work against this trajectory, Miller recommends (*contra* Benhabib) the cultivation

of a unified national identity through an emphasis on cultural integration. He believes that

this can help foster and promote social trust. When addressing the claims of refugees and

asylum-seekers, Miller insists that states seek to uphold the human rights of migrants and

refrain from ever refouling asylum-seekers back to dangerous environments. But given the

above analysis on social trust, Miller wants to simultaneously admit that there is always a

potential cost associated with admitting newcomers who will face difficulty integrating

culturally. Admitting immigrants may erode social trust by diversifying the *demos*.[167] This

decrease in social trust may then inhibit the deliberative nature of the democracy. This lack

of democratic deliberation will inevitably lead to lower levels of public goods, lower levels of

social welfare services, and lower levels of peaceful rhetoric in the public square. In as much

as a citizen cares about these positive goods, then the cultivation of a social trust through a

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[165] Here again, I'd like to flag the opportunity for further research on the relationship between Christian cosmopolitanism and a theology of place. Oliver O'Donovan and Willie James Jennings are quite different scholars and yet both of them emphasize a theology of place that Christian cosmopolitanism needs to engage in a more robust way than the scope of this paper allows. Gestures at this more robust engagement can be found in the footnotes.

[166] O'Donovan, *Bonds of Imperfection*, 300–301.

[167] This is the challenge to Christians; a challenge that "Welcome the Stranger" cannot fully address alone. This is where the robust biblical work from chapter 2 becomes important and where the practical theology in chapter 4 will become particularly relevant.

unified national identity is an acceptable priority for him. Derivatively, a concern about the pace and quality of the cultural integration of immigrants is appropriate. Miller places a higher value on the potential good of a unified national identity than Benhabib does and so he emphasizes cultural integration to a degree that Benhabib does not.

Although Miller doesn't argue it explicitly, one implication of his work is that the preservation of social trust may also be critical for maintaining high levels of refugee and immigrant admissions itself. The same way that a lack of social trust ripples through the levers of democracy to paralyze the provision of social welfare and public goods, so too a lack of social trust threatens to paralyze a generous asylum policy and/or generous refugee admissions. Here we see Miller's contribution to the question of what considerations affect nation-state decisions in regard to refugee admissions policy. Miller shows how the level of social trust in the *demos* will affect state discretion in admissions.

It is at this precise point, where we can begin to see the theoretical dilemma quite clearly. On the one hand, not admitting refugees and asylum-seekers making a claim plainly threatens to contradict a Christian commitment to refugee protection. But to admit high numbers may threaten the very existence of a state's refugee protection policies at all. This threatens to form a kind of catch-22. Miller hopes that levels of displacement will remain small enough that receiving nation-states and "burden sharing" agreements between countries can manage the inflows. But his position that refugee admission is a "remedial obligation" that is limited by "considerations of cost" implies the possibility of a "tragic conflict of values."[168] In the closing lines of his chapter on refugees, Miller worries about the frightening possibility that a gap might open up between the "rights of the vulnerable" and

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[168] David Miller, *Strangers in Our Midst*, 93.

the "obligations of those who might protect them."[169] For Miller, this is the awful but

necessary implication of the reality that "bounded political communities" need closure to

"sustain democracy and achieve a modicum of social justice."[170]

In a brief postscript to his book, Miller depicts the arrival of higher and higher

numbers of Syrian and other asylum-seekers into Europe in 2015 in just this light. He admits

these events as a distinct challenge to his political philosophy. "My purpose in this book has

been to defend a qualified right on the part of states to close their borders and to propose

principles for selecting immigrants for admissions, but my position might seem to collapse

when confronted with the physical realities of Europe in 2015."[171] Even though Miller

defends the morality of showing partiality to one's compatriots and the political value of

nationalism, his commitment to human rights as a minimum threshold that must not be

crossed[172] prompts him to end the postscript with a plea for "a positive response to their

entreaties."[173]

How are Christian cosmopolitans to respond to Miller's account? While the church

can laud Miller's faith in confessing the human rights of migrants and asylum-seekers, the

legacy of Christian ethics is more universal and more covenantal than what is outlined in

Miller's approach. Miller's recognition of bonds between compatriots, which are thicker than

the minimum standards established by human rights, only extend to members of the nation-

state. Miller's concern for the common good extends as far as the nation-state and the bonds

that extend to the stranger go no further than human rights. But the church wants to say

more than that. Because refugees are systematically marginalized and disenfranchised by the

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[169] David Miller, 93.
[170] David Miller, 64–65, 76–78, 93.
[171] David Miller, 167.
[172] David Miller, 33.
[173] David Miller, 173.

dominant political system and the ideology that legitimates that system (like widows and orphans in James' day), the church's calling goes beyond simply respecting human rights or demanding that the government respect human rights.

In Miller's calculation, refugees and asylum-seekers are bearers of human rights that should not be denied but they are not included in the calculation of the self-determining nation-state. In Miller's account, the common good of the nation-state, while a value, is not a value that is grounded in any higher purpose that can guide it when its moral obligations are practically challenged. Besides the minimum threshold established by the human rights regime, the nation-state exhausts the moral and political obligations of citizens in Miller's account. The church, on the other hand, is an entity that exists both within any particular nation-state and across nation-states that bears a covenantal responsibility toward refugees. Simultaneously, Christians are positioned to cultivate social trust at the local level and raise their voices in advocacy about admissions decisions. These activities have the potential to affect the calculus of nation-state determinations/admissions decisions. More will be said about this function and role of the church in the chapter that follows.

While Miller's theoretical counterpoint about how democracy functions is supported by sociological data and does manage to effectively chasten Benhabib's political theory, we must simultaneously and unequivocally name the baseline suspicion of those who are different that often influences discourses surrounding American feelings of placelessness and the erosion of social trust. Overt, masked, and structural forms of racism all still play a dominant role in shaping American perceptions of a loss of interconnectedness.[174] As Benhabib would likely be quick to point out, nostalgic calls that hearken back to a day when

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[174] See Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The First White President," *The Atlantic*, October 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/10/the-first-white-president-ta-nehisi-coates/537909/.

"we" were more "unified" typically conjure up exclusionary and oppressive times when homogeneity was founded on hatred and injustice was empowered by ignorance. While Putnam's sociological data remains convincing, the interpretation of the data can often function as a thinly-veiled attempt to exclude newcomers, outsiders, and those who have been historically oppressed. Miller's narrative about social trust, while valid, should never be allowed to justify exclusionary tactics against those fleeing violence and persecution. While the active erosion of social trust is certainly not a desirable characteristic of society, the idealization (and idolization) of a homogeneous society built on exclusionary and oppressive practices is even more unacceptable.

What we need then is to pursue Benhabib's hope for the possibility of democratic iterations but in a way that is proactively responsive to the concerns about social trust identified by Miller. This is the political challenge that the practical theology of Christian cosmopolitanism must address. This challenge necessitates not only reactively combating xenophobia but also proactively addressing legitimate concerns about social trust. This will not only undermine xenophobia in a more sophisticated and long term way but also pave the road for democratic iterations that don't corrode the "deliberative-ness" of American democracy. But is this possible? Can the church really approach issues of refugee protection both within Benhabib's normative frame and with constant attention to Miller's important concerns? In the next section, I seek to answer these questions with a practical theology that describes a politically informed role for the church to play in refugee protection.

<u>Summary</u>

David Miller's and Seyla Benhabib's political philosophies of immigration and political membership both seek to address the question of how to ensure maximum refugee protection without dissolving the state. Both operate within a statist framework but advocate

for higher levels of refugee admissions. They take the state as a given reality and then explore possible factors that influence states' decisions in regard to asylum claims and refugee admissions. Each thinker attempts to articulate the considerations that go into state's discretionary decisions concerning the admission of refugees and the granting of asylum to asylum-seekers. Their values, reasoning, and conclusions are different but related; sometimes diverging, sometimes overlapping. I focus on their work on refugee protection not only to introduce refugee-oriented political theory to a Christian audience but also to illustrate the relevance of this theory to Christian practical theology. Miller and Benhabib are helpful voices for exploring the role that the church should play in relation to both refugees and current political arrangements because they help us see the context in which this activity must take place.

