

THEOLOGY, LOGIC, AND RHETORIC:
THE RHETORICAL PRACTICES OF THEOLOGY IN POLITICAL ACTION
SPEECHES OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CLERGY

by

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ABSTRACT

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In this dissertation, I contribute to scholarly conversations about religion and political action rhetoric by revealing the important complexities and abundance of rhetorical resources found in various theologies. Through close textual analyses of three political action speeches by contemporary clergy members in North Carolina and the identification of key theological emphases in those texts, this dissertation displays that there is not simply one way that religion functions in political rhetoric, but a variety of ways flowing, in part, from the constraints and animation from textual theologies serving as the texts' interpretive framework. I propose that theology is a more helpful focus than religion, or spirituality, for rhetorical analysis because theology provides an actual material discourse about God and God's interactions with the world for a critic to analyze as it manifests in a particular text. Textual theologies have power in a text and specific textual theologies have specific powers. This dissertation argues that different theologies offer varied resources, constraints, and patterns, and merit careful consideration by rhetorical scholars.

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To
Robyn

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: Theory, Method, and Texts.....	30
Chapter 3: Rev. Dr. William Barber’s Higher Ground.....	60
Chapter 4: Rev. Mark Creech’s Marriage Battle.....	100
Chapter 5: Bishop Burbidge’s Prayer and Advocacy.....	147
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	187
References.....	205
Curriculum Vitae.....	216

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The Higher Ground Agon.....	68
Figure 2. Barber's Positive Cluster.....	72
Figure 3. Barber's Negative Cluster.....	77
Figure 4. Barber's Narrative Arc	81
Figure 5. The Marriage Battle Agon.....	112
Figure 6. Creech's Positive Cluster	115
Figure 7. Creech's Negative Cluster.....	121
Figure 8. Creech's Narrative Arc.....	127
Figure 9. The Immigration Reform Agon.....	156
Figure 10. Burbidge's Positive Cluster.....	159
Figure 11. Burbidge's Negative Cluster.....	164
Figure 12. Burbidge's Narrative Arc.....	168

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Religion in North Carolina's Contentious Public Discourse

The State of North Carolina has become a symbol of the contentious state of American politics and public discourse. The nation's ninth largest state has grown to be increasingly polarized along political lines. While North Carolina broke the Republican Party's "southern stronghold" on national elections by voting for Democrat Barack Obama in the 2008 Presidential election, the Tar Heel state had a sweeping wave of Republican victories in both the 2010 and 2012 state elections. In 2010 North Carolina's Republicans, led by the staunchly conservative Tea Party, claimed control of both houses of the North Carolina legislature for the first time in over 100 years. In 2012 North Carolina Republicans gained control of the executive branch with the election of a Republican governor. Republicans claimed a mandate from the people for their policies, and with control of both the legislative and executive branches proceeded to rapidly implement conservative policies; policies that by most measures would be viewed as very conservative (Dias, 2013; Graham, 2013). The response of North Carolina's self-described "progressives," and even some political moderates, to the sweeping policy changes has been passionate, organized, and, most striking for this dissertation, overflowing with rhetoric informed by certain Christian theologies.

On February 8, 2014, approximately 80,000 people participated in a massive march and rally at the North Carolina state capitol in protest against the policies of the governor and legislature. The march was the largest to date of the numerous protest marches, rallies, and demonstrations happening on an almost weekly basis throughout the state. North Carolina's progressive protest movement, known broadly as the Moral Monday movement, has garnered

national attention from media, political scholars, and social activists because of its large number of participants and growing momentum (Fuller, 2014). Moral Monday protests have even spread into other states. In a 2014 lecture in Madison, Wisconsin, Rev. Dr. William Barber II, a pastor of a North Carolina church, president of the North Carolina NAACP, and leader of the Moral Monday movement, credited the growth and excitement of the movement to the religious leaders who had the courage to make a clear moral stand. Barber further claimed that many citizens believed that the actions of the state leadership were morally wrong, and the people “just needed courageous leaders to show them where to act and how to act” (Barber, 2014b). It is significant to note for this study that the “courageous leaders” to whom Barber was referring were primarily members of the clergy.

While many clergy in the historic Black Churches, Mainline Protestant denominations, and progressive Catholic and Evangelical groups support progressive political policies from their theological positions, the perception of many Americans is that the dominant clergy voices advocating religious rationale in the public political discourse are members of the powerful Religious Right (DePalma & Ringer, 2015, loc. 232; Edwards, 2015, loc. 243; Westen, 2008; Wilkinson, 2012). William Barber is a prominent example of contemporary clergy members who call upon values, morals, and religious language as resources for their political action rhetoric in a politically progressive social movement. The rhetoric of William Barber challenges the popular conception that religion primarily serves conservative political ideology and rhetoric.

Barber employs religious content to justify and persuade others to support his progressive political positions. For example, when speaking to the crowd after the February 8, 2014 Moral March on Raleigh, Barber claimed that four biblical texts served as the foundation for Moral Monday’s conception of public morality, the public morality that they found lacking in the

policies enacted by the state's Republican majority. Barber read all four of the biblical texts including Isaiah 10:1 & 2, "Woe to you who make iniquitous decrees, who write oppressive statutes, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be your spoil, and that you may make the orphans your prey!" Barber (2014a) claimed that the progressive political agenda of the Moral Monday movement was rooted in this and other religious texts.

In addition to using religious content in his rhetoric, Barber also uses what could be called religious passion to inspire people to action. For example, toward the end of Barber's February 8, 2014 speech his voice shifted into the singing delivery style that is characteristic of the preaching in many historic Black Church traditions, particularly at the end of a sermon. He then concluded the speech with an extended segment describing an existential experience on a spiritual dimension in which God affirmed the progressive coalition's cause. A YouTube video of this speech shows that the audience vocally and physically engaged with Barber and one another by shouting, singing, clapping, and dancing throughout the conclusion of the speech (Barber, 2014a).

The Moral Monday movement is perhaps the clearest, most enthusiastic, public alignment of theologically animated rhetoric and mainstream Christian clergy with a progressive social movement since the American civil rights movement. William Barber, the most prominent leader of the Moral Monday movement, exemplifies the movement's emphasis upon religion in political action rhetoric. While Moral Monday has generated significant excitement inside and outside of North Carolina, not everyone has embraced Barber's public declarations using religion, and more specifically theology, as a justification for progressive public policies.

Political conservatives who use religion to advocate for conservative policies are some of Moral Monday's most vocal critics. Rev. Mark Creech is a prominent critic of Barber and the Moral Monday Movement. Creech is the executive director of the Christian Action League of North Carolina, a politically conservative faith-based organization that focuses on lobbying state officials and mobilizing conservative Evangelicals to support conservative political policies and candidates. Creech has been a strong supporter of the state policies that prompted the Moral Monday protests. In an interview with *The Christian Post*, Creech called Moral Mondays "socialism with a religious veneer" (O'Neil, 2013, para. 2). Creech went on to indict the clergy participating in Moral Mondays of falling to "a Christian heresy." Creech argued that the biblical texts on caring for the poor frequently quoted by the Moral Monday clergy are actually intended for individual acts of charity, and that the bible taught that government-sponsored charity is wrong. Creech claimed that the Bible passage Romans 13:1-6 revealed, "Government's primary – if not exclusive – responsibility is to protect the God-given rights of the people, our life, liberty, and property" (quoted in O'Neil, 2013, para. 8). Creech accused Barber and other clergy involved in Moral Monday of biblical unfaithfulness because they were calling for government to "confiscate the private property of the people and give it to somebody the government believes [is] deserving of charity" (quoted in O'Neil, 2013 para. 9).

In North Carolina, a state so clearly embodying division in contemporary American politics and public discourse, some of the key leaders guiding the public debate are religious clergy. In a day when some scholars claimed religion would fade out of public discourse (Berger, 1979), religious clergy in North Carolina are acting as prominent voices on various sides of public debates on public policies relying on their theology to justify and persuade others to adopt their political positions. This dissertation will explore political action rhetoric of some influential

clergy in the current North Carolina political debates in order to gain insights into the role of theology in contemporary political discourse in America.

In this dissertation, I will address how religion, and more specifically various Christian theologies, are relied on by clergy to rhetorically support different political positions as demonstrated in, but certainly not limited to, the North Carolina debates. In pursuit of that goal I will trace intersections of theological discourse and political action discourse in the case to discover whether there are patterns that cluster by various theological interpretations of religious and political material that make some rhetorical resources more likely to pair with them than with others. This dissertation will go beyond identifying the frequency of the use of religion, more specifically theology, as a resource by also identifying how specific theological logics participate in the overarching logical frameworks of selected political action texts. I will focus the study on the role of theology in contemporary Christian clergies' speeches to mobilize people for political action because clergy frequently rely upon theological emphases as rhetors who are respected, theologically trained, and expected by many to speak from their theological knowledge. This study will add depth and focus to ongoing scholarship on religion in public discourse by highlighting the rhetorical functions of theology in political discourse.

Rhetorical Studies on Religion in Public Discourse

While discussions about religion in public discourse often focus on the appropriate roles and boundaries of religion in public discourse, I will not make the claims of what I believe the boundaries should be in an abstract argument. Rather, by looking at the rhetoric of three prominent and politically active clergy, I will see how rhetors negotiate those boundaries in practice. I begin with the understanding that the presence and influence of religion and, as I will

go on to argue more specifically, theology in American public discourse is virtually undeniable (Lovin, 2012, p.88; Mathewes, 2012, p.113). This study, then, attempts to better understand how theology uses and is used by clergy in contemporary public discourse. Rhetoric inspired by religious and theological resources can be found in public discourse throughout the nation, albeit not always as prominently as currently seen in North Carolina. Sociologist Peter Berger's (1979) famous "secularization thesis," the belief that modern societies would inevitably be secular societies as religion faded away in the face of modernity, has been largely dismissed even by Berger (1999) himself (Cavanaugh, Baily, & Hovey, 2012, loc. 111; Grasso, 2012, loc. 115). Today, scholars generally acknowledge that religion continues to be vital in the modern world, in both our private and public lives (Grasso, 2012, loc. 112). Instead of fading away or being relegated to a private realm, modern religion, according to religion scholar Jose Casanova (2003), "has, assumes, or tries to assume a public character, function, or role" (p. 111). While in recent decades some scholars believed that religion would, or perhaps should, fade out of American public life, a growing number of scholars are recognizing that religion has never left American public discourse.

The public role of religion in American life can be seen in political rhetoric that explicitly draws on religious resources. The political power of White American Evangelicals offers a highly visible and well documented example of the significant influence that religion, and more specifically theology, has on public political discourse in the United States by elevating the prominence of religion in the discourse (Cavanaugh, Baily, & Hovey, 2012, loc. 104; Edwards, 2015, loc. 243). Contemporary American politicians, even those not claiming to be Evangelical, present various religious personae, some extremely devout, when engaging the electorate. Political commentators as diverse as the very conservative Glenn Beck and the very progressive

Cornel West highlight religious themes in their rhetoric. Contemporary political rhetoric that explicitly draws on religious resources can be recognized as a part of a long history of religion in American political discourse. The history of American public discourse is suffused with Christian themes and Biblical language. While the exact nature and roles of religion in the public square remains contested, significant voices in rhetorical scholarship have recognized that religion has played and continues to play a role in American public discourse.

Rhetorical scholars, regardless of their personal views on religion, should continue to grow in understanding the roles of religion and theology in public discourse because religion continues to be a significant part of contemporary public discourse. As the secularization thesis is no longer a prominent lens to view religion in public life, some prominent scholars have called for further study on religion in public discourse. For instance, Laurent Pernet (2006) justified his study on the intersection of rhetoric and religion in ancient Greece by noting that scholars increasingly acknowledge that religion continues to be present in the modern world. He urged the academic community to follow his lead and take the presence of religion in public life seriously because religion was growing in influence on public discourse, “This is why it is important— and perhaps why it is the duty of us academics and intellectuals—to find new ways of thinking about religion” (p. 236). In similar fashion, Craig Calhoun (2011), reflecting upon a panel of scholars discussing the power of religion in public discourse, called for further scholarly consideration of the powerful influence of religion in contemporary public discourse. Calhoun argued that while some scholars had predicted that religion would fade away, it has in fact remained a powerful force in American public discourse. Pernet (2006) and Calhoun (2011) justified their work on religion in public discourse by claiming there is a need for rhetorical scholarship on public discourse that employs religion because the secularization theory has

proven false and religion has maintained a prominent role in public discourse. Furthermore, they urged other rhetorical scholars to contribute to this line of study. This dissertation is one piece of my response to their calls for further study.

In addition to the general dismissal of Berger's secularization thesis, the renewed scholarly interest in the study of religion in public life can also trace its influence to Jürgen Habermas's change in posture toward religion in the public sphere. Habermas's theories on the public sphere are extremely influential in a number of fields, including rhetorical studies. One influential aspect of Habermas's early writings on the public sphere was that it virtually overlooked the role of religion in public life. However, in recent years, Habermas has affirmed that religion serves noteworthy roles in the public discourse (Edwards, 2015, loc. 491; Habermas, 2011, loc. 271; Mendieta & VanAntwerpen, 2011, loc. 36 & 45). He claimed he had not intentionally neglected religion in the past, but he later saw that not addressing religion in writing about the public was an important oversight (Habermas, 2011, loc. 284). Habermas now insists that any fair, accurate, and complete conception of a public must recognize the presence of religion (Habermas, 2010, pp. 37, 46, & 49). Habermas's clarification, or change, on the inclusion of religion in his conception of the public combined with the demise of the once prominent secularization thesis provides a renewed scholarly awareness of religion in public discourse.

Religion is a subject worthy of serious rhetorical study because it can teach us about both American public life and rhetoric. Calvin Troup (2009) claimed that religion must be part of any accurate understanding of the American public. He took the argument for the need to study religion in public discourse a step further, claiming that scholarly discussions of public discourse are incomplete if they neglect to acknowledge the role of religion. Troup reasoned that religion

should be considered in explorations of civic discourse because religious institutions actively develop social capital in their members and those religious citizens tend to be some of the more active participants in American civic life (p. 244). While Troup (2009) argued that overlooking religion leads to an insufficient understanding of American public life, Michael-John DePalma and Jeffrey Ringer (2015) argue that overlooking religion can also lead to an insufficient understanding of rhetoric. They liken a renewal of rhetorical studies of various religious discourses to maps that identify important geography that exists but has been forgotten. DePalma and Ringer (2015) contend that rhetorical studies of religious discourses will provide a better understanding or map, if you will, of the field of rhetoric because religious discourses are key elements of the broader public discourse (loc. 170).

Rhetorical scholars have produced some meaningful studies of religion and public discourse, particularly in studies of the role of religion in the rhetoric of past social movements. In his aforementioned argument for more scholarship on religion in public discourse, Craig Calhoun (2011) also claimed that the discourse of the great social movements of American history have drawn upon religious sources (loc. 1366). The American civil rights movement is one social movement recognized by scholars for its numerous political action texts that made frequent use of religious resources, including theology, genres, and sacred texts.

Davis Houck and David Dixon (2006) made a significant contribution to scholarship on religion and social movement rhetoric by taking the scholarly conversation beyond an acknowledgement of the presence of religious language within the political discourse of the American civil rights movement. They argued that the religious content and style that infused the political action rhetoric of the movement was a primary driving force of the entire American civil rights movement. Their extensive analysis of largely obscure civil rights speeches by little-

known activists convincingly demonstrates that religion played a central role in mobilizing people to political action for civil rights. Houck and Dixon claim that the risks and sacrifices undertaken by civil rights activists are best understood by recognizing the power of religiously-charged rhetoric in that important social movement (loc. 126). Their study presents the religious resources, not only as something present in the political discourse of the American civil rights movement, but as potentially powerful when used to advance the movement.

The resources offered by religion in political action discourse can be particularly powerful when utilized by a clergy member. One study of a political action text that reveals a clergy rhetor's use of religion as a crucial resource is Keith Miller's (2012) detailed analysis of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech. Miller argued, as did Houck and Dixon (2006), that religion was more than an accessory or surface element of King's political action rhetoric. His analysis revealed that King's theological, biblical, and religious training in seminary and as an active life-long church member infused every aspect of his political action rhetoric. Miller argued that King was meticulous and intentional about his religious appeals to his audiences, and he insisted that scholars most fully grasp King's rhetoric when they recognize the religion that molded the rhetoric (p. 20). One of the many important contributions of Miller's rhetorical studies of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is that his analysis went beyond the general concept of religion and began to identify specific theologies that served as resources to King's political action rhetoric. Miller's careful analysis of King's rhetoric revealed King's "system of interpreting the Bible" was the basis for his rhetorical approach to the social issues facing his audience (p. 21). I will refer to this system of interpreting the Bible as King's theology.

The functional definition of theology I use in this dissertation is discourse about God and God's interactions with the world that acts as interpretative systems. This definition reflects my study's focus on theology in action in life rather than formalized theology. Recognizing the breadth of this definition of theology, I will also identify three levels of theology that enhance the definition and will be noted in the dissertation. First, there are theological traditions that have emerged as human discourse about God and God's interactions in the world have found commonalities and built off of one another. These theological traditions will predate and may or may not influence the role of theology in the invention of a rhetorical text. Second, on the most specific level, individual rhetors describe God and God's interactions in the world in particular texts. The text may or may not be influenced by theological traditions. It will likely be influenced by the situation or need that has encouraged the rhetor to speak at that moment. The text can be analyzed using a variety of rhetorical methods, some of which may identify theology in the text. Third, and of primary concern in this dissertation, is a mediating level of theology between theological traditions and the rhetoric in a text. I will refer to this as "textual theology."

Textual theology is observable in but not limited to a specific text. It can be transferred to other texts as the interpretive lens or perspective for communicating and making sense of the world, including the situations encouraging the rhetorical invention of the texts. While textual theology is not the same as a specific text, there are traces of the textual theology present in the text. In this dissertation I will use rhetorical methods to pull patterns of textual theology out of a text in order to understand how the more abstract theology animates texts in the real world in ways that have implications that reach beyond the particular text because they tell us about a way of looking at the world and coaching people's actions and attitudes. Textual theologies mediate abstract beliefs about how God operates in the world and historical theological traditions for

immediate, real-world situations. Identifying textual theology also strengthens the rhetorical scholar's ability to predict a rhetor's future rhetoric.

Sharpening the Focus from Religion to Theology

This dissertation will contribute to rhetorical scholarship's discussions of religion in public discourse by demonstrating that identifying the activity of specific theological logics within a text's coherent overarching logical framework, rather than using the blanket term "religion" to describe theological appeals in political discourse, can provide a more in-depth understanding of rhetorical operations of theology in political action texts. One of the challenges of discussing the role of religion in public discourse is that the meaning of "religion" is quite slippery. The term "religion" itself is highly contested. Religion scholar William Cavanaugh (2009) has poignantly clarified this lack of a shared definition within the discipline of religious studies. Some scholars define religion by certain content or substance (Cavanaugh, 2009, p. 57). Other scholars define religion by its fulfillment of certain functions (Cavanaugh, 2009, p. 57). Still others insist that the very notion of religion is a rhetorical construct of the modern academy, the modern nation state, or another political entity (Cavanaugh, 2009, p. 59). In light of the ambiguity of the term "religion," including its origins, meanings, and uses, and in light of the various ways that religion is expressed in public, a growing number of religion scholars find it more fruitful to differentiate and focus on specific theologies in the study of religion in public life (Cavanaugh, Bailey & Hovey, 2012, loc.112).

I propose that rhetorical scholars would find it fruitful to explore this approach of focusing on specific theologies and how they function differently as interpretive lenses that shape and fund understanding and advocacy rather than religion in general when addressing the

role of religion in public discourse. While the term “religion” is broad and its meaning disputed so that it can be near impossible to define and use for analysis, theology provides scholars with more clear definition and boundaries for study. Cavanaugh and Scott (2004) defined theology as “discourse about God, and human persons as they relate to God” (p. 64). As stated in the previous section I have added the three levels of theology to this general definition. My dissertation will recognize the presence of theological traditions, while analyzing specific texts with theologically-inspired rhetoric, with the goal of identifying the textual theology that serves as a guiding logic of the specific text in study.

This definition provides greater precision than merely discussing religion because it deals with one particular aspect of religion in theology and it recognizes theology’s rhetorical complexity. For instance, a religion generally includes theology, history, community, and practice. A theological tradition can be identified as a formal systematic discourse about God or a more general pattern of discourses about God that are found in, identify, and generate a theological tradition. Theology can also be identified in a specific text, such as a political action speech. Textual theology is theology that participates and is manifested in a text’s logical framework. In addition to providing greater focus for study than the wide scope of religion, theology can provide rhetorical scholars with insights into an internally consistent logic about the relationship between humans and the divine that can be witnessed in and reconstructed from texts that are not explicitly about formal tenets of theology and that inform and motivate particular kinds of appeals that are not as available in other interpretive logics.

I recognize that the term theology may carry various meanings for readers, even as I have provided some explanation of how I will use the term in this dissertation. Theology can be formal as seen in theological statements of religious communities. Theology can be academic

and systematic. Theology can be identified as connected series, or tradition, of discourses about about God. Theology can also be informal, practical, and popular. Humans likely have thoughts about the Divine and the Divine's interactions with the world without knowingly adhering to any particular formal theological statement. People likely have logic systems for and including their thoughts and discourses about God even if they have not approached theology in a systematic manner or self-identify with a theological tradition. In the informal sense then, all humans who use symbols to think or speak about the God practice theology.

This paper will address an even more dynamic aspect of theology. My study recognizes theological traditions and the theology that emerges in a clergy rhetor's political action text. My study focuses on textual theology, the rhetorical practice of theology that emerges in a rhetor's invention of a text and serves in the text's interpretive framework. I understand textual theology to be observable through a close study of a text and the text's logical framework. I understand the rhetorical practice of theology as a dynamic interaction with logic and other rhetorics within a text. In this dynamic relationship, theology, rhetoric, and logic inform, constrain, and animate one another creating an overarching logical framework in the text. My study will explore how various theological logics animate and constrain the logical framework of how a situation is seen and how a situation may be responded to in a text. The reaction to a situation will fall within the interpretation of the text's overarching logical framework in which the textual theology participates.

Having narrowed the focus of study from religion to theology, this dissertation will further narrow its focus by examining political action speeches of clergy from different Christian theological traditions. This approach will likely provide both similarities and differences in the textual theologies, based on my assumption that different discourses about God and God's

interactions with the world will provide divergent constraints and animations as they participate in the interpretive logic of political action texts. There are, of course, different religions and these different religions have disparate theologies. It is also true that there are diverging theological traditions within what is frequently understood as the same religion, in this case, Christianity. Rather than simply recognizing that religion has an impact on public discourse, this study begins with an understanding that there are various theologies at work within public discourse as interpretive frames for rhetors and auditors and that all theologies may not afford the same rhetorical resources. I propose that identifying the diversity of theologies present in public discourse provides opportunities for a more nuanced analysis and understanding of the dynamics of the particular public artifact being studied.

The focus of this dissertation is further narrowed by exclusively exploring Christian theologies, and more precisely, a small sample of the Christian theological traditions animating clergy rhetoric in the North Carolina case study within a particular period of time. This choice is not intended to argue for the exclusivity or superiority of the selected theologies. The primary theologies shaping the interpretations of and appealed to by the clergy as they sought to forge identification with others in my case study of the contemporary political debates in North Carolina all happen to be Christian theologies. My selection of a few Christian theologies thus offers a representative, though certainly not comprehensive, treatment of the situation. Narrowing the focus of the study to the few Christian theologies in play allows me to demonstrate the depth and diversity of resources available within the narrowed scope of Christian theology. I am not able to do an in-depth analysis of the application of all of the discourses that textual analysis could reveal as animated by a theology found within various world religions, or even within Christianity, in a single dissertation. However, this study will

demonstrate that within Christian theologies, and more specifically the few Christian theologies represented in the political action texts analyzed in this study, there exists a wealth of diversity and complexity. This complexity will be made visible in part because I have chosen to focus on a few specific examples. I propose that if this depth and diversity is available in the few theologies addressed in this dissertation, then future studies of the rhetorical resources of a wider range of theologies will reveal even greater depth and diversity. This study will provide a focused basis for such examinations.

Rhetorical Studies on Theology in Public Discourse

While my focus on theologies as rhetorical resources will expand a limited emphasis in rhetorical studies that observe religion in political discourse, it is not entirely foreign to the field of rhetorical studies. Some rhetorical scholars have gone beyond the discussions of general “religion” in public discourse and have identified positive and negative contributions that certain theologies provide for overall public discourse. They have, in different ways and to various degrees, suggested or implied that particular theologies offer distinct contributions to conceptions and practices of public discourse. These individual projects made contributions to rhetorical understandings of public discourse, and for this dissertation it is notable that taken together they demonstrate that different theologies can make unique contributions to public discourse.

I understand James Darsey’s (1997) book on prophetic rhetoric to suggest that theology can play a role in the logic and expression of public discourse. Darsey’s influential work argued that the prophetic tradition is a type of public discourse that must be understood on its own terms. He argued that the philosophical roots and practices of the prophetic tradition open space

for a public rhetoric that differs significantly from the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition (loc. 210). I propose that this claim is also true of the theological roots of prophetic rhetoric. While I am not aware of other rhetorical scholars who have explored Darsey's admittedly limited focus on theology, he did make some claims about the impact of theology on prophetic rhetoric. Darsey traced the origins of prophetic discourse to what he called a "prophetic theology" that recognized God in a cause and effect relationship with the here and now of the rhetor's world (loc. 2474). Theology was not a major emphasis for Darsey as he traced the development of the prophetic rhetoric, but he did recognize that changes in theology influenced changes in how prophetic rhetoric was expressed (loc. 2518, 2894, & 2997). While not a major theme in his work, Darsey's book on prophetic rhetoric recognized that changes and differences in theologies have an influence on public rhetoric.

I also understand the article "Augustinian Political Theory and Religious Discourse in Public Life" by David Tell (2007) as making a subtle but important distinction between general religious influence upon a public rhetoric and the resources that a specific theology can provide for religious and public discourse. Tell made a significant contribution to the debates about the role of religion in public discourse and, in doing so, also demonstrated the importance of distinguishing between general religion and a specific theology. Tell argued that elements of Augustinian theology could provide a third way in the debates about the role of religion in public discourse. While debates about the role of religion in public discourse in a pluralistic democratic society often pit a side calling for freedom of religion in public against a side calling for freedom from religion in public, Tell (2007) argued that Augustinian theology provided a way to understand possible roles of religion in public discourse that neither exclude religion nor discard democratic principles (p. 215). While providing a possible resolution to gridlocked debates on

the role of religion in public discourse, Tell also demonstrated implicitly that religion, as commonly understood, is not the same as theology. Religion was a broad category that was commonly put in conflict with secular values of democratic public discourse. Tell's proposal for the gridlock between religion and democratic discourse was not simply choosing one or the other. Instead, Tell consulted a theology that has historically influenced certain conceptions of religion and discourse, and the theology provided "the resources" (p. 221) to understand religion in a pluralistic state. There are many theologies within various religions, and within Christianity, that would not allow for Tell's approach to reconciling religious and democratic discourse. Tell did not emphasize the distinction between religion and theology, but I propose that his central argument was dependent upon that distinction.

In a study more clearly advocating the rhetorical resources found within a specific theology, Mark Steiner (2009) proposed that several aspects of Evangelical theology could contribute to a more productive public discourse in contemporary America. Steiner argued that despite its negative reputation and unfortunate misuses to stifle public life, Evangelical theology has the potential to make positive contributions toward a robust, productive, and civil public discourse. It is important to note for this study that Steiner (2009) specifically noted that it is their theology that "equips" Evangelicals to contribute a positive model of public discourse (p. 291). He built his case by connecting the work of key Evangelical theologians and theologies to positive postures and practices of public discourse. For instance, Steiner traced an Evangelical theology of the nature of humans to postures that he identifies as helpful for public discourse. Evangelical theology claims that humans both have great dignity and value and are marred by sin (p. 295). Steiner then traced this theology to an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of human symbol use (p. 296). Finally, Steiner continued working out this theology to the need

for modesty in truth claims (p. 302) and the importance of building trust through discourse (p. 310). This is a model of identifying complexities within a theology to reveal how that theology might serve as a resource for public discourse.

