

# Editorial

## Notes from the Coasts of Bohemia:

### Persisting Beyond Sanctioned Categories

The Apostle Paul, James Cone, Ján Lajčiak and a contemporary Czech Protestant pastor walk into a room... What sounds like the opening of a twice-told Czech joke is, in truth, the very substance of this issue.

František Abel introduces Paul amidst his struggle with the “Judaizers” who so unsettled the Galatian Christians. Drawing upon the currents of New Testament scholarship that read the works of Paul of Tarsus within the multifaceted context of late Second Temple Judaism, Abel demonstrates that the motive of those seeking to compel Gentile converts to undergo circumcision was, at its heart, a reluctance to remain outside the safety of socially sanctioned categories.

Brach Jennings presents James Cone, a luminary of Black Theology, against the backdrop of Luther’s seminal Heidelberg Disputation of 1518. It was here that Luther first articulated his “theology of the cross” in opposition to the “theology of glory.” Cone’s concept of Black Theology is not merely a byproduct of the social upheavals of the 1960s; it is a profound and original application of Luther’s inverse logic of the cross – a gospel-derived subversion of the hierarchies of “high” and “low” – to the experience of African Americans and, indeed, all marginalised groups.

Sidónia Horňanová, in her study, introduces the Slovak theological *solitaire* Ján Lajčiak. As the first academically trained Slovak Old Testament scholar, Lajčiak remained an outsider within his own domestic milieu despite his international perspective. In the author’s rendering, he becomes the embodiment of the very hero to whom he devoted his scholarly attention: the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel.

Ondřej Macek, for his part, brings into the room the figure of the Protestant pastor as revealed by his sociological survey, which focuses on the ministerial role within a postmodern European context. The findings highlight

a startling discrepancy between what pastors value most in their own vocation and what the active members of their congregations actually expect of them.

This leaves us with the perennial dilemma: whether to mirror politely the expectations of others or to tread the solitary, if somewhat inconvenient, path of perceived truth. We trust that the contributions in this issue of *Communio Viatorum* will assist you in weighing this question with due intellectual honesty – an endeavour we felt compelled to encourage.

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