

Editor's Introduction

In the Spring of 2016, John Dominic Crossan visited Manchester University to give five lectures on issues related to religion, the historical Jesus, the historical Paul, conflict in biblical narratives, and the possibility of developing a peaceful hermeneutic in biblical interpretation for the future. This was made possible by a generous donation from the Luce Foundation.

The ideological struggle for a peaceful biblical hermeneutic and nonviolent reconciliation is played out in both academia and the churches, but especially in the pulpits every Sunday morning. In an effort to recognize the extraordinary work being done at the grassroots of this struggle for peaceful interpretation, the journal has invited three laypeople, one historian, and two academics to write in response to John Dominic Crossan's work, the leftist political turn to Paul, or their own experience in the church.

Justin Lasser¹ and Leonard Williams² reflect on the leftist turn to the Apostle Paul and death of God theology in the work of Alain Badiou, Slavoj Žižek, and Simon Critchley and offer a challenge and redescription of this turn by way of the work of John Dominic Crossan, Burton L. Mack, and contemporary anarchist theorists. Stephen Myers offers an essay reflecting on Crossan's interpretive methods as they relate to violence and nonviolence in the Bible. Jo Ann Schall the historical effects that the revolution enacted by the Emperor Constantine had on the diverse proto-Christian traditions in the preceding three centuries. Ernest Barr offers an essay reflecting on his pacifist approach to the Bible and Christian faith. He asks, "How is the Bible an Instrument of Peace and What Are the Prospects for the Future?" Robert Gilbert³, a historian, offers a paper that considers the perennial question: "Is Christianity a Religion of Peace or Conflict?"

Each of these articles are unique and reflect the struggle for a peaceful interpretation of the Christian tradition that contends with the imperialistic rhetoric which has become, once again, increasingly prominent. This struggle is ongoing, and these short essays should be read in that spirit.

A special thanks goes to Jacob Ray, a graduate of Manchester University, for his work as a co-editor on this project. His meticulous edits and suggestions made each piece better.

Justin M. Lasser, Ph.D.
Editor

¹ Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Manchester University, IN.

² Professor of Political Science, Manchester University, IN.

³ An Adjunct Professor of History and Peace Studies at Manchester University, IN.