Steiner's (2009) article offers a counter-position to Sharon Crowley's (2006) book, *Toward a Civil Discourse*, which was written with concern about the negative impact that Evangelicals are having on American public discourse. Crowley claimed that principles of American liberal democratic discourse are at risk due to the rise of a restrictive and controlling public discourse that she attributes to an Evangelical "apocalypticist theology" (pp. 2, 9, & 115). While Crowley frequently over-generalized her claims about religion, Christianity, and Evangelicalism, perhaps betraying a lack of understanding of the vast array of theological diversity within religious, Christian, and Evangelical communities, she did occasionally clarify that her concern was with a specific theological system and the negative impact that she traced from that theology to a worldview with an arrogant, hateful, and controlling influence on American public discourse. Crowley (2006) sought ways to effectively engage with the "theology-driven fundamentalists" (p. 17) whom she described as opposed to liberal democracy. Crowley reasoned that the combination of two theological positions, God's propositions are clearly and perfectly revealed in the bible and true Christians are to have dominion over all earthly institutions, results in an unwillingness to dialogue or compromise with people of other convictions, thus weakening the very possibility of democratic discourse (pp. 117 & 144).

One could simply view Steiner's (2009) and Crowley's (2006) writings to be saying opposite things about Evangelical theology and public discourse. An ungracious reading could assume that they are simply twisting their analysis to support their predetermined argument for or against American Evangelicals. However, a closer look shows that they are actually writing

about two different theologies that can be found within the vast American Evangelical tradition. Evangelicalism is often described as a single religious tradition, but there are a number of distinct theologies within Evangelicalism. One of the hallmarks of the Neo-evangelical movement of the middle twentieth century is that it crossed several historic theological divisions (Marsden, 1991). Steiner's research and Crowley's research on the impact of Evangelical theology upon American public discourse end in radically different places, as different as hope and despair, because they were exploring different Evangelical theological systems. This clarification of the reason for some of the differences between Steiner's and Crowley's assessments of American Evangelicalism in public discourse suggests that particular theology is extremely important when assessing the role of religious influence in public discourse.

One of the clearest statements of the importance of theology in political rhetoric comes from Jason Moyer's 2011 dissertation on the role of theology in presidential rhetoric. Moyer's work is helpful for my project because it recognizes that the differences in theologies can provide us with insights into a text beyond understanding it to be influenced by religion. His dissertation recognizes that a theology will have an influence upon a rhetor and his or her rhetoric (Moyer, 2011, p. 4). Moyer also acknowledges that the theology of an audience can also have an impact upon their receptivity to the use of theology in a political discourse (p. 5).

There are two particular areas of Moyer's (2011) study that I would like to build upon. First, while mentioning a number of distinct theologies in his dissertation, Moyer maintains extremely general categories for theologies in his analysis, distinguishing between liberal theologies and conservative theologies (p. 190). I propose that theologies are far more complex than what can be divided into these two broad categories. Theologies address a number of issues and a number of positions can be taken within each issue. Thus, while theologies may each have

an internal dynamic or logic, they contain a complex and somewhat fluid combination of positions and issues that go beyond the categories of liberal and conservative. I would like to more deeply explore the differences of theologies and the potential implications of those differences upon political rhetoric. Second, I would like to change the focus of type of rhetor in my study. Moyer's (2011) dissertation is on the role of theology in the rhetoric of three United States presidents. I would like to study the role of theology in clergy political action rhetoric. I suspect that the use of theology, and the expectations for theology, may be more pronounced in the political action rhetoric of clergy rhetors than of presidents, providing more clarity in texts to better observe the relationships among rhetoric, theology, and politics.

The review of recent rhetorical scholarship on the role of religion in public discourse provides several important insights into the topic. There is renewed scholarly recognition and interest in American public discourse that is animated by religious influences, particularly because religion continues to play a significant role in public and political discourse. Language that is animated by religion has been a significant resource in political discourse in America, as demonstrated in rhetorical studies of clergy rhetoric in the civil rights movement. Beyond general discussions of religion, identifying particular theologies can provide depth and distinctions when considering how religion might serve as a resource within public discourse. This dissertation will advance understanding of religion in public discourse by revealing the important complexity and abundance of rhetorical resources found in theology.

The Significance of Theology in Clergy Political Rhetoric in Public Discourse

As shown above, rhetorical scholars, most clearly Calhoun and Pernot, have recognized the importance of and called for further study of the role of religion in public discourse. This

study will contribute to these discussions on this topic in two significant ways. First, it further examines the rhetorical resources in certain theologies as they are actively engaged in specific political action texts. Second, it highlights the role of clergy rhetoric in the exercise of theologies into contemporary political discourse. Clergy are theologically trained rhetors who are presumed by many audiences to speak informed by theological frameworks and traditions. This unique role has yet to be highlighted in contemporary, post-civil rights movement political action rhetoric.

This study will investigate the extent of which there is a recognizable relationship between specific theologies and patterns of rhetorical moves within a clergy rhetor's political action discourse. This study seeks to deepen and show more precisely the range of ways that "religion" has a powerful role in public discourse. I will explore how different rhetorical possibilities for political discourse may be privileged by various theologies by comparing the use of particular theologies in divergent political action texts within a common public controversy. This study will enhance our understanding of the intersection of rhetoric, theology, and politics by demonstrating that there is not simply one way that religion functions in political rhetoric, but a variety of ways flowing, in part, from the constraints and animation from various theological logics.

This study will also provide insights into how clergy engage theology in contemporary American public discourse. Clergy are theologically informed rhetors: their authority, particularly with religious audiences, is connected to their theological understanding. Audiences generally expect clergy to speak from their theology, even when they speak to political issues. Although clergy serve as key rhetors in bringing theological beliefs into public discourse, there has not been significant study of the role of theology in the political action rhetoric of clergy in social movements after the American civil rights movement.

As clergy from Christian theological traditions, the rhetors in this dissertation share a common theological inspiration on the importance of the act of speaking according to the will of God. This is relevant to the study as all three clergy rhetors claim to speak God's will in their political action speeches. The clergy rhetor's theological traditions share a foundational narrative of a God who creates by speaking worlds into existence and who also enables humans to participate in the ongoing work of creation through the act of speaking according to God's will (Soskice, 2016; Wright, 2013). The three clergy rhetors in this dissertation are a part of theological traditions that claim that through the performative act of speaking according to God's will - however that may be understood in the given tradition - human rhetors participate in nothing short of God's creation of new worlds - however that may be understood in the rhetor's specific theological tradition.

This dissertation investigates some ways that theology engages logic and other rhetorics in the terministic screens of contemporary American clergy political action rhetoric. This thesis also suggests that theology is a resource for scholars seeking to understand the role of religion in political discourse. Scholars exploring political action texts by clergy rhetors will benefit from understanding that different theologies might offer different kinds of rhetorical resources and patterns. Scholars can better understand a Reformed Evangelical political rhetoric by understanding Reformed Evangelical theology or better understand a Catholic Liberation political rhetoric by understanding Catholic Liberation theology. This dissertation explores how clergy appeals to certain Christian theologies, understood as discourses that serve as interpretive frames for understanding God and God's ways in the world, might play a larger role in our understanding of contemporary public discourse in America.

Guiding Research Questions

I will advance an understanding of the rhetorical roles of theology in contemporary political discourse through the pursuit of my primary research question; how might the political action rhetoric of contemporary American clergy rely on resources in various Christian theologies? This question will guide me to analyze contemporary political action texts by clergy, not as a theologian, pastor, or political analyst, but as a rhetorical scholar seeking insights into the rhetorical functions of religion, and more specifically Christian theology, in one contemporary controversy. The question identifies the possibility that different theologies may engage a text with different rhetorical resources, but resists the trap of being reductionist or deterministic in explaining the interactions between the theology, other rhetorics, and the text's logical framework. The question focuses on dynamic functions of theology in a text.

The question also narrows the focus of the study to contemporary clergy as rhetors of political action texts. This is an important distinction given the numerous types of rhetors exercising theologically animated rhetoric in public discourse. Additionally, focusing on one type of rhetor will make the study more manageable. Observing contemporary clergy political action rhetoric also helps sharpen my focus on the role of theology in political discourse because clergy are recognized, at least within religious communities, as theologically trained rhetors.

There are three secondary research questions that will contribute to answering my primary research question.

1. How might a clergy member's rhetoric negotiate, stretch, and appeal to a theology?
2. How might a clergy member's rhetorical options be constrained by consistency with a particular theology?

3. How might different theologies provide or favor different rhetorical resources and patterns?

These questions provide pathways and focus for answering the dissertation's primary research question. The questions also point to some of the ways that contemporary clergy might utilize resources in a theology in their political action rhetoric. The questions leave room for a dynamic relationship between rhetor, resource, and rhetoric, or stated more specifically in this case, the clergy, theology, and political action speech.

Seeking Answers in North Carolina

This study will seek to answer my questions about theology in clergy political action rhetoric by looking at clergy political action texts in the contemporary political debates in North Carolina. I will choose texts from clergy who, to the best of my understanding, are from different theological traditions, being attentive to the ways in which the differently trained clergy's rhetoric might draw on theology. I will attempt to reduce some variables contributing to rhetorical differences by analyzing texts from Christian clergy members from the same state speaking on similar issues in approximately the same time frame. This dissertation will analyze political action texts of clergy from different theological traditions who participate in a common public discourse.

The current political movements in North Carolina provide an opportunity to study political action texts of clergy from different theological traditions participating in a vibrant public discourse. North Carolina's clergy have been exceptionally active in the state's recent social and political controversies. This provides a variety of theologically oriented political action texts to study. There have been clergy on all sides of these political debates. More

importantly for this study, the political action texts from clergy in North Carolina demonstrate diverse theological traditions and rhetorical approaches within a large public discourse.

North Carolina's current political debates include a robust use of theologies and religious styles. For instance, clergy in the Moral Monday movement use appeals based on religion and morality in ways that have not been seen in a broad progressive movement since the American civil rights movement. This has left the role of religion, and more specifically theology, in public policy and public debate largely contested with various theological and political groups. This dynamic situation provides the kinds of texts needed to pursue my guiding research questions. The current North Carolina political debates provide clergy political action texts that not only reflect different political positions, but also reflect different theological traditions and different rhetorical approaches engaging each other at a unique moment in time.

I have identified three Christian clergy whose political action rhetoric may serve as key texts for this study: (1) Rev. Dr. William Barber, President of the North Carolina NAACP; (2) Rev. Mark Creech, Executive Director of the Christian Action League; and (3) The Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Raleigh. This collection of North Carolina clergy meets the criteria of this study because they represent different theological traditions, exhibit both similarities and differences in rhetorical styles, are contemporaries speaking in a common politically contentious public controversy, and illuminate a type of rhetoric that reflects elements of theology that support their various political positions.

While public theological discourse is more blatant in North Carolina than in many other locations, this study will produce insights that are relevant beyond the so-called "bible belt." This focused swath of contemporary public discourse in North Carolina, more specifically some political action texts of several contemporary clergy in North Carolina, will provide a richness of

insights that would only be multiplied were the scope later expanded beyond this specific place and time, beyond these particular clergy and their Christian theologies. The clergy members' reliance on theology to support their political action rhetoric exists in other locations, even though it might have different expressions - possibly not as blatant - than it does in North Carolina. North Carolina provides us with an opportunity to study clear examples of practices that are often subtler in other contexts.

Outline of Study

This chapter has served as an introduction to my dissertation. I have introduced the contentious public discourse in North Carolina and the prominence of clergy and theology in that public debate. I have surveyed some of the leading rhetorical scholarship on religion and theology in public and political discourse in America and explained how my research can advance the scholarly conversation by highlighting the role of clergy as political rhetors as well as the rhetorical resources provided by theology in political discourse. I have introduced the primary and secondary research questions that will guide my study and foster the significant insights I am seeking. Finally, I revisited the setting of the contemporary public debates in North Carolina, showing how that is an ideal context in which to pursue my research questions.

In the next chapter I will discuss the research design of my project. This will include descriptions and justifications of the primary texts that I have chosen to analyze. I will further justify the significance of the context for understanding the texts and answering my research questions. Finally, I will explain and justify the critical lens that I have chosen for this project.

Chapter three explores the rhetoric of Rev. Dr. William Barber. Barber is a pastor, president of the North Carolina NAACP, and the primary leader of the movement popularly called Moral Monday. While there are many clergy giving political action speeches in the contemporary North Carolina political action discourse, Barber's emotionally rousing, boldly religious, and generally successful rhetoric in support of a politically progressive movement has intensified and complexified the use of theology in the state's public discourse. Barber regularly appeals to the prophetic tradition frequently found in the historic Black church.

In chapter four I turn my analysis to the political action texts of Rev. Mark Creech, the Executive Director of the Christian Action League. As mentioned earlier, Rev. Creech is often on the opposite side of political issues from Barber, and his rhetoric is often just as impassioned. Creech appeals to both apocalyptic and reformed theology in his rhetoric. While these theologies are not entirely consistent, they are two of the more prominent theologies in White Evangelicalism.

Chapter five analyzes texts from the Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh. Interestingly, the Catholic Church is listed as a supporter of both Barber's Moral Monday movement and Creech's Christian Action League, and at times the Bishop affirms certain policy positions of each organization. Burbidge appeals to Catholic theology and social teaching when addressing political issues.

Finally, in chapter six of this dissertation I will explore the possible role of theology as both a motivating force and rhetorical resource in each of the terministic screens identified in the study of clergy political action texts in chapters three, four, and

five. I will compare and contrast the three terministic screens explaining how the symbol clusters of each screen form an interactive and coherent logic that yields different meanings and appeals and recommendations even if many of the same elements appear in each of the screens. I will demonstrate how the common elements can interact in different ways and are prioritized differently in the various terministic screens. Finally, having discussed the potential significance that theology can have in a text, I will call for rhetorical scholars to give greater attention to the contributions of theological logics on the interpretive logical frameworks of texts they participate in.

Chapter 2: Theory, Method, and Texts

Introduction

In chapter one of this dissertation I introduced the research questions guiding my study. My primary research question is, how might the political action rhetoric of contemporary American clergy rely on resources in various Christian theologies? I also have three secondary research questions that will contribute to answering my primary research question. First, how might a clergy member's rhetoric negotiate, stretch, and appeal to a theology? Second, how might a clergy member's rhetorical options be constrained by consistency within a particular theology? Finally, how might different theologies provide or favor different rhetorical resources and patterns?

These questions should be of interest to rhetorical scholars because, contrary to the predictions of an inevitable future of non-religious public square, religion continues to be a significant part of contemporary public discourse in America. My research questions sharpen the focus of scholarship about rhetoric and religion by specifically addressing the role of theology at work in the political action rhetoric of American clergy. Overlooking the role of theology, both theological traditions and the manifestation of theology in rhetorical texts can lead scholars to an insufficient understanding of contemporary American public life and the subtle yet powerful rhetorical resources that rarely call direct attention to themselves. Neglecting to be aware of the role of theology can also lead to an insufficient understanding of rhetoric, because theology has been a prominent and longstanding dance partner with both human persuasion and constitution of communities.

In the previous chapter I presented a contemporary setting and highlighted rhetors that will provide adequate rhetorical texts for study in pursuit of my research questions. First, I argued that the current public political debates in North Carolina provided an abundance of political action texts by clergy, texts with clear theological language and arguments, and thus an ideal setting for exploring my research questions. Then I argued that Rev. William Barber, Rev. Mark Creech, and Bishop Michael Burbidge are three prominent politically active clergy rhetors in North Carolina who offer rhetorical texts that inform my investigation of the research questions because they display different political positions, theological traditions, and rhetorical styles while involved in a contemporary political struggle within a common state.

In this chapter I will describe how I intend to answer my research questions, explaining what I will study and how I will study it. First, I will identify and justify the texts I have chosen to analyze, arguing that my primary texts will provide representative insights for larger bodies of rhetorical texts. Then, I will build the critical lens through which I will view the texts, outlining the rhetorical theories and methods that I have chosen to guide my approach to the texts. Finally, I will justify why these theories and methods are the most appropriate and sufficient to successfully find answers for my research questions.

Selected Texts

While I suspect that theology may play an active role in American political rhetoric in a number of ways, I have narrowed down my pool of political action texts through my specific research questions. The focus on clergy as rhetors, the context of a common time and place, and clergy from different theological traditions should offer comparisons among some of the roles that theology can play in political action rhetoric. First, my research questions narrow the focus

of my study to contemporary clergy as rhetors of political action texts. Focusing on contemporary clergy political action rhetoric helps sharpen my focus on the role of theology in political discourse because clergy are recognized, at least within religious communities, as theologically trained rhetors. Second, I have chosen to seek answers for my research questions by analyzing contemporary political action texts by clergy in a common public context. The setting of a common public context provides some cohesion and interaction between the texts, even if they are not addressing exactly the same issues. Third, I have chosen to study political action texts by clergy of different theological traditions. While there is some ambiguity and diversity of belief within theological traditions, there is also some substance and form which holds a recognizable theological tradition together. By analyzing political action texts of clergy from different theological traditions, I hope to better understand the ways that the particularities and rhetorical resources of certain theological emphases may animate the clergy rhetor's political action texts.

As stated in the previous chapter, the contemporary political debates in North Carolina provide a wealth of political action texts by clergy from different traditions. Rev. Dr. William Barber, Rev. Mark Creech, and Bishop Burbidge are clergy from different theological traditions: historic Black church, conservative white evangelical, and Roman Catholic, respectively, who have in common that they are active in current political debates in North Carolina. I have chosen these individual clergy members because they provide a variety of political action texts and the use and influence of theology can be identified in their texts. The political action texts of these three clergy members demonstrate differences in political positions, theology, and rhetorical approaches. The specific texts I have chosen from each of these clergy rhetors help me answer how the political action rhetoric of contemporary American clergy might rely on resources in

various Christian theologies, as these are texts by clergy members who include theology in their calls to audiences to take political action on social issues.

Representative Anecdote

Having chosen to focus on three clergy rhetors for this study, I will now narrow down the specific texts I plan to study from each. I am, of course, not able to provide an analysis of every political action text from each of the clergy members in a single study. My study requires selections of political action texts and selections require necessary exclusions of other political action texts. My goal for my choice of texts is that I adequately represent the larger body of political action rhetoric for each of the selected clergy members between 2010 and 2015. I seek a collection of texts that can serve as an appropriate summary of the clergy's political action rhetoric of that selected time period.

I have chosen political action texts that serve as representative anecdotes of the clergy member's larger work of political action texts. I used the theory and method of the representative anecdote to select the texts. In this section I will justify my choice of method and therefore justify my texts as I explain how they are selected using that method. First, I will briefly describe the theory and method of the representative anecdote. Then, I will establish the criteria that a text will need to meet in order to be considered a representative anecdote for the clergy's political action text in that given timeframe. Finally, I will explain how my selected texts of study meet the established criteria for representative anecdotes and are therefore appropriate texts to analyze to answer my research questions.

The concept of a representative anecdote in rhetorical theory can be seen in Kenneth Burke's (1969a) discussion of human selection of vocabularies and symbolic paradigms. Burke claimed that any vocabulary was a selection of reality, and thereby a deflection of reality by

humans attempting to make a reflection of reality (p. 59). The selection of vocabulary to reflect reality by very nature also reduces what is being reflected. The reduction, however, does not make the vocabulary inadequate in symbolically capturing reality. On the contrary, an adequate vocabulary will have the scope to reflect reality in spite of its reduction. Burke argued, “the anecdote, is in a sense a summation, containing implicitly what the system that is developed from it contains explicitly” (p. 60). Burke had two criteria for the representative anecdote. First, it “must be supple and complex enough to be representative of the subject matter it is designed to calculate” (p. 60). Second, it must pose “simplicity in that it is broadly a reduction of the subject matter” (p. 60). Burke then noted that the theory of representative anecdote is not limited to developing, selecting, and identifying vocabularies, but the principle could be applied to other areas. He moved beyond human vocabularies to display another level of representative anecdotes exist in what might be called paradigms through which we view the world (p. 61).

Burke’s theory of the representative anecdote has emerged into a method of discourse selection in some schools of rhetorical scholarship. Barry Brummett (1984) claimed that the representative anecdote was a method to be used by the rhetorical critic in order to identify anecdotes that represent a larger text or discourse. While I understand Burke’s writing about representative anecdotes being primarily about the nature of symbols to select, deflect, and reflect human reality and how those symbols build and combine with other symbols into larger systems of representation, I view the use of representative anecdote theory to identify critical texts as a useful application of the theory. I propose that rhetorical scholars can take the theory of representative anecdote and utilize the theory outside of the manner that Burke appeared to use it. In such cases the substance of the theory of representative anecdote is the same even if the function is changed.

Before I demonstrate how my selected texts are representative anecdotes of each clergy member's political action rhetoric between 2010 and 2015, I will establish the criteria for what constitutes a representative anecdote of a clergy member's political action rhetoric. In doing so I keep in mind Burke's (1969a) criteria that the anecdote needs to be supple and complex enough to be representative of the subject and the representative anecdote needs to be simple enough to constitute a reduction of the subject. I will narrow the criteria for a representative anecdote for the clergy member's political action texts in the given years to three elements that are relevant for my research questions. First, I look for the text to reflect some of the rhetorical approaches frequently used by the clergy member. Second, the text should exhibit the theological claims and base of reasoning that the clergy member often uses in his political action texts. Finally, in order to be considered a representative anecdote, the text should address social topics and advocate political positions that the clergy member has regularly addressed in this period of time.

While there a number of ways a text could serve as a representative anecdote of a larger body of texts, the three criteria I have selected for identifying a text as a representative anecdote for each of my selected North Carolina clergy rhetors meet Burke's criteria for a representative anecdote and help to identify texts that may answer my research questions. The criteria (1) help to identify texts that are summaries of each clergy's larger body of political action rhetoric; (2) help narrow the range of texts while maintaining a scope that is broad enough to represent a larger body of their individual rhetoric; (3) prevent the selection of any texts that may be a deviation for the rhetor's norm; (4) prevent selection of any texts that may be off topic to this study; (5) highlight aspects of the larger body of texts that I seek to address in my research questions - the interactive relationship between theology, politics, and rhetoric.

Barber's "Higher Ground"

The study will begin with a close textual analysis of the political action rhetoric of Rev. Dr. William Barber. As discussed in the first chapter, Barber is a pastor who has played a significant role in uniting and mobilizing a diverse, politically progressive coalition in North Carolina into what has become known as the Moral Monday movement. Of particular interest to this study is that Barber has built and mobilized this coalition using political action rhetoric that regularly makes clear theological claims and references. I will conduct an in-depth rhetorical analysis of his speech "Higher Ground." Barber gave this rousing speech on February 8, 2014, to approximately 80,000 people at a rally following the annual Moral March on Raleigh. This speech is representative of Barber's political action texts in its rhetorical approach, theological references, and political positions.

In the February 8, 2014 speech "Higher Ground," Rev. Dr. Barber demonstrated rhetorical approaches common in his other political action texts. Barber claimed to root the content and spirit of his message in both the Bible and constitution, invoking these sources as valued by the audience and as sources of authority. Barber also made connections between his message and stories of the American civil rights movement and the Hebrew prophets. Barber claimed that he and the audience were part of the same story as those earlier historical movements. In this speech, Barber framed the moment as a part of a larger cosmic struggle between good and evil, moral and immoral, and justice and injustice. Barber described their situation as a story of powerful and wealthy "extremists" attacking the common people of the state and eroding the state's historical and moral foundations.

The speech is also an appropriate choice for this study as it is representative of Barber's use of theology in his political action texts. Barber referenced scriptures, religious traditions, and

religious experience throughout the speech. In this speech Barber claimed he had a divine message and spoke with an authority from God. He spoke passionately for justice for the poor and confronted unjust powers for their wrongdoing, as these are matters of divine concern. In contrast to his confrontation of wrongdoing, Barber also presented the hope of a preferred future that he, the audience, and God will bring into being, a better future for the poor and oppressed, for those in power who turn away from their wrongdoing, and for those who work toward that just future.

William Barber's 2014 speech "Higher Ground" can also serve as a representative anecdote of his political action texts because it summarizes the political positions he frequently addresses. In this speech following the largest demonstration to date by his progressive Moral Monday movement, Barber explained the foundations of the Moral Monday movement. Barber made emotional and intellectual appeals as he identified the overarching political and social themes of the movement, repeatedly circling back to the point that people are called to choose the moral high ground in public life.

Creech's Marriage Amendment Rally Keynote Address

Rev. Mark Creech is an ordained Baptist pastor and the Executive Director of the Christian Action League, a statewide coalition of conservative evangelical and fundamentalist churches in North Carolina that is also affiliated with national conservative social organizations. While I will refer to a number of Creech's comments in my study in order to show the role of theology in his rhetorical approach to politics, my primary text for analysis is a speech that Rev. Creech delivered at a rally to generate support for Amendment One, an amendment to the North Carolina Constitution to define marriage as a union between one man and one woman. Creech

delivered this speech as the keynote speaker at the April 30, 2012 Marriage Amendment Rally at Poovey's Chapel Baptist Church in Hudson, North Carolina.

This speech followed Creech's common rhetorical approaches. Creech regularly claimed the clarity and the authority of the Bible on a wide variety of contemporary and social issues in his political action texts. In my selected text, Creech spoke of the absolute clarity of the Bible on issues around same-sex marriage and on the role of Christians in addressing those issues through the government. Creech regularly framed the debates about political policy in the United States as part of a larger spiritual war between the forces of good and evil. For Creech, America was something great, even holy, but it was under attack by evil powers and was at risk of being lost. Creech's claims of clarity of the Bible on issues and his framing of issues as spiritual battles place him in a position that severely restricts room for compromise or dialogue. In this speech, and many other of his political action texts, Creech presents the options as either victory of his side or the utter despair of a state or nation being oppressed by evil.

Mark Creech's keynote speech at the April 30, 2012 marriage amendment rally can also serve as a representative anecdote for Creech's political action texts of that era in his use of theology. As noted in the paragraph on his rhetorical approach, Rev. Creech regularly claimed that his positions are clearly explained in the scriptures. He frequently defined the scriptures as the shared and highest authority for himself and his audience. In this and other political action texts, Creech passionately pleaded for his audience to both follow the teachings of the scriptures and to have scripture be established as the law of the state. He regularly argued for and from a theology that views compliance to the scriptures as the only way to have social stability and prosperity and claimed that social decay and destruction follow when governments violate the

teachings of scripture. Creech claimed that a crucial part of being a Christian is working to have the government follow the teachings of the Bible.

My third criterion for a text to be considered a representative anecdote for a clergy member's larger body of political action texts is that it is representative of the rhetor's political positions taken in that specific time period. While this speech is primarily about one specific piece of legislation and Creech addresses a number of social and political issues, I propose that it is representative for two reasons. First, the speech passionately urges the audience of conservative Christians to vote for what at the time was considered to be a conservative political position that was up for a vote into state law in a week. Second, this was a piece of legislation that Creech had spent more than ten years advancing (Three anti-gay groups). Of all of the political battles Creech had engaged between 2010 and 2015, his fight against same sex marriage may have been the most pronounced, meaning - among other things - that this speech can serve as a representative anecdote of Creech's political action texts.

