Jesus the Prophet, Jesus the Displaced

A Redemptive-Historical Theology of Place

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In Wendell Berry's novel *Remembering*, Kentucky farmer Andy Catlett leaves his Kentucky farm for an agricultural conference.[1] The pictures Berry uses to describe this are bleak. Andy's arm is torn off by industrial machinery that finds no difference between his arm and a plant. The dismemberment of Andy's arm is symbolic of what Berry sees as a modern predicament, the dismemberment of the person from community. Likewise, the agricultural conference away from home is sterile and unhuman. It is removed from place, and in being so destroys the good nature of agriculture. Disconnection from the earth and from place are shown to be unhuman. However, Andy returns back home, a sign of *re*membrance. The redemptive arc of the story is that what was dismembered is remembered through community rooted in place.

In a contrasting picture, Jesus Christ begins his ministry by returning home. He is not *re*membered. He is rejected. Jesus' well-known retort to his rejection at Nazareth is that "a prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household."[2] Jesus' retort separates his ministry from his hometown. The justification for the gospel that Jesus preaches is not based in a realm of values rooted in his home community. Seemingly, Jesus' prophetic duty is at odds with Berry's vision for humans.

Jesus' retort cannot be read as a retort on the ethics of community, just as any of his other comments against Jewish customs cannot be read as a retort on the Jewish ethic. The statement instead must be understood as serving a typological purpose, pointing to the final redemption of humanity at the cross. Jesus' comment then, is a description of his role as the last prophet, not a prescriptive justification for any person who claims to be a "prophet" or who challenges the norms of a culture or community. This will be explained through three parts: the ethical imperative that exist within and regarding community, how Jesus is rejected through this ethic, and finally how Jesus as the last prophet redeems this ethic. Jesus' statement about his rejection establishes him as the final prophet, the fulfillment of the Old Testament office of prophet, who necessarily was rejected from his community for the sake of forming true, lasting community.

Community as a Good

In his book *How to Be a Conservative*, Roger Scruton develops a political philosophy out of a concept he calls *oikophilia*, literally, "love of home." Scruton explains that human beings are inherently "animated" by "not only the home but the people contained in it, and the surrounding settlements that endow that home with lasting contours and an enduring smile."[3] The notion of *oikophilia* contrasts with a modern way of thinking which, while not denying community as a net

[1] Wendell Berry, *Remembering: A Novel* (Berkley: Counterpoint, 2008)
[2] Mark 6:4 (ESV).
[3] Roger Scruton, *How to Be a Conservative*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 24-25.

good for the human, redefines community as a "timeless, placeless vision."[4] Scruton's principle indicates an important facet of human nature. There is no way that any human can be everywhere or timeless. Scruton's concept of love-of-home can only be thought of in terms of limits. In Scruton's thought, and additionally in the thinking of Wendell Berry and Patrick Deneen, community matters because it ties a person to time and place, *id est* limits.

Before proceeding to an exploration of what exactly limits mean, it must be noted that Scruton, Berry, and Deneen are not suggesting that the question of community is not an existential choice. Put simply, people do not cease to be human by choosing to leave a community, but rather community provides for the essential formation of character. Deneen, for instance, notes that it is possible for humans to "set out for new pastures," acknowledging that there is a fundamental difference between someone who has been raised and shaped by the limits of community and the false anthropology of liberalism, which suggests humans are disconnected and solitary at birth.[5] In other words, community does not *make* humans human. Rather, it is the inherent fact that humans are limited, contingent beings. Since limitation is part of the essential nature of humanity, humans have the choice either to tie themselves to the established, time-tested limits or to be thrown about by unstable, fleeting limits. This is well illustrated in Wendell Berry's novel *Remembering*.[6] When Kentucky farmer Andy Catlett's arm is dismembered by farm machinery, the question is not whether Catlett has a choice to be limited in community or unlimited with modern industrialism. Catlett by essence is limited, and thus the attempt to transcend limits through industrial machinery pulls him into a state of bondage, not freedom. Contra liberalism, the stewardship of limits is the path to freedom. Scruton, Berry, and Deneen all suggest that the human fact of limits must be nurtured through the good limits that a community can provide.