Benhabib's normative theory can provide Christians with a political framework for fulfilling our obligations to refugees but Miller's work gives us additional insight into the political challenges that refugee protection faces in modern democracies. Benhabib is right that all humans are worthy of respect and bear inherent dignity. Miller is right that an anonymous society of siloed cultural groups will not be able to sustain a deliberative public sphere and will struggle to sustain a common life together. Somewhat ironically, Benhabib's vision of political integration threatens to recreate Miller's insistence on human rights and nothing more. In as much as human rights in Miller and political integration in Benhabib operate as minimum thresholds, they are valuable and to be unequivocally affirmed. But when these minimum thresholds become the extent of our moral obligations, we begin to have a problem. The church must take the position that our relational commitment to refugees not only meets the obligations of the human rights regime and recommends the minimum integration possibilities of abstract political principles, but goes further. While

respect for human rights is a nonnegotiable minimum threshold and political integration provides a necessary next step, the church has to pray for and pursue deeper person to person encounter. The other two associative obligations identified by Miller, the economic and cultural dimensions, have to be holistically engaged if refugees are to feel truly secure again, the church is to fulfill its mission based on James 1, and nation-states are to be empowered to sustain vibrant refugee resettlement and asylum policies.

In as much as human rights in Miller and political integration in Benhabib operate as minimum thresholds, they are valuable and to be unequivocally affirmed. But when the church takes these minimum thresholds as the extent of our obligations, we have a problem. The church must take the position that our relational commitment to refugees not only acknowledges human rights, not only offers the integration standards of abstract political principles, but goes further. At this point, it is important to foreground that my proposals in chapter 4 attempt to change the moral outlook of established communities even as they work to integrate refugees and asylum-seekers. I need to be clear that I am not suggesting uniformity, strong-armed cultural integration, or a kind of coercive and blind proselytizing. There is a difference between no encounter, full unidirectional assimilation, and a true human encounter of reasoned dialogue across boundaries of identity and culture. But what then is the practical character of the Christian cosmopolitanism that I am gesturing toward?

All of this begs the question, what does a lived Christian cosmopolitanism actually look like? More specifically, if Christian cosmopolitanism describes what Christians should believe, how then should Christians behave politically in a world of nation-states? This question has received less attention in the scholarship. How can Christian cosmopolitanism be embodied in a way that is distinct from both communitarianism and liberal cosmopolitanism? What set of social and political practices mark Christian cosmopolitanism

as unique? Does Christian cosmopolitanism have its own distinct dangers or hang-ups? Now that the biblical foundations of Christian cosmopolitanism have been laid and the contemporary political challenges examined, we are in a place to begin to describe the practical character of a lived Christian cosmopolitanism. In what follows in chapter 4, I attempt to connect the political theology of Christian cosmopolitanism (with its emphasis on what the church should *believe*) with the political theory (and its emphasis on the function of political institutions) to recommend how the church should *act* as a people with *political* personality.

Chapter 4: The Lived Practice of Christian Cosmopolitanism

Despite robust biblical foundations and the pressing political need for such a value, Christians in the pews in America remain largely divorced from the theoretical discourse surrounding Christian cosmopolitanism. As such, Christians in America are ill equipped to respond to the political challenges that are currently confronting refugee protection and immigrant integration. Despite the scholarly advances in the realms of theory, many churchgoers in America remain locked into either narrowly communitarian or liberal cosmopolitan perspectives and practices. There is an absence in the literature about what a lived Christian cosmopolitanism should look like. When practices are recommended, they often lack political grit or sophistication. Having already explained the biblical foundations for Christian cosmopolitanism, how the value is situated theoretically, and the political challenges that confront the value; in this final chapter I reflect on years of refugee service work in and out of local churches to suggest a set of practices for embodying the scholarly vision of Christian cosmopolitanism.

The contemporary political challenges that confront Christian cosmopolitanism necessitate that the character of a lived Christian cosmopolitanism be engaged in two related but distinct practices. Each practice is rooted in biblical faith. These two practices are hospitality and advocacy. Our joyful hospitality cultivates social trust at the local level and our insistent advocacy supports the claims of asylum-seekers who need a political solution. In this section, I describe what these two practices of a lived Christian cosmopolitanism look like. I differentiate them from what hospitality and advocacy look like when practiced from the perspectives of liberal cosmopolitanism or communitarianism. I demonstrate that when these two practices are performed with the specific character empowered by Christian

cosmopolitanism, they are able to simultaneously embody our biblical commitments and reduce the contemporary political pressures that refugee protection faces.

<u>Hospitality</u>

In the first section of this chapter, I respond to David Miller's concerns about the erosion of social trust by proposing that the Christian practice of hospitality can cultivate social trust even in the midst of diversity. I build on the biblical foundations laid in Chapter 2 and make use of stories to describe the Christian cosmopolitan ideal for the character of their hospitality. I argue that the kind of hospitality empowered by Christian cosmopolitanism is distinguishable from both liberal cosmopolitanism (which isn't particularly connected to local place) and communitarianism (which isn't that interested in opening the community system up to outsiders). The practice of hospitality by Christian cosmopolitans is concrete and inclusive, acknowledges both similarities and differences, and is neither coercive nor detached. Illustrating these three descriptors using stories from my experience,[175] I seek to show how this particular vision of hospitality, when practiced by a critical mass of Christians, begins to form a tangible response to the political challenges highlighted in chapter 3.

I) Concrete and Inclusive

First, Christian cosmopolitans practice a form of hospitality that is *both* concrete *and* inclusive. As an employment services provider for resettled refugees at a Lutheran Services office in South Carolina, I saw firsthand how political challenges structure community responses to refugee resettlement. As refugees cope with the traumas of displacement and

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[175] I have chosen to focus on resettled refugees because of my own history of involvement in these communities and my own knowledge of the issues specific to this context. The stories I tell, which seek to provide a vision of how Christian cosmopolitanism can be embodied at the local level, have names and identifying markers changed and may have minor details altered to better illustrate my point. But each of these stories originates from actual people, events, and conversations.

the challenges of social adjustment, stress can mount. Under enormous pressure to become self-sufficient within three to six months, refugees typically must take the first available job. As a direct service provider, it often felt like I lived daily at the intersection of unmet needs, limited agency capacity, and insufficient community resources. In this environment, a scarcity mindset can too easily become the dominant framework for confronting new issues.

After sharing some of these challenges in conversations at my local parish, a woman from the church named Jessica became involved at Lutheran Services as a volunteer. Jessica was paired with a refugee family I was working with that was facing some of the most difficult challenges of any case that I had encountered. The family was from Iraq and spoke almost no English. The father in the family was reporting ongoing health issues and the mother had never worked before. They often seemed overwhelmed by the pace of life in America and exhausted by the gravity of all the decisions that continuously confronted them. Unanticipated challenges seemed to constantly spring up, derailing their journey toward health and self-sufficiency. While many of these challenges had been gestured at in cultural orientation classes or addressed in conversations with case managers, it was becoming increasingly clear that a substantive gap still existed between the sense of security desired by the family and the knowledge conveyed in these materials from our agency.