Burbidge's Statement on Comprehensive Immigration Reform

As the leader and official voice of more than half of the Catholics in North Carolina, Bishop Burbidge is certainly a prominent and influential clergy on matters of theology. Bishop Burbidge's choice to form *Catholic Voice NC* as a way to mobilize North Carolina Catholics to take political action on legislation in light of Catholic social teachings is a sign that the Bishop embraced the opportunity to also wield political influence in the state. I have chosen to analyze a brief speech given by Bishop Burbidge in support of comprehensive immigration reform on Sunday, September 8, 2013, at Saint Mary Basilica Shrine in Wilmington, North Carolina as my primary text of my case study on his political action rhetoric. The speech is significant for this

study because it can serve as a representative anecdote of the Bishop's other political action texts.

In this particular statement in support of comprehensive immigration reform, Bishop Burbidge displayed some rhetorical approaches that are common in his political action texts. First, his delivery tone was calm and conversational yet authoritative. Second, he connected a theological position or practice of the church with a call for political action; in this case he transitioned from prayer to advocacy. Third, he connected the call for political action with the teachings of the Catholic Church and the congregation's identity as Roman Catholic who are willing to follow the teachings of the Church. The Bishop regularly encouraged his audience to contact their representatives so that the "Catholic voice" would be heard.

This call for political action in support of comprehensive immigration reform is also representative of Bishop Burbidge's political action texts in his use of theology. In this speech, and in most of his political action texts, the Bishop emphasized the audience's identity as Catholics. He connected the Catholic identity to the authority of Catholic Church's leadership, teaching, and tradition on social issues. The Bishop advocated for support of comprehensive immigration reform by saying it is a position consistent with the social teachings of the church. Bishop Burbidge also argued in this and other political action texts of that period that Catholics should pursue the common good of society as a reason why Catholic laity should be politically active on issues of moral concern.

A final reason why Bishop Burbidge's September 8, 2013 statement on comprehensive immigration reform can serve as a representative anecdote is that it addresses one of his primary political issues. Comprehensive immigration reform is one of the six areas of social concern listed on Bishop Burbidge's *Catholic Voice NC* website. The statement also included the

Bishop's frequent attempts to present strong advocacy of a specific public policy as a non-partisan - even politically neutral - social position. His political action texts, particularly those that could be viewed as politically liberal, often include him noting that he is not advocating the position from either side of the contemporary conservative – liberal political divide, but merely as a faithful Catholic.

In order to pursue my research questions on how the political action rhetoric of contemporary American clergy might utilize resources in various Christian theologies, I will analyze three carefully selected political action texts by clergy of different Christian theological traditions who are in a common public. Having argued in Chapter One for the appropriateness of three different politically active clergy in contemporary North Carolina, in this chapter I justified the political action texts that will serve as my primary texts for each clergy member by arguing that each text serves as a representative anecdote for that clergy rhetor's larger body of political action texts. William Barber's February 8, 2014 "Higher Ground" speech at the Moral March on Raleigh, Mark Creech's keynote address at the April 30, 2012 Marriage Amendment Rally, and Bishop Burbidge's September 8, 2013 statement on comprehensive immigration reform following the service of thanksgiving at Saint Mary Basilica Shrine each meet the criteria of being able to summarize the clergy member's rhetorical style, theological references, and political positions.

Critical Lens

Having identified and justified the primary texts that I will analyze in pursuit of my research questions, I will now describe how I will analyze those primary texts. The texts alone will of course not analyze themselves nor will they answer the research questions. Like a

carpenter approaching a project, I must select the appropriate tools to work with the raw material to achieve the desired end. The tools in a rhetorical analysis of a text are the theories and methods that inform and guide the manner which a rhetorical scholar approaches a text. I understand theories and methods to have a dynamic, interactive, and frequently overlapping relationship with each other in the field of rhetoric. In my understanding, rhetorical theories and methods are not only complimentary, but they are occasionally interchangeable (Brummett, 1984). Therefore, I will combine my theories and methods under what I will refer to as the critical lens through which I will observe and interrogate my selected texts.

Everyone approaches the study of a text informed by particular understandings of human communication. An informed rhetorical scholar will understand a variety of theories and methods at their disposal to understand any given text with any particular set of questions of study. It will benefit my study to emphasize theories that could potentially help me better understand my selected texts in light of the project's research questions.

My research questions seek understanding of how certain social discourses (theologies) may have come to serve as an interpretive framework and rhetorical resource for a person's (the clergy member) new social discourse (political action rhetoric). I have chosen to come to the study of my primary texts informed, on a general level, by Kenneth Burke's conceptions of the interactive relationships between symbols and symbol users in order to better understand the interactive relationships between clergy and the theology they have been immersed in and the political action rhetoric that they are contributing to the political debates in North Carolina. Burke can provide theoretical insights on the different rhetorical uses of theology in public discourse. Burke (1984) recognized that humans use words and words use humans (p. 333). Humans do, of course, have the ability to form, select, and modify words. People choose to give

words power, and the words are not neutral. Burke (1984) claimed that words provide direction to our social interactions (p. 4). Our words create frames that organize and assign meaning to our social experience and coach our roles to take on in those experiences (p. 5). Words form frameworks that humans use to interpret situations (p. 35). The power of the words flows between the symbol and the symbol user.

More specifically, in this study I will utilize Kenneth Burke's theories of the terministic screen and the ambiguity of substance. These theories provide further focus on the relationships between symbols and symbol users by addressing how a group of symbols can constrain a symbol user and how the nature of a symbol allows for range of uses by the symbol user. These theories will assist in exploring research questions about the possible restrictions and resources particular theologies might offer American clergy constructing political action rhetoric. Finally, Burke's theories of the terministic screen and the ambiguity of substance can serve as a basis for methods of rhetorical analysis that may be useful in my analysis of clergy political action texts.

Terministic Screens

Burke's (1974) conception of a terministic screen provides insights into ways symbols use humans and humans use symbols. Whether or not the symbol user is aware of its existence, a terministic screen is an internally coherent perspective through which a human interprets the world. A terministic screen is visible as it works in texts through a systematic vocabulary with an internal logic. All humans communicate through terministic screens and those terministic screens are manifested, therefore observable, in symbolic communication. A terministic screen is not deterministic of what a rhetor will say, in fact it may not necessarily predate the text, but it does act as a constraint that influences a rhetor's rhetorical choices with its coherent logic. This theory would suggest that clusters of theological symbols, known or unknown by the rhetor, in a text

may prompt or constrain a rhetor's choices in composing a political action text. This theory impacts how I view the political action texts in this study by claiming there is a coherent system of symbols within each text, a system that has placed constraints on the development of the text and can be identified through the text. I approach this study with the understanding that theology in a political action text must work within the text's terministic screen.

The first step in understanding Kenneth Burke's (1974) conception of the terministic screen is to recognize that Burke presented language as symbolic action with the power to define human perceptions of reality. Burke held that language was inherently suasive. In other words, even if we were to hold that some types of language are intended to reflect the world "as it is," language is forced to limit what aspect of reality to reflect. Burke insisted that "by very nature as a terminology must be a selection of reality, and to the extent it must function also as a deflection of reality" (p. 45). This view of language suggests that theological language of clergy members is more than merely descriptive of the content of their belief; the theological language also constricts and creates possibilities for those who use it.

As pieces of this inherently suasive language work together to define the world, they form a broad and systematic vocabulary, or a terministic screen. The terministic screen is bound together by some type of internal logic, which may or may not be intentional, that holds the terminology together. Just as every piece of language reflects, selects, and deflects reality, a terministic screen guides the attention of the rhetor and auditor toward some things and away from others. As the suasive nature of language is unavoidable, the presence of terministic screens is also inherent in human language use. All human understanding, even basic human observations, are shaped by the particular terministic screen being used to filter and guide reality (Burke, 1974, p. 50). Kathryn Olson (2009) claimed that most people function "as if in a

coherent reality, which they help create by ‘making sense’ using symbolic patterns from one or another of more-or-less internally consistent interpretive perspectives” (p. 236). While the presence and influence of a terministic screen is unavoidable, it is not deterministic. Humans are able to change their terministic screen if they find it is not useful to their social experiences. There is also some range or flexibility within any given terministic screen because, as addressed in the next section, language also entails ambiguities. This theory leads me to suspect that a clergy member’s system of theological language may, by default, though not necessarily, serve as a terministic screen for how the clergy member thinks and communicates about the world.

For Kenneth Burke (1974), all humans understand reality in a “roundabout” way through symbols (p. 52). The gift of language that can expand human understanding also constricts human understanding because all human understanding is filtered and directed by language. Human understanding, perhaps even experience, of reality is shaped by the language being used. Burke claimed that much of what people consider reality only exists because of their language systems that filter and describe all that our senses take in (p. 48). This means that different terministic screens act by directing human attention differently and thus lead to correspondingly different observations or experiences of “reality” (p. 49). Again, while Burke is emphasizing that language is not neutral, his theory also leaves room for human agency in choosing and stretching terministic screens.

Burke’s understanding of language as symbolic action and the power and inevitability of the terministic screen has considerable implications on public debate of political issues. Every party in a public debate understands the issues and the “realities” of the situation through terministic screens. The different terministic screens guide and direct people to different understandings of common issues. While humans cannot avoid having a terministic screen,

humans are able to change or adjust their screens. Humans are also able to understand terministic screens that are not their own and critically reflect on and shift among frames if they determine that another frame functions better and navigate a range of meaning within their own terministic screen.

Identifying and understanding the terministic screen seems then to be an important work of rhetorical scholars. Burke claimed, “the injunction, ‘believe that you may understand’ has a fundamental application to the purely secular problem of ‘terministic screens’” (p. 47). When one has identified the particular terministic screen that is guiding the observations and understands the logical pattern that holds the screen together, the observations will then be clear and understandable as they fit the pattern of the screen. In other words, understanding the terministic screen will help the rhetorical scholar understand the texts emerging from that terministic screen. The process can, and perhaps must, also be reversed; the rhetorical scholar can identify and understand the terministic screen by understanding a rhetor’s texts. Furthermore, once identified, the terministic screen can allow a critic to foreshadow what and how a screen’s adherents may think and speak about various undeclared issues (Olson, 2009). This is how the theory connects with rhetorical methods. A text itself provides evidence of the terministic screen that a rhetor is operating from as the words of the text can reveal an internally consistent logical frame. A close reading approach to the text will help the rhetorical scholar identify those themes.

The terministic screen is a theory that will help me approach the texts for analysis in order to answer my research questions. The terministic screen will be particularly helpful for my research question on how a clergy member’s rhetorical options might be constrained by consistency within a particular theological system. I have provided a working definition of

theology as an interpretive frame for understanding God and God's interactions with the world. The theory of terministic screens helps explain the constraints of an interpretive frame. It explains the complexities of how words and systems of words foster understandings of reality that are then reflected in other words about the world. Words, and more so terministic screens, order understandings of reality. Theology may function in this way, rhetorically constricting or expanding what is understood as reality and what is possible, or at least probable. While I will not look for one absolute terministic screen to represent an entire theological tradition, I will seek the terministic screens that are demonstrated in the political action rhetoric of the particular clergy members.

Burke's terministic screen provides a helpful theoretical construction for understanding texts by revealing language and logic structures that undergird the texts. Uncovering the interpretive frameworks, or interpretive screens, could potentially help explain some the differences and similarities among the clergy political action texts in this study. Having given a functional definition of theology as an interpretive framework for understanding God and God's interaction with the world, the concept of terministic screen helps understand how theology may have a role in the political action texts in this study and, more specifically, how theology might direct the observations and claims of the clergy about current political issues.

Ambiguity of Substance

Burke's (1969) conception of the ambiguity of substance provides insights into how humans use symbols. While an understanding of the terministic screen will prove helpful to this study, it will also prove incomplete for my purposes, leaving some of my questions unanswered. In order to more fully address my research questions, I will turn to another rhetorical theory found in Kenneth Burke's writing. Burke's conception of the ambiguity of substance could

provide insights on ways clergy rhetors may adjust or appeal to various understandings of a theological symbol or framework. While the terministic screen serves to explain some of the inspirations and constraints that a theology may place on a clergy member's political action texts, the ambiguity of substance explains some of the flexibility clergy can have with their exercise of theology. The ambiguity of substance provides balance to the constraining nature of the terministic screen, expanding a theoretical understanding of clergy rhetor's opportunities to shift definitions and narratives.

Burke's (1969a) concept of the ambiguity of substance begins with the understanding of the paradox of substance. When people define what something is, its substance, they also define what a thing is not. Putting a boundary around something in order to define its substance also highlights the context around the thing's substance that helps make it relatively meaningful. This paradox is inevitable in definition (p. 23). According to Burke, the paradox inherent in definition gives an unresolvable ambiguity to the concept of substance (p. 24). Ironically, while definition is at times an attempt to eliminate or reduce ambiguity, definition makes ambiguity all the more evident. Out of the ambiguity of substance, terminologies and systems of dialects have flexible and blurred boundaries and margins that overlap with other terminologies and systems of dialects. The flexibility, overlapping, and blurring between terminologies provides symbol users with opportunities for transitions between terminologies (p. xxii). The flexibility, overlapping, and blurring between terminologies also provides opportunities for the transformations of terminologies because the distinct terminologies share an ambiguous common substance (p. xix).

Burke (1969a) observed that this ambiguity, and subsequent transitions and transformations, is present in both external and intrinsic communication (p. 33). The ambiguity of substance is an acknowledgement that there is a paradox inherent in language and flexibility

in symbols used in communication. This is not to say that there is no substance in things or meanings to be found in symbols; rather, it is a recognition that symbols are not definitive and universal representations of a substance. As theology is stated in language, it follows that there is some ambiguity in theological terms and systems.

The ambiguity of substance provides opportunities for communicators because ambiguity is created by the interactions between opposites (e.g., what a thing is and what a thing is not). Those paradoxical interactions create opportunities for transformations of meaning (Burke, 1969a, p. 24). Language may allow for “definitive” statements that overlook the ambiguity of substance, but the ambiguity is still present and can be utilized in the ambiguity of language. The ambiguity from the paradox serves as a crucial resource for rhetoric, particularly for creating change (Burke, 1969a, p. 51). Robert Ivie (2005) has argued that dissent is made possible in social conflict because the ambiguities of substance provide dissenters with the ability to both affirm and challenge aspects of the status quo. Likewise, clergy rhetors may find opportunities for dissent and change in the ambiguity of theological language and systems.

Once again, this theory leads me toward close reading as a methodological approach to analyzing the text. Burke claimed that, just like terministic screens, the transitions and transformations that occur through ambiguity of substance are observable realities (Burke, 1969a, p. 57). Texts provide us with observable structural relationships for the ambiguity of substance and the transitions that the ambiguity facilitates. Recognition of the ambiguity of substance helps identify the challenges to and the changes within terministic screens and helps us to understand the rhetorical possibilities for dissenting voices.

The theory of the ambiguity of substance will aid my research in a number of ways. Ambiguity of substance may help answer my research questions of how a clergy member’s

rhetoric might negotiate, stretch, and appeal to a theology. Ambiguity of substance can help understand the stretching and negotiating of a theology that may take place as a clergy member crafts a political action text. As a clergy member seeks to address a current political situation as a leader representing and informed by a theological tradition, the clergy will need to make choices to address a new context with an existing tradition. The clergy rhetors are not simply reciting their theology nor are they simply applying the theology to the situation. There is something more rhetorically complex happening in the role of theology in political action texts. The theory of ambiguity may provide insights into the innovation and choices of the clergy rhetors in such situations.

Ambiguity of substance may provide explanations for some of the apparent inconsistencies between the different clergy members' political action texts and between each particular clergy's political action text and their theological tradition. It may also explain how a rhetor can relieve tensions in their text's overarching logical framework. Close readings of the texts will reveal differences in definitions, and frames, and narratives. Ambiguity of substance provides theoretical understanding of why these differences may be rhetorically viable for the clergy member calling for political action.

Finally, I believe that, when balanced with the concept of the terministic screen, the ambiguity of substance can provide insights into the dynamic relationships within a clergy rhetor's logical framework, his or her theology, and the clergy's call to political action. Those dynamic relationships interact in construction of the political action texts. In this way, the concepts of the terministic screen and the ambiguity of substance serve my research questions. If a particular theology serves as, or contributes to, a terministic screen for a clergy's rhetoric, then the internal logic of the theology will constrain and guide the clergy member's political action

texts. Likewise, the ambiguity of substance in a clergy's theology provides opportunities for the clergy to stretch and negotiate understandings and implications of the theology on political matters. The two theories are also complementary because they are both conducive to close reading methods of textual analysis.

Close Reading

I have chosen to take a close reading approach to my texts. A close reading places the text at the center of the work of rhetorical analysis (Jasinski, 2001, p. 91). This type of approach seeks to go beyond the surface level of understanding to seek the deeper meanings of the text by unpacking the text's rhetorical dynamics (Brummett, 2011; Jasinski, 2001; Zarefsky, 2008). A close reading approach to the text is consistent with my choice to use Burke's theories of communication and language as a piece of the critical lens that I will use to analyze my selected texts. Burke (1969a, p. 57) claimed that texts provide observable actions, citable realities, and demonstrable realities. A close reading approach to analysis treats the text as though it contains resources for rhetorical study, and close reading methods are tools that enable a critic to make the kinds of observations that Burke claimed the text can offer.

Close reading methods will allow me to see the theory at work in the texts, which I have established as an important element in helping me answer my research questions. Some scholars may suggest that a theological reading of the clergy's political action rhetoric would be a better way to identify the role of theology in the texts. I would counter that a close reading will provide a more holistic understanding of the texts, an understanding which recognizes the role of theology but also provides attention to the nature of language, the political situation, and the choices of the rhetor. A close reading approach to the clergy's political action texts will not isolate the text from the theological discourse that presumably surrounds it. On the contrary, the

close reading will display one of the ways that the theology does political work in the world (Jasinski, 2001, p. 95).

In this study I will approach my three primary political action texts on two different levels of a close reading. I am using, and enhancing, these levels from Barry Brummett's (2011) levels of close reading. First, I will identify and examine the direct tactics used by the clergy member. These direct tactics are generally clear in the text, but they are important for an understanding of the dynamics of the text. In my study of the direct tactics in the text I will identify arguments and definitions that are directly given in the text. Second, I will explore what Brummett (2011) called the implied strategies used in the text. These strategies are what Kenneth Burke (1973) described as the dramatic alignment and dramatic development observable in the text that help indicate the contours of the terministic screen at work. In the following sections I will explain and justify these close reading approaches for this project.

Direct tactics. My first stage of close reading of the clergy political texts in this study is to identify the direct tactics used by the clergy rhetor. The direct tactics are the most explicit claims, requests, and prompts made in the text (Brummett, 2011, p. 104). While direct tactics are generally straightforward appeals, supports, and definitions at the very surface level of the text, direct tactics should not be viewed as merely superficial. Direct tactics can reveal the explicit word and argument choices of the rhetor and elements of the plain message the audience encounters in the text. The direct tactics also provide an entry into deeper levels of textual reading. Therefore, identifying the direct tactics used in a text is an important element of understanding the text. In this study I will focus on two kinds of direct tactics, arguments and framing.

The first elements of direct tactics that I will identify in my study are the basic arguments of the clergy's political action texts. I will identify the basic elements of the key arguments in the text, making note of the claims, grounds, and warrants of the argument. The claims of the argument are the positions and actions that the clergy member is urging the audience to hold or take. The grounds of the argument are the reasons and evidence given to support the clergy's claims. The argument's warrants are the principles and reasoning used to connect the grounds to the claim. This basic level of argument analysis should enable me to identify a general course of reasoning used in the clergy member's call for political action.

The second element of direct tactics that I will address is how the rhetor defines, or frames, his argument. The clergy member frames the argument in how he chooses to describe the situation that has brought about their call for political action. The description of the situation includes the scale and scope of the situation. The rhetor also frames the argument with his claims about stakes of the situation, or what hangs in the balance if the audience chooses to respond or not respond to his call for political action. Finally, I will include the clergy member's definition of the key issues in his framing of the argument, noting both the content of the definition and type of definition.

Identifying the text's direct tactics of explicit argument structures and explicit definitions will give me an understanding of what is being said on the surface level of the text. While that is not the only level of meaning of the text, it is an important level for understanding the text. These methods will likely reveal both theories of terministic screen and ambiguity of substance at work within the given political action text. Identifying the explicit arguments and framing in the different clergy's political action rhetoric may reveal different definitions based on different theological traditions. These methods of identifying direct tactics may reveal support for

arguments consistent with, or claiming to be consistent with, a clergy member's theology tradition. It may reveal assumptions in arguments that are related to theological traditions. I anticipate seeing some consistencies between the argumentation and definitions within any particular clergy member's political action rhetoric and their theological tradition, possibly indicating constraints provided by their theology. I also anticipate observing differences in definitions and argument between, and possibly within, the clergy rhetor's texts. These differences may reveal some of the ambiguity, and thus flexibility, of that particular theological term and even the interpretive framework of their theological tradition.

Implied strategies. The second stage of close reading of my primary texts entails uncovering what Barry Brummett (2011) referred to as the text's "implied strategies." These strategies are, in Brummett's (2011) words, "subtler and not always consciously intended to be perceived" (p. 104). While the strategies are not explicit, they are present in the text and are generally related to the direct tactics employed in the text by the rhetor making them accessible to a rhetorical critic through close reading of the text. These implied strategies, uncovered through methods of clustering and tracing movements, are crucial to this study as they reveal the rhetor's terministic screen. In order to uncover the implicit strategies in the texts I will use elements of the dramatistic method of textual analysis used by Kenneth Burke (1973). More specifically, I will use Burke's cluster-agon analysis and narrative arc analysis in my study of the primary texts in order to identify the terministic screen revealed in each text. Burke (1968) claimed that the dramatistic method was "the most direct to the study of human relations and human motives is via a methodical inquiry into cycles or clusters of terms and their functions" (p. 445). The interrelationships between the associated clusters in the text itself are the rhetor's motives in which he or she communicates the text (Burke, 1973, p. 20). This approach brings

with it a dramatistic understanding of texts, but it answers the questions directly from a close, careful, and rigorous analysis of the text (Burke, 1973, p. 69). First, I will uncover the dramatic alignment in the text. Then, I will uncover the dramatic development found in the text.

I will begin by identifying the dramatic alignment and interrelationships as directly revealed in the text. There are two basic questions that I will answer in this stage of textual analysis: “what goes with what?” and “what is opposed to what?” (Burke, 1973, p. 69). The first question can be answered by identifying what symbols are linked together in a text. This can quite literally be that the terms are placed next to one another or the terms are repeatedly mentioned together (Brummett, 2011, p. 107). Symbols of a text may also be recognized as “going together” by sharing a common value, characteristic, or setting. Another way in which terms can be clustered together is because they are on the same side of a struggle. This leads me to identify ways terms in a text may be opposed to one another. Symbols in a text may be placed in opposing clusters of terms if the text presents the symbols in conflict with one another or simply as a contradiction to one another (Brummett, 2011, p. 110).

The next step of the locating the implicit strategies of the text is to identify the dramatic development that takes place in the text. This dramatic development may or may not be clear in the explicit tactics or structure of the text. The dramatic development and transformations of the interrelationships in the text can be uncovered by identifying the beginning, middle, and end of the drama in the text. These points are often not the same as the literal beginning, middle, and ending of the text, rather they are the beginning, middle, and end of underlying dramatistic struggle subtly implied in the text. The dramatic development can be found by answering the questions, “from what?” “through what?” and “to what?” in careful study of the text (Burke, 1973, p. 71). In the clergy political action texts, the “from what” or beginning of the drama will

likely be presented as the current situation or aspects of the current situation that need to change. The dramatic development's middle, the "through what," will likely include the actions required of the audience to leave the current situation in order to move toward a preferred future. The "through what" of the implied drama in the political action text will also likely include the challenges and transformations that will take place in that journey toward the preferred future. The drama's ending or "to what" will include the descriptions of the preferred situation that the requested political action is intended to lead toward. The ending is generally preferable to the beginning, justifying the costs of the requested actions.

Identifying the implicit strategies of a text makes a deeper level of meanings available to the audience than even a careful reading of the text's explicit tactics. The relationships and movements implicit in the text provide guidance, a screen if you will, for the explicit tactics of the text. These deeper meanings are of value to rhetorical critics attempting to understand a text. For this project, identifying the dramatistic interrelationships, conflicts, and development implied in a text will help me identify the terministic screen of the political action text. The dramatistic method will help me identify the implied narrative, and narratives provide powerful frames for how we understand the world (Jasinski, 2001, p. 158). The method allows me to see the theory at work in the clergy's political action texts. As argued in the section on the theories used in this paper, the theory of terministic screens allows me to understand particular constraints that the clergy member's theological emphases may place upon their political action texts, therefore providing some insights into the theological resources used by clergy in political action rhetoric.

Terministic Screens and Theology

My close reading of the three clergy member's representative political action texts will provide me with insights into the terministic screens constraining and animating the clergy's

political action rhetoric and the clergy members' navigation of the ambiguity of their theological logics in the terministic screens in the development of their political action rhetoric. This will position me to make other steps toward answering my guiding research questions, considering the role of rhetorical resources in theology for political action texts. In chapter six of this dissertation I will further examine the theological logics in the terministic screens identified in the textual analyses of chapters three, four, and five, in order to compare and contrast how the distinct and common theological emphases participate in the texts' logical frameworks and with the larger goal of identifying how the political action texts' rely on theology.

In this final stage I will compare and contrast the arguments, definitions, and terministic screens identified in close readings of each of the political action texts in my study. I anticipate that there will be similarities and differences between the three terministic screens identified in the three political action texts. While various contextual influences could be used to attempt to explain these similarities and differences, I will argue that there are motivations that can be traced in the texts themselves. I will explain how the symbolic clusters and dramatic progression in each screen forms an interactive logic that yields in combination different meanings and appeals and recommendations even if many of the same elements appear in all of the cases. My study proposes that the specific theological logics in the terministic screens identified in the clergy political action texts will likely interact in different ways that can be discovered and compared through close study of the texts.

I will argue differences and similarities identified in the comparison of the three terministic screens will reveal some of the rhetorical resources available in theological discourse. The terministic screen as identified in a close study of the clergy member's political action text is the lens through which the clergy member interprets reality. By understanding the terministic

screen revealed in a particular text, a rhetorical critic is able to anticipate what that text's rhetor might say on other issues based on the internal logic of the terministic screen. In this case, I will argue that the clergy rhetor, while not providing a traditional theological discourse, does reveal certain theological emphases in the terministic screen of their political action text and I can anticipate some of that clergy member's theological constraints and affordances from that terministic screen. I will make references as to possible connections between the theological suggestions of the rhetor's terministic screen and their known theological tradition, but will not do so to either analyze consistency or claim causality. Instead, I will focus on the theological logics present in the text and will suggest that the theological tradition may hold some rhetorical resources and constraints as they participate in the overarching interpretive framework in the construction of clergy member's political action text.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explained how I will pursue my research questions in this dissertation. First I identified the three speeches I have chosen as my primary texts for analysis and justified the texts as representative anecdotes of the political action rhetoric of Rev. Barber, Rev. Creech, and Bishop Burbidge from 2010 to 2015. Then, I identified and explained the critical lens, or the theories and methods, that I will use to analyze the texts and explained how they are appropriate tools for my research questions. My critical lens for this study includes Kenneth Burke's rhetorical theories of the terministic screen and the ambiguity of substance. Those theories emphasize the actions of and in the text, leading me to use methods and techniques of close reading to uncover direct tactics and implied strategies in the text that make up the ambiguity-laced terministic screens and so help to answer my research questions. Having

identified and justified my primary texts of study for this research project, and having identified, described and justified the critical lens I will use to analyze my texts in order to gain insights for my research questions, I will now proceed to my study of the political action texts of the three clergy members in the current public debates in North Carolina, keeping an eye on what these texts can teach us about theology in political rhetoric.