Community and limits can be tied together because community necessarily involves place.[7] Berry comments that a community, by virtue of having a common interest, has customs and a sense of goodness that it as a unified organism strives towards. Because community inherently involves standards, it can "enforce decency without litigation."[8] Yet a distinction must be drawn before presuming that communities always will enforce decency—pluralism cannot constitute community. "Places differ from one another and…people will differ somewhat according to the characters of their places."[9] Denying the importance of geographical location in community making is to deny the limit of place, which is fundamental to the human as an embodied being. There thus can be no common interest—and thus no "decency without litigation"—in a placeless community. The community in place can avoid the inevitable conflict, rivalry, and societal depreciation that marks positivistic legal thinking because the enforced limits are developed out of interest tied to living within nature, rather than created out of human will. In short, place makes the limits of community *good* limits.

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[4] Scruton, *How to Be a Conservative*, 25.

[5] Patrick J. Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*. With new preface (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 78.

[6] Wendell Berry, *Remembering*.

[7] In the mind of these thinkers, place is essentially involved in the natural community. A synthetic "community," such as an online forum or group, is thus attempting (unsuccessfully) to fill the void of placelessness that is not found except in naturally formed communities.

[8] Wendell Berry, "Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community," in *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community: Eight Essays*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 120.

[9] Berry, "Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community," 168.

These *good* limits that community provides involve customs, ways of thinking, and a way of life that remains to an extent unchallenged. Scruton articulates this well in showing that community comes with an obligation. Community is not a purely instrumental good. Like any good, it is a gift from God and realized through the shaping constraints of nature within a particular place.[10] Those who are born into a particular place, then, do not make community, they receive it. When something is received, it must come with a series of obligations. These are not obligations in the sense of demand, but rather what is required to live well with something. This can be understood with anything that is received. Community is not a one-size-fits-all void but contains a shape and character. There are certain institutions, customs, and holidays that must be maintained from generation to generation. The common interests that define good limits must be kept at the forefront of minds as living needs and cares, not dead fragments of heritage. Naturally, as Scruton, Berry, and Deneen all acknowledge, community will undergo change from time to time, but change is not discontinuity. As Edmund Burke hypothesized, there is a "germ" of belonging that defines the underlying foundation of the organically developing community.[11] Since the "germ" must remain alive, there will be a culture of blessing and shame towards those who either keep or neglect the obligations of the community.[12] In this respect, the underlying substance of community remains unchallenged, and those who from time to time do challenge such substance will not succeed in overthrowing an order larger than themselves.

The existence of community as the essential foundation of human living reinforces another fundamental truth: no human can, as a solidary individual, be the sole beholder of truth. In his Gifford lectures, Scruton explains that all humans "face the world in a posture of accountability. We are called upon to justify our conduct, to be truthful in revealing our states of mind and our goals, and to be aware of the community that stands as though on a balcony above our projects, expecting us to play our part."[13] Community is not an epistemology in itself, nor can it by its own merit produce truth. It nevertheless serves an important epistemological role. Scruton's observation that "we are called upon to justify our conduct," including "our states of mind," means that reason is not an individualistic pursuit. Reason involves dialogue, and dialogue involves living with other people.[14] The dialogue that is marked by what Scruton calls the "I-You" relationship—namely, a relationship between two living, ensouled individuals—means that any claim of truth or pursuit of reason must first encounter the filter of accountability.[15] There are, then, no new ideas. All ideas are developed out of a sense of obligation, interest, and customs that are themselves rooted in place.