After our volunteer coordinator paired Jessica with this family, I was worried about how Jessica and the family would get along. It seemed like an exceptionally difficult case for a first-time volunteer. But Jessica was in many ways just the relationship that the family had been looking for. Jessica visited faithfully, shared tea with the family, and took ownership of trying to convey welcome to the family. She cultivated a non-threatening presence with them by practicing her Arabic with them, giving them confidence to begin working on basic English with her. She told me that she was consciously trying to stay aware of the ways in

which she represented the majority culture in her interactions with the family. I always observed her to be careful and considerate in her interactions with the family as she navigated the privilege of her position. From helping them sort through confusing mail to having conversations about the children's screen time, she became a trusted resource for the family as they sought to evaluate how they would relate to the established community and the culture of their new place of residence.

Further, Jessica exemplified to me what it might mean to not separate out one's personal life from one's relationships with newcomers. Without creating an enmeshed or boundary-less relationship, Jessica found ways to integrate her relationship with the refugee family from Iraq with her own family life, friendships, and relationships with members of the established community. Jessica occasionally brought her husband or a native-born friend with her when she visited the family. She took the family to her favorite local cafes and introduced them to the business owners there. Once, when the mother in the refugee family was having an exceptionally difficult time in a Wal-Mart and was beginning to become distraught, Jessica explained the predicament to the Wal-Mart employee who was struggling to understand the issue. At church, Jessica explained about her newfound relationship informally and enthusiastically, even leading a donation drive that not only supported Lutheran Services but also provided an opportunity for her to educate members of the church about newcomers in the community.

What stood out to me most about Jessica's hospitality was the way in which it contrasted the other two dominant models with which I was more familiar. On the one hand, the practices of hospitality common to many within the parish were primarily aimed at those who already shared a common denominator. The communitarian hospitality they practiced, having people from the church over for meals or community groups, was

powerful and generative. This kind of hospitality that nurtures local community shouldn't be

undervalued or underappreciated, especially in our times of declining social trust. But this

version of hospitality often does not include those who exist across lines of difference or

those who do not already somehow know themselves in relation to the group. Although

actively seeking to show welcome and hospitality, this group simply wasn't engaged in

practices of hospitality that extended to those outside of those who were similar. Simply put,

the hospitality embodied in this group was concrete but *not* inclusive in any way that affected

the lives of resettled refugees.

On the other hand, especially among younger members of the parish, there was

another common practice of hospitality that vocally prized welcoming those who were

different. These individuals tended to be supportive of the church "partnering" with

Lutheran Services. But they were far less active when it came to actual forms of practical

implementation. Basically, we could count on them for Facebook likes and Instagram shares

but when it came to moving a family into their new apartment or cleaning the welcome

house, these concrete forms of hospitality were simply less compelling to them. They

seemed to fancy their hospitality as best embodied through some kind of abstract or

"structural" way. This manifestation of liberal cosmopolitan hospitality may also offer its

own important contributions. But there are problems if people are more motivated to

maintain a political appearance of hospitality on social media rather than to practice it at a

local level. Simply put, the hospitality embodied here aimed at inclusivity but was *not*

concrete.

Jessica embodies a vision of Christian cosmopolitanism that offers a different form

of the practice of hospitality. Her hospitality both reached past significant differences while

also being oriented toward the complicated relationships between the established community

and the refugee family. Jessica neither ignored the presence of the refugee family nor did she bracket out her relationship with the refugee family from the web of relationships with the local community that she already had. In short, Jessica's hospitality is *both* inclusive *and* concrete. This character of hospitality is uniquely empowered by the biblical vision of Christian cosmopolitanism outlined in chapters 1 and 2.

Since community is inherently fragile and Jessica recognizes the fundamentally community-oriented nature of the human person, Jessica is sensitive to the communal considerations of both the established community and the new refugee family. But since Jessica also knows that community exists for goods beyond itself, that all people are created with equal dignity, that we are called to pursue faithfulness in relationship with people who are different from us, and that we bear a special obligation to those who are systematically marginalized by the reigning political order; Jessica moves toward refugees and is proactive about exploring relationships with newcomers and those who are different. This vision of bounded openness is supported by both the exilic conversation preserved in the Old Testament as well as the diasporic conversation preserved in the New.

II) Similarities and Differences

Second, Christian cosmopolitans practice a form of hospitality that notices both similarities *and* differences. In our day, the practice of hospitality is being squeezed from two, opposite sides that tend to emphasize one of these sets of observations to the exclusion of the other. On the one hand, there is an increasingly common liberal cosmopolitan tendency to relativize all differences into a mantra of "We are really all the same." This kind of rhetoric should always be watched closely as it can function in quite different ways depending on who is speaking it and how it is being used in the moment. A minority individual may appeal to "We are all really the same" to elicit empathy whereas an individual

occupying a majority position of power may use the same sentiment to flatten out differences or disagreements that are more easily avoided. These two functions of the same sentiment should elicit different responses from the Christian cosmopolitan. But any unilateral emphasis on similarities to the exclusion of differences is sure to miss something important.

On the other end of the spectrum are those individuals who prefer to emphasize differences across boundaries of identity, culture, or religion. Todd Scribner argues that a "Clash of Civilizations" framework has become increasingly influential in its emphasis that culture provides the "primary fault line on which future conflict will occur."[176] In its more extreme rhetorical forms, especially at the level of popular discourse, this communitarian theory can function to imply that reasoned exchange across boundaries of identity or cultural origin is unlikely or not even possible. The resulting skepticism about intercultural discourse tends to handicap the ability of practitioners to recognize important similarities across lines of difference.

In contrast to these two approaches to hospitality, the Christian cosmopolitan is able to admit the existence of both similarities and differences that exist across boundaries of identity, culture, and religion. In fact, Christian cosmopolitanism will generally insist on and be looking for the presence of *both*. When dialogue threatens to become one-sided, practitioners of Christian cosmopolitanism enter the dialogue strategically to even it out. That is to say, if a dialogue is singularly emphasizing either similarities or differences, the Christian cosmopolitan's instinct will be to consider how hospitality might make room for the other side of the coin. Practitioners of Christian cosmopolitanism want to allow space for differences to be explored, assessed, debated, and even appreciated; while also working

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[176] Todd Scribner, "You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee Resettlement in the Age of Trump," *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 5, no. 2 (2017): 263.

to ensure that this is done in a way that is non-threatening, fair, honest, open, and simultaneously respectful of noted similarities.

My friend Claire recently had a number of foreign-born individuals over for dinner. The group included resettled refugees, foreign students, and first-generation Americans. As discussion turned to matters of religion and morality, one of the dinner attendees began to articulate the idea that everyone around the table and all practitioners of all religions were really all fundamentally the same. As a Christian cosmopolitan, this was something with which Claire could agree. She nodded her approval as others around the table also encouraged her friend to continue. As many of the other participants around the table echoed this sentiment, Claire thought through where she was, the relational capital she had with everyone around the table, and the complex life experiences behind each statement offered to the group. Feeling increasingly sure that there was enough confidence in the relationships in the room that discussion of differences could also be engaged, Claire eventually asked the group a question about the ways in which their religious practices and beliefs might seem to differ from the religious practices and beliefs they have encountered in the United States. Claire told me that she explicitly said, "There are also ways in which I don't think we are all exactly the same. And that's okay." This moved the conversation forward in a nonthreatening way and, I believe, fostered the kind of reasoned dialogue across boundaries of identity, culture, and religion that the Christian cosmopolitan believes in, supports, and engages enthusiastically. In short, Claire was seeking to embody a form of hospitality that was willing to recognize both similarities and differences.

Although power imbalances were certainly in play, I think that these were lessened by relationships and the intentional efforts to both amplify the less culturally prominent voices and quiet the voices that are normally more culturally dominant. Whether coming

from Multicultural frameworks on the left or Clash of Civilization frameworks on the right, the Christian cosmopolitan always resists the notion that biology, race, cultural origin, or social location predetermines one's values and social attitudes. Simultaneously, however, the Christian cosmopolitan *is* sensitive to how these factors can and do exert complex (and difficult to predict) layers of influence on formation. Christian cosmopolitans practice a form of hospitality that notices both similarities *and* differences. This leads us to the third and final descriptor of the unique character of hospitality as practiced by Christian cosmopolitans.