Chapter 3: Rev. Dr. William Barber's Higher Ground

The Rise of North Carolina's Progressive Prophet

When Rev. Dr. William Barber, an ordained pastor of a Disciples of Christ church, was elected president of the North Carolina chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 2006, he prioritized building a broad coalition of diverse progressive organizations throughout the state. As a result of his efforts, The Historic Thousands on Jones St. People's Assembly Coalition pushed both Democrats and Republicans to take up progressive policies on issues of economics, education, healthcare, criminal justice, and equal protection (Barber, 2014). The coalition secured the passage of key pieces of progressive legislation, including same-day registration and early voting (Dubose, 2014).

However, the progressive coalition seemed to lose their political power as quickly as they had gained it. In 2010 the political landscape in North Carolina - as in much of the nation - shifted dramatically more conservative as Republicans won a majority in both houses of the state assembly for the first time since 1870. In 2012 Republicans won the state's governorship, leaving conservatives in control of the entire state government with no political need to negotiate with Barber's progressive coalition (Fuller, 2014). While The Historic Thousands on Jones St. People's Assembly Coalition had made a practice of working with both Democrats and Republicans, the 2010 and 2012 elections gave the staunchly conservative Tea Party commanding authority in North Carolina's government. The Tea Party's dominance in the state government proved a significant challenge for political progressive coalition. Barber claimed, "Their goal has been to undermine and roll back those victories and to undermine and keep this sort of fusion political movement from going on" (quoted in Dubose, 2014). With the Tea Party

controlling the Republican Party, and the Republican Party controlling the North Carolina State Government, there was very little that could be done to stop or even slow the reversal of the progressive agenda. Progressive leaders felt they had reached a breaking point when North Carolina conservatives passed some of the most staunchly restrictive voting laws in the nation, legislation that included dramatic reductions to voter registration and early voting and the requirement of voter identification (Berman, 2013).

On Monday April 29, 2013, Barber and a group of sixteen others, primarily ordained ministers, took action. The clergy were told that they could not make overtly political statements on Capitol grounds, but they could make biblical and religious statements. Barber and the other clergy gathered in the Capitol and sang traditional gospel songs calling for justice, said prayers asking God for justice to prevail in the state, and read ancient scriptures about the need for social justice. Once state officials realized the political implications of the ministers' religious expressions, they ordered the clergy to stop. The protestors refused to stop, arguing that they had the right to free assembly and religious expression, and thus they were promptly arrested (Bean, 2013).

The next Monday more people assembled at the Capitol to make religious expressions calling for social justice. Thirty more people were arrested that day, and a regular protest upon the North Carolina State Capitol known as "Moral Monday" was born. Moral Monday protests continued to grow. The average weekly attendance at the protests in 2013 was estimated at approximately 2,500 people. Within eight months almost one thousand people, including prominent religious leaders in the state, had been arrested for their participation in the protests at the Capitol (Blythe, 2013).

Moral Monday protests spread across North Carolina and even into other states (Berman, 2013). Moral Monday protests were held in every congressional district in the state in 2013, including a 2,000-person protest in the city of Charlotte (Perlmutter, 2013) and a 10,000-person protest in Asheville (Phillips, 2013). By February 2014, the Moral Monday movement had drawn approximately 80,000 to march on the state capitol in Raleigh. The growth, size, and momentum of the Moral Monday movement gained the attention of national media and political leaders. As reports of Moral Monday spread across the nation, Barber's political action rhetoric reached and resonated with people outside the immediate political context of North Carolina. Rev. Dr. Barber was invited to give lectures, lead workshops, and speak at rallies in other states. In the months that followed, Moral Monday and similar movements began in other states across the nation (Fuller, 2014).

The growing number of participants in the Moral Monday movement and Barber's rapidly expanding audience indicate that there is something about his rhetoric that resonates with significant segments of the population. This chapter will explore the appeal of Barber's rhetoric by identifying the terministic screen in his "Higher Ground" speech given at the 2014 Moral March on Raleigh. In the previous chapter I identified this speech as an acceptable representative anecdote for Barber's political action rhetoric between 2010 and 2015. I also explained in the previous chapter that I will identify the terministic screen of the speech, thus its larger, internally consistent framework for interpreting events, through a close analysis of the speech's implicit strategies. I anticipate that my analysis will reveal ways that Barber's theology participates rhetorically in the internal logic of Barber's terministic screen, thus allowing me to identify ways that Barber's specific theology constrains and animates his political action speech. I argue that the specific theological logics in Barber's text - that God works for public morality through a

diverse array of humans, for instance – actively participate in the speech’s larger internally consistent logic system, for example, that diverse people of good will are agents who can act to reach a moral higher ground. Theology therefore animates and constrains Barber’s political action text in ways that offer his audience deep and broad motives of purpose, conviction, and hope.

Barber’s Call to Higher Ground

Barber’s “Higher Ground” speech took place at the February 8, 2014 Moral March on Raleigh. It was the eighth annual march and rally at the state capitol put on by a diverse coalition of politically progressive groups, of which Barber was a key leader. In the first six years the march had grown from five thousand to fifteen thousand. Following the rise of the Moral Monday movement in 2013, Barber and others anticipated a larger crowd and secured a permit for 30,000 marchers. On the day of the Moral March, an estimated crowd of 80,000 demonstrators arrived in Raleigh to march on the capitol (Fuller, 2014). Rev. Dr. Barber was the final speaker at the rally following the march. He was introduced as the leader - a moral leader - of the movement and as a prophet for the time (Barber, 2014a).

The primary argument of Barber’s “Higher Ground” speech was a plea for the citizens of North Carolina to unite in a movement to challenge and reverse the government policies put in place by ultra-conservative “extremists” who were “attacking” the people of North Carolina. This plea was most explicitly stated at just over six minutes into the speech, when Barber indicated what the movement would do and why it was initiated: “In order to promote these principles (of public morality) and to challenge the premeditated attacks on them by extremists, this Moral March inaugurates a fresh year of grassroots empowerment, voter

education, litigation, and nonviolent direct action.” Barber emphasized the identity of the political opposition as extremists throughout the speech, noting that they cannot be reasoned with in the usual ways but require the audience to take bold steps of opposition. Barber went on to implore the audience to join the movement in opposition to those extremists: “We call upon all people of good will – Blacks, Whites, Native American, Asian, Latino, Democrats, Republican, rich, poor, young, and old - to resist the attacks on the poor and working families of North Carolina.” Barber’s “Higher Ground” speech consisted primarily of a rationale for why the movement was needed, identification of the public policy agenda the movement would pursue, and brief statements about the actions that people in the movement would take to confront the political extremists harming the state.

In this speech, Rev. Dr. Barber provided four primary reasons why the Moral Monday movement was needed. First, Barber insisted that there were certain moral standards to which government policies should be held. Around the eight-minute mark, Barber claimed, “Let us be reminded that we are called to high standards in our civic and public life.” He cited texts from the Bible and the state and the national Constitution as the standards of moral judgment for public policy. Second, Barber argued that the movement was needed because political extremists had forced extreme policies that violated those high moral standards for government onto the state of North Carolina. Barber characterized acts of the political extremists as immoral and unjust attacks upon the people of the state. For example, around ten minutes into the speech, Barber described the government policies as “a dangerous agenda of extremist law set by the ultra-conservative right wing that is choosing the low road.” Third, Barber invoked respected social movements of the past to invite people to join the Moral Monday movement, claiming that the audience could be part of a tradition of people who fight for justice in the face of extremism.

Less than two minutes into the speech, Barber claimed, “This kind of coalition that we see here today is as old as the fusion politics ... (of) the first reconstruction. It is as recent as the reconstruction of the civil rights movement in the 1960s.” Finally, Barber encouraged people to join the movement because the movement was of God. Just over fifteen minutes into the speech, Barber claimed a biblical Psalm for the Moral Monday movement, “The stones that the builders have rejected have become the chief cornerstones of a new movement and it is the Lord’s doing.” Barber championed the Moral Monday movement by repeating these four justifications at various places in his 2014 “Higher Ground” speech. The justifications presented the audience with stark choices between the extremists and people of goodwill, immorality and morality, the low road and higher ground. Barber argued that this was a battle between the agents of justice and agents of injustice with no middle ground and that the stakes were as high as the future of the state.

In addition to providing reasons for the movement, Barber spent much of the speech indicating the policy goals of the Moral Monday movement and the general actions that the movement would take to accomplish those goals. While reiterated throughout the speech, Barber explicitly described the policy goals of the movement approximately four minutes into the speech and again around the twenty-three-minute mark. These goals included affordable healthcare, strong public schools, progressive economic policies, equal protection for minorities, and expanded voting rights. In both cases, the policy goals of the movement were paired with general actions that the movement would take in order to achieve the goals. At both the speech’s six-minute and twenty-two minute marks, Barber identified steps like legal challenges to new state policies, making efforts to increase voter turn out, and mobilizing young people to political action.

Rev. Dr. Barber framed the situation for the audience through his definitions in the “Higher Ground” speech. Barber defined the current officials in the state government, his political opposition, as “extremists” and their policy agenda as “attacks” against the people of North Carolina. He used these terms throughout the speech, framing the situation as a fight against a dangerous enemy who was deliberately out to harm the state. This framing created a stark contrast between government leaders and their policies and the audience and their moral convictions about government policies. Four minutes into the speech, Barber articulated the audience’s beliefs about what constituted moral and just government policies. This definition included anti-poverty pro-labor policies, well-funded quality public education, affordable healthcare, minority rights, and the expansion of voting rights. Barber also proposed, from early in the speech, how the audience could advance just and moral government policies. He defined the way forward as “what we can do ... together.” This definition framed the solution, and therefore the actions of the audience, as the story of a community of people coming together to confront the extremists who had attacked the people of North Carolina. Finally, Barber further defined the situation as similar to the first reconstruction and civil rights movements, framing the audience’s situation as part of a larger narrative of standing against extremists and working for justice in the southern United States.

Barber also defined the political struggle as one in which God was active and partial. Barber referenced God and God’s Word a number of times during the speech, but with statements such as, “if God be for you, it does not matter if the whole world is against you,” he most clearly framed the situation as God supporting the Moral Monday movement. Barber closed his speech by advancing the claim that God supports him and the Moral Monday movement. Around the thirty-minute mark, gave a detailed description of a personal spiritual experience,

“when God lets my mind and my soul go a little bit higher than the troubles of this world.” This conclusion not only defined the Moral Monday movement as a cause supported by God, it also defined Barber as a leader who has access to the Divine.

In addition to making explicit appeals and definitions with words in his speech, Barber also performed the speech in a manner that reflected both his purpose and underlying logical framework. Barber delivered his words with great force and emphasis, expressing confidence and conviction as a rhetor speaking the will of God to the audience. Barber expressed strength in both his encouragement of the audience and his rebuke of the immoral public policies of the “extremists” he calls the audience to stand against. Barber’s delivery also reflects and builds the underlying narrative discussed later in this chapter. The speech begins with a strong and confident tone, and yet it is subdued compared to the rest of the speech. Barber built intensity and increased his volume as he listed, and elicited audience participation in listing, the injustices of the political opposition. Barber continued to build intensity as he spoke of the actions that the audience would take as they united as a moral movement. Finally, Barber concluded his speech in a celebratory tone, inviting the audience to join him in celebration, as he spoke of the joy of experiencing “higher ground.”

The Internal Logic of Barber’s Higher Ground

Having reviewed the context of William Barber’s “Higher Ground” speech and identified some of the explicit appeals that Barber made in the speech, I will now explore deeper levels of meaning in the text found in the text’s implicit strategies. As explained in the previous chapter, I have chosen to use the methods of cluster-agon analysis and narrative arc analysis to uncover the implicit strategies within each of the speeches. These methods serve the primary research goals

of this dissertation by revealing the terministic screen and ambiguity in the text and, more specifically for my research questions, the possible roles of specific theological statements in the terministic screen or ambiguity of a text. The cluster-agon analysis focuses on two questions, “what goes with what?” and “what goes against what?” The narrative arc analysis centers on three questions about the narrative movement within the text: “from what?” “through what?” and “to what?”

The Choice between the High Ground and the Low Road

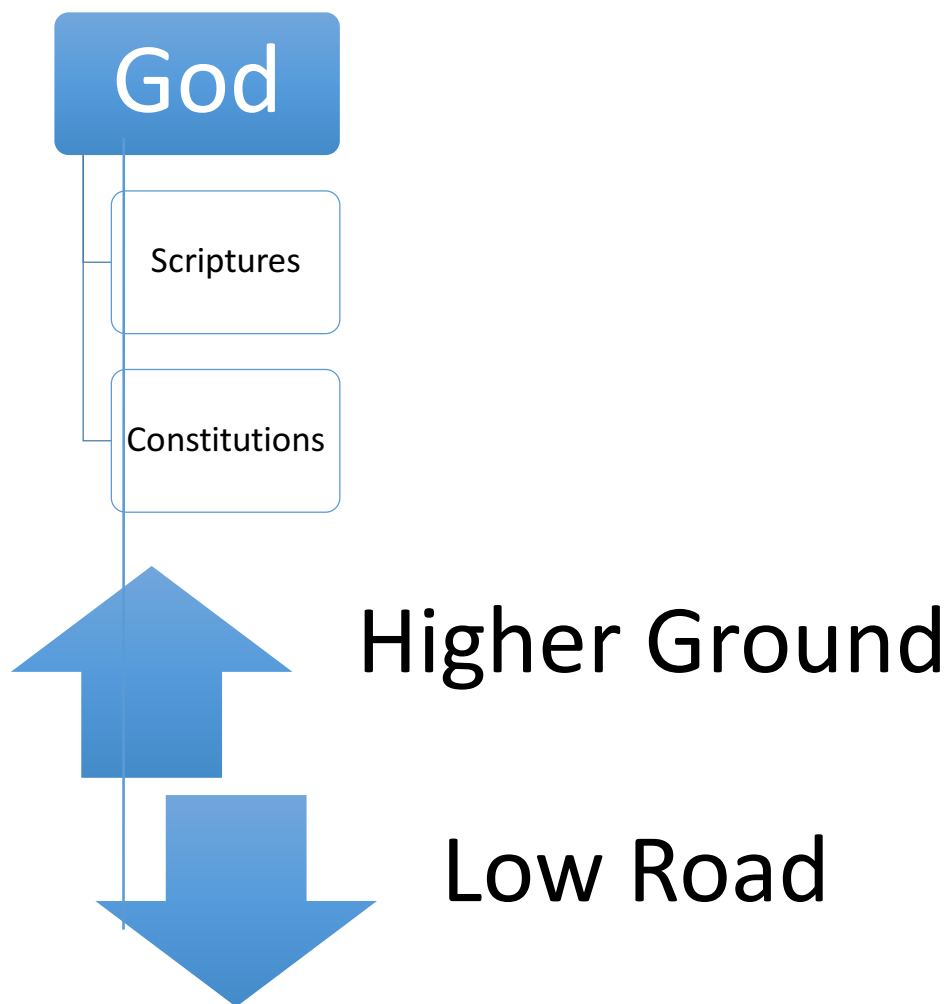


Figure 1. The Higher Ground Agon

I began my cluster-agon analysis of Rev. Dr. William Barber's "Higher Ground" speech by looking for clusters of terms or, as Kenneth Burke wrote, "what goes with what?" The analysis revealed a clear division of terms into two large opposing clusters, each cluster with one key term and numerous related satellites of terms. In this section, I will identify the two large clusters in opposition to each other in Barber's terministic screen. I will describe the key terms of the opposing clusters that energize the dramatic relationships in the speech. However, before I identify the opposing clusters, I will explain the sources of authority that ground the judgments and logical coherence of the terministic screen. The agon analysis reveals public morality and public immorality as the central conflict in an internally consistent logical framework. In this logic, God is both the judge of what is moral and immoral and has revealed those judgments to humanity in a variety of ways. This logic demands the audience make a choice and places high stakes on their decision.

The Divine grounding of the conflict. While Barber's "Higher Ground" speech was delivered to a religiously diverse audience and was less reliant on theology in its explicit arguments than the other speeches analyzed in this dissertation, the cluster-agon analysis reveals that "God" is the highest authority in the speech's terministic screen. "God" determines what belongs with what cluster. In the logical framework, God makes the authoritative judgment on what belongs to "higher ground" and what fits the "low road," or what is and is not public morality. Furthermore, as the grounding of the speech's logical framework, "God" is the only term with some type of presence in all of the satellites of terms in the terministic screen, blessing some and condemning others.

The cluster-agon analysis of Barber's speech also revealed how God's authoritative judgments are made known to humanity. Barber's logic recognizes that God provides judgment

about public morality through a variety of authoritative sources. During the speech, Barber repeatedly claimed that his judgment was not from his own opinion, but from a higher standard found in higher authorities. The state and federal Constitutions and the “Word of God” were the sources of authority to which Barber appealed most frequently in the speech. Just seven minutes into the speech, Barber claimed and provided examples that the high standards of “higher ground” come from the Word of God. Then, ten minutes into the speech, Barber claimed additional roots for high standards in both the United States and North Carolina Constitutions. Barber reiterated the constitutional and scriptural basis for “higher ground” a number of times in the speech. Barber also claimed to base his condemnation of the “low road” cluster in the North Carolina and United States Constitutions and the “Word of God.” These claims of authority for judgment from widely respected sources likely prompted the audience to accept the “higher ground” cluster of terms as moral and just. The claims of authority also allowed the audience to view the movement as more mainstream than radical as Moral Monday was judged favorably by the recognized and established sources of authority in the terministic screen.

The role of “God” in the logic of this terministic screen serves several rhetorical functions, many of which will be addressed later in this chapter. For now, I will mention three functions most relevant to the cluster-agon analysis. First, the terministic screen carries a motivation of being on God’s side. This makes the significance of the struggle more than merely differences in public policy. In Barber’s terministic screen the issues are cosmic and eternal. Second, the logic in Barber’s screen contains the motivation that humans can work on God’s behalf. Third, the logic of the screen indicates that God works on behalf of humans, particularly on the behalf of those who work for God. This logic provides encouragement for those working toward higher ground in the face of significant political obstacles such as those present in North

Carolina where the political opposition had moved aggressively to implement its own public policy agenda.

The definitive conflict. The agon analysis of Barber's Higher Ground speech reveals two primary clusters positioned in opposition to each other. Barber explicitly presented a choice between the two opposing clusters around eleven minutes into the speech: "In policy and politics we face two choices. One is the low road to destruction and the other is the pathway to higher ground." The cluster-agon analysis shows that the "higher ground" cluster is in conflict with the "low road" cluster. I will explain in the analyses of their respective clusters that "high road" is a metaphor for moral and just public policy and "low road" is a metaphor for immoral and unjust public policy. In addition to the clear opposition between the terms high and low, Barber used strong, confrontational language in the speech, drawing sharp divisions between the two sides. The conflict between the opposing sides of clusters is particularly strong as the two sides are almost mirror images of one another, marking a clear "what goes against what?" division between the clusters. The cluster analysis will provide insights on how the sets of terms around the cluster's key term inform the meaning of those terms and the underlying conflict in the speech.

The agon analysis reveals the central conflict moving the underlying logic of William Barber's speech calling for all people of good will to come together in a moral movement to oppose the immoral agenda forced on the state by political extremists. Barber used the metaphor "higher ground" for the moral and just public policy agenda he called people to unite around and demand from the state government. "Higher ground" was placed in stark opposition to the "low road," Barber's metaphor for the unjust and immoral public policy agenda that "extremists" were "pushing" on North Carolina. This clear and sharp opposition between two sides presented the

audience with a clear choice. In Barber’s terministic screen, the audience did not have the option of a centrist position in this particular conflict, they had to choose between the low road or the higher ground.

The Higher Ground Cluster

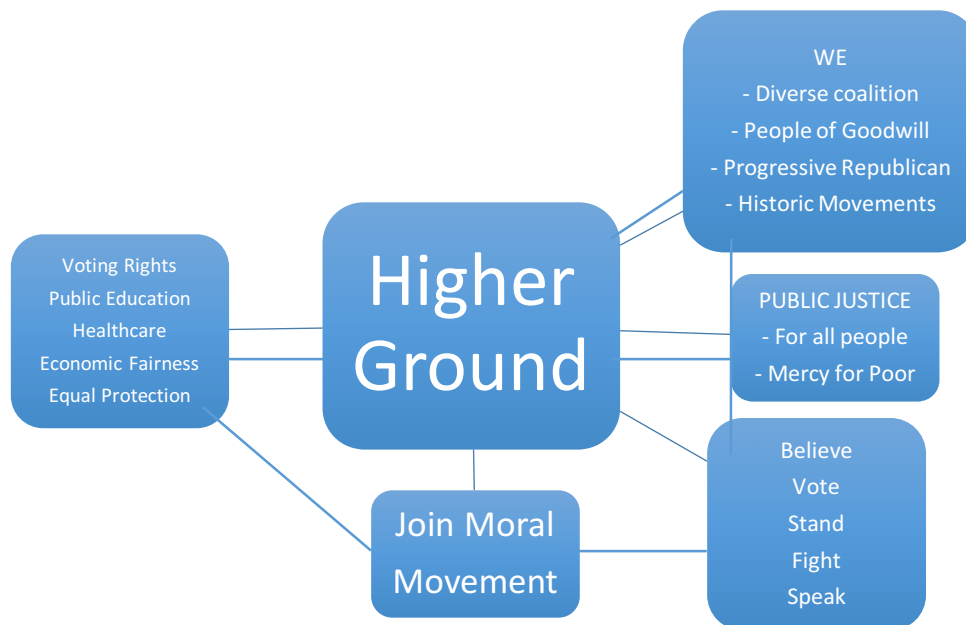


Figure 2. Barber’s Positive Cluster

The larger of the two major clusters in the “Higher Ground” speech was composed of the positive terms that Barber was advocating for. I will refer to this as the “positive cluster.” The primary term for the positive cluster is “higher ground.” Throughout the speech, Barber called the audience to come together to pursue “higher ground.” My cluster analysis of the speech placed multiple sets of terms in satellites around “higher ground,” revealing Barber’s use of the terms and the relationships among the terms. Identifying the terms and relationships in the cluster provides insights into the content and relational dynamics of Barber’s terministic screen.

The key term and central focus of the positive cluster in Barber's "Higher Ground" speech is the metaphor "higher ground," a metaphor Barber used for moral public policies. In order to understand a metaphor, one needs to identify the vehicle and the tenor of the metaphor. In Barber's speech, "higher ground" is the vehicle of the metaphor and gives insights into the tenor of the metaphor. While the tenor of the metaphor is not explicitly explained in the speech, it can be discerned. Some clarification of meaning can be found through the frequently recited expression "high standards." When Barber referred to the high standards he spoke exclusively of standards for morality and justice in public policy. Therefore, the tenor of the "higher ground" metaphor is moral and just public policy. The tenor of the metaphor can be further explained through the work of the next stage of the cluster analysis, the identification of terms and relationships within and among the satellites of terms supporting the key terms of the positive cluster. I will now describe the five satellites of supporting terms revealed in my analysis of Barber's "higher ground" cluster of his speech.

One prominent supporting satellite is defined by the term "we." "We" is the definitive term for the agents in the positive cluster. Barber began the speech emphasizing the term "we," claiming, "'We' is the most important word in the justice vocabulary." While Barber was introduced as the leader and prophet of the moral movement, his speech emphasized the importance of the communal "we." "We" was the dominant pronoun in the speech. Likewise, Barber used "together" as the dominant adverb in the speech. The emphasis upon the terms "we" and "together" show that Barber was inviting the audience to join with each other in opposition to the "extremists" and form a community of people, like others at other crucial points in history, that calls and works for "higher ground."

The “we” satellite also contained other terms that identified the agents of the positive cluster. Barber described the “we” as a diverse community of people united in their advocacy for moral public policy and in their opposition to the political extremists and their immoral public policies. Goodwill and morality are the terms at the core of the identity of Barber’s “we.” The identity of the “we” could not be reduced to a particular demographic, region of the state, political party, or even era. “We” was as broad as “all people of good will.” Approximately seventeen minutes into the speech, Barber emphasized the diversity of the “we” with a long list of people and groups committed to public morality:

We are black. We are white. We are Latino. We are Native American. We are democrat. We are republican. We are independent. We are people of faith. We are people not of faith, who are secular but still believe in a moral universe. We are natives. We are immigrants. We are business leaders and workers and unemployed. We are doctors. We are uninsured. We are gay. We are straight. We are students. We are parents. We are retirees. We are North Carolina.

Barber further expanded the diversity of the “we” by naming various locations throughout the state to which the invitation to join the movement was extended. Likewise, while Moral Monday is largely viewed as a liberal political movement, Barber repeatedly welcomed and included “progressive, sensible Republicans” into the “we.” Barber strengthened this invitation by claiming that the extremists were not genuine Republicans and that genuine Republicans had historically worked for justice and morality. Finally, Barber further emphasized the core designation of the “we” as standing up for justice and morality by repeatedly connecting the “we” with leaders of the first Reconstruction of the 1860s and the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Barber’s agents of the positive cluster were placed in the larger story of people choosing to act for just and moral public policy. Barber invited the audience to join this diverse people united around public morality as he described the “we” in his speech.

The second supporting satellite of terms in the positive cluster consists of the purpose that guided the agents in the “higher ground.” My analysis revealed that the major purpose guiding the “we” was “public justice.” Barber described two elements of public justice. First, public justice is the pursuit of “the good of all people.” Barber also referred to this as the “good of the whole” or the “common good.” Approximately fifteen minutes into the speech Barber identified the purpose that should guide the “we” in moving toward “higher ground,” “In face of these decisions we have to look at policy through the moral lens of justice for all and the constitutional principle of the good of the whole.” Second, public justice also consists of “mercy for the poor.” This purpose is consistent with, even complementary to, the “good of all people” as it clarifies that the poor are included as a part of the whole, rather than excluded or neglected from the goodness in society. The purpose of public justice finds its direct opposite purpose in the negative cluster’s “public injustice,” leaving the audience with a clear choice of purpose in choosing and advocating for public policy.

The third satellite of terms supporting the key term “higher ground” reveals the various agencies through which Barber’s “we” could take action. As Barber’s speech called the audience to join the moral movement, the agencies in this cluster told the audience how to take that action. My cluster analysis revealed that Barber paired the verbs “believe,” “stand,” “speak,” and “fight” with the pronoun “we” throughout the speech. Furthermore, Barber often formed a trio by adding the adverb “together.” For example, at the beginning of the speech while he was emphasizing the importance of the entire community of the “we,” Barber also emphasized that the “we” was formed and accomplished its goals through action, “The issue is not what I can do but what we can do, when we stand together, we fight together, we pray together, and we love one another together.” My cluster-agon analysis also revealed that the actions taken in the positive cluster are

in opposition to the silence and inaction of “so-called friends.” That contrast highlighted the importance of action in Barber’s terministic screen and enhanced his ability to mobilize the audience into the Moral Monday movement. The “we” in Barber’s speech was united in action through common agencies. This united movement worked to reach what Barber called “higher ground.”

The primary action of the positive cluster is represented in the fourth satellite of terms supporting the key term “higher ground.” The primary act is “joining the moral movement.” Halfway through the speech Barber clarified that the “we” was invited to join “a movement not a moment.” Barber reinforced this message near the end of the speech when he had the audience tell those standing next to them, “Its movement time!” The movement’s pursuit of “higher ground” and Barber’s frequent use of the term “moral” to describe the movement clarify that the agents are using their agencies to join a moral movement.

The final satellite of terms supporting the key term of the positive cluster identifies the ends that the “we” works toward, giving a more specific and practical identification of the moral public policies pursued in the “higher ground.” These government policies were grouped into five categories. The largest category, and the point of greatest emphasis, in this public policy satellite of terms was on issues of voting rights. A second policy category emphasized by Barber in his discussion of “higher ground” was the funding of quality public education. Affordable and accessible healthcare for all people was a third policy category in the “Higher Ground” speech. Barber also included in his speech policies that ensure equal protection under the law for all people. Finally, Barber described “higher ground” as having policies that promote economic fairness. In Barber’s terministic screen the public policy ends of the “higher ground” cluster are presented in sharp contrast to the “low road” public policies pushed upon the state by the

extremists. This, once again, emphasized the need of the audience to choose between conflicting options. It also introduced the need for movement in the story to reach moral policies, something I will address in the narrative arc analysis.