For Scruton, this principle of an unchallenged germ is not an abstract one, but one that works itself out concretely in the realm of aesthetics. Scruton remarks, "We shape our surroundings as a home by farming, by building, by arranging the world. Aesthetic values govern every form of settlement."[16] He further draws this point out by remarking on the creation story in Genesis, "A

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[10] Scruton, *How to Be a Conservative*, 26.

[11] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Francis Canavan, volume 2 in *Select Works of Edmund Burke* (Carmel: Liberty Fund, Inc., 1999), 136.

[12] Scruton, *The Face of God: The Gifford Lectures 2010* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012), 38.

[13] Roger Scruton, *The Face of God*, 38.

[14] Scruton, *The Face of God*, 45.

[15] Scruton, *The Face of God*, 45. Scruton later ties this to Hegel's principle of the self emerging outwards towards a community; cf. 64.

[16] Scruton, *The Face of God*, 137.

garden is a cultivated place, a place transformed by aesthetic choices, a place that bears the mark of human labour [sic] and human desires."[17] Scruton's remarks serve to reify Burke's principle of the unchallenged germ of community. The underlying *idea* of anything remains functionally unchallenged as it is met by the judgements of shame and blessing that community provides. This works itself out in concrete particulars of any community, from architecture and fine arts to customs, rites, and holidays. It once again is worth mentioning that any healthy society will undergo change. Changes in customs, thinking, and way of life, however, are not subject to any individual will, but the organic living development of people in community together. As Berry notes, there is no truly private life; all of life is found within the shared good that defines community.[18]

Is there ever a point when the germ of community must be challenged? This task, I suggest, is realized in the office of the prophet. It is this question that the next section deals with.

The Prophet Against Community

In all three of the synoptic gospels, Jesus Christ is rejected in his hometown.[19] All three accounts follow Jesus as he goes to Nazareth and teaches in the synagogue, only to be met with disapproval and rejection. Jesus, seemingly unphased, responds, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household," and leaves.[20] *Prima facie*, Jesus' rejection seems to be akin to Scruton's claim that all humans face a realm of judgement upon entering the world. As noted above, ideas must pass through the filter of community and be judged through reason marked by dialogue. The message that Jesus brings is nevertheless proclaimed as true in the Christian Scriptures despite being rejected by the realm of judgement in the community that was Jesus' own. In leaving Nazareth, Jesus seems to neglect limits and neglect place. Seemingly, Jesus' claim that he has the authority to proclaim his message does not align with Scruton's, Deneen's, and Berry's principle. However, before this objection is raised, it should be noted that Jesus is fulfilling a specific *office* of prophet, to such an extent that he is the *last* prophet. The shape of the office of the prophet and how Jesus fulfills this must first be examined.

The Biblical prophet is one who challenges community-imposed limits when those limits have fallen into a state of error and thusly disconnected the community from its divine source. A prophet (προφήτης—literally "one who speaks forth) is someone who speaks out to call people to repentance (μετάνοια—literally "change of mind"). Charles Hodge notes that there is a Biblical distinction between the office of prophet and that of teacher. Hodge draws this distinction in terms of inspiration: the teacher draws upon a corpus or canon of thought while the prophet speaks inspired by God, a literal "organ" of God.[21] The prophet's epistemology rests upon an inherent, direct connection to God; it is through this direct connection that he and others know what he speaks is true. The prophet's epistemological relation to a community, then, is not through the mediating limits that Scruton, Berry, and Deneen suggest for normative discourse. There are two ways in which Jesus' rejection at Nazareth places the prophet in conflict with the community-imposed limits

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[17] Scruton, *The Face of God*, 138.

[18] Berry, "Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community,"119-121.

[19] Matt. 13:53-58, Mark 6:1-6, Luke 4:16-30.

[20] Mark. 6:4 (ESV).

[21] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Volume II, *Anthropology*, reprinted (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1999), 462.

that Scruton, Berry, and Dennen speak to: Jesus' rejection first raises a problem of place and second a problem of honor. Yet the rejection of Jesus, both displacing and dishonoring, simultaneously identifies him with the Old Testament prophets and confirms his role as the realization and fulfillment of the office of prophet. The question thus raised is how Scruton's, Berry's, and Deneen's principle of limits interact with Hodge's epistemology of the prophet.