III) Neither Coercive nor Detached

Thirdly, Christian cosmopolitans practice a form of hospitality that is *neither* coercive *nor* detached. This third descriptor is important to grasp at both institutional and interpersonal levels. Let's examine the institutional level first.

The reality is that when resettled refugees live in America for any amount of time, they too can become especially vulnerable to the same experiences of alienation and placelessness that are affecting the native-born population. Many refugees come to America from countries where family, community, and tribe form vital context for life and identity. It is of course difficult to generalize, but my experience confirms that the vast majority of refugees who come to America actively want to know how they relate to the *polis* here. They want to know where they can go to meet and mingle with Americans, friends, and others. They want to reestablish the associative ties (political and economic *and* cultural and religious) that they lost when they fled violence. Where do the residents of this place all meet to discuss their common life together? As the native-born public becomes more and more confused about how they themselves relate to the *polis* and as the institutions that provide forums for public engagement become more and more disparate, immigrants have a harder

and harder time determining their own identities in such a complex multi-cultural mainstream.

Many of the institutions that do provide more explicit expectations with regard to integration can be demanding, unidirectional, and coercive. For example, a place of employment is a (if not *the*) primary locus for most adult refugees where questions of integration play out in real time and with real consequences. Cultural values with regards to the workplace differ widely across the globe and refugees often struggle to understand unspoken (as well as clearly stated) cultural expectations. For example, a culture that tends to value patience over efficiency (and expects others to hold these same values) will react very differently to a late bus than a culture that tends to value efficiency over patience. American employers, who tend to value efficiency over patience in such scenarios, are typically not very flexible with start times or breaks. The American job market can be quite harsh and unforgiving in instances of such cultural misunderstandings. This is only one example of many that could be given to demonstrate the unyielding pressure to assimilate to the cultural expectations of one's new environment.

Other institutions that resettled refugees encounter in America offer little to no guidance in terms of integration. Bureaucratic institutions like the food stamp office, the department of motor vehicles, the social security administration, or even hospitals and doctor's offices are largely procedural and impersonal. You file the paperwork; you receive your benefit. Over and over again, when I took refugees to appointments at these offices, they had question after question for the case manager who generally responded like a deer in the headlights and explained, "All we do is X" before sending them out to never interact again. Although these benefit offices are obviously critical supports for refugees transitioning to their new life in America, these institutions are simply not built to foster meaningful

associative ties nor are they currently equipped to guide those eligible for benefits toward any kind of forum for the public life of local communities.[177] While resettlement agencies work to stand in this gap, it can't be adequately addressed without the involvement of local communities. Without going into a sustained critique of either governmental bureaucracies or US employment standards, I'd like to suggest that a Christian cosmopolitan practice of hospitality can go a long way to address this context in a manner in keeping with Christian commitments.

I currently serve with Laura and Lydia on a "Good Neighbor Team." Good Neighbor Teams form as volunteer teams through World Relief, a refugee resettlement agency in our neighborhood. These Good Neighbor Teams are groups of volunteers that partner with World Relief to welcome and support newly arrived refugees. Good Neighbor Teams commit to weekly visits with the family for at least six months. The family that our Good Neighbor Team has been paired with is a Karen family of five from Myanmar. Prior to resettlement to Atlanta, the family was living in a refugee camp in Thailand. The language barrier is high so any nuanced or complicated communication is difficult. Both parents are present in the family and they have three daughters around the ages of one, four, and six.

At a recent visit to the family's apartment, Laura and Lydia were playing with the two older children in the family. After coloring on the sidewalk with chalk and kicking a soccerball back and forth, the children brought out a canister of thanakha. Thanakha is a tan-yellow powdered substance used as a cosmetic sunblock in Myanmar. It is popular among the Karen people. The girls, who we have often seen wearing thanakha, motioned to

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[177] Too often, the pressures facing resettlement agency offices threaten to recreate these dynamics there as well. Case managers are doing everything they can to ensure protection and access to housing and food. Employment service providers are building on this foundation by working with clients to ensure self-sufficiency through a job that will allow them to meet their basic monthly needs. These are critical steps but they are simply different goals than what the Christian cosmopolitan understands hospitality to mean. The third step of social integration necessities greater participation from local communities.

Laura and Lydia that they wanted to apply the cosmetic to their faces. The parents laughed

and Laura and Lydia indicated that that would be okay. Laura and Lydia, the Americans who

were "supposed to be coaching the family on cultural orientation," were suddenly in a place

of learning about the refugee family's culture. Not just learning about it but experiencing it

firsthand, literally feeling it on their skin. What could have been a relationship of

unidirectional exchange became a relationship of mutuality. As Laura and Lydia leaned into

the vulnerability of receiving a foreign skin product onto their skin, applied by children, they

allowed the power dynamics of the relationship to be flipped, even if just for a moment. All

this took place in the context of nervous smiles and genuine laughter.

What does this story have to do with a Christian cosmopolitan vision of hospitality?

How does this story present a Christian cosmopolitan response to the challenges of

integration that refugees face? Laura's and Lydia's presence each week allows the family to

meet with members of the native-born community without any programmed agenda. Laura

and Lydia (or other members of the Good Neighbor Team) show up at the same time each

week to color, pass a ball back and forth outside, play hopscotch, bounce the baby, smile at

one another, and fail at communicating across the language barrier for an hour. This time

together is what Henri Nouwen calls "friendly, empty space." He outlines how necessary this

component is for communion with those who are different. Only this kind of friendly,

empty space, which marks the hospitality of Christian cosmopolitans, enables the possibility

of encounters that are neither coercive nor detached. Seen in the context of coercive

integration pressures at work and the detached practices at every other institution they

encounter, this interaction of friendship becomes remarkably significant.

What about at the level of interpersonal dialogue? How does the way that Christian

cosmopolitans practice hospitality affect interpersonal relations? In America in 2018, the

possibility of reasoned discourse across boundaries of identity and social location is coming under attack on both the right and the left. On the right, the nationalism of trumped-up, Clash of Civilizations rhetoricians exaggerates communitarian logic to the exclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers. For different (and generally much more charitable) reasons, the left too can harbor its own skepticism about the possibility of reasoned discourse across boundaries of identity and culture. It is an irony, but advocates of multicultural paradigms can all too often share the faulty assumption of the Clash of Civilization framework, namely that biology or racial or cultural origin is the principal criteria for determining values, social attitudes, and beliefs. There is a form of multiculturalism that uses the theoretical pre-social individual from liberal cosmopolitanism to assert the individual autonomy of each discourse participant. This type of multiculturalism shies away from believing that any substantive exchange can happen across boundaries of identity, culture, or religion. Everyone simply has "their own truth." Whether an individual is influenced by Clash of Civilizations political rhetoric on the right or critical multicultural frameworks in which all discourse reduces to power on the left, they both tend to understand boundaries of culture as impervious. In either case, there is little cause for optimism about the prospects of exchange across or encounter at these sites of difference. Contra this position, Christian cosmopolitanism asserts that dialogue marked by mutuality is possible, necessary, and empowered by hospitality.[178] Those who work or volunteer in refugee services are familiar not only with the division in the public between those who are inhospitable and those who are supportive.

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[178] Both my thesis advisors have written persuasively on this subject to suggest that Christian hospitality requires such things as humility, mutual vulnerability, and mutual capacity for learning. See Ellen Ott Marshall, *Christians in the Public Square: Faith That Transforms Politics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008). and Silas Allard, "In the Shade of the Oaks of Mamre: Hospitality as Framework for Political Engagement between Christians and Muslims," *Political Theology* 13, no. 4 (2012): 414–24.