The Low Road Cluster

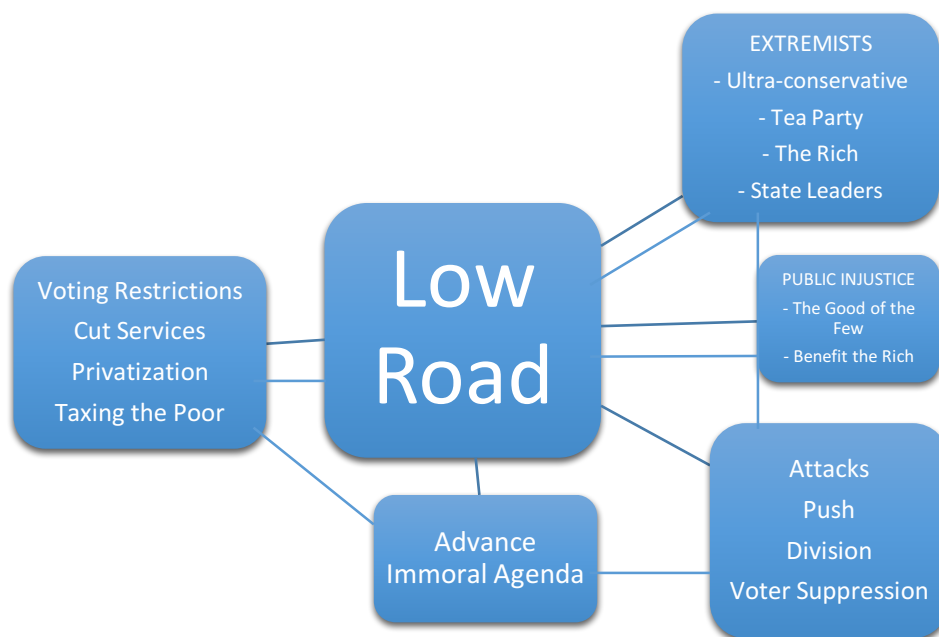


Figure 3. Barber’s Negative Cluster

The slightly smaller of the two opposing clusters in the “Higher Ground” speech is composed of the terms that Barber spoke against. I will refer to this as the “negative cluster.” The primary term for the negative cluster of terms is “low road.” In the speech, Barber repeatedly spoke against the extremists because they had forced North Carolina onto the “low road.” My cluster analysis of Barber’s speech revealed that the relationships among the terms and satellites of terms in the negative cluster are nearly identical to those in the positive cluster. For every negative in the terministic screen, there is a positive alternative. This juxtaposition

intensifies the conflict and importance of choice between the two clusters in Barber's terministic screen.

The key term of the negative cluster of Barber's terministic screen is the metaphor "low road." This term itself is a clear and stark contrast to the "higher ground" that Barber advocated for in his speech; it is also the antithesis of higher ground in the logic of the speech's terministic screen as revealed in the cluster analysis. Like higher ground, the low road should be understood as a metaphor. More specifically, Barber used "low road" as a metaphor for unjust and immoral public policies. As with the positive cluster, the key terms of the negative cluster can be understood as the vehicle of the metaphor. The tenor of the metaphor, the unjust and immoral policies, can be further understood through the work of the next stage of textual analysis, the identification of terms and relationships within and between the satellites of terms supporting the key terms of the negative cluster.

The first satellite in the negative cluster of the "Higher Ground" speech designates the agents of the "low road." "Extremists" is the key term in the "low road" agent satellite, acting as the antithesis to "we" agents in the "higher ground" cluster. The term "extremist" serves as the other, the other than "we" in Barber's terministic screen, as well as the antagonist who acts to harm the "we." The primary identity of the "extremists" is found in their purpose, actions, and goals, which Barber framed as extreme, rather than in some innate or unchangeable characteristic. Therefore, the "extremists" and the "we" in Barber's terministic screen are in direct opposition because of their moral choices.

The agent satellite of terms in the negative cluster provides additional terms identifying the "extremist" agents of the low road. Barber identified current government officials in North Carolina as the agents of the negative cluster, frequently referring to the government and

specifically naming four individuals in the speech. “The rich” are also included in the set of negative agents in the cluster analysis, standing in opposition to the “poor” and “hard working people” in the positive cluster. The political movement known as the Tea Party, which had led the transformation of several state policies, was specifically named as an agent of the low road. Finally, Barber used the general term “ultra-conservatives” to name the extremist agents in the low road cluster. The designation of “ultra-conservative” emphasized the purposes, acts, and ends of the negative agents, emphasized their extreme nature, and draws a sharp contrast to the “progressive republicans” of the positive cluster.

Continuing the mirrored opposition of the positive cluster, the negative cluster has a satellite of terms for the purpose of guiding the acts and ends of the agents of the “low road” cluster. The key term in the “low road” purpose satellite is “public injustice.” Barber identified two elements of negative purpose. First, “public injustice” seeks the benefit of only a few. Barber expressed this purpose in negative terms and clear opposition to the purposes of the positive cluster, as an opposition to the common good. Second, Barber made the purpose of the low road cluster more clear by claiming that the extremists had “benefiting the rich” as the center of their actions and ends. These purposes placed the extremists in opposition to, rather than in service of, the majority of North Carolinians.

The third satellite of terms in the negative cluster reveals the agencies used by the extremists to take the “low road” cluster’s primary act. Some of the agency terms are violent. The extremists use “attacks” on their fellow North Carolinians, especially the poor and hard-working people of the state. The extremist agents of the terministic screen also “push” the state down the “low road.” True to the oppositional nature of the agon, cluster analysis reveals that the extremists “divide” the people of North Carolina, a term in direct conflict with the unifying “we”

and “together” of Barber’s positive cluster. Finally, the extremists’ agents of the negative cluster use voter suppression to advance their immoral public agenda.

The primary act of the “low road” is found in the cluster’s fourth satellite of terms. The extremists use their agency for the act of “advancing an immoral political agenda.” Ten minutes into the speech, Barber framed his longest section of text that describes the “low road” by saying, “We have been called together to fight against a dangerous agenda of extremist law set by the ultra-conservative right wing that is choosing the low road.” Barber described the extremists’ political agenda as “immoral” and “unjust” a number of times in the speech. The judgment of the primary act reinforces the opposition between the negative cluster and the positive cluster where the primary act was described as moral, further clarifying the choice of action before the audience.

The fifth and final set of terms in the “low road” cluster is comprised of the ends that the extremists pursue in the low road. The ends of the negative cluster are the immoral public policies that the extremists pursue by advancing their political agenda. While the public policies of the negative cluster are listed on a few different occasions in the speech, they were given the most emphasis about a third of the way through the speech when Barber spends nearly four minutes forcefully condemning various policies recently passed by state officials as “mighty low.” Barber most frequently and emphatically identified voter restrictions as a policy of the “low road.” Barber’s negative cluster also included policies that reduced funding of public education, healthcare, and unemployment. A third type of public policy within the negative cluster are policies that transfer public moneys to private institutions and families. A final end of the low road in Barber’s terministic screen were public policies that increased taxes on the poor and working classes in order to reduce taxes for the wealthiest citizens of North Carolina. The

cluster-agon analysis has demonstrated what terms go together and what terms are in opposition to each other, thereby revealing the relational dynamics in Rev. William Barber’s “Higher Ground” speech. The most striking relational dynamic in Barber’s speech is the conflict between the “low road/extremists” and the “higher ground/we” clusters. In laying out the two fiercely oppositional sides of the terministic screen in his speech, Barber presented a very clear choice for his audience. There was no middle ground in the divide between clusters; the audience must choose with which side to identify. Barber presented the positive cluster as the attractive choice, actively inviting the audience to identify with the higher ground cluster of the Moral Monday movement. The narrative arc analysis provides insights into the story and trajectory for audience action - not just the side - that Barber invited the audience to step into.

Journey from the Low Road to the Higher Ground

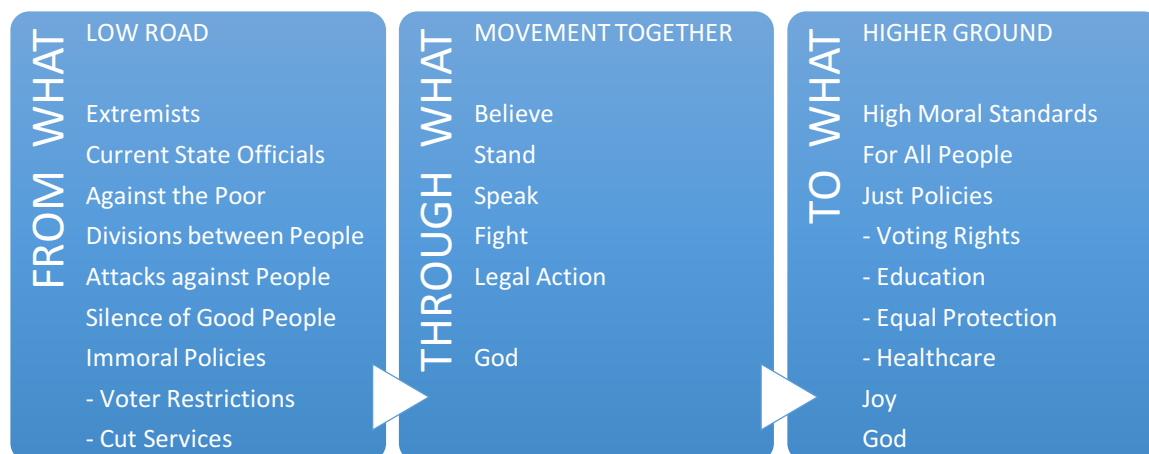


Figure 4. Narrative Arc Analysis

The terministic screen in Barber's "Higher Ground" speech does not merely leave the audience with two alternative clusters of terms between which to choose. Barber's terministic screen includes a logic of how the audience could actively make the choice between the two clusters; more specifically it shows the audience how to actively move from the "low road" to "higher ground." The narrative arc analysis gives the critic insights into the logic of this audience engagement. The narrative arc is the implied strategy of a story under the surface of the text that clarifies for audiences what their choices are and what stakes hang in the balance with their choices and motivationally privileges moving toward one of the opposing clusters over the other. The narrative arc analysis identifies the narrative progression - the beginning, middle, and end - in the speech's terministic screen. The three phases of the narrative are identified in the text through the sets of answers to the questions: "from what?" "through what?" and "to what?"

Answering the question "from what?" when analyzing Barber's speech helps form a picture of what he is calling people to leave behind. The dominant term for what Barber is calling people away from is "the low road." In Barber's speech, the low road was most closely connected to the public policies that the political "extremists" have "pushed" upon the state of North Carolina. The sets of terms surrounding extremist policies include many of the same terms identified in the negative cluster of the cluster-agon analysis earlier in this chapter. Barber associated the term "extremists" with the current state leadership and "ultra-conservatives." Barber described the low road policies of the extremists as acts of division and attacks against the people of North Carolina, making special note of attacks against the poor citizens. More specifically, the extremist policies of the low road that Barber called the audience to leave behind included voting restrictions and cuts to public services. Barber further emphasized the need to leave these policies behind by condemning the extremists' policies as immoral. The low road to

leave behind in the narrative within Barber's speech also included the silence of the people choosing not to speak out against the extremist public policies.

The key term of the "through what?" set of terms, the way the narrative invites the audience to leave the "extremist policies," is a "movement together." Barber was primarily calling for the audience to come together in a movement in order to leave the low road and move to higher ground. The terms "together" and "movement" carry approximately the same emphasis in the narrative arc. Other sets of terms surrounding the "movement together" pair provide insights into what actions comprise the movement of the positive and preferred drama undergirding the speech and driving the terministic screen. Terms included in the "through what?" set include "believe," "stand," "speak," "fight," and "take legal action." Those are the actions that the audience can execute in order to change the extremist policies they want to leave behind. All of these actions are described as being taken in concert with other people of good will. These actions taken together form a movement toward the preferred situation of higher ground. There is one additional set located near the "movement together" in the "through what?" section of the narrative arc. Near the end of the speech, Barber emphasized that God would help the collective movement reach its destination. It is interesting that in a narrative arc overwhelmingly focused on the people taking actions together, there is also an emphasis upon God acting to help move people through to the desired future. This seems to carry a logic that God and humans work together to reach "higher ground."

Barber was clearly calling his audience toward something in his "Higher Ground" speech. This final point of the narrative arc that functioned as the goal in Barber's speech is "higher ground." This phrase was repeated so frequently and with so much emotion that it is an unmistakable emphasis of Barber's speech. Terms grouped around higher ground provide a

strong association with just and moral public policy. The just public policies of the higher ground that Barber's speech called the audience to choose meet the high moral standards set in the government constitutions and religious scriptures. The public policies of the higher ground function for the good of all people in the state, including the poor who the moral public policies treat with mercy. The higher ground section of the narrative arc names some of the just public policies that the audience is moving toward, including the expansion of voting rights, well-funded public education, expanded access to healthcare, and equal protection under the law. My narrative arc analysis revealed that Barber's higher ground, with its just policies that work for the good of the whole, was also marked by joy among the people. Finally, and of utmost interest to this dissertation, "God" was a term associated with "higher ground" in the narrative arc of Barber's terministic screen. "God" was connected to the "justice" and "joy" that characterize the higher ground. Even more striking, God has a direct connection to the higher ground. In the theology at work in Barber's terministic screen, God is both a part of the "through what" section of the narrative arc, and God also sanctions, blesses, and is present in the higher ground that the "movement together" is pursuing.

A narrative arc cluster analysis of William Barber's "Higher Ground" speech reveals the underlying story within the speech. Barber urged the audience to move from the "low road" of immoral policies that political extremists have "pushed" on North Carolina. The extremists have imposed this situation on the audience, but Barber presented the hope that the audience could change its present conditions. Barber's words indicate that the way for the audience to move from the extremist policies is to come together and form a movement by believing, standing, and fighting against the extremists. The goal of this movement is to have the state government adopt more just policies. That leads to the conclusion of the narrative arc, what Barber called "higher

ground.” Barber reminded the audience of the progress toward a final destination through a biblical psalm, “weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” In Barber’s terministic screen, the justice and the joy of the higher ground is for all people.

The Theological Logic of the Higher Ground

The cluster-agon analysis and narrative arc analysis have revealed William Barber’s terministic screen in his “Higher Ground” speech. The analysis displays a clear and sharp division between the diverse people of “goodwill” in North Carolina and the political “extremists” who have taken leadership roles in the state government. The division can be seen clearly in both the contrasting values and contrasting public policies pursued by the two groups. However, Barber’s terministic screen contains more than state citizens and government leaders as actors in the drama in North Carolina. The cluster-agon analysis and narrative arc analysis revealed God as an active agent and highest judge in the terministic screen. Barber implored the audience to join together in a movement to force the state government to enact more “just” and “moral” policies, that is, the ends approved by God using the means approved by God. Barber’s words demonstrated the belief that people could choose to act to create political change that meets God’s moral standards and that God supports and plays a role in such work for political change. Barber concluded the “Higher Ground” speech with a passionate description of a “spiritual” encounter with God in which God affirmed the work of the Moral Monday movement. The conclusion was performed in a melodic, enthusiastic, call-and-response type of delivery, reminiscent of the preaching style at many historic Black churches. While the term “God” was present at various places in the speech, the passion and prominence of God in the conclusion of the speech show God to have a crucial role in Barber’s terministic screen.

This study is particularly interested in the role of “God” in the terministic screen of Barber’s “Higher Ground” speech. More specifically, I am looking at how the theology in the text, what I am calling the textual theology, interacts with the other rhetoric and with the logic of the text with a goal of discovering how Barber’s theological inspirations may differ from and have different motivational logics than other theologies. In order to make these assessments, I will review some of the theological rhetoric in the terministic screen and reflect on some ways those statements constrain and animate the rhetoric of the speech.

It is my claim that the theological impulses are not neutral to the terministic screen. Rather, theology constrains, guides, and provides resources for the logic of the terministic screen. The internal logic of the terministic screen would be quite different without the presence of theological influence, and more specifically, without the particular theology expressed in the speech. Barber’s various theological statements expressed in the speech are crucial to the internal logic of the terministic screen in the “Higher Ground” speech. In the following paragraphs I will identify some of the specific theological influences present in Barber’s terministic screen and identify some ways that they enhance and constrain the logic of the speech.

The textual analysis in this chapter revealed several theological elements in Barber’s terministic screen. God is on one side and against the other side in the conflict driving Barber’s rhetoric. In Barber’s terministic screen, God sets the standards and acts as judge of “higher ground” and the contrasting “low road,” including standards on human government and public policy. More specifically, God demands, enables, and blesses public policy marked by justice, mercy, and morality. In Barber’s terministic screen, God supports public policy that benefits common people, the poor, and the greater good of the community and state. More specifically, Barber’s terministic screen claims that God is in favor of certain public policy agendas and

opposed to others. Barber's God is on the side of voting rights, public education, affordable healthcare, economic fairness, and equal protection. God, in Barber's terministic screen, uses humans to accomplish these public policy goals. In addition, Barber's God is also involved in the narrative. God helps people achieve their goals of reaching "higher ground." God can also be experienced on a spiritual level, even today. Each of these theological inspirations impact the speech's logical framework.

God is on the Side of Higher Ground Defined as Moral and Just Public Policy

The theological claim that God is on the side of Barber's "we" carries with it a logic that constrains and enriches the entire speech. Barber's speech declared that Moral Monday has Divine support in the current political battles in North Carolina. Such a proclamation, when combined with God's connection to justice and morality in the logic of the terministic screen, carries the probable implication that the Moral Monday movement is on the moral and just side of the tense political divide and that the "extremists" are on the immoral and unjust side. The Divine endorsement of the Moral Monday movement in Barber's theological rhetoric provides additional, perhaps more emotionally complex, support and a wider scope of support for the claim that the audience should join the movement.

Another likely association of this logic is that audience members already engaged in the Moral Monday movement should move forward with confidence, even in the face of significant political obstacles, because God is on their side. It is interesting to note - and this will be addressed more fully later in the chapter - that Barber's theology also emphasized the role of human action in God's work, thus avoiding a logic of passively waiting for God to fix things directly. Instead, in Barber's terministic screen, God's activity motivates greater human activity.

In addition to the persuasive resources for the audience to join and courageously continue in the Moral Monday movement, the theological logic that God is on the side of Moral Monday could contribute to an absolutist posture for participants in the movement. This logic could direct a participant toward a conviction that they do not need to compromise with the other side of public policy debates. In fact, the logic could lead to a belief that compromise on public policy could be an act against God.

Another interesting implication of the claim that God is on the side of Moral Monday is that aligning with God, at least on public policy issues, is more dependent on philosophy of public morality and just government than what is more generally understood to be theological beliefs. On a practical level, this logic leads to the belief that people of passionate religious faith can work for political change with people who disagree about God, even about the existence of God, and still have the conviction that they are part of a movement supported by God. On the other hand, the logic of this theology also leads toward a belief that members of the political opposition can believe in God, even having many of the same theological beliefs, but can be in opposition to God because they do not share God's view on public morality and just government as revealed in the terministic screen. The theological rhetoric that God is on one side of the political division in North Carolina is best understood in logical relationship with a second element of theological rhetoric in Barber's terministic screen: God is the One who sets the standards of public morality and judges people and governments on those standards.

God Establishes and Judges by High Moral Standards for Public Life

William Barber's "Higher Ground" speech included a theology that described God as One with the authority to both establish cosmic standards for public morality and justice and judge individuals and governments on their adherence to those standards. In Barber's terministic

screen, God taking sides is not arbitrary nor is it an act of blind partisan allegiance. Rather, God is on one side of the political divisions in North Carolina because of the deliberate and stubborn choice of “extremists” to push public policies that violated God’s standards for public morality and justice.

This theological rhetoric made claims about the relationship between God and human morality and justice. More specifically, and a crucial theological distinction for the logic of Barber’s terministic screen in the “Higher Ground” speech, is that the the rhetoric made claims that God stands in judgment of individuals and governments for violation of or adherence to standards of public morality and just governing. For the purpose of Barber’s speech, this theological rhetoric directs the audience to passionate devotion to the public policy priorities identified as meeting God’s high standards and opposition to the extremists’ policies described as condemned under the judgment of God.

While it is common for a theology to contain explicit claims about God’s relationship to human morality, the theology expressed in Barber’s speech is more unique in its emphasis on God’s relationship to public morality and just governing of states. While other theologies might emphasize orthodox doctrine, or individual spirituality, or personal piety, the theological inspiration in Barber’s “Higher Ground” speech placed God’s primary concern on the morality of the powers and policies that govern human communities. This theology would be familiar to those from Barber’s own theological tradition of the Historic Black Church, a tradition which placed significant attention on God’s engagement with and judgment of public justice and morality. On the other hand, this theology likely met resistance in audience members whose logical frameworks had not created a place for a theology of public morality, including members of theological traditions that emphasized the after-life or individual morality. Interestingly,

Barber's emphasis upon public morality and just government in his theological rhetoric likely found receptivity from audience members whose logic systems also emphasized public morality and just government, even if their logic systems had limited room for Barber's other theological statements. The rhetorical possibilities and constraints generated by Barber's theology of God and public morality are consistent with the logic of his terministic screen in which blessing and condemnation by God are the products of human choices on public policy.

God Works Through Humans to Establish Moral and Just Public Policy

A third theological logic revealed in the textual analysis is that in addition to setting standards for and making judgments of public morality and just government, God works for justice and morality in the world through the work of human beings who choose to work for justice and public morality. Early in the speech, Barber claimed that "The Spirit of Justice" had called the audience to join together and work for justice. My cluster analysis revealed connections between God and the agents and actions of the positive cluster. While God is a prominent term in the terministic screen, there is also a heavy emphasis upon the practical actions by the progressive coalition to work toward the "higher ground." Finally, my narrative arc analysis of the speech highlighted various human actions as the primary, yet not exclusive, means through which the goal of "higher ground" was to be achieved.

Barber's theology of God working for justice and morality through humans who choose to work for justice and public morality influences the logic of the terministic screen, providing rhetorical options and constraints. This theology introduces a higher level of motivation than the previously addressed theological logic of humans being on God's side by placing even greater agency and reliance on the actions and choices of humans in the work of God. In the logic of Barber's terministic screen, humans are not only judged and instructed by God in their work for

public morality and just government, as seen above, and supported and blessed by God, as seen below; human beings are themselves doing God's work. God works through humans in Barber's terministic screen. The only separation between a human's actions being the work of God or not is the person's choice to work for moral and just public policies, broadly defined as policies benefiting all people. This potential to do God's work is available to all people, but it requires human choice and action. While this theology provides motivations for audience members to choose to join the work of the Moral Monday movement, it also creates a tension in the logic of the terministic screen. The strong emphasis upon human action in the work of God could suggest that God's work is fully dependent upon the work of humanity. This type of logic creates a tension in the very definition of God - namely it raises the question of whether a being so deeply dependent on human effort is worthy of the name God? This logical tension finds reasonable relief in the two following pieces of theological inspiration.

God Acts to Help Humans Establish Moral and Just Public Policy

The fourth theological logic in Barber's terministic screen, one that carries the potential to either balance or create tension with the previous theological logic, is that God works to help humans working for public morality and justice. This theological inspiration emerged most clearly toward the end of the speech when Barber repeatedly and passionately called upon God to place the audience, the state, and the nation on "higher ground." The theology contains a logic that God is, or at least can be, active in the work to establish and implement moral public policies. In my cluster analysis of the "higher ground" cluster, I drew two lines connecting God to the ends - the moral public policy agenda - of the positive cluster. The indirect connection, which goes through the acts of human agents before proceeding to the ends of the cluster, reflects the previous theological inspiration. The line of direct connection between God and the

ends of the higher ground reflects this theology that God's relationship to higher ground ends is not entirely bound to his general plan of working through humans. Another outworking of this theology is the presence of God in both the "through" and "to" sections of the narrative arc analysis, revealing that God is active in the approval and blessing of the destination of "higher ground" as well as in the largely-human process and work toward "higher ground."

Once again, this specific theology generates possibilities and constraints. First, the logic of God placing people on higher ground, helping them realize just and moral public policies, could provide encouragement through providing the assurance of Divine support on behalf of the discouraged and politically disenfranchised group. While Barber's audience had virtually no influence within the state government, the theological inspiration implying that God could put them on "higher ground" could provide hope that change, the institution of just and moral public policies in North Carolina, was possible. On the other hand, while the theology of God's actions brought hope and encouragement to the audience, it also created some tension within the logic of the terministic screen. Namely, the logic of God working directly toward justice is potentially in tension with the previously mentioned theological logic that God worked through humans who choose to work for justice. This raises questions about the terministic screen's logical fidelity regarding the roles of God and humans in the work of moral and just public policies.

God and Humans Work Together to Establish Moral and Just Public Policy

The tension in Barber's theology about the role of God and humans in the establishment of just government and public morality is more of a balance than a contradiction in the logic of his terministic screen. In other words, the tension between the theological inspiration that humans work for God and the theological inspiration that God works for humans provides balance rather than incongruity in Barber's logical framework. The two theological logics can be held at the

same time. This balanced logic can be expressed in another expression of theological rhetoric in Barber's terministic screen - God and humans work together for just and moral public policies. This distinct theological rhetoric relieves the negative tension of two potentially conflicting theological statements in the terministic screen through an ambiguity that recognizes the claims as complementary.

The theology that God and humans work together for justice and moral public policies incorporates the motivational strengths of both theological inspirations discussed in previous sections, namely, that humans work for God and God works for humans. The speech presents the audience with both the urgency of choice and action from the theological logic that humans work for God and the hope and assurance of the theological logic that claims that God works for humans.

People Can Experience God in a Spiritual Higher Ground

The final theological logic at work in the terministic screen of Barber's "Higher Ground" speech that I will address is that humans can experience God on a spiritual "higher ground" now, even if the political "higher ground" has not yet been reached. This theology was most clearly displayed in the conclusion of Barber's speech in which he passionately described such an experience with God. This enthusiastic description of Barber's spiritual experience added a theology, and with it a logic, about who God is and how God interacts with humanity that is not clearly present in the rest of the speech. This theology enhanced the concept of God in the terministic screen by introducing the idea that God could be experienced in some type of spiritual realm in the midst of the "low road" political circumstances of immoral and unjust policies.

This final theology of the analysis introduced additional rhetorical resources into Barber's speech. First, Barber's inclusion of his own spiritual experience with God added to his credibility as someone speaking on behalf of God. Second, the theology served as a confirmation that God was on the side of the Moral Monday movement. Finally, the theology provides an additional motivation that God is accessible in their current challenging circumstances. While other theological inspirations about connecting human actions with God and God's acts provided motivations of purpose and hope, the theological inspiration that God is accessible to individuals now contributes an additional motivation in doing God's work through the possibility of a relational connection.

This final theological logic may also create a tension in the logical coherence of the terministic screen, specifically with regard to relationships between God, humans, and "higher ground." Specifically, while "higher ground" in this text is primarily described as a political reality - a set of public policies - blessed by God and to be pursued by humans as an end of public life, this latest theological statement indicates that higher ground is a spiritual reality inhabited by God and accessible to human experience now. This tension can find relief in two different ways. First, there may simply be ambiguity in the metaphor "higher ground." The metaphor could inform two different tenors, both a political and a spiritual reality. Second, the tension does not necessarily need to be a contradiction. Rather, a theological logic can be internally consistent in claiming that God can be present in political realities and spiritual realities and in the present and the future. This resolution to an apparent tension in the theological logic is consistent with prominent theological tradition of the historic Black church that views spiritual and political as part of an integrated whole and recognizes God as accessible in all of it both in the present struggle as well as in the future glory.