Jesus' rejection in his hometown is marked by him leaving a specific *place* that he initially was rooted in. Before the rejection, the members of Jesus' synagogue community note a separation between a sort of common idea or common sense and the words Jesus taught. Mark's text records the people saying "*Where* (πόθεν) did he get this," to such an extent that they did not recognize either his wisdom or his miracles.[22] All three synoptic gospels then remark that the people took offense at Jesus' words and expelled him from his own hometown. Luke's account remarks that the very geography of the town was used in the rejection. The town was built along a cliff, which the townspeople attempted to throw Jesus from, and yet he "passed through" the crowd and "departed."[23] Because common judgement of the hometown and place are inherently linked, Jesus must be understood as leaving his hometown as a *place*. Jesus' ministry not only continued in a place that differed from where he had initially belonged, but he could no longer call the place where he initially belonged his own.

The synoptics are further unified in remarking that Jesus' rejection involved him being *shamed*. While Luke's account simply remarks that Jesus is not welcome, Matthew and Mark include stronger language, remarking that a "prophet is not dishonored (ἄτιμος)" unless he is in his hometown.[24] Scruton's principle that community stands above, serving to "justify our conduct," is in a sense illustrated here. Jesus' home community presumes that it has the power to pronounce blessing or shame upon conduct, action, principles, and thoughts. As Luke's account notes, when Jesus justifies his conduct, he speaks of two paralleled ideas. While he first suggests that the expected justification will be the performance of a grand miracle, he instead connects himself to an Old Testament prophet, Elijah, who ministered for years when no miracles were done.[25] In other words, Jesus' apology is not the one anticipated by the people, but rather on the grounds that he—like Elijah—is a rejected one.

The inclusion of this story in the synoptics demonstrates that Jesus by virtue of being both displaced and dishonored is a prophet of the gospel. Robert Cara, for instance, notes that in the historic iteration of the office of prophet there is a paralleled realization of rejection and suffering. According to Cara, Jesus' rejection was both "according to God's will and matches what the Old Testament taught" and also "connects [to the] healing and preaching motifs through the Old Testament prophets Elijah and Elisha."[26] While the office of prophet is in essence one who speaks forth as (using Hodge's language) an "organ" of God, the secondary property or consequence of this role to be expected by all called to it is simultaneously rejection and suffering. Perhaps most importantly, Jesus' reception of both displacement and dishonor inevitably led to a place of

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[22] Mark 6:2, translation and emphasis my own.

[23] Luke 4:30, my translation.

[24] Mark 6:4, my translation. Matthew's account (13:57) includes nearly similar although not exactly similar language.

[25] Luke 4:23-27.

[26] Robert J. Cara, "Luke," in Michael J. Kruger, ed., *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 102.

complete rejection. While the synoptic account of his rejection at Nazareth ends with Jesus teaching in other villages, the conclusion of Jesus' ministry was a final dishonoring in his crucifixion and also an attempted displacement, as crucifixion attempted to remove someone away from the world through death while also dismembering any remaining, placed legacy by displaying the criminal in a place of prominence. Jesus' whole identity as a suffering servant meant that he was both displaced and dishonored.

Despite the juxtaposition of community limits and the suffering servant-oriented ministry of Jesus, the rejection at Nazareth displays Jesus as the final prophet, the realization and fulfillment of the Old Testament prophetic office and ministry. In other words, all Old Testament prophets served as types for Jesus' rejection at Nazareth, an event itself that serves as a type for the dishonoring and displacement of all humanity under the headship of Jesus Christ that occurs at the cross. The fact that in the Luke account Jesus reads a scroll of the prophet is significant. This speaks to what Cara calls the "suffering/rejected prophet motif," which he argues is fulfilled in Jesus.[27] Whether those angered in the synagogue realized it or not, they were confirming Jesus' words—"today this writing is fulfilled"—with their anger.[28] In other words, the rejection at Nazareth was not a one-off statement or witty quip on human tendencies. It was a commentary on both the fact that Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophetic office and also that he was destined to take on the shame and suffering of all humanity. Jesus' role as the displaced prophet is a uniquely fulfilled one which does not belong to any other person.

