

# Introduction

We, the editors, are proud to offer the first issue of the seventh volume of *CTJ* in service of University and Church, especially our own Concordia University System and Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The journal continues to receive generous financial support from the Bartling Endowment through Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor (CUWAA), for which we are grateful.

As a reminder to our readers, *CTJ* is now in its second year of the reboot, which features the entire Concordia University System and is double-blind peer reviewed. In addition to the print journal, *CTJ* can be found online at our webpage ([www.cuaa.edu/ctj](http://www.cuaa.edu/ctj)) and is listed on ATLASerials™ with the full-text of each article available on ATLASerials Plus™. The purpose of *CTJ* is to provide space for interdisciplinary, academic conversation within the tradition of Confessional Lutheranism on matters affecting the church and Christian higher education. To this end, while we want to focus on academic offerings from the universities' and colleges' theology departments, we are open to interdisciplinary work as well that would include faculty in other academic departments at CUS schools, such as biology, anthropology, English, etc. Please see our website for instructions on how to submit articles for consideration.

As in the previous volume, this issue is truly a joint venture of the Concordia University System. No theme unites these essays; rather, they are an eclectic mixture of theological disciplines, all featuring quality academic work on topics as diverse as the backgrounds of our faculty. In the first essay, former professor at Concordia University Portland, now President of Concordia University Irvine, Michael Thomas writes on the relations of Jews and Christians in Northern Mesopotamia during the first four centuries after Christ based on three ancient texts and each's respective *Sitz im Leben*. Thomas' insightful analysis of these texts gives a rare picture into Jewish-Christian relations in antiquity. In the second essay, Theodore Hopkins (Concordia University, Ann Arbor) offers an analysis of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Discipleship* in relation to Martin Luther's commentary on the Sermon on the Mount. Hopkins shows how differences in theological tools conceal a broader similarity of task, in condemning idolatrous works and constructing the Christian through the Word. In the third essay, David Loy (Concordia University, Irvine) explores the theological confession of Lutheran Universities. Although Christian Universities are tempted to put aside theology in favor of numbers, Loy shows the importance and even necessity of Lutheran Universities holding fast to their confession. In the final essay, Paul Puffe (Concordia University, Texas) dives into Hebrew grammar, arguing that the common translation of מַטּוּ as "be shaken" is mistaken, and the word is better translated as "collapse." Even if you don't know Hebrew, Puffe's close reading of the Bible will help you read the texts in question and

see why the translation of a word matters in understanding the Christian life.

Finally, a word about the cover art. This issue was originally put together at the beginning of January, 2020, and it was at that time that we decided to include a picture of Concordia University – Portland (CUP) on the cover due to the great support given to the journal by their theological faculty, both in terms of providing articles but also in helping with our process of blind peer review. However, as we were waiting for the journal to be printed, the closure of CUP at the end of April 2020 was announced. As editors, we decided to keep the cover as it is as tribute to the work that God has done on CUP’s campus for the last 115 years. Memory eternal.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Theodore J. Hopkins and Scott E. Yakimow (CUAA), editors