“Higher Ground” Theology’s Logical Patterns of Motivation

The close reading and analysis of William Barber’s “Higher Ground” speech has provided insights into various roles of theology in Barber’s terministic screen. These textually-rooted insights provide clues into where this theologically-animated logic system may lead Barber’s Moral Monday movement, as well as other individuals and groups whose terministic screen includes similar theological rhetoric. First, I will discuss three positive ways that the theological emphases guide and motivate the movement. Then I will discuss two more problematic potential outcomes of the specific theological logics’ influences upon the terministic screen.

The specific theology expressed in Barber’s speech animates his political action rhetoric with Divine depth and breadth of purpose, conviction, and hope. This unmistakably theological logic provides a motivation for action to a politically disenfranchised audience beyond inciting anger at the political opposition or dispersing theoretical objections to the current government policies. Barber’s terministic screen provides motivation for the movement through an alignment with the Divine. The political obstacles facing the Moral Monday movement were significant; they had virtually no power in the state government, and their political opposition were aggressively pursuing their extreme policy agenda. Yet, the logic of Barber’s theological emphases provided the audience with the purpose of doing God’s work, the conviction of upholding God’s standards, and a hope that God would aid them in accomplishing the work of upholding those standards even when the situation looked bleak from a human perspective. While purpose, conviction, and hope are generally effective rhetorical motivators in any

terministic screen, Barber's theology provided Divine purpose, conviction, and hope that I propose introduced a powerful motivation in the face of discouraging circumstances.

Barber's theological inspirations provided a wide scope of purpose to the audience by blurring the binaries present in other logic systems. In Barber's terministic screen the logical motivations for responding to his call-to-action includes purposes that are both political and spiritual, practical and supernatural, human and Divine. The widening of the scope of motivation by encompassing common philosophical binaries engages more of the auditor, and invites more auditors to respond and invest in the movement.

The theological emphases in Barber's logical framework also provide a strong and deep conviction for the movement's stated values and policy positions. Barber's terministic screen positions God as the source of standards of public morality and just government. The theologically-animated logic system also identifies God as the ultimate judge of purposes, actions, and policies for public life, blessing what is moral and just, and condemning the immoral and unjust. Barber's terministic screen and political rhetoric position God as firmly in support of the Moral Monday movement, judging them as moral and just, and blessing them for upholding the Divine standards for public life. The theology animates the logic by positioning the purposes, actions, and public policy goals as based in something "higher" than the movement itself. Such logic can lead an audience to a deep sense of confidence and conviction that they are on the proper side of North Carolina's sharp political divide. In a theological logic in which God is the ultimate judge of public morality and justice and has judged Moral Monday's purposes, actions, and policies as moral and just while also condemning the political opposition as immoral and unjust, the audience has what the logic presents as the ultimate endorsement and assurance of rightness. The confidence instilled by the rhetorical Divine endorsement in a logic system in

which there is none higher than the Divine can serve as powerful motivation to choose to join with Barber's movement and endure in the face of political, social, economic, and rhetorical challenges.

The terministic screen's placement of God in the process of working toward the goal of "higher ground" provides the audience with a motivational hope for success. This theology animates a Divine hope that is beyond the audience's immediate circumstances of political disenfranchisement. In a theological logic in which God is the almighty, with Divine powers beyond the most powerful human authority, the assurance of human activity on the behalf of those who work for public morality and justice provides the ultimate logical hope for those choosing to join the Moral Monday movement. The logic of the theological claim is clear in that God's involvement is not a replacement of human action; the audience must do more than pray and wait for God to act. Instead, in the logic of Barber's terministic screen, the theology of God's action provides a hope that the actions of the audience are not done in vain. In light of the devastating losses in recent elections and policy debates, the aggressiveness and power of the political opposition, and the limited political influence on the current state government, the theology's assurance of Divine intervention in their cause could overcome the audience members' likely discouragement with a Divine hope of success.

While Barber's theological inspirations provide positive motivations in his logical framework, they also create some potential dangers for both theological and political discourse. Theologically, the logic of Barber's terministic screen examined in this chapter could lead to a problematic reduction of God. While Barber's speech was not a comprehensive theological discourse, the speech does reveal a theological logic. The theological logic in this speech could lead to God being reduced to something less than Divine. If the "God" in Barber's terministic

screen is reduced to merely a supporting motivation toward something else, then it would by definition be something other than God. Likewise, if the “God” in Barber’s logical framework is powerless to engage the world, then that “God” appears to fall short of the God of the theological traditions Barber cites in the speech. While I think Barber’s terministic screen held a broad enough logic of God to avoid these errors and maintain its coherence, the theological logic of the relationship between God and the just and moral public policies pursued by the Moral Monday movement has potential to become self-contradictory. A second potential danger of the logic of Barber’s theologically-infused rhetoric is a concern for political discourse. Barber’s theology could lead to a rejection of any type of compromise or dialogue with the members of the political opposition. The sharp opposition between the political sides and placement of God with one side of the conflict can also lead to a demonization of anyone who differs on an issue identified as a moral public policy. The rhetorical aligning of one’s own movement with God and framing their political opponents as opposed to God can easily lead to the overly-harsh judgment and even punishment of the political opposition and an unwillingness to compromise or even dialogue with the political opposition. In such cases, the logic of the terministic screen could become the very type of oppressive, exclusive, and extremist ideology that it formed to combat.

Finally, while I have argued for these probable trends for the political action rhetoric of the Moral Monday Movement inspired by the theological logic in Moral Monday leader William Barber’s terministic screen, I propose that these trends can be found beyond this particular case study. Theological logics similar to those identified in William Barber’s “Higher Ground” speech will likely provide similar animations and constraints to other political action rhetorics as they will certainly influence the logic of the rhetoric’s terministic screen.

As noted on occasion in this chapter, Barber's theological emphases in the "Higher Ground" speech contained numerous similarities to theological emphases of other clergy from his theological tradition. While it is not surprising to find similarities between Barber and others from the historic Black church in America, it does provide an expansive body of texts to observe the patterns among similar theological logics' animations and constraints upon political action rhetoric. Rhetorical studies (Houck & Dixon, 2006; Miller, 2011) of political action rhetoric by historic Black church clergy during the American Civil rights movements, at least those studies that make note of the theological elements of the rhetoric, have noted how the theology - theology similar to Barber's logic uncovered in this chapter - provided seemingly supernatural motivation of Divine purpose, conviction, and hope for their deeply disenfranchised audiences.

The similarities in the theology and political action rhetoric of William Barber and Black Clergy members in the American civil rights movement suggests that the patterns of animation and constraint uncovered in the analysis of the role of theology in the terministic screen of Barber's "Higher Ground" speech may reoccur when similar theological logics are included in political action rhetorics. This is something quite different than saying that Barber's political action rhetoric and the political action rhetoric of Black church clergy are similar because they both include "religious" elements. I have argued in this chapter that the specific theology expressed in Barber's speech is reflected in the speech's terministic screen providing an internally consistent logic that animates and constrains the political action rhetoric. As there are different theological logics not found in Barber's speech, those different theological logics, while also identified as "religious," would make different contributions to a terministic screen, providing animations and constraints not found in Barber's speech.

Chapter 4: Rev. Mark Creech's Marriage Battle

North Carolina's Conservative Culture Warrior

The Christian Action League's Rev. Mark Creech is frequently on the opposite side of political battles fought by Rev. Dr. William Barber, yet both clergy hold theologies that view political engagement as fitting hand-in-hand with the Christian Gospel. Rev. Creech's rhetoric focuses on mobilizing Christians to participate in political causes, claiming that faithfulness to the Christian scriptures requires political engagement. Creech has argued against fellow conservative evangelicals who believe that politics is a distraction from the (spiritual) Gospel, claiming, "Christian 'political activism' doesn't supplant the Gospel. Instead it brings the 'word of truth' to bear upon the political process" (Creech, 2014, para. 3). In a similar argument for the inclusion of politics in preaching, Creech claimed, "If America is to be saved, we must both proclaim the Gospel and seek to bring its influence to bear on the body politic" (Creech, 2013, para. 12). These two quotations suggest a key element of Creech's theology: Christians are to work for political influence.

Creech's arguments on the relationship between political action in the Christian life are consistent with the approach of the Christian Action League where Creech has been executive director since 1999. The Christian Action League of North Carolina describes itself as a "Christian public policy organization representing conservative evangelicals from seventeen denominations in the Tar Heel state" ("About CAL," n.d., para. 1). The emphasis upon Christian involvement in politics is expressed in the slogan, "The only lasting cure for evil and injustice is Christian Action" ("About CAL," n.d., para 7). The origins of the Christian Action League can be traced to the early twentieth century when certain churches in North Carolina worked together

in the anti-saloon movement. These partnerships became more formalized with the founding of The Allied Church League in 1937. In 1958 the organization changed their name to the Christian Action League of North Carolina and expanded their agenda to address a variety of public policies (“About CAL,” n.d.). As the Religious Right movement became a political powerhouse in the 1980s, the Christian Action League aligned themselves with much of its agenda (Carpenter, n.d.). As the president and primary spokesperson of the Christian Action League, Rev. Creech’s political action rhetoric resembles rhetoric of other leaders in the Religious Right.

Today, the Christian Action League claims to have the largest base of members in any Christian public policy organization in the state of North Carolina, boasting representatives from almost every county in the state. Their stated mission is to train and mobilize conservative Christians for public action (“About CAL,” n.d.). They also actively lobby at the state capitol for legislation that fits their agenda. In 2013 the organization had two full-time lobbyists, including Dr. Creech (“Christian Action League,” 2013). The Christian Action League is affiliated with the American Family Association, a national conservative group that the Southern Poverty Law Center calls an anti-gay hate group, and The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, which is a body of the Southern Baptist Convention (Three anti-gay groups, n.d.). While a considerable amount of funding comes from the Southern Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist churches (Blume, 2011; Carpenter, n.d.), the organization claims to represent conservative evangelical churches from seventeen denominations, and it claims to have directors, a board of advisors, and to receive contributions from churches and individuals from a variety of denominations from across the state (Blume, 2011). The Christian Action League website claims to address a variety of social and political issues including, “America’s Christian heritage, religious liberty, biomedical ethics, marriage and family, substance abuse, gambling, pornography, race relations,

sanctity of human life” (“About CAL,” n.d.). Rev. Mark Creech’s political action rhetoric mobilizes audiences throughout the state to action on these issues.

Rev. Creech is a prominent rhetor interweaving strains of conservative evangelical theology and conservative politics in North Carolina and, to some degree, the nation. In addition to serving as the Executive Director of the Christian Action League, Creech has a broad writing and speaking reach. Creech is a regular contributor of social commentary articles on the *Christian Action League* web site, *The Christian Post*, *One News Now*, *Renew America*, *Civitas Institute*, and *Conservative Writers*. In addition to writing social commentary articles, Creech frequently preaches at churches around North Carolina, encouraging conservative evangelical congregations to engage in political action on issues that the Christian Action League finds pressing. Rev. Creech also speaks at conservative Christian political rallies and workshops (“Rev. Mark Creech,” n.d.). In addition to mobilizing and training conservative Christians for political action, Rev. Creech also exercises influence as a lobbyist at the North Carolina capitol. As a lobbyist at the state capitol, Creech claims to both share his faith with state legislators and advocate for that theological and social perspective to be taken into consideration in the state’s legislative process (Blume, 2011; “Three anti-gay,” n.d.). Rev. Creech (2012a) refers to himself as a lobbyist for conservative evangelical Christians.

Rev. Creech’s numerous writing outlets and speaking engagements and the influence of the Christian Action League suggest that his rhetoric has resonated with his conservative evangelical target audience. The remainder of this chapter will explore the appeal of Creech’s rhetoric by identifying the terministic screen in his keynote address at a marriage amendment rally on April 30, 2011, a speech that I have established as an acceptable representative anecdote of his political action rhetoric between 2010 and 2015. I will identify the internally consistent

logical framework of the speech through a close analysis of the speech's implicit strategies. I anticipate that Creech's theology participates rhetorically in the internal logic of his terministic screen and that my analysis will reveal ways that Creech's theological logics constrain and animate his political action speech. I argue that the specific theologies contained in Creech's rhetoric, for example, that the Bible contains the only revelation of God's purpose for marriage, plays a role in the speech's larger internally consistent logic system. For instance, his logical framework presents God's people as in a battle to protect humanity from a redefinition of marriage. Theology therefore animates and constrains Creech's political action text in ways that offer his audience deep and broad motives of purpose, fear, and urgency.

Creech's Marriage Battle

Rev. Mark Creech gave the keynote address at a rally to generate support for Amendment One. Creech was the keynote speaker at the April 30, 2012 Marriage Amendment Rally at Poovey's Chapel Baptist Church in Hudson, North Carolina. Hudson is a small town in largely rural Caldwell County in northwest North Carolina. Poovey's Chapel Baptist Church had been a part of the small community for eighty years before the rally. The church is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, as is Rev. Creech and the Christian Action League. The rally for North Carolina Amendment One was held in the church sanctuary, which seats 600 people ("Our church," n.d.).

Amendment One was an amendment to the North Carolina State Constitution on the ballot in the May 8, 2012 primary election. North Carolina 2011 Senate Bill 514 placed the amendment on the primary election ballot as a for and against vote by the citizens. The ballot read, "Constitutional amendment to provide that marriage between one man and one woman is

the only domestic legal union that shall be valid or recognized in this State." The Bill read that a majority was needed to approve the constitutional amendment ("Senate Bill 514," 2011). This amendment not only made it unconstitutional to recognize same sex marriages, including marriages deemed legal in other states, it also made it unconstitutional to recognize civil unions in the State of North Carolina, a fact unrecognized by many citizens ("Amendment One," 2012).

Amendment One drew a considerable amount of attention from around the nation. Special interest groups on both sides of the amendment debate contributed significant amounts of money to support their positions (Dalesio, 2012). Groups supporting the amendment reportedly raised 1.5 million dollars. Groups opposing the amendment raised \$2.5 million (Blumenthal, 2012). Based on the financial investment of national organizations on both sides of the same-sex marriage debate, North Carolina's Amendment One should be recognized as an important vote in the national struggle over the legalization of same-sex marriage in this dissertation's range of 2010 – 2015.

Rev. Creech's Christian Action League was a strong supporter of Amendment One, devoting considerable time and energy to getting it on the ballot and passed. Marriage was frequently one of the issues listed as a priority for his organization ("About CAL," n.d.). Rev. Creech himself had been working on the measure for more than eight years ("Three anti-gay," n.d.). As argued in chapter two, Creech's prioritization of "traditional marriage" justifies the selection of a speech about Amendment One as representative of his political action texts between 2010 – 2015.

The results of the vote on Amendment One showed strong support for the amendment, support beyond the partisan lines that typically divided North Carolina elections at that time. Voter turnout was 34.66%, a relatively high percentage for a state primary election. Of those

voters, approximately 61% voted for the amendment and 39% voted against it (“Primary election,” 2012a). Such strong results demonstrate a victory, and certainly some type of affirmation for the message of the pro-amendment advocates such as Rev. Creech. It is interesting to note that the results in Caldwell County, the site of the Marriage Amendment Rally speech analyzed in this chapter, are even stronger than those at the state level. Voter turnout in Caldwell County was 39.42%, almost five percent higher than turnout for the state. A commanding 80.6% of Caldwell county voters approved the amendment, with only 19.4% voting against it (“Primary election,” 2012b). While I do not claim a direct causation between Creech’s speech and the results in the following week’s vote on Amendment One, there is cause to believe that Creech’s audience embraced his rhetoric.

As one might expect from the keynote address at a rally supporting Amendment One, the primary argument in Rev. Creech’s speech was that the audience should support the “marriage amendment,” the title he gave Amendment One just two lines into the speech. Creech spent most of the speech advancing the argument of why the audience should support the amendment. Creech also identified specific ways that the audience could support the amendment. In this section of the chapter, I will organize and summarize Creech’s general argument for supporting Amendment One.

The majority of Creech’s keynote address at the Marriage Amendment Rally was an argument for why the audience should support Amendment One. Creech provided several reasons why the audience should support the amendment. His reasons appealed to the audience’s deepest motivations. Creech devoted the most time to the argument that the audience should support the amendment because God had designed marriage to be between a man and a woman. Second, Creech argued that the amendment would protect religious freedom and the rights of

citizens. A third argument that Creech repeated was that passing the marriage amendment would create a better world for the audience's children. Fourth, Creech argued that it was the obligation of Christians to be politically engaged on biblical issues and that marriage was the key biblical issue. Finally, Creech argued for the marriage amendment by going so far as to claim that marriage was the "cause of Christ."

Creech's primary argument for why the audience should support Amendment One was that it was God's design for marriage to be between a man and a woman. Creech claimed that God's design as revealed in the Bible should be the preeminent authority in the debates about same-sex marriage. Creech supported his claim of God's design with two biblical texts. Furthermore, he claimed that those biblical texts, Genesis chapters one and two, are the only way to know God's plan for marriage, relationships, and sexuality. He also claimed that the biblical texts' description of marriage was supported by the audience's experience in their attraction and bonding between genders. Additionally, Creech reasoned that this plan of marriage between a man and a woman provided the only basis for serious marriage commitment. Finally, Creech reasoned that marriage as exclusively between a man and a woman was important because the biblical text implied that the image of God was only fulfilled through a man and a woman becoming one.

Creech's second line of argument for the "marriage amendment" was that it would create a better world for the audience's children than the world that would be created by a "redefinition of marriage." To support this claim, Creech emphasized that God had designed marriage as between a man and a woman for the good of society and the good of humanity. He reasoned that marriage between a man and a woman had benefited humanity throughout history. Furthermore, he claimed that questioning this historic and divine plan for marriage was foolish, because it

rejected something good for the world. Instead, Creech implied that passing Amendment One would protect the next generation's understanding of marriage to include the attraction and bonding only available between genders. Similarly, Creech claimed that the amendment would ensure the audience's children live in a world that values the high level of marriage commitment found, in his argument, only in marriage between a man and a woman. Finally, Creech claimed that the amendment would protect the audience's children from a world in which dangerous groups of sexual deviants would impose twisted definitions of marriage and sexuality upon others.

A third line of reasoning in Creech's speech was that the amendment would protect the audience's religious freedoms and citizen rights. Creech gave great emphasis to the claim that a failure to amend the constitution would leave open the possibility not only of legalized same-sex marriage but of a radical redefinition of marriage as the new "legal orthodoxy." He claimed that the government would force this new legal definition of marriage on all citizens, even on those who held marriage as only between a man and woman. In such a case, Creech ensured that the government would use force to guarantee conformity, violating citizen rights and religious liberties. Creech supported these claims with reports of lawsuits in states that recognize same-sex marriage and the fear of lawsuits in countries where same-sex marriage is legal.

A less frequent, but I propose foundational, reason that Creech provided for why the audience should support Amendment One is that it is the obligation of Christians to be politically active. In the introduction of his speech and description of the Christian Action League, Creech insisted that God calls His people, whom Creech seems to limit to conservative evangelical Christians, to influence society. Creech's reasoning equated the influence of society with political action. He claimed that Christian political action is the only solution to a society in

decline. Creech urged the audience to promote and implement God's design of society into the law of the land.

Finally, Creech argued that the audience should support the "marriage amendment" because of the utmost importance of marriage. Creech broadened the scope of the argument beyond the benefits of God's design of marriage or the benefit of gendered marriage for society to the cosmic importance of marriage. Creech claimed that marriage, to be understood as marriage between a man and a woman, was the "cause of Christ." At the end of the speech, Creech associated the passage of Amendment One with the salvation of the church, state, and nation. These claims would carry significant weight for Creech's conservative evangelical audience who emphasize the cause of Christ and salvation in their understanding of the world. While these significant claims about the cosmic importance of marriage were not extensively developed or supported, they were consistent with Creech's argument about Christian political action is a key element of the Christian life.

In addition to arguing why the audience should support Amendment One, Creech also told the audience how to support the marriage amendment. Creech revealed much of the purpose of his speech as he came to its conclusion, "I hope that tonight I've convinced everyone here to join with this critical effort to protect marriage as one man and one woman, by helping us educate the electorate on this issue, and get out the vote between now and May the 8th." Creech emphasized the need to vote for the amendment and getting others to vote for the amendment. He used the word "vote" fourteen times in the last third of the speech, emphasizing it as an application of his message and urging the audience not to assume the preferred outcome if they do not vote. The second way Creech encouraged the audience to support Amendment One was to be educated on the issue and to educate others. Creech positioned his speech as an important

piece of the audience's education. He also urged the audience to visit a website devoted to promoting Amendment One, "VoteForMarriageNC.com." Creech presented a third way that the audience could support the amendment early and late in his speech. He noted the need for financial contributions both when he introduced the work of the Christian Action League and when he claimed that the amendment's opponents had outspent the amendment's supporters two to one. Finally, at the conclusion of his speech, Rev. Creech called for the audience to have a "passionate intensity" for the amendment. He claimed that the groups with the most passion for their cause are the victors in social and political struggles.

In addition to the explicit arguments in his speech at the Marriage Amendment Rally, Creech also argued for his position through his definitions in the speech. In these acts of definition, Creech did not defend his statements as claims; rather, he simply asserted the way he intended to use certain terms or situations. Interestingly, Creech defined the situation facing the people of North Carolina as a crisis of definition, how the state would define marriage and who would decide the definition. In the remainder of this section I identify some key terms defined by Creech and how he defined the situation for the audience in order to fulfill the purpose of his speech.

Rev. Mark Creech directed the argument in his speech with his definitions of several key terms involved with the argument. First, Creech named Amendment One the "Marriage Amendment." Further, he said, "the marriage amendment legislation ... provides for all of us the opportunity to vote on this critical matter, the definition of marriage in our state." In this statement, Creech clearly defined the amendment as addressing one issue - the definition of marriage. However, Amendment One actually included items beyond the definition of marriage. It read, "Constitutional amendment to provide that marriage between one man and one woman is

the only domestic legal union that shall be valid or recognized in this State" (Senate Bill 514, 2011), also outlawing civil unions and same-sex marriages performed in other states. Second, Creech defined attempts to legalize same-sex marriage as attempts to redefine marriage. He emphasized his definition by claiming that the legalization of same-sex marriage would mean that the definition of marriage as a genderless contract would be the only legal definition of marriage in the state. Creech explicitly claimed that such a redefinition would not merely add something to the existing definition of marriage, but would create a new "legal orthodoxy," making the existing traditional definition of marriage illegal. Third, Creech defined the source of authority in the debate over same-sex marriage as exclusively the first two chapters of the biblical book of Genesis, claiming it was the only place to "discern God's purpose for human relationships, sexuality, and marriage." Finally, Creech defined marriage as one man and one woman as the "cause of Christ," a definition that placed Jesus Christ, and therefore any of His faithful followers, as working toward the protection of the traditional definition of marriage including the passage of Amendment One in North Carolina.

Mark Creech defined the situation as an opportunity to protect citizen rights and to protect God's definition of marriage. Creech also defined the stakes of not passing the amendment as leaving open the possibility for the "liberal cadre" and activist politicians to redefine marriage, imposing a new definition of marriage on unwilling citizens and violating their religious freedom. In addition to what he said in his speech, Creech also defined the situation by omitting information. He did not explain, or even state, what Amendment One actually said. Neither did Creech acknowledge that the amendment also outlawed the legal recognition of civil unions in the state of North Carolina. The omission of information that did

not fit the frame contributed to Creech's framing of Amendment One as an issue of the citizens' right to protect God's definition of marriage in the state.

As important as the words of explicit appeals and definitions were in Rev. Creech's political action text, his performance of the speech also served and reflected his purpose and logical framework. Creech used self-deprecating humor early in the speech, apparently attempting to build connection with the audience. However, when he began to make proclamations about what the Bible teaches about God's will on current political issues, Creech performed a deeply serious and confident tone. Creech made declarations about biblical interpretation and application to current political debates in a simple, confident, and matter-of-fact tone. Creech's performance built in intensity of delivery. The strongest, most passionate delivery was in his condemnation of liberal groups for attacking God's plans and the audience's religious freedom. He also exerted great passion in his final plea for the audience, God's people, to passionately fight against the liberals for the "cause of Christ."

The Internal Logic of Creech's Marriage Battle

As displayed in the previous chapter, the explicit tactics of a text provide a useful introduction and overview of a text, but a deeper level of analysis, identifying the implicit strategies of a text, is needed to discover the text's terministic screen. In this section I will describe the results of my cluster-agon analysis and narrative arc analysis of Rev. Mark Creech's keynote address at the 2012 Marriage Amendment Rally in Hudson, NC.

The Cosmic War Between Good and Evil in North Carolina

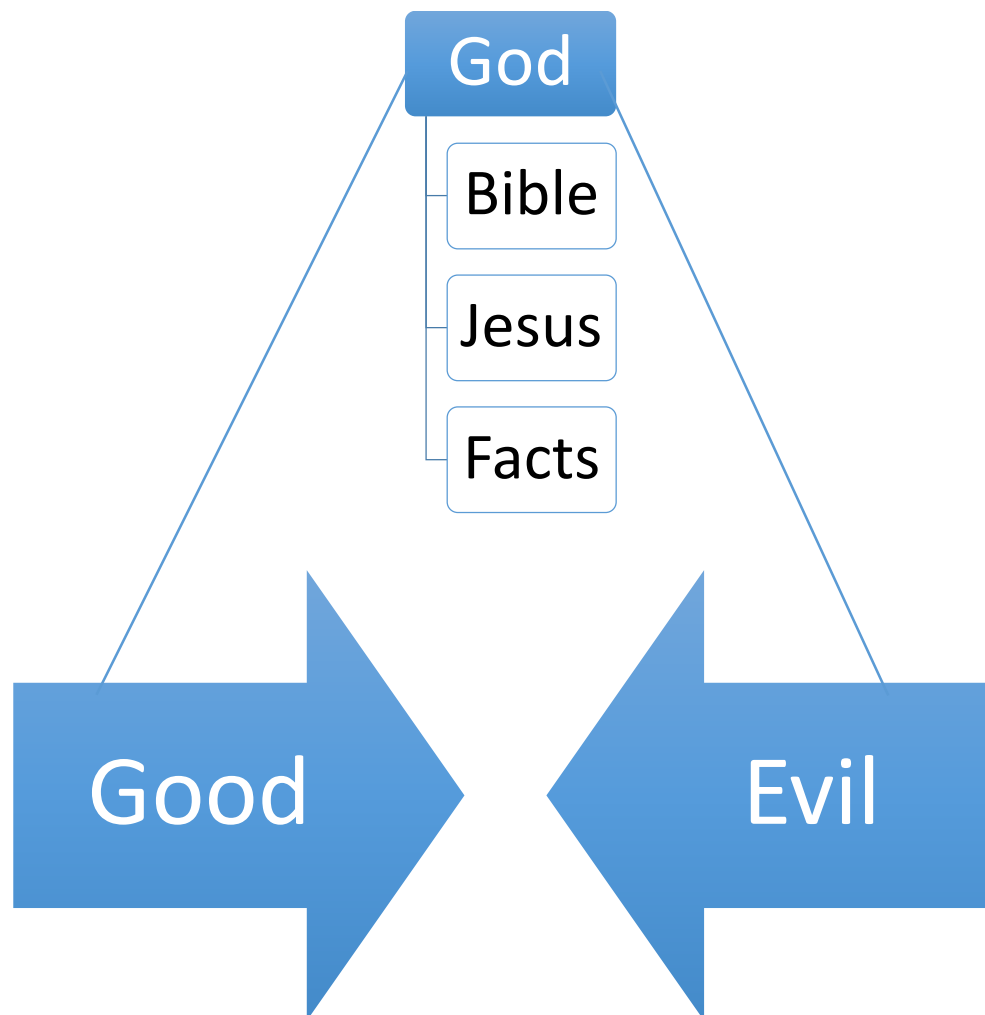


Figure 5. The Marriage Battle Agon

My cluster-agon analysis of Rev. Creech's marriage amendment speech identified the relational alignment of terms in the text, thus revealing a crucial piece of his terministic screen. The analysis shows how certain terms clustered together through a variety of relationships, while other terms conflicted with each other. The analysis revealed a clear division of terms into two large and evenly-sized opposing clusters. Each cluster focused on a single key term that was surrounded by numerous related satellites of terms. In the following sections I will describe the

results of the cluster-agon analysis. First, I describe the key terms for the two large clusters in conflict in Creech's speech and the sources of authority in the terministic screen which act as a ground for the rhetoric's logical framework. Then, I carefully explain the inner-workings of each cluster, first the positive and then the negative, detailing the smaller satellites of terms surrounding the key terms and the relationships between the satellites of terms within the cluster and how they contribute to the conflict between the two clusters.