The Prophet For Community

Wendell Berry's vision for humans, the earth, and community is not typically explicitly Christian, but Berry's ethic of care for the earth and place simultaneously mirrors much of the Bible's message and challenges much of the modern Christian ethos. Perhaps the closest work of Berry resembling a theology is his essay "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," originally a lecture delivered at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.[29] In the essay, Berry provides a critique of Christianity with the purpose of reforming Christian thinking. He takes issue with desecration of nature by Western industrialism and argues that Christians have stood by complicitly.[30] In contrast, he holds that the mandate of the Bible is otherwise. Berry acknowledges his own debt to the Christian tradition and argues that it is unescapable, as that is what he was born into: it is that which he received.[31] Cultivating the Christian tradition well, however, means it must be reformed to reject the desecration of nature and return to its original message of the healing of the land. Since God made creation, it must be good; there is no "dualism" between God and His earth.[32] Nor are humans separated from the earth. God did not fill a body with a soul; rather God embodied the "dust of the ground" with personhood.[33] Humans are rooted both spiritually and physically in the earth and thus

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[27] Cara, "Luke," 101.

[28] Luke 4:21, my translation.

[29] Wendell Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," in *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community: Eight Essays*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 93-116. See the footnote on 93.

[30] Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," 93.

[31] Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," 95-96.

[32] Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," 105.

[33] Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," 106. "The formula given in Genesis 2:7 is not man = body + soul; the formula there is soul = dust + breath."

cannot be thought of as separate from either nature or place. Berry argues that "the Bible leaves no doubt at all about the sanctity of the act of world-making."[34] Christians must pursue the "holiness of life," which extends beyond the church building to the whole of God's creation.[35]

Berry's thesis in the essay is one of Christian duty—but the question must be asked: can a *sinner* fulfill a holy *duty*? It is this question that must be answered to resolve the question of the prophet. The prophet as described above is one who calls the sinner to repentance. The call of repentance, however, is not one of renewed ethical conduct. The apostle Paul urges that the purpose of law is one of a "schoolmaster" to drive God's people to the realization and fulfillment of holiness, Jesus Christ.[36] Berry acknowledges that creation has been corrupted by sin but maintains that God still finds it worthy.[37] While this is a true enough observation, Berry's ensuing conclusion is to task humans with an ethical imperative. He does not see this realized in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Berry's ethic falls short because he does not see the realization and fulfillment of an ethical demand in an eschatological consummation, contra Paul's comment regarding the "schoolmaster."

Berry's thesis does not account for this facet of theology because he does not account for the overarching historical narrative of Christianity. Christianity is, first and foremost, a historically oriented religion. It follows a historical narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation, and the incarnation itself speaks to this fact. Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God was the historical fulfillment of the ethical demands of the law.[38] The lack of a historical orientation around the ethical imperatives of Christianity will thus miss the redemption of all creation in the person and work of Jesus Christ. If an ethical task is given and a person does not have historical-oriented theology to look back to the fulfillment of law in the person and work of Jesus, the only source of fulfillment will be in the individual person acting on his own behalf.

Since the office of the prophet is one of repentance and thus one looking towards the redemptive *event*, the theology relating to prophet can tend towards neglect of place.[39] Jesus Christ's statement about the prophet and his hometown, however, is counterevidence to this one-sided error. As demonstrated in the preceding section, the synoptics' story about the rejection at Nazareth is a commentary on place; it comments on Jesus' own *dis*placement. The question that remains is whether Berry's Biblically-based ethic of place is reconcilable with Jesus' own displacement, seeing that Jesus as God cannot violate any moral obligation. Simultaneously, Jesus is God and yet also "acquainted with grief" in a human way.[40] Simultaneously, Jesus is made incarnate to fulfill human nature (which must involve emplacement) perfectly and yet is rejected by his own place.