There is also a division within those who are supportive between what I will call "the missionary type"[179] and what I will call the "anonymous type."

For what I will call the "missionary type," interactions are consistently marked by an implicit possibility that the relationship (and the exchange facilitated by the relationship) may stop if the refugee doesn't properly receive something that the "missionary" is providing. The relationship could be interpreted as simply a means to an end. Resettled refugees, especially in their first year of life in America, are often exceptionally vulnerable and fearful of losing services and supports. Even if it is unintended or perceived by the member of the established community to be extremely minor, the slightest religious or cultural pressure can exert an enormous influence in the life of a resettled refugee. Christian cosmopolitans are diligent to avoid even the implicit suggestion that their relationships with newcomers are contingent upon the resettled refugees adopting lifestyle choices of the established community.

The "anonymous type," however, overcorrects by erring on the other side. They feign a certain "value-neutral" posture when engaging any cultural, religious, theological, or even moral issue with a resettled refugee. In their relationships with newcomers, the anonymous type avoids conversations about any cultural or religious topics that they have taken off the table due to their desire to avoid slipping into coercive or manipulative dynamics. While this is a strategy that Christian cosmopolitans will occasionally make use of,

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[179] By using the term "Missionary type," I in no way mean to disparage Christian career missionaries who serve in foreign contexts nor am I necessarily suggesting that those who have previously served as career missionaries might not be able to embody the type of hospitality I describe. I use this term because I believe that many who fall into this pattern often view themselves in this way but are simply insensitive to the invisible power dynamics that affect the validity of their Christian "mission." Christian mission is offered from a position of weakness, not domination. I will also add that, somewhat to my own surprise, my own experience with career missionaries who have returned to the states and now volunteer with refugees suggests that many of them are quite capable of maintaining gentle and non-coercive relationships with minorities. I believe that their own experiences of living as a minority in a foreign country can serve to cultivate a natural empathy to a degree not generally found in the native-born population.

Christian cosmopolitans remain fundamentally open to engagement on cultural and spiritual issues so long as that engagement doesn't leverage power imbalances in unfair or coercive ways. That this type of engagement is possible is a presupposition of the Christian cosmopolitan and is necessary for building and maintaining social trust.

This Christian cosmopolitan version of hospitality is important to refugees and immigrants also. The claims that asylum-seekers make are fundamentally moral claims. The possibility of moral discourse in environments marked by diversity is necessary if the claims of involuntary migrants are to be heard, taken seriously, and responded to. Additionally, many refugees arrive from countries where spirituality is a central part of life. To be met by people who can speak that language and who can engage on that level is an important priority of many immigrants from parts of the world that don't divide the private and public spheres the way that Americans tend to or that don't relate to a diversity of religious truth claims the same way that Americans tend to do. Lastly, resettled refugees often emphatically want to contribute to their new communities. They know that their cultures and their identities have important insights that Americans can learn from. The possibility of discourse across boundaries of culture allows for the possibility that these insights might also be communicated to Americans. Christian cosmopolitans are open to these possibilities. While Christian cosmopolitanism may agree vehemently about the importance of acknowledging power imbalances and about the dangers of ignoring the tendency of discourse to become coercive, the possibility of moral dialogue needs to be affirmed.

IV) Summary

Hospitality in the Christian cosmopolitan mode pushes back against common naiveté about the difficulty of discourse in the presence of power imbalances. It cannot be stated enough that when relationships are marked by power imbalances across boundaries of

identity or culture, these imbalanced power dynamics are always threatening to dissolve reasoned discourse into something coercive and manipulative. That this can (and often does) happen in unseen and unintentional ways is what makes this reality so difficult to avoid. The Christian cosmopolitan practice of hospitality is sensitive to these realities, proactive about counteracting them, and committed to avoiding coerciveness.

While the concern that "We can't discuss because of power imbalances and I might be coercive" is taken seriously by Christian cosmopolitans, Christian cosmopolitans also fight to maintain optimism about the possibility of establishing environmental and relational context that can allow for reasoned discussion. This is a necessary component of developing social trust among people who are different. When Christian cosmopolitans practice dialogue, they look for both similarities and differences with an instinct to strategically fill out the conversation in the direction it is lacking. Christian cosmopolitans don't want to relativize competing truth claims nor do they want to resolve these competing truth claims through violence. Rather, Christian cosmopolitans strive to enter dialogue with humility about the limits of the provable, a commitment to not mischaracterizing others' positions, and a willingness to attempt to entertain the alternative frameworks of others.[180] The hospitality that I am proposing retains both an optimism about the possibility of reasoned dialogue across boundaries of identity, culture, and religion *and* a critical suspicion about discourse across boundaries marked by significant power imbalances.

Graham Hill writes that, "Hospitality's location is often the place that I love… Hospitality involves our relationship to our home, to the earth, and to local place. It involves our connections to local relationships, local soil, and local generosity. As we nurture local

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[180] See John D Inazu. *Confident Pluralism : Surviving and Thriving through Deep Difference*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2016 and this Veritas Forum discussion between Dr. Timothy Keller's and Dr. Jonathan Haidt: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFD5odFv36k.

soils, cultures, homes, and communities, we are able to offer hospitality. Are we connected

enough with these to be hospitable?"[181] Hill's question suggests that there are prerequisites

to being able to offer hospitality. Hospitality isn't something you can offer without adequate

preparation. One must cultivate a space one can call home before one can invite anyone into

that place or extend meaningful hospitality. This understanding of hospitality, which Hill

argues is a lesson that Western Christians should learn from both their scriptures and from

their brothers and sisters in the Global Church, necessitates attention to both the concrete

levels of social trust that exists within one's community as well as the presence and

integration of newcomers.[182] As Christian cosmopolitans practice this kind of hospitality,

they are actively responding to Miller's concerns about social trust in democratic societies.

They are holding fast to both the communitarian anthropology and the universal normativity

of their faith. Christian cosmopolitans, then, are uniquely suited to be able to both reject

xenophobia and foster social trust.[183] If Christian cosmopolitans are going to proactively

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[181] Graham Hill, *Global Church: Reshaping Our Conversations, Renewing Our Mission, Revitalizing Our Churches* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 102–3.

[182] Readers familiar with the work of Dr. Willie James Jennings may recognize a certain resonance with the role his theology of place plays in his thought. As noted in a previous footnote, the relationship between Jennings' theology of place and Christian cosmopolitanism represents an important opportunity for further research.

[183] Throughout this thesis, I have included footnotes that track the beginnings of an engagement with Willie James Jennings's theology of place. This is another place where this thesis bumps up against questions of place. In this concluding paragraph about how Christian cosmopolitan hospitality offers a significant response to Miller's concerns about social trust, there are also hints at how Christian cosmopolitan hospitality might address the growing sense of placelessness identified by O'Donovan and the derivative interpersonal challenges that resettled refugees face. Christian cosmopolitanism sees these issues as inextricably intertwined and responds by refusing to let social trust and diversity pull us in opposite directions. An important next question, however, concerns if in doing so we should attempt to recover a sense of place. I believe that the Christian cosmopolitan answers both Yes and No. Like good poetry, good theology tends to both undermine what is hoped for and provide it. So too, an embodied practice of hospitality can enable us to both undermine our need for a sense of place and, in a new way, recover it. By fostering warm and strong local communities where art, commerce, music, and education flourish, Christian cosmopolitans are investing into the place from which meaningful hospitality can be offered. This is an act of faith and an expression of hospitality that isn't empowered in the same way by either communitarianism or liberal cosmopolitanism. But simultaneously, Christian cosmopolitans don't glorify their place at the expense of other places. Christian cosmopolitans have a "whole world" perspective committed to the idea that there is one God who created the whole planet. From this notion flows a certain

respond to today's challenges, they must engage in faithful acts of hospitality, as

demonstrated by Jessica, Claire, Laura, and Lydia.[184]