Authority and grounding for the battle. Before explaining the driving conflict in Rev. Creech's terministic screen, it will be helpful to identify the authoritative sources that serve as a grounding for the logic, and therefore the relationships and judgments in the terministic screen. Creech's logical framework was grounded in sources that would likely be held as authoritative by his religious audience. Creech's terministic screen positioned God, and then the Bible, Jesus, and facts as the authoritative sources supporting the dramatic relationships and narrative arc at work in the speech. Creech repeatedly claimed that God was the ultimate source and advocate of traditional marriage and, in the logical framework, thus a supporter of the marriage amendment. God's position as the ultimate authority also served as the grounding of Creech's identification, description, and condemnation of people opposed to Amendment One. God, then, served as the ultimate grounding for the conflict between the two sides of the debate over Amendment One. Next, underneath the authority of God in Creech's terministic screen, the Bible and Jesus were sources of authority that revealed God's will. Creech claimed, "Its only in the first two chapters of Genesis that we can discern God's purpose for human relationships, sexuality, and marriage." This quotation demonstrated the logic that God's position on marriage was only known through the Bible. This logic was also demonstrated with Creech's use of another Bible passage to show Jesus' affirmation of the Genesis Bible passage as God's position on marriage. Creech's rhetoric

repeatedly rooted his position in these three sources of authority. For example, he called marriage between a man and a woman the “purpose of God” and the “cause of Christ.” The final term that served as an authoritative grounding in Creech’s terministic screen was the term “fact.” Creech’s rhetoric claimed that the “facts” of the situation supported the marriage amendment and its promised ends and displayed the folly and falsehood of the opponents of Amendment One. While this final authority did not provide a divine authority in the logic of the speech, it did serve to remove some of the ambiguity that the audience may have perceived in the situation by claiming the issue was clear to anyone interested in being “factual” and “objective.” The term provided a logical grounding, which may have created a tension within the logical framework, outside of the religious domain.

The cosmic war expressed in state politics. My analysis of Rev. Creech’s “Marriage Amendment” speech revealed an underlying conflict between two clusters of terms; one cluster with the key term “good” and the other cluster with the key term “evil.” First, Creech framed the speech with a description of his work at the Christian Action League as “exposing” and “curing” the evil in the world. Creech depicted evil in the world as attitudes and actions that arrogantly defy God, God’s ways, and the good of others in order to promote deviant self-interests. In the particular situation addressed in the speech, “evil” is attempting to “redefine marriage.” Second, as Rev. Creech presented his work combating something negative, he also presented his work as being done on behalf of some larger good. Creech presented the Christian Action League as working to promote the “common good” and preserve what is good in culture. It is significant for both this dissertation and the logic of Creech’s rhetoric that Creech concluded the speech rooting his marriage arguments in God’s “goodness,” thus exposing something larger at work in the terministic screen. In this speech, Rev. Creech depicted “good” as necessarily grounded in the

Divine, revealed in the scriptures, and benefiting humanity. While Creech claimed that the stakes of the battle over Amendment One are extremely high, his inclusion of other social issues and various purposes and ends around the issue signal that Amendment One is a particular battle in a larger war between “good” and “evil.”

The conflict between good and evil is central to the terministic screen in Rev. Creech’s “Marriage Amendment” speech. While good versus evil may initially appear to be a simplistic conflict, my cluster-agon analysis uncovered two complex clusters of terms supporting the key terms. These complex clusters display the narrative and dramatic relationships generating from and contributing to the central conflict between good and evil. My analysis of Rev. Creech’s speech revealed that the two opposing clusters were near perfect reflections of one another. The parallel clusters display the strength of the clash between good and evil as it manifest conflicts between the cluster’s various supporting terms.

The Cluster of Good

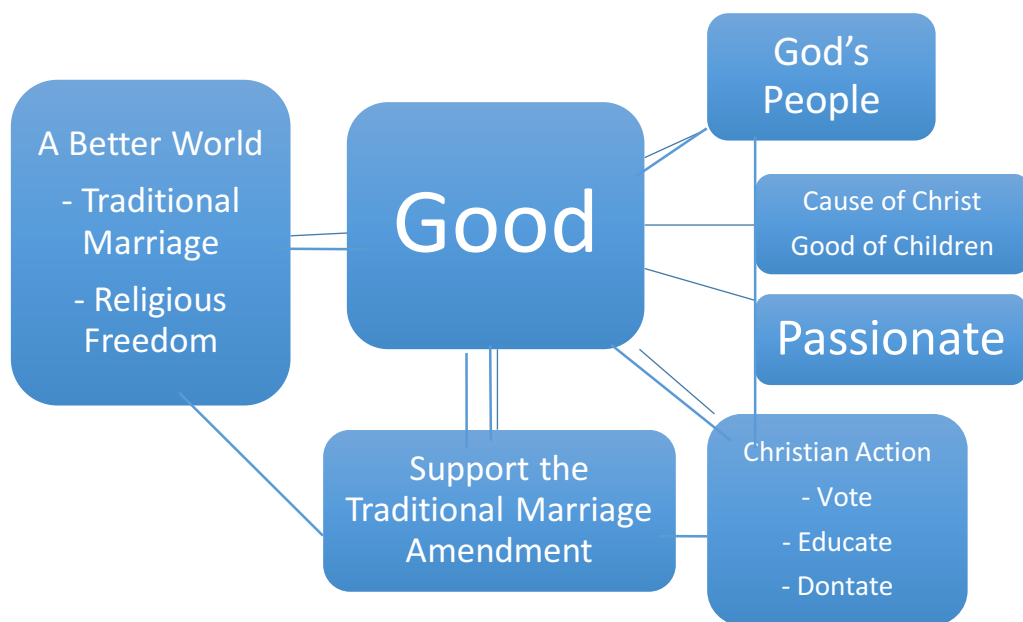


Figure 6. Creech’s Positive Cluster

As revealed above in the discussion of the speech's agon, the cluster of terms for what Rev. Creech was advocating for in his speech centered around the term "good." Within the logical framework of Creech's rhetoric, "good" is grounded in the goodness of God. Furthermore, according to Creech's logic, God's goodness is revealed most clearly in the Christian Scriptures, is consistent with human experience and "facts" about the world, and provides clear guidance to the ways of human flourishing and the common good. The nature and importance of the "good" in Creech's positive cluster will be more fully explained in the following analysis of the various satellites of supporting terms.

The first satellite term supporting the keyword "good" is the agent, "God's people." "God's people" acts as the term for the agents in Creech's positive cluster. The term is also the identity that Creech is clearly inviting the audience to take upon themselves. This identity places great dignity for the audience as belonging to God and great responsibility to act on God's behalf. Early in the speech Creech stated, "Christians are the ones who keep the world from going completely rotten and as light they arrest the darkness by exposing the evils of their day." At the end of the speech he called for "the passionate intensity of God's people to save America, to save our state from moral ruin." The logic's motivation for action based in an identity as God's people is complemented and strengthened by the logic that the positive clusters key action, and the good associated with it, is dependent on God's people. God's people, as the agent in the "good" cluster, are connected to satellites of motivating purposes, an attitude, and types of agency with which they take the primary good action.

A second satellite of terms identified in my analysis of the positive cluster consists of two purposes motivating the agents to action in support of the marriage amendment. In Creech's

terministic screen the people of God act for the purposes of the “cause of Christ” and the “good of children.” Creech explicitly stated these purposes at a transition point in his speech: “I hope you're not only thinking about the cause of Christ, but I hope you're thinking about your children, your grandchildren, and what kind of world they're going to be living in.” In the logic of the speech, Creech lifted the issue of the definition of marriage as exclusively a man and a woman to the level of theological primacy as to call it the “cause of Jesus Christ.” This motivation would be central for agents identified as the “people of God.” Rev. Creech prayed early in the speech, “Lord, to stir Your people to righteousness and advance the principles of Your kingdom.” Creech expanded the motivational purpose beyond what some might call the religious realm of life, saying “it's not only a spiritual battle, but it's also a battle about them (our children) and their future.” Creech further emphasized the purpose of benefiting the children by having the audience affirm their love for their children and grandchildren and promising that the marriage amendment will help the audience pass on a better world for their children.

The motivational force of the two purposes of Creech’s terministic screen led to an attitude that would distinguish the actions of the people of God. I have distinguished this attitude as “passion” and it acts as the third satellite in the “good” cluster. Toward the conclusion of the speech, Rev. Creech made an emotional plea for the audience to “be passionate.” He argued that the stakes of the battle between good and evil, manifested at the time in the vote for Amendment One, were extremely high and demanded passionate action. Furthermore, Creech claimed that the political opposition, operating on behalf of evil, were full of passion and the side that engaged the battle with the most passion would win the battle.

The fourth satellite of terms supporting the marriage amendment consists of the agencies through which the “people of God” can take the primary action in the “good” cluster. The

primary term in this agency satellite is “Christian action to protect traditional marriage.” Creech began, and framed, his speech by emphasizing the necessity of “Christian action” to expose and combat the “evil of their day.” Creech defined “Christian action” as “being involved in the political process.” The secondary terms in the agency satellite reveal more specific agencies available for the “people of God” to exercise the central agency of “Christian action to protect traditional marriage.” The agency terms are similar to the action steps identified in the discussion of Creech’s explicit strategies. The specific means that God’s people can use to take Christian action to protect traditional marriage are voting, educating, and giving financial support. Voting was the most significant secondary agency. Voting was mentioned frequently in the speech and is most directly related to the cluster’s central act. Creech also highlighted the role of education as means of agency for the people of God. In his terministic screen, “educate” related directly to the authoritative terms of the “Bible” and the “facts.” Educate also counteracted the “evil” cluster’s agency term of “lies.” The third and final term in the agency satellite is financial donation. Creech briefly mentioned the need for financial donations to assist efforts to “educate” the public on the “facts” about Amendment One. In Creech’s terministic screen, this means of action could offset the advertising spending acting as a means for the opposition to propagate their “lies.” The satellite of terms of agency in Creech’s “good” cluster provided the audience with a strong and unified agency in “Christian action to protect traditional marriage.” It also provided clear and multifaceted means of response for the audience with various levels of commitment to take the cluster’s central act.

The fifth satellite of the “good” cluster contains the cluster’s primary act. The primary act that the “people of God,” and the audience who is invited to embrace that persona, take in Creech’s terministic screen is to “support the traditional ‘marriage amendment.’” According to

Creech's logical framework, supporting North Carolina's Amendment One was the focus of Christian action because it was the only way to defend traditional, and divinely-designed, marriage against relentless, and fundamentally evil, attempts to "redefine marriage" by removing the requirement it be between a man and a woman. As discussed above, the "good" cluster's primary act of supporting the traditional marriage amendment is the focus of the cluster's satellites for the agent's purpose, attitude, and agency. The analysis of the "good" cluster's satellite of ends, discussed below, revealed the terms as the ends of the act of supporting the traditional marriage amendment. This central act is so deeply intertwined to the cluster's key term of "good" that I have drawn a double line connecting the two terms on the diagram.

The sixth and final satellite of terms in Creech's "good" cluster consists of the ends that will come from God's people acting in support of the traditional marriage amendment. This is a particularly large satellite of terms because Creech spent a considerable amount of time discussing the good ends of the action he called his audience to take. The primary term in the ends satellite is "better world." The end of a "better world" directly fulfills one of the agents' two purposes in the cluster's purpose satellite, thus providing a logical motivation. The satellite also contains two secondary ends which, according to the speech's logical framework, contribute to a "better world." The secondary ends of supporting the traditional marriage amendment are "traditional marriage" and "religious freedom."

Rev. Creech argued extensively that traditional marriage, marriage as exclusively one man and one woman, contributed to a better world. He primarily relied upon the terministic screen's authoritative sources of God and the Bible, identified in the agon section above, to present traditional marriage as the basis for a stable society, family commitment, and gender bonding. First, Creech exclaimed that the Bible clearly revealed that traditional marriage was

God's first institution and the institution God planned to serve as the cornerstone of society. Creech argued that God's plan of traditional marriage was rooted in God's goodness and intended for the good of humanity by creating stable and flourishing societies. Second, Creech presented traditional marriage as producing stable societies in part because a marriage between a man and a woman produced a deep family commitment, a commitment not possible in same-sex coupling. Creech supported this claim with traditional marriage as God's plan in the Bible and with "facts" about declining marriage rates in countries with same-sex marriage. Finally, Creech claimed that traditional marriage contributed to a better world because of the differences, attraction, and bonding that can take place between the two genders of man and woman. Creech supported this claim with appeals to both the audience's experience and the Bible's revelation that God's image is revealed in male and female, which Creech claimed meant God is most fully revealed in the union of a man and a woman. Within Creech's terministic screen, the goodness of supporting the traditional marriage amendment was supported by presenting the goodness of traditional marriage and the good that it brings to the world.

The final secondary end contributing to the better world created by God's people supporting the traditional marriage amendment is "religious freedom." The marriage amendment was positioned as the final protection against social, legal, and government-enforced persecution of citizens for acting on their religious and heartfelt beliefs in marriage as exclusively a man and a woman. Creech warned that the inevitable result of the "redefinition of marriage," repeatedly attempted by the opposition, was government forcing a new "legal orthodoxy" of marriage on unwilling citizens. The "religious freedom" end served as a sharp contrast to the "religious persecution" end of the redefinition of marriage cluster, presenting a clear choice for Creech's conservative religious audience. Creech's logic provided a motive of preserving the audience's

ability to maintain their capacity to practice deeply held beliefs in the face of a rhetorically constructed assault on their religious freedoms by the evil agents of the terministic screen's negative cluster.

The Cluster of Evil

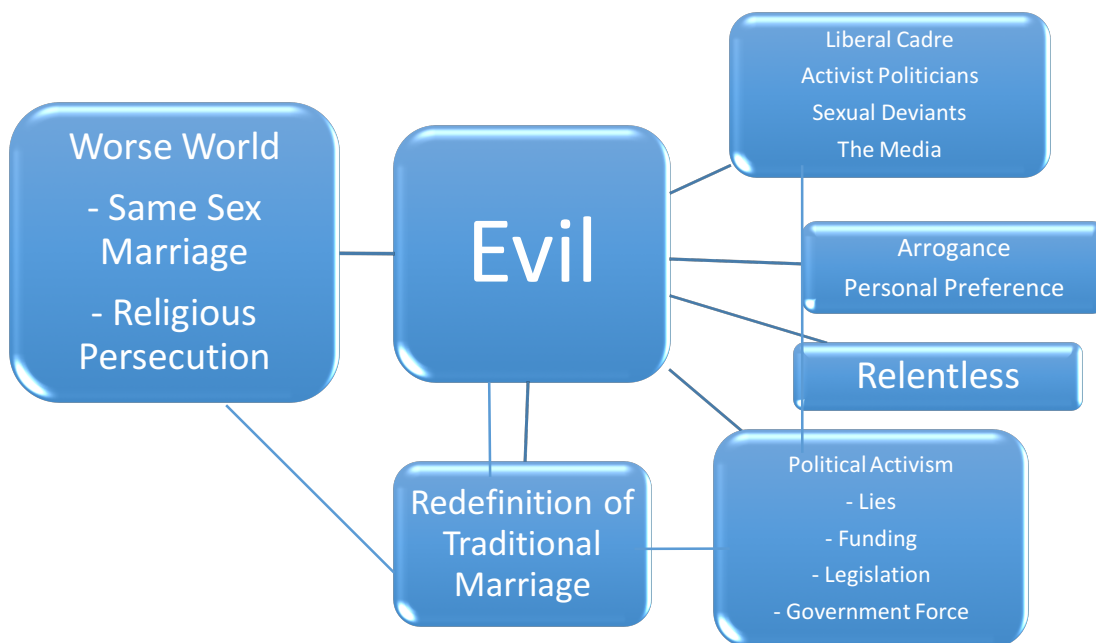


Figure 7. Creech's Negative Cluster

The key term and centerpiece of the negative cluster in Rev. Creech's "Marriage Amendment" speech's terministic screen is "evil." The term "evil" is clearly in opposition to the term "good." The designation of what is "good" and what is "evil" in Rev. Creech's terministic screen is grounded in the terministic screen's sources of authority. In this logical framework, "evil" is a rejection of the goodness of God and God's plans that are revealed in the Bible. Furthermore, such a rejection of goodness leads to harm for humans. As with the "good" cluster, I grouped the various supporting terms around "evil" in satellites based on the roles that the terms play in the cluster. These roles include agent, purpose, attitude, agency, act, and ends. The

“evil” cluster of terms and their logical relationships with each other, as well as their relationship to the oppositional terms in the “good” cluster, provide insights into the dynamic logic in Rev. Creech’s “Marriage Amendment” speech.

The first satellite of terms in the “evil” cluster is comprised of four different kinds of agents associated with evil. Going beyond merely naming opponents on a specific public policy, Creech described these agents in extremely stark terms, such as, “those people who are robbing our nation of its soul.” The “evil” agents satellite is in clear opposition to the agents - “God’s people” - in the “good” cluster. The first and primary agent in the satellite are a broad assortment of liberal political activist groups that Creech referred to as the “left-wing cadre.” The “left-wing cadre” included “abortionists,” “evolutionists,” atheists, and gay rights activists. While the causes identified were diverse, they were unified by their political action work for causes deemed “evil” in Creech’s terministic screen. A second type of agent in the evil cluster are groups of “sexual deviants,” who, Creech warns, are driven by “evil” desires to push the government to legalize various sexual behaviors and have any imaginable sexual pairing be called marriage. A third agent in the satellite are corrupt government leaders who willingly betray the will of the people to appease the “left-wing cadre” and “sexual deviants.” More specifically, Creech mentioned “showboating politicians” and “activist judges.” Finally, “the media” are included as an agent in the “evil” cluster as Rev. Creech fiercely condemned the media for its lack of objectivity and for intentionally misleading citizens with lies in order to advance the central act of the “evil” cluster. Having identified the agents in the “evil” cluster, I will now identify the purpose, attitude, and agency with which the four types of agents approach the cluster’s central act.

The second satellite of the “evil” cluster consists of the purpose motivating the agents’ action. The purpose in the “evil” cluster is “serving personal preference.” Creech accused the the opposition of arrogantly acting against the goodness of God and the good of humanity in order to serve their “personal preferences” on sexuality, relationships, and marriage. More specifically, Creech accused the agents of seeking their own “sexual convenience” and the advantage of “government benefits.” The self-serving purpose in the “evil” cluster is a sharp contrast to the purposes in the “good” cluster, which are focused on God and future generations. Within the speech’s terministic screen, the nature of the contrast between “good” and “evil” purposes contributed to the clear choice that Creech’s speech presented to the audience.

I have placed the attitude with which the agents approach the agencies and primary action in the cluster’s third satellite. The attitude in the “evil” cluster is “relentless.” While North Carolina had laws restricting marriage to one man and one woman at the time of the speech, Creech claimed the legal restriction was under relentless attacks by the “evil” cluster’s agents. He pointed out how the opposition had “redefined marriage” in other states, and he claimed that they were constantly looking for opportunities to “redefine marriage” in North Carolina. The “relentless” attitude of the “evil” agents increases the urgency of action in the “good” cluster, further warranting its call for “God’s people” to manifest a “passionate” attitude.

The fourth satellite of terms in the “evil” cluster consists of the means of agency that the agents use to accomplish the cluster’s primary act. My analysis identified one primary agency and four secondary agencies through which the agents could act. The primary agency of the “evil” agents in the terministic screen was “political activism against traditional marriage.” Rev. Creech described the opposition as being relentlessly engaged in various types of political activism in their self-serving attacks against traditional marriage. The satellite’s four secondary

terms are the agent's specific means of political activism. The first secondary means in the agency satellite is the opposition's lies and deceptive talking points. Creech directly made the accusation that the opposition would "argue something when you know it's not right, but, yet, you're doing it to scare folks out of voting for something." The opposition's lies are in direct contrast to the "facts" from the authority sources in the terministic screen. The second secondary means of the opposition is the large amount of funding given and used to propagate their self-serving lies about marriage and Amendment One to the general public. Third, the opposition attempts to use legislation to establish and impose a new "legal orthodoxy" of marriage upon citizens without their consent. Finally, in the "evil" cluster of the terministic screen, the opposition would use government force to accomplish their primary act. Creech warned that once legislation was passed the government would "exercise its broad enforcement powers" to ensure compliance to the redefinition of marriage by all citizens regardless of their religious and moral convictions. The five means in the agency satellite revealed how the agents may logically attempt to accomplish the cluster's central "evil" act.

The fifth satellite contains the primary act of the "evil" cluster. In Creech's "Marriage Amendment" speech, the primary "evil" act is the "redefinition of traditional marriage." The connection between "evil" and this primary action at the time of the speech is so strong in the speech's logical framework that I have drawn a double line joining the key term with "redefinition of traditional marriage." As noted earlier in the chapter, "redefinition of marriage" was Creech's definition of the legalization of same-sex marriage. Creech explained his opposition's attempts at action as, "a concerted effort ... today to redefine the sacred institution of marriage to include same-sex coupling." The analysis of the "evil" cluster has revealed the purpose, attitude, and agency that the "evil" agents bring to this primary action. Furthermore, and

explained in further detail in the description of the ends satellite, in the logic of Creech's speech, the legalization of same-sex marriage would not merely be an additional option for marriage. Instead, it would be a redefinition of a divinely-designed institution and the establishment and enforcement of a "new legal orthodoxy" upon unwilling citizens, to the detriment of the world.

The "evil" cluster also includes the ends that would follow the act of the redefinition of traditional marriage. The sixth satellite in my analysis of the negative cluster contains a primary and two secondary ends of the act. The primary end in the satellite is a "worse world." The two secondary ends contributing to the "worse world" are "same-sex marriage" and "religious persecution." These ends directly conflict with the ends in the terministic screen's positive cluster, "a better world," "traditional marriage" and "religious freedom." This sharp contrast provides a clear choice for the audience and, for those embracing Creech's terministic screen, a powerful motivation for action toward the "good" and away from the "evil" ends.

Rev. Creech argued that the "redefinition of traditional marriage" would result in "same sex-marriage," which was banned at the time in North Carolina, thus creating a "worse world." While Creech spent a considerable amount of time discussing same-sex marriage, it was entirely from the perspective of showing its inferiority to traditional marriage. Creech presented three outcomes of same sex marriage that he argued would make the world worse. First, Creech claimed that same-sex marriage would result in marriage becoming irrelevant. He cited the decline in marriage rates in nations where same sex marriage is legal as support to this claim. A second result of same-sex marriage in Creech's negative cluster is a lack of family commitment. Creech claimed that same sex marriage lacked the depth of traditional marriage and was based in "personal preference" and "sexual convenience" and therefore could not generate the depth of commitment required for healthy families. Third, Creech highlighted that same-sex marriage

would remove the role of gender from marriage. In Creech's logical framework, the elimination of gender differences and roles would result in the elimination of attraction and bonding that can only happen between two distinct genders.

Finally, the next secondary end of the "worse world" resulting from the redefinition of traditional marriage and contributing to the "worse world" end is "religious persecution." Creech claimed that the redefinition of traditional marriage would establish a new "legal orthodoxy" to which the Government would force citizens to conform to. In the speech's logical framework, the legalization of same-sex marriage would legally exclude the traditional definition of marriage. As a result of this "radical change," citizens who held to the traditional definition of marriage due to religious convictions would become "the legal equivalents of bigots for acting on their religious or heartfelt beliefs." Creech warned that aggressive legal action would be taken against anyone holding to moral or religious convictions about marriage as the government would act to enforce the new definition of marriage. Creech supported these claims and increased the urgency of his call for action by citing lawsuits and fear of lawsuits in states where same-sex marriage is legal.

The Fight for Salvation from the Threat

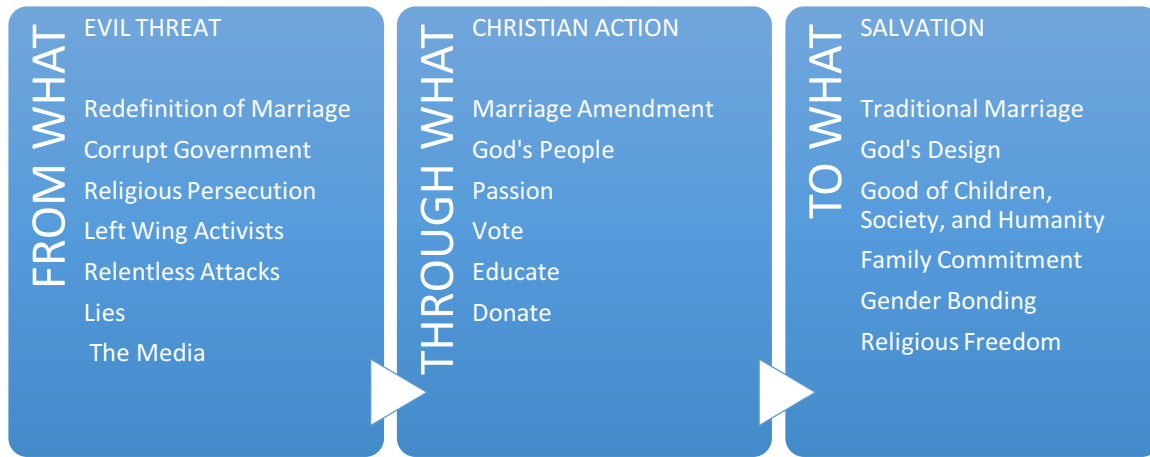


Figure 8. Narrative Arc Analysis

As seen in chapter three, the terministic screen in a clergy member's political action text contains both the underlying relational alignment and narrative progression of the text. The cluster-agon analysis revealed the dramatic relationships and opposition in Rev. Creech's speech. This alignment presented a clear choice between good and evil for the audience in their choice to act to support the traditional marriage amendment or act for the redefinition of traditional marriage. The narrative arc analysis discussed in this section reveals the narrative underlying Creech's speech. More specifically, the narrative arc analysis reveals the beginning, middle, and end of the narrative within the speech. This guiding narrative contains a logic of how the audience can make the choice between the two oppositional clusters of good and evil. The narrative arc analysis reveals what the speech calls the audience to move from, what the audience needs to move through in order to make the transition, and what the audience is invited to move

to. In Creech's speech and terministic screen the audience is introduced to an engaging story of moving from the danger of evil threats to the world by relentless attacks on traditional marriage to the salvation of the world where traditional marriage is protected because of Christian action in support of the traditional marriage amendment.

Rev. Creech's speech at the marriage amendment rally contained a narrative that provided salvation from the evil threat that Creech argued was facing the audience. Creech claimed that a current manifestation of evil that threatened to harm humanity by defying God's purposes in the world was the relentless attempt to redefine traditional marriage. This evil threat was the arrogant and self-serving work of left-wing activists, corrupt politicians, and the media. In the narrative, these actors of evil were currently using and would continue using various forms of political activism in their continued attempts to redefine traditional marriage. They use extensive lies, large amounts of funding, and government power to wage their vicious attacks against the goodness of God's plan of traditional marriage and the benefits it brings to individuals, families, and society. Finally, in this initial stage of the narrative arc, citizens who hold to religious convictions about traditional marriage face the threat of harsh religious persecution. This initial stage of the narrative would be extremely negative within the logic of the terministic screen, motivating the audience to seek change.