In his book *Where Mortals Dwell*, Craig Bartholomew suggests that the whole story of the Christian Scriptures is one of place. The redemptive arc from creation to fall to restoration "has the

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[34] Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," 98-99.

[35] Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," 100.

[36] Gal. 3:24. Paul's term is "παιδαγωγὸς," which the King James Version renders as "schoolmaster," although more recent translations (e.g. ESV) render this as "guardian."

[37] Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," 97.

[38] Rom. 3:24-31.

[39] Craig G. Bartholomew, for instance, notes this as tendency in theology that studies the cross as a redemptive-historical event. He proposes an alternative hermeneutic that takes time and place both into equal account. Cf. *Where Mortals Dwell: A Christian View of Place for Today*, (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic Press, 2011), 99, 117.

[40] Is. 53:3

structure of implacement-displacement-(re)implacement [sic]."[41] For Bartholomew, the event of re-emplacement is the completion of a redemptive arc of the current, inherent human condition. Bartholomew argues that Jesus' comment in the synoptics at Nazareth "alerts us to his sense of a new implacement, namely as that of a prophet of the kingdom."[42] This kingdom is not an invisible, abstracted reign. "The third beatitude is most interesting: 'Blessed are the meek, for *they will inherit the earth*.' This placial reward clearly contradicts the notion that the kingdom of God always refers to the reign of Israel's God and never to his realm."[43] Bartholomew goes on to clarify that the *earth* must refer to the tangible ground and place of the physical earth.[44] Such a thesis about the historical reality of Jesus' death and resurrection and nature of the inaugurated kingdom means that place and history cannot be separated.

The restoration of place is tied directly to the inauguration of the Messianic kingdom. It is a promise that the physical earth is not simply replaced but, much like the body of a redeemed person, glorified. When Paul says that "the *whole* creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until *now*," he comments on the fact that all of nature is touched by the fall, all of nature will be redeemed, and that *now*, the time of Jesus' advent, is when all nature is redeemed.[45] The redemption of this reign is to be creation-wide, but this does not void place inherent in the local community.[46] Rather than occurring through political force or the use of coercive power, the kingdom is realized in the local church.[47] In the local church, both Jesus' redemptive work and additionally the outpouring and indwelling of the Holy Spirit is manifested in a sense that is both rooted in community of persons and place.

The inauguration of such a kingdom, however, must rest upon the advent of the person and work of Jesus. In other words, the "the structure of implacement-displacement-(re)implacement" is not wrought by the invisible force of God, but rather through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. This is in particular emphasized in the gospel of Matthew, the only one of the four gospels to reference the "church" explicitly.[48] Reggie Kidd argues that, drawing upon this theme, the later part of Matthew "marks Jesus's preparation for the cross and for the creation of the church. Appropriately, the narrative portion begins with the rejection of Jesus at Nazareth and the death of John the Baptist at the hand of Herod the tetrarch."[49] This was in order "to reshape God's people by making faith the boundary marker between 'clean' and 'unclean'." Kidd's comment on the rejection at Nazareth display a twofold purpose in the narrative.

First, while the local church is the continuation of the Jewish synagogue of the Old Covenant, the inauguration of the New Covenant, while not changing the covenant in *essence*, did mark a challenge to the substantive outworking of rites, customs, and modes of thinking of Jewish tradition. This can for instance be seen in circumcision's fulfillment in the rite baptism, or the Passover's

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[41] Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell*, 31.
[42] Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell*, 112.
[43] Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell*, 107; emphasis Bartholomew's.
[44] Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell*, 107-108.
[45] Rom. 8:22 (ESV); emphases mine.
[46] Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell*, 117, 125.
[47] Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell*, 129.
[48] Reggie M. Kidd, "Matthew," in Michael J. Kruger, ed., *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 29.
[49] Reggie M. Kidd, 35.

fulfillment in the Eucharist. While the essence of placed community was maintained, the synagogue as a local community failed to see that true re-emplacement would only be brought about by the redemption of place in the coming of the Messiah. The rejection of Jesus, then, is not a placed community exercising judgement; it is rather an articulation of a community attempting to *dis*place itself.