<u>Advocacy</u>

The second practice is advocacy.[185] The practice of advocacy grows out of the

practice of hospitality and witnesses to it. While hospitality is itself a political act, the practice

of advocacy entails a more engaged political posture and more directly addresses the

specifics of legal categories, policy alternatives, governmental decisions, and even partisan

platforms. This practice of advocacy corresponds to both Benhabib's work on the possibility

of "democratic iterations" and James's exhortations to move with compassion toward those

who are marginalized by the very definitions of the reigning political order. Through the

practice of advocacy, Christian cosmopolitans are able to promote democratic iterations that

can provide for the rights of those who flee political violence and are seeking a safe political

arena. In the same way that a 1st century widow who couldn't remarry may have been

provided for by the church, in today's context, advocacy is necessary if the church is to

promote and reestablish associative ties for asylum-seekers. This advocacy that is practiced

hopefulness about increasingly levels of global interconnectedness, an openness to global travel, and an enthusiasm for encountering those from other parts of the world. How this posture intersects with a recovery of a strong sense of local place remains to be seen but it is this pursuit that I believe Christian cosmopolitans are uniquely able to engage.

[184] For more on the Christian practice of hospitality, see Luke Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness Amid Moral Diversity* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), Especially 121-159; and Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1975), Especially 46-78.

[185] Recommending advocacy as a key practice rubs against Amstutz's concern that a "shortcoming of Christian initiatives on immigration reform is the priority given to political advocacy and the neglect of moral education." I do not, however, see these two as necessarily in conflict. If the church is providing moral education, that moral education will necessarily inform and find expression in the political advocacy of individual Christians and even Christian groups. As I explain in this chapter, I see advocacy and hospitality as intimately related practices for Christians to engage. On Amstutz's own terms, American Christians have a right and even responsibility to shape political decisions based on their status as American citizens. Mark R. Amstutz, *Just Immigration*. 189, 228.

by Christian cosmopolitans will be insistent, targeted, rooted in moral claims, and committed to truth.

In this section on the practice of advocacy, I concentrate on asylum-seekers from the Northern Triangle counties of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. I first introduce data that supports their claim to fundamentally need a political solution and then call into question whether the US government's response is appropriately acknowledging the refugee-like character of the crises they flee. In this way, I mean to exemplify the kind of situation that I believe calls for Christian cosmopolitan advocacy. I believe that the adjudication of the asylum claims of individuals from these three countries offers a particularly relevant, important, and representative case study for Christian cosmopolitans in America to consider. I argue that this is just the kind of case in which Christian cosmopolitans might advocate. I then distinguish the advocacy of Christian cosmopolitans from the advocacy that might be conducted by communitarians or liberal cosmopolitans with examples from a nonprofit ministry called El Refugio.

Since 2000, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) has documented a rapid increase in immigration from Central America.[186] In particular, violence related to gang activity and organized crime has resulted in increased outflows from the countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Asylum-seekers from these countries flee alarming violence. Many of these immigrants ultimately end up living in the United States without documentation.[187]

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[186] Marc Rosenblum and Ariel Ruiz Soto, "An Analysis Of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States by Country and Region of Birth" (Migration Policy Institute : U.S. Immigration Policy Program, August 2015), http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/analysis-unauthorized-immigrants-united-states-country-and-region-birth.

[187] Alongside these statistics, it is important to also recall that not all immigrants from the Northern Triangle are undocumented. As of 2013, MPI reports that about 2.7 million people born in Northern Triangle live in the United States. This means that about half of the foreign-born population from the Northern Triangle that lives in the Unites States is undocumented and the other half is authorized to be present in this country. See: Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova, "Central American Immigrants in the United States" (Migration Policy Institute, September 2, 2015), http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/central-

Between 2009 and 2013, about 15% of undocumented immigrants in the United

States were from Central America.[188] During this same period, the Council on Foreign

Relations points out that there was a seven-fold increase in asylum seekers at the southern

border of the United States; 70% of which came from the Northern Triangle.[189] MPI

estimates that, as of 2013, there were 704,000 unauthorized immigrants from Guatemala,

436,000 from El Salvador, and 317,000 from Honduras in the United States.[190] The arrival of

unaccompanied minors has also increased, particularly since 2011. Apprehensions of both

unaccompanied minors and family units from the Northern Triangle spiked significantly in

the recent summer of 2014.[191]

Out of this undocumented population of almost 1.5 million people, how do we

begin to consider the percentage who fled violence in their home country or who would

have a credible fear of violence if they returned? This is much harder to describe accurately,

particularly in the aggregate. While this question demands a case-by-case adjudication, some

contextual factors give us significant insight into the situation these immigrants face in their

home countries.

Honduras is often considered "the murder capital of the world" and is plagued by

violence from gangs and organized crime. A country of 8 million people, in 2012 Honduras

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american-immigrants-united-states. The recent loss of Temporary Protected Status by El Salvadorans (and Nicaraguans) further complicates this picture.

[188] Marc Rosenblum and Ariel Ruiz Soto, "An Analysis Of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States by Country and Region of Birth," 4.

[189] Danielle Renwick, "Central America's Violent Northern Triangle" (Council on Foreign Relations, January 19, 2016), http://www.cfr.org/transnational-crime/central-americas-violent-northern-triangle/p37286.

[190] Marc Rosenblum and Ariel Ruiz Soto, "An Analysis Of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States by Country and Region of Birth," 5.

[191] Marc Rosenblum and Isabel Ball, "Trends in Unaccompanied Child and Family Migration from Central America" (Migration Policy Institute, January 2016), 1, http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/trends-unaccompanied-child-and-family-migration-central-america.

reached a staggering average of 20 murders per day.[192] Even as overall homicide rates have

decreased in the years since 2012, homicides of the kind closely associated with organized

crime (multiple homicides, decapitations, mutilations) have been on the rise.[193] The majority

of homicides in Honduras are not resolved.[194] In El Salvador, murder rates reached 103

homicides per 100,000 residents in 2015, making it the most violent nation in the Western

hemisphere.[195] There were weeks in 2015 where there were more violent deaths in El

Salvador than there were in Iraq.[196] In what has been described as a war between the state

and gangs, some have suggested the sobering statistic that the country has been averaging at

times one murder every hour.[197] Similar problems affect Guatemala. Authorities there

suggested in 2014 that citizens collectively pay around $61 million in extortion fees to gangs

and organized crime networks.[198] While currently trending in a positive direction, Guatemala

also experiences high levels of homicide, with rates hovering around 40 per 100,000 since

2005.[199] These statistics document the very real threat of violence that asylum-seekers from

the Northern Triangle countries are facing.

  Asylum seekers from the Northern Triangle countries have made asylum requests in

many neighboring countries throughout Central America.[200] Analyzing data from the United

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[192] Maya Rhodan, "Honduras Is Still the Murder Capital of the World," *Time Magazine*, February 17, 2014, http://world.time.com/2014/02/17/honduras-is-still-the-murder-capital-of-the-world/.

[193] Maya. Rhodan. See also David Gagne, "InSight Crime's 2015 Latin America Homocide Round Up" (InSight Crime, January 14, 2016), http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/insight-crime-homicide-round-up-2015-latin-america-caribbean.

[194] "Honduras Travel Warning," Travel Report (United States Department of State, August 4, 2016), https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings/honduras-travel-warning.html.

[195] Jonathan Watts, "One Murder Every Hour: How El Salvador Became the Homocide Capital of the World" (Guardian, August 22, 2015), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/22/el-salvador-worlds-most-homicidal-place.

[196] Jonathan Watts.

[197] Jonathan Watts.

[198] Danielle Renwick, "Central America's Violent Northern Triangle."

