

“Redeeming Justice”
Fall 2024 Raleigh Regional Convivium at
Campbell Law Room 313
October 25-26, 2024
Call for Papers

“So natural is the union of Religion with Justice, that we may boldly deem there is neither, where both are not. For how should they be unfeignedly just, whom religion doth not cause to be such; or they religious, which are not found such by the proof of their just actions?”

So writes Richard Hooker in *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie*. Religion has long been seen as the basis for justice, and the principles that are found in the text of the Old and New Testaments were for centuries in the West taken as principal sources for understanding and right applications of law. But in the increasingly post-Christian societies of the West, acceptance of biblical and theological underpinnings in the field of criminal justice have been increasingly seen as suspect.

The recent decades have seen a heightened awareness of the need to reform criminal justice, both in theory and practice. Many reform movements have vied for prominence, and public discourse on justice has been fraught. Many assume that criminal justice has only to do with the political and ideological, and that we can only assess justice based on the end result (e.g., statistics about crime or incarceration rates).

Some scholarly contributions have contested this simplistic way of thinking, and made movements to recover the inseparability of religion and justice. Notably, in his recent significant book, *Reforming Criminal Justice: A Christian Proposal*, Matthew T. Martens has suggested that recent attempts to criticize our criminal justice system have fallen flat because critics lack any real understanding of how the system works, and because their arguments are unmoored from both biblical wisdom and the natural law tradition. Evangelical cries for change have more closely resembled common political talking points than considered application of biblically and theologically informed ethics.

Christian love sees an image-bearer in need of correction, but also recognizes the reality of human nature affected by sin. Likewise, a Christian critique of the system of criminal justice must hold in tension the need to discipline and correct the sinful heart and also the need to confront the danger of sinful misuse of authority by the state.

At the Fall 2024 Raleigh Regional Convivium, our fourth on the broad theme of “theology and law,” we invite you to join us to consider the necessity of grounding criminal justice reform in Scripture, tradition, and natural law.

We welcome submissions of proposals for paper presentations or guided discussions on topics related to the theme of the Convivium. The conference is intentionally interdisciplinary and we would love to hear from professional attorneys, pastors, scholars, or graduate students. Presentation should generally aim to be 20-30 minutes in length. Possible avenues of inquiry include:

- Equality under law: comparing natural law concepts of equality with (American) criminal law concepts of equality
- Mapping jurisdictional variation in American Criminal Law with variation in divine law
- Parallels between access to justice & religious freedom
- Redemption as a framework for modern-day re-entry efforts
- Redemption v. Justice: Who pays the sinner's tab in religious v. secular justice?
- Religious roots of preventive detention
- Retribution's hidden lesson: critiquing habitual offender laws through the lenses of atonement and social equilibrium
- Role of the church in the restorative project, e.g., helping criminals be reunited into the community
- Role of plea bargaining in a system of justice
- Role of capital punishment in advancing a culture of death and life;
- Role of the police in community life
- The call to confession and the assurance of pardon: Using the order of worship as a model for an ordered and just society

(The above are meant to be suggestive of possible avenues to explore, not exhaustive)

If you are interested in presenting a paper or leading a discussion, please submit your 200-300-word abstract to Scott Pryor (pryors@campbell.edu) by October 1.

Location: Campbell Law School, Room 313

Schedule: 4:00PM Friday October 25 through 4:00 PM Saturday October 26.

Cost:

- Friday night: \$10
- Saturday: \$30 (includes lunch)
- Friday-Saturday (includes Saturday lunch): \$40 • Friday-Saturday student cost: \$25

Keynote speaker: Prof. Anthony Bushnell