Second and more importantly, the nature of the incarnation is such that Jesus himself is *dis*placed for the purposes of being *re*-emplaced. The Apostle Paul remarks that "the one not knowing sin was made sin for us."[50] This is a fulfillment of the Messiah being "acquainted with grief," as Isaiah comments.[51] The reason that the Son of God took on human flesh was for the purposes of incarnating the human condition in its fallen state and thus, by his own righteousness, redeeming it. Just as Jesus died according to sin for the purposes of being raised in holiness, Jesus was displaced for the purposes of being re-emplaced. Just as Jesus' righteousness is imputed, Jesus' redeemed emplacement is imputed in a completed way through the Church. The mystery of Jesus Christ is that he is simultaneously the suffering servant and the glorified Lord. This is realized in the rejection at Nazareth. Reggie Kidd notes that the rejection of Jesus is one of the "powerful signs of the hiddenness of the kingdom of heaven."[52] It is hidden in that Jesus is rejected from his hometown but realized in that Jesus is the source of true re-emplacement to community and place. The way that a sinner fulfills the ethical *duty* towards community is not by works but rather through grace. Just as in Luther's law-gospel categories law is fulfilled in the gospel of Christ, the law of place is fulfilled in Jesus Christ's gospel of place.[53]

Conclusion

The restoration of community rooted in place is one of the promises that God offers to Isreal throughout the Old Testament that he redeems finally and fully in Jesus Christ. Along with Bartholomew, Scruton also notes that the Jewish ethic is one that is inherently rooted in care for the land. Scruton argues that Isreal was "conscious of the uniqueness of their territory, of the need to respect it and to sanctify it. They regarded the Promised Land not as a thing to consume and discard but as an inheritance, to be cared for and passed on."[54] While this care did include aspects of caring for the land intentionally through good agriculture and architecture, "a true city begins from an act of consecration, and it is the temple, God's dwelling, which is the model for all other buildings. It is from the temple that we can learn how to build."[55] If this need for the consecration of community is understood, it can be seen why community in place could only be realized in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

When Jesus took on flesh in the incarnation, he dwelt with humanity. Jesus' home was in heaven. When he took on human flesh, he took on human nature. If Scruton, Berry, and Deneen are correct, human nature necessarily involves emplacement on the physical earth. This dual emplacement of Jesus according to his dual nature is displayed well in his baptism. Jesus is baptized

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[50] 1 Cor. 5:21, my translation.

[51] Isa. 53:5 (ESV).

[52] Reggie M Kidd, "Matthew," 53.

[53] Cf. Martin Luther, *On Christian Liberty*, trans. W. A. Lambert, rev. Harold J. Grimm (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 8.

[54] Scruton, *The Face of God*, 117.

[55] Scruton, *The Face of God*, 119.

to "fulfill all righteousness," and when the baptism is completed Jesus's association with earth is commended by the Father.[56] Jesus must be rejected according to his human nature, including a rejection at Nazareth. At the same time, he is able to minister as the final prophet in full authority because of his divine emplacement in heaven. In the incarnation, God consecrated humanity through his active presence. Since humans are not abstract, independent entities free of personal connection, but rather rooted essentially in community in place, the consecration of humanity that occurred through the incarnation redeemed humanity in community. The incarnation is a redemption of place. By his suffering in his rejection, Jesus Christ redeemed the social bonds that define human life and livelihood.

[56] Matt. 3:15-17 (ESV).

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