[199] Danielle Renwick.

[200] And the whole region is, at least to some degree, implicated in their flight. The drug and arms trafficking that keeps many of the gang and organized crime rings in business in the Northern Triangle involves countries across the region, not least the United States. Drugs exported from the Northern Triangle are

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), MPI reports that "the high rates of violence in the Northern Triangle have resulted in significant increases in asylum applications from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras throughout the region" and that "asylum applications by Northern Triangle nationals in Mexico, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, and Belize increased a combined 1,200% between 2008 and 2014" while "asylum applications by Northern Triangle nationals in the United States increased 370% in the same period."[201] This suggests that the United States is not receiving a disproportionate share of the Northern Triangle migrants. Other countries in the region are seeing these same issues playing out in their own contexts.

These statistics do not guarantee that every unauthorized immigrant that enters the United States from the Northern Triangle is fleeing a credible fear of violence or that there aren't other factors for the state to consider when making admissions decisions, but these statistics paint a picture of violence as a very significant "push" factor that propels outward migration.[202] Taken along side the testimonies from each particular case, these statistics suggest that the claims of many asylum-seekers from the Northern Triangle to need political access to a stable arena of law and order are likely to be legitimate claims.

At this point, it is important to note that the violence being described in the Northern Triangle countries is typically seen as *indiscriminate*. Because of the definitions of who qualifies as a refugee, this is an incredibly important word. Immigrants who cross a

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often consumed in the United States as well as other neighboring countries. This demand props up and feeds these criminal activities and violence. Additionally, some of the gangs active in the Northern Triangle were initially founded in the United States. Many of the weapons used by these pseudo-paramilitary groups can be traced back to arms manufacturers in the region, including in the United States. While outside the immediate scope of this paper, it should be noted that a compelling case could be made that the United States bears some amount of responsibility for many of the structural problems that drive migration from the Northern Triangle.

[201] Marc Rosenblum and Isabel Ball, "Trends in Unaccompanied Child and Family Migration from Central America," 4.

[202] Marc Rosenblum and Isabel Ball, 3.

border fleeing violence that targets them *specifically* (as opposed to indiscriminately) based on their membership in some social group are eligible for protection under the Refugee convention and under US law.[203] The United States is a signatory to these international documents and incorporated this definition into US law in the 1980 Refugee Act.[204] This legislation prohibits the United States government from returning any person with a legitimate claim to refugee status to a country where they may be persecuted.[205] Immigrants fleeing *indiscriminate* violence, on the other hand, form a category not currently protected.[206]

In fact, the asylum requests of individuals from these Northern Triangle countries are regularly and routinely denied. Recent conversations with immigration attorneys and advocates in Arizona and Georgia suggest that deportation for asylum-seekers from the Northern Triangle countries occurs in about 94% of cases nationally and likely closer to 98% at the Stewart Detention Center in Georgia. This is confirmed by data in the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse.[207] Out of the 21,943 immigration court cases involving an immigrant from Guatamala, Honduras, or El Salvador that can be found in that system, only

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[203] Remember that according to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, a refugee is defined as an individual who is outside their country of nationality and unable or unwilling to return to it because of a "well founded fear of persecution" based on "political opinion, race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group."

[204] Matthew Gibney, *The Ethics and Politics of Asylum: Liberal Democracy and the Response to Refugees*, 161.

[205] Matthew Gibney, *The Ethics and Politics of Asylum: Liberal Democracy and the Response to Refugees*.

[206] Asylum-seekers in the United States from the Northern Triangle countries are analogous to asylum-seekers in Europe from Syria. In both cases, many are fleeing civil war and indiscriminate violence rather than targeted ethnic cleansing, political persecution, violent religious intolerance, or other forms of persecution that more directly fit the 1951 definition. In both cases, too, these are individuals who are forcibly displaced in what the UNCHR calls a "refugee-like" situation and are in need of a political solution in a similar way that a refugee needs one. In both cases, too, many of the countries in which they are claiming asylum are falling back on the 1951 definitions of a refugee to skirt any responsibility to these individuals.

[207] http://trac.syr.edu/

1,337 are recorded as receiving relief. This comes out to about 6%. The outcome of removal

for the other 94% could easily mean death for these individuals.[208]

Given the political instability and violence in those countries and the asylum claims

many immigrants from those countries are lodging, it is nothing short of shocking to

consider the fact that the US government is regularly chartering deportation flights back to

Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Although these asylum-seekers may be on the

periphery of the technical definition of a refugee provided in the 1980 Refugee Act, they do

fit the category of individual that James 1:27 addresses: those who are cut off from the

necessary associative ties to the *polis*. This scriptural commitment obligates Christians to

these individuals even if our government doesn't believe that the 1951 convention definition

of a refugee obligates it to accept their claims.[209] To the Christian cosmopolitan, then, it is

unconscionable that the US government is deporting 94% of asylum seekers from the

Northern Triangle countries back to dangerous conditions. This reality calls for advocacy.

But what do I mean when I use the word "advocacy?" First, I mean explicitly

contacting government officials and elected representatives to lobby on behalf of those who

are detained and/or seeking relief from deportation back to unsafe conditions. Additionally,

I would include in my definition of advocacy participating in actions that seek to hold the

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[208] "According to the United Nations, since 2008 there has been a fivefold increase in asylum seekers just from Central America's Northern Triangle—Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador—where organized gangs are dominant. In 2014, according to the U.N., Honduras had the world's highest murder rate; El Salvador and Guatemala were close behind." Sarah Stillman, "When Deportation Is a Death Sentence," *The New Yorker*, January 15, 2018, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/01/15/when-deportation-is-a-death-sentence.

[209] That these asylum-seekers are borderline cases under the Refugee Definition is well established. But what legal tact to take in response to this reality is still debated. Two main options, which could potentially be pursued in tandem, exist. The first involves writing new law that responds to contemporary context rather than the WWII context in which the 1951 definitions took shape. Second, there is the strategy of suggesting a new hermeneutic for interpreting the standard 1951 definition. This strategy would work to expand and support precedents that broaden the understanding of a refugee to eventually include those who flee indiscriminate violence, civil war, or otherwise need a political solution. For an introduction to how such asylum seekers might be included in the traditional refugee definition, see Silas W. Allard, "Global and Local Challenges to Refugee Protection," *International Journal of Legal Information* 46, no. 1 (forthcoming 2018).

government accountable; for example an immigration court watch program or touring an immigrant detention facility. Advocacy expresses to the public and to the government the Christian cosmopolitan commitments that all people are created in the image of God, that community exists for goods beyond itself, and that we have a special obligation to those who are systematically marginalized by the very definitions by which the political order is legitimated. This means that our advocacy could also include methods of direct aid and/or humanitarian assistance, particularly when these actions are intentionally communicating these core commitments to governmental or public authorities.

This kind of advocacy is happening at El Refugio in Lumpkin, Georgia. El Refugio is a ministry of hospitality and visitation serving immigrants at the Stewart Detention Center and their friends and families. Near the detention facility, El Refugio operates a small hospitality house for those who come to visit immigrants detained at Stewart. They provide food and lodging free of charge to those who come to see detained family or friends. Additionally, volunteers from El Refugio regularly visit detained immigrants who have requested visits. El Refugio keeps track of notes about their conditions and needs. As able, they send care packages, letters, and necessities to the detained men at Stewart with whom they have visited and whom they have gotten to know. Out of this radical hospitality, volunteers are empowered to advocate for detained immigrants and asylum-seekers.

What is unique about El Refugio's advocacy is the way it grows out of their ministry of hospitality. These two sets of practices aren't divorced from one another but intimately connected. El Refugio isn't using stories in their advocacy to manipulate, rather they use stories because that is what they know. When they hold a prayer vigil outside the Detention Center, it isn't an artificial one-off advocacy event designed to communicate their "woke" bona fides. No, their prayer vigils grow out of the regular prayers of their volunteers, their

board members, and the detained men themselves as well as the families and friends who have stayed in the hospitality house. Participants from El Refugio have walked into court with a detained man's fiancé as she crosses herself in silent prayer for a good outcome. They have prayed with detained men during visitations conducted through a glass window via a telephone on the wall. These are the prayers that shape their practice of advocacy. El Refugio doesn't use prayer as an instrument of advocacy, rather prayer is the main thing and advocacy is a necessary way in which one can enter prayer with integrity. Their advocacy itself becomes a kind of prayer and an extension of human connectedness fostered by their practices of hospitality. Their advocacy witnesses to this reality and to the implication that this kind of community is not only possible but also deeply desirable.

In this type of advocacy on behalf of asylum-seekers, Christian cosmopolitans are engaged in the precise possibility of a democratic iteration that was identified by Seyla Benhabib. Since democratic communities are able to reconstitute themselves to include new previously-excluded individuals and since Christian members of the established community in democracies have a say in how, when, and why that might happen, Christian advocacy on behalf of the inclusion of asylum-seekers can be seen as cultivating a democratic iteration. In this process, democracies are not only able to include people previously excluded but can also create new political modalities and spectrums on which newcomers might move toward inclusion. This political process is enabled first by the cultivation of social trust at the local level by practices of hospitality but then also by robust practices of advocacy that insist on granting the asylum requests of those who genuinely need a political solution to their plight. This is the kind of work El Refugio is doing through their twin investment in both hospitality and advocacy. In amplifying their demonstration of harmonious community between asylum-seekers and those who are members of the established community, El

Refugio is engaged in intentional advocacy that lays the foundation for democracy to "re-iterate" itself.

Further, El Refugio is carrying out precisely the work that the biblical material calls us to. Living out a focused solidarity with those alienated from the dominant political order, El Refugio recognizes and reacts to the real, communitarian needs of persons; including not only detained immigrants but also guards and employees at the Detention Center, local residents in Lumpkin, El Refugio volunteers, and government officials. Stewart Detention Center is pointedly and intentionally isolated from community. Located over two hours from Atlanta, almost all lawyers, family, or friends visiting immigrants have to drive for hours to even get to the detention center. El Refugio seeks to offer a space of hospitality to these travelers and a space that facilitates meaningful connections between detainees and those not detained. This is especially important work because many of the detained men have been moved to Stewart from other places all over the country. This disrupts the possibility of community unless an active organization intentionally seeks to create and foster meaningful person-to-person connections.

Simultaneously, El Refugio seeks to uphold the universal standards of human rights. El Refugio realizes both that community is fragile but also that community exists for goods beyond itself. Implicit in their advocacy is the notion that a goal of the nation-state community is the ability to offer protection to those who have lost their own connection to their original state. This position is supported by a careful application of the biblical understanding of community and the New Testament's understanding of the church's social ethic to the contemporary realities in focus in this paper. Through demonstrating the possibility of community across lines of difference and through actively reestablishing bonds of social trust, El Refugio demonstrates that asylum-seekers can be active participants in the

community. Advocating against detention for asylum-seekers and for democratic iterations by which many asylum-seekers may be included in the community, El Refugio is living out a ministry that is in line with the vision of Christian cosmopolitanism explored in this paper.

<u>Summary</u>

It is in the cultivation of local soil and local community that we then become able to offer hospitality to others. Christian cosmopolitans recognize a fundamentally communitarian anthropology and the biblical insight that community is inherently fragile. For these reasons, David Miller's concerns about social trust in a deliberative democracy find a certain resonance among Christian cosmopolitans. But Christian cosmopolitans proactively address this concern through practices of hospitality that are inclusive, concrete, mutual, and honest. Out of that local community, Christian cosmopolitans can advocate for including those who have been cut off from all of the associative ties that previously connected them to a state. Like liberal cosmopolitans, Christian cosmopolitans seek to universalize rights. In addition to the biblical insight that community is fragile, Christian cosmopolitans also recognize the biblical insights that community exists for goods beyond the borders of the particular community and that the church is called especially to those who are marginalized by the definitions that legitimate the political order. These commitments find a certain resonance in Seyla Benhabib's work on the possibility of democratic iterations. Further, these commitments necessitate advocacy on behalf of those who flee war or injustice but who don't fall under the current refugee definitions. Asylum-seekers from the Northern Triangle countries offer a particularly clear case of when this kind of advocacy is necessary. These practices of hospitality and advocacy, then, offer Christians in America useful tools for living out their biblical faith in a way that proactively addresses the real-world political challenges of refugee protection.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that, by combining liberal cosmopolitanism's vision of universalized rights with a communitarian anthropology, Christian cosmopolitanism offers Christians a promising framework from which to respond faithfully to refugees and asylum-seekers. This is a framework with robust biblical foundations. In the Old Testament's exilic literature, Israel articulates two enduring insights about community. Community exists for a good beyond itself and community is inherently fragile. In the book of Daniel, these insights are integrated into the very form of the text to suggest a social ethic that refuses to let go of either insight. By reiterating the wisdom of Hillel right alongside the demands of the Qumran community, the Epistle of James in the New Testament recommends the same kind of social ethic we find in Daniel. Further, we see in James' writing that the church must have a special concern for whoever is systematically disenfranchised by the definitions of the reigning political order of the day.

In our day of nation-states and borders, refugees and asylum-seekers are those who are disenfranchised by the very definitions upon which our global political order is legitimated. Rather than seeking to upend the entire political system or ignoring the plight of the stateless, Christians are called to move toward refugees with compassion. Since states are the only communities currently able to provide the fundamental need that refugees and asylum-seekers need, the Christian mandate to care for those marginalized by the nation-

state political order necessitates attention to contemporary politics and the factors influencing admissions decisions.

The work of Seyla Benhabib addresses the politics of political membership in modern, pluralistic states. In arguing for porous borders, Seyla Benhabib offers Christians a normative political theory that attempts to leave space for particularized applications within specific communities. Her work suggests that Christians can optimistically engage in moral advocacy on behalf of asylum-seekers while also remaining sensitive to the real challenges that face both established communities and newcomers. David Miller articulates one of these key challenges. A deliberative democracy is sustained by the presence of social trust. If social trust begins to evaporate due to increasing levels of diversity, the result is a democracy in logjam. Even admissions decisions, refugee resettlement quotas, and asylum decisions will be affected by this resulting deadlock. Political integration alone, at least as Benhabib lays it out, doesn't solve this problem. Too often, Christians who "welcome the stranger" and advocate on behalf of newcomers are unaware of this concern.

We are left then with a question about how to cultivate a robust welcome for those who flee danger without compromising the social trust necessary for that very welcome. Since Christian cosmopolitanism refuses to see hospitality to the refugee as inconsistent with nurturing the common life of the polity, this challenge calls the church to the practices of Christian cosmopolitanism. The practices of hospitality and advocacy, when practiced from the framework provided by Christian cosmopolitanism, can insist on both cultivating social trust and admitting asylum-seekers in need of a political solution. The church's practice of advocacy insists on the nation-state's ability to provide for the asylum-seeker while the church's practice of hospitality cultivates that very ability. The practice of hospitality by Christian cosmopolitans is concrete and inclusive, respects both similarities and differences,

and is neither coercive nor detached. The practice of advocacy by Christian cosmopolitans is insistent, targeted, and fundamentally rooted in moral claims. These practices of Christian cosmopolitanism, which flow from biblical foundations, have the power to answer the political challenges outlined in chapter 3 and go beyond what is on offer in either liberal cosmopolitanism or communitarianism. Through these practices, Christian cosmopolitanism has the potential to guide American Christians into a form of faithfulness that is at once biblically sound, politically effective, and practically relevant.