The middle stage of Creech's narrative provides the audience with descriptions of what a departure from the first stage of the narrative, the stage marked by the evil threat, would entail. The narrative's middle stage invited the audience to move from the evil threat through Christian action to protect traditional marriage. Creech established Christian action as a major theme early in the speech, claiming that Christian action was "the only lasting cure for evil and injustice." By "Christian" Creech was speaking of action taken by "God's people," which means conservative

evangelical Christians in his terministic screen. The “action” that Creech spoke of was political activism to influence government legislation. The narrative arc includes three means of Christian activism needed to escape from the evil threat against traditional marriage. First and foremost, the audience was repeatedly encouraged to vote and get others to vote for the traditional marriage amendment. Second, the audience was told to “be informed” and “educate others.” This education was to be based in the Bible and the “facts” as identified as the source of authority in the terministic screen. Third, God’s people could participate in Christian action by giving money to the campaign to defend traditional marriage. These donations would counteract the political activism and propagation of lies currently advancing the evil threat. Finally, at the conclusion of the speech, Creech emphasized the need for “passionate intensity” as essential to escaping the evil threat against traditional marriage. This stage of the narrative provided the audience with clear and realistic steps to take toward the narrative’s fulfillment.

The final stage of my narrative arc analysis identified what Creech’s speech called the audience toward. The narrative progression in Rev. Creech’s speech led the audience to salvation from the evil threat against traditional marriage. Salvation from the evil threat protected God’s design for marriage and goodness for children and all of humanity. In Creech’s logical framework, salvation from the evil threat against traditional marriage preserves the stable society, strong family commitments, and bonding between genders that are associated with traditional marriage in the terministic screen. Finally, salvation from the evil threat against traditional marriage also preserves the religious freedoms under attack in the evil cluster of the terministic screen. The salvation scene of the narrative contained many of the same terms identified in the “better world” ends satellite of the speech’s positive cluster, presenting a highly

desirable goal within the speech's logical framework, and thus advancing Creech's purpose of mobilizing the audience to take Christian action in defense of traditional marriage.

The Theological Logic of the Marriage Battle

The cluster – agon analysis and narrative arc analysis of Rev. Creech's keynote address at the April 30, 2012 Marriage Amendment Rally has revealed the speech's terministic screen. The terministic screen provided dramatic conflict, personal and cosmic purposes, and a high-stakes decision for the audience. In the terministic screen, God's people, guided by God's revelation in the Bible, are God's agents of good in the world. God's people have God's plan for marriage, a plan that is crucial to the good of the world. However, in the terministic screen, God's plan and goodness in the world is under aggressive and relentless attack by agents of evil, and God's people must actively battle these agents. Specifically, evil agents are attacking goodness by attempting to redefine marriage. God's people have one chance to prevent the redefinition of marriage and save the state from great peril by acting to pass the "marriage amendment." In summary, the speaker has Divine clarity and authority regarding a current issue on the ballot, a ruthless enemy was attempting to defy God and ruin humanity, and the audience had a clear role to play to avoid disaster.

One of the more striking elements of Creech's speech was the prominence of theological claims in the explicit tactics. The analysis of Creech's implied strategies revealed that theology also played prominent roles in the speech's terministic screen. In this section of the chapter, I will identify and explore several points of theology in Creech's terministic screen in order to evaluate how specific theological logics constrain and animate the speech. The terministic screen reveals a number of particular claims about God and God's interactions with the world that are

integral to the internally consistent logical framework that the speech reflects and generates, exposing the motivational dynamics at work with Creech and his audience. While the terministic screen reveals the logical appeal of Creech's rhetoric, the in-depth analysis of the text also reveals tensions or weaknesses in the logic of the terministic screen, including weaknesses related to certain theological logics.

God Speaks Primarily through the Bible

The first piece of theology that makes a significant impact on the speech's internal logic is the logic that God speaks primarily through the Bible. This theology was discussed extensively in the chapter's agon analysis. While "God" is the ultimate authority in the terministic screen, the Bible acts as the primary way that God's authority is expressed in the logical framework. The Bible is the primary source for the designation of "good" and "evil." The authority of the Bible was seen most clearly in Creech's claim that the first two chapters of the biblical book of Genesis are the only source of knowledge on God's plan for marriage, sexuality, and relationships. Creech made that explicit claim early in the speech and then supported the claim by reasoning that Jesus referenced those texts when answering a question about marriage. This theology influences the logic to consult the Bible for revelation of "God's will" in order to determine and defend a position in a contemporary political debate.

The theological inspiration that God's plan for marriage can only be found in one very small section of one sacred book contributed to a number of rhetorical opportunities for Creech. First, the claim narrowed the complex situation into one limited focus. Creech did not need to address the multiple aspects of the debate around the amendment. He did not need to discuss law, culture, implementation, or other relevant topics. Instead, he only needed to address the Bible passage. Second, in addition to narrowing the focus of the debate, the theology provided Creech

the opportunity to bring a sense of clarity to the situation. Creech simply needed to state his interpretation of the biblical text and his understanding of its implications for the issue of Amendment One. Creech further rhetorically constructed this clarity by excluding dissenting voices on the interpretation of the text or its implications on the situation. Third, the theological claim provided the speaker and audience with a shared text to consult on the situation and a source of authoritative guidance. This theology reflected the conservative evangelical tradition of both Creech and the church in which his speech was given. In the theological logic of segments of the conservative evangelical tradition, the “plain reading” of the Bible is taken as the inerrant and authoritative Word of God (Smith, 2011, loc. 200).

The first issue of tension in the logic has to do with the role of human experience as a source of authority in arguing that marriage is exclusively between a man and a woman is God’s design for marriage. The theology of the terministic screen presents God’s intent for marriage as only understandable through Genesis chapters one and two. However, the speech also included arguments for marriage between a man and a woman as God’s exclusive plan based on presumed human experience of differences and attractions between different genders. There is tension in the logic of claiming the biblical text as the only way to know God’s plan, but then using human experience as a support for that plan. The use of human experience proves to create another weakness in the logic. If God’s exclusive design of marriage can be proven in the experience of difference and attraction between genders, then there is a weakness in the argument when humans experience gender in ways that disrupt the social binaries of gender roles and attributes. The argument from human experience is further weakened by human experience of attraction between people of the same gender.

The theology that God speaks primarily through the Bible and, more specifically, the claim that the biblical text of Genesis provides the only way to know God's plan for marriage, sexuality, and relationships creates another set of weaknesses in the terministic screen's logic. The biblical text, which was read in the speech, does not explicitly state the primary argument of the speech, that the audience should support the "marriage amendment." At some point there is significant interpretation of the text to get to Creech's position. There could be other interpretations and applications of this text and different applications of this text on the issue of North Carolina's Amendment One. There is a step in the logic of the terministic screen that equates not questioning God's plan revealed in the Bible with not questioning Creech's policy position. The call to take action in support of the traditional marriage amendment does not rest solely on the authority of the biblical text, despite Creech's claim to the contrary. The logic, or weaknesses in the logic, of the terministic screen reveals that there is an authority higher than the biblical text itself. Creech's interpretation of the proper application of the biblical text to this particular policy is the primary authority in this speech. This creates a tension in the logic of the theological claim that Genesis chapters one and two is the only way to understand God's plan for marriage, sexuality, and relationships. If Creech's interpretation and application of the biblical text functions as authority over the Bible, the tension in logic extends beyond the theological logic, creating a tension in the logic of the text's populist rhetoric. Creech, who forcefully claimed that the citizens and God should decide what counts for marriage in North Carolina, by very nature of his speech, places himself above the rest of God's people as the person who should make that decision.

God Works Primarily through the Political Action of God's People

A second significant theological statement in Rev. Creech's terministic screen is that God works in the world primarily through the political action of God's people. While the Bible is the primary source of knowing God's will in the terministic screen, God's people are the primary way that God works in the world. As noted in the textual analysis, Creech appears to use "God's people" for conservative evangelical Christians like himself and the congregation where he delivered the marriage amendment rally keynote address. In the speech's logical framework, the agents of "good," as defined by God through the Bible, are God's people.

This theology logic carries a second significant point; God works through God's people specifically through political action, which Creech calls "Christian action." Christian action was described in the agency satellite of the "good" cluster earlier in the chapter. Creech clearly expressed this theological logic in framing his speech with the motto of the Christian Action League, "The only lasting cure for evil and injustice is Christian action." The specific agencies identified in the speech indicate that "Christian action" refers to political action taken by Christians (i.e. conservative evangelicals) rather than some type of action that is uniquely "Christian."

The theological logic that God works in the world primarily through the political action of God's people inspires Creech's logical framework in a variety of ways. First, the theology provides a powerful identity for the audience as "God's people," a people connected with the goodness of God. Second, the theology places the stakes of audience action on cosmic level. As seen in Rev. Barber's speech in chapter three, the theology widens the scope of audience action; in this case, action on a constitutional amendment, to the breadth of good against evil. In addition to a sense of purpose, the theology also instills a significant responsibility on the audience to act

as the goodness of God in the world and thus, the defeat of evil is essentially dependent upon them. Third, this theological logic also provides the audience some clarity on how they accomplish their divinely-mandated responsibility. The audience embracing the terministic screen can be confident that they are serving as God's good agents if they are politically active on issues that their clergy identify as key biblical issues.

While this theological logic contributes to a coherent logical system, it also opens the possibility for some tensions in the terministic screen. The potential tensions can be found with the claim that God primarily speaks through the Bible while the biblical texts may challenge the theology that God works primarily through the political action of God's people. First, there are texts in the Bible in which God is seen acting through people who are not recognized as "God's people." While the biblical story emphasizes communities with the identity of God's people, the narrative is sprinkled with examples of God and God's actions not being limited to working with those specific communities. In those biblical examples, God worked supernaturally, in historical events, and even through the words and actions of religious outsiders. Second, the Bible was not written in a context with anything like modern American political activism. This dissimilarity makes it difficult to argue from the Bible that God only works through activism within the political system. Quite to the contrary, in the biblical narrative, especially in the Christian New Testament, God's people are seen doing the work of God outside of or even while subverting the political system of their day. These tensions between the theological logic of God primarily working through the political action of God's people and the theological logic of the authority of the Bible are certainly reduced when the authority of the Bible is channeled through a preacher with this terministic screen. Still, the designation of the Bible as an authority may challenge this

theology in Creech's terministic screen as he shares with audiences who also view the Bible as an authority.

God's People are in a Holy War Against Liberals

A related theological inspiration in Creech's terministic screen is that God's people, whom Creech seems to equate with conservative evangelicals, are in a holy war against liberal activists including progressive interest groups, the media, and liberal judges and politicians. The conflict between God's people and liberal activists is rooted in their identity as agents of opposing clusters in the terministic screen. The conflict of the agents is as large as the cosmic conflict between good and evil. God's people promote God's goodness and combat evil. Liberal activists attack God's good plans and work evil in the world. Furthermore, within the speech's logical framework, liberal activists are opposed to God and are condemned by God.

The fight between God's people and liberals in this speech was focused on the issue of marriage; the two sides take different actions, motivated by conflicting purposes, and moving toward dramatically different ends. However, the speech and terministic screen reveal a deeper divide than the issue of marriage in at least three ways. First, Creech mentioned a variety of political and social differences that divide liberals and God's people, expanding the violent term of a "fight" beyond the vote on Amendment One. Second, the contrast between "religious persecution" in the negative cluster and the first stage of the the narrative arc and "religious freedom" in the positive cluster and final stage of the narrative arc reveals a crucial underlying conflict in which the liberals attack the core identity of "God's people" as a religious people and God's people fight back in a desperate attempt at survival. Third, and in sharp contrast to the conflict analyzed in chapter three, Creech offered no possibility of the opposition changing their ways and aligning with God's people. There is no mention of a "Godly liberal" joining God's

people in this particular fight. Instead, the “liberal cadre” is a rhetorically created coalition relentlessly attacking God’s people and the ways of God. According to Creech’s terministic screen, God’s people must act to defeat liberals for the glory of God, the good of humanity, and their own survival as a religious people.

The theological logic that God’s people are at war against liberals provides several elements of motivation for action. First, the threat of a ruthless external enemy provides a clear point of contrast which can serve as a source of identification and cohesion for the audience. The strong sense of a unified group identity, heightened by the alignment with God and God’s good in the world, opens the audience to take unified action; in this case, supporting the traditional marriage amendment through Christian action. Second, as I argued above that the theology of being on God’s side and doing God’s work increased the depth and breadth of motivation for the audience, I propose that this alignment with the Divine is all the more motivating when put in terms of group identity in the context of a war against opponents who are not aligned with the Divine. This theology expands motivation beyond actions, ends, and even purposes, to a motivation of a dearly-held and cosmically-significant identity as God’s people. Third, the war between God’s people provides the audience with a motivation of a fight for survival. The stark contrast between God’s people and liberals, seen clearly in the oppositional clusters they inhabit in my cluster-agon analysis, and the framing of the efforts of liberals as attacks on God’s ways and the religious freedoms of God’s people places the battle over marriage law in the context of a larger war for survival.

This theological inspiration in Creech’s terministic screen, while problematic for civil democratic discourse, inflicts very little tension on the coherence of the speech’s logical framework. In fact, I propose that the powerful motivation of this theology as identified in the

previous paragraph is so rhetorically compelling that it compensates for many of the tensions in logic I identified in my analysis of other theological inspirations. This theological inspiration does create one tension in the internal logic, however. If God supports religious freedom and God supports God's people, defined as conservative evangelicals, and opposes liberals, then there seems to be a tension with what kinds of freedoms God would favor for people of religious faith who are politically liberal due to their religious faith. The logic of a war between conservative evangelicals and liberals suggests that religious freedom must be limited to freedom of those of a particular religion, a definition many would find problematic. While not an element of this speech, Creech has dealt with this tension when addressing Rev. Dr. William Barber and the liberal-leaning Moral Monday meeting by dismissing their religious beliefs (O'Neil, 2013).

Traditional Marriage is God's Purpose and the Cause of Christ

A fourth significant theological logic in Rev. Creech's terministic screen is that traditional marriage is God's purpose and the cause of Christ. Creech built off of the first theological logic in the terministic screen, that the Bible, more specifically the Genesis narrative of Adam and Eve, is the only revelation of God's plan for marriage, a theological logic that God designed marriage as exclusively between a male and a female. Creech's theological emphases went on to include the logic that traditional marriage is God's purpose. First, God intended that the differences between men and women facilitate attraction, bonding, and distinct and complementary roles between the two genders. Second, God planned marriage between two different genders for the good of children, society, and humanity. The logic is further extended, and perhaps stretched, beyond the argument of earthly benefits of traditional marriage with the theological claim that marriage as one man and one woman is the "cause of Christ," expanding the scope of the issue to the cosmic realm and from a plan to a cause, thus intensifying the

urgency. Creech provides additional theologically-inspired logical support and significance with the claim that the Image of God in humans is only fully expressed by a relationship between the two genders.

The theology that traditional marriage is God's purpose and the cause of Christ contributes to the speech's logical framework and motivation. The theological logic makes the high claim that marriage as a man and a woman is God's plan and purpose for marriage, moving the source beyond human culture, tradition, or religion and onto the Divine. Creech's terministic screen includes the theological emphases that God is the highest authority and wisdom and that God acts for the good of the world. This logic facilitated Creech's denouncing of the arrogance and foolishness of humans - the political opposition - attempting to alter God's good and wise plan for marriage. Furthermore, in the speech's theologically-inspired logical framework the redefinition of marriage as arrogant and foolish, and even dangerous and damning for children, for the state, and for the world as it is an assault on the wisdom and goodness of God. The audience is motivated to combat such an evil attack that would harm humanity and foil God's good intentions. Furthermore, the logic of this sacredness of marriage increased the value and importance of marriage beyond the benefits of a divinely-orchestrated design to the very revelation of God to humanity.

The theological logic about marriage also creates some tension in the logic of the terministic screen. First, there is a tension between the theological logic that the Bible is the only revelation about God's plan for marriage and Creech's claims about marriage which seem to go beyond the "plain reading of the text" and rely upon cultural norms and individual experiences. For example, beyond the claim that God made a man and a woman, the theological rhetoric about gender differences, attraction, bonding, and roles are not given support from the book of

Genesis. Any support that is given is dependent upon presumed audience experiences. Second, the logic that the Image of God requires both male and female in order to be fully present is challenged by the delivery of the claim. Creech delivered this theological statement as a male preacher, acting without a woman in presentation or even in citation. If the logic holds that the Image of God requires both male and female, then it should at least suggest that a man should teach with, or at least extensively cite a woman when declaring the plan, purpose, and cause of God.

God is on the Side of Religious Freedom

Another piece of theological inspiration in Rev. Creech's terministic screen is the logic that God is on the side of religious freedom. This theological logic emerged from Creech's framing of North Carolina's Amendment One as a fight to protect citizens' rights to hold their "heartfelt" religious convictions about marriage against the threat of religious persecution by liberals and the government. In this fight, God's people are on the side of God's purpose of marriage, and God is on the side of God's people to hold, practice, and promote God's position on marriage.

This theological logic places God on the side of the audience in the midst of rhetorically constructed threats to their religious freedom, specifically the freedom to hold religious convictions and practices of traditional marriage rather than a hypothetical liberal redefinition of marriage. The theological logic that God is on the audience's side complements the theological logic that the audience is on God's side. As the various theological emphases interacted in Creech's terministic screen, a theological logic developed in which God and God's people support each other against attacks of their liberal enemies.

This theological logic that places God on the side of religious freedom contributes to a tension in the terministic screen that also contains a logic that condemns questioning of one specific understanding of God's plan. It becomes unclear what type of religious freedom God could support if God is also against change or questioning of the status quo or dominant religious view. While Creech decried the scenario of the government interfering with a citizen's "heartfelt" religious belief that marriage was an exclusive union between a man and a woman, the logic of the terministic screen would firmly oppose different beliefs and practices about marriage beyond Creech's definition, even if those beliefs were "heartfelt" and religious. Amending the North Carolina Constitution so that there is no possibility of change in the definition of marriage appears to conflict with the claim that God supports the religious freedom of individual citizens given that citizens hold divergent understandings of marriage based, at least in part, on divergent religious beliefs and practices.

Culture War Theology's Logical Patterns of Motivation

My close textual analysis of Rev. Mark Creech's keynote address at the Marriage Amendment Rally revealed the terministic screen at work in the political action text. I have focused specifically on the activity of theology in the terministic screen. The analysis has identified a logic that appeals to many who encounter Rev. Creech's rhetoric. In this logic: the speaker has Divine clarity and authority on the current issue on the ballot; there is an enemy attempting to defy God, harm humanity, and eliminate the audience; and the audience has a clear role to play to avoid disaster. I have also identified points of weakness in the logic of the terministic screen, places where the theological inspirations appear to lead to conflicts and complications within the logical framework. Understanding the logic of the terministic screen,

both the points of strength and weakness, allows the rhetorical scholar to make predictions of where the rhetoric will lead those who accept the invitation of the terministic screen. I will conclude this chapter by forecasting three key areas that Rev. Creech's terministic screen may lead his audience if it were to remain consistent over time.

First, Creech's theologically-infused political rhetoric will likely contribute to further decay in democratic deliberation in politics. His rhetoric demonizes the social and political opposition, moving beyond attacks on specific differences of policy or political philosophy to attacks on identity. The logic of the rhetoric fosters a deep distrust and animosity toward outsiders because of the rhetorical construction of the outsider's identity as evil. Judgment of the political opposition, in this case a cosmic condemnation, is made on the basis of their identity prior to any political actions, purpose, or goals. The absolute division between the identity of two political opponents in the terministic screen eliminates the need for or appeal of dialogue, compromise, or collaboration. When adopted, the logic of war against a dangerous and fully-other enemy, reduces political action to mobilizing one side to defeat, and perhaps, if the logic is taken far enough, even punish or eliminate the political opposition. The logic of this rhetoric does not allow the "fight" to end with one particular battle over a specific policy difference. Instead, because the conflict runs as deep as the very identity of the political adversaries, the fight must continue until the war is complete and the opposition is defeated. The tendency of this logic toward extremism is made all the more extreme through the theological logic that places the source of judgment, in this case the blessing of conservative evangelicals and condemnation of political liberals, in the highest imaginable authority, God. This theological logic does not necessitate but certainly can facilitate a win-at-any-cost ethic of political warfare.

Second, the logical framework of Mark Creech's theologically-infused political action rhetoric will likely leave no room for dissent within the conservative evangelical community he represents. This conclusion of the logical framework is not the result of any one particular theological inspiration examined in my analysis of the speech. In fact, some of the theological inspirations in the terministic screen, namely, the audience as God's people, the importance of religious freedom, and the Bible as the highest authority, should provide a logic against exclusion of dissenting voices in the religious community. However, I argue that some of the logical tensions identified in the previous section will likely lead to a logic that will not tolerate any descent on Creech's proclamations on what the Bible says and how it should be applied to the immediate social and political context. More specifically, this logic of exclusion will most likely be engaged on issues related to the rhetorically constructed war between God's people and liberals, as the logic of war rhetoric leads toward authoritarian leadership and the exclusion of dissenting opinions. A theological logic that recognizes the community as God's people, values religious freedom, and claims the Bible as the highest source of God's revelation could logically lead to a rhetoric of free and respectful dialogue and debate over the interpretation of the Biblical text and its appropriate application. However, the fear and urgency in the theological logic of the (culture) war rhetoric incited by Creech invited him to act as the authoritative voice of God's plan and purpose for the audience. This approach induced some of the points of tension in the logic discussed above in the analysis of Creech's theological rhetoric, particularly the large gaps in the logic between claims of the Bible's authority on marriage and sexuality followed by specific theological claims about Amendment One and other issues not addressed in the biblical text. In practice, Creech took on the position of highest authority on God's position on the marriage amendment. This logic leads to Creech, not God's people or even the Bible, acting as

the voice for God in this (culture) wartime crisis, and likely leaves no room for dissenting opinions. It is likely that this authoritative wartime rhetorical style would continue beyond the battle of marriage in North Carolina and on to other political battles in the culture war, once again placing Creech or another like-minded preacher in the position of authority to declare the will of God and making adherence of his decrees the litmus test of faithful membership in the community.

Finally, the logic of Creech's terministic screen will likely lead the audience to make a particularly deep investment into the issue of the constitutional amendment on marriage. The logical framework revealed in my cluster-agon analysis and narrative arc analysis connected the traditional marriage amendment to the "good" center of the positive cluster and an end goal of the narrative progression. As the focus of the terministic screen, particularly with strong theological influences inspiring significance throughout the terministic screen, audience members who embrace the logic will likely respond by accepting Creech's plea for "passionate intensity" on the issue, perhaps even embracing Creech's claim that it is the "cause of Christ." Indeed, when one considers the position of prominence on Amendment One that many conservative evangelicals in North Carolina had allowed Creech and the overwhelming degree to which the amendment was passed, such factors suggest that many of Creech's audience members accepted the logic of deeply investing in this issue.

While an audience responding to a rhetor's political action text by deeply investing in the particular issue at the center of the speech is precisely the outcome desired by the speaker and his logical framework, the logic of the single issue holding cosmic importance within the terministic screen carries some long-term hazards for Creech's Christian Action League. First, a deep investment into a single issue can lead to neglect of other issues that become important in the

rhetorically constructed culture war between good and evil. Second, while success on the particular issue may embolden the audience for future action, it may also lead to complacency when faced with other issues because, according to the logical framework, the audience has already addressed the most important issue. Third, if the audience is defeated on the issue of central importance in the logical framework, the audience may understandably be devastated to the point of hopelessness because they were so deeply invested in a cause and had understood the stakes to be so high. Fourth, a theological logic that places a specific ballot item as a Divine cause displays an openness to presenting other specific ballot items as a Divine cause. Excessive repetition of political ballot issues framed as matters of Divine importance and urgency can leave an audience of mortals with issue exhaustion or cynicism. Fifth, a final potential long-term danger of the audience's deep investment into the issue at the center of the logical framework is that the audience can uncritically embrace every element placed in alignment with the issue, even to the point of neglecting crucial details about the issue. As discussed earlier in the chapter, a comparison of Creech's claims about the marriage amendment with the actual Amendment One reveals key contradictions overlooked by Creech's enthusiastic audience.

This analysis of Rev. Mark Creech's keynote address at the April 30, 2012 Marriage Amendment Rally has identified numerous theological emphases in Creech's terministic screen, identified motivations and tensions in the logic generated by certain theological logics, and anticipated outcomes of some of the logics in the theologically-animated rhetoric. My analysis has demonstrated the logical outcomes of specific theological emphases at work in the terministic screen. While the theological logics are not the only element at work in Rev. Creech's political action rhetoric, I argue that the specific theological logics participate in the rhetoric's logical framework in ways other theologies would not participate.

In the course of this analysis I have mentioned that a few of Creech's theological statements reflect the specific segment of the conservative evangelical theological tradition to which he and his audience belong. If my claim that specific theological logics tend to animate and constrain political action rhetoric in certain ways, then the common theological logics found in Creech's terministic screen and in other conservative evangelical political action rhetoric should exhibit similarities. Recent rhetorical studies of American conservative evangelicalism (Crowley, 2006; Edwards, 2015) have revealed both theological emphases and rhetorical logics similar to what I have found in this analysis of Rev. Creech's political action text. More specifically, these studies of conservative evangelical rhetoric have identified that the logical outgrowth of theological rhetoric about the absolute authority of the "plain reading" of the Bible to current events combined with theological rhetoric of Divinely-sanctioned culture war against the political opposition often leads to authoritative, divisive, and Machiavellian political discourse that threatens civil discourse. And while, as noted in the analysis of Creech's terministic screen, no specific element of conservative evangelical theology directly necessitates such toxic rhetoric, combinations of certain theological inspirations may act in ways that poison the fountain of public discourse.

Chapter 5: Bishop Burbidge's Prayer and Advocacy

The Growing Catholic Voice in North Carolina

The inclusion of Christian theologies in clergy political action texts in North Carolina between 2010 and 2015 extended beyond the debates between politically progressive and conservative Protestant Christians. The Catholic Church has increasingly become a political force in North Carolina as it experienced significant growth over the past fifty years. Some public policies endorsed by the Catholic Church during this period of sharp political division aligned with political progressives, and on other issues aligned with political conservatives. The Catholic Church holds a number of distinct theological emphases from those found in the rhetoric of the predominantly Protestant Moral Monday and Christian Action League. In this chapter I will analyze a political action text of the Bishop of Raleigh to uncover how theology animates and constrains a Catholic Bishop's political action text.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Raleigh has grown in number and influence in its relatively brief existence. Pope Pius XI established the Diocese of Raleigh on December 12, 1924. At the time, the Diocese covered the entire State of North Carolina. The entire Catholic population in the state was just 6,000 ("Our History," n.d., para. 4). The Catholic population grew to approximately 70,000 in the Diocese' first fifty years. In 1972, Pope Paul VI split the Diocese in half to create the Diocese of Charlotte covering the western half of the State of North Carolina, leaving the Diocese of Raleigh on the eastern half of the state ("Our History," n.d., para. 5). There are still two Catholic Dioceses - each overseen by a Bishop - in North Carolina today.

The Catholic population in the Diocese of Raleigh, and the entire state of North Carolina, has continued to grow at a rapid rate. In 64 years the Catholic population in the Diocese of Raleigh grew from just over 22,000, comprising 0.5% of the state's population, to 245,000 when it covered only half of the state ("Diocese of Raleigh," n.d., statistics). Adding the 245,000 Catholics in the Diocese of Raleigh to the Catholic population of 236,000 in the Diocese of Charlotte reveals a state-wide Catholic population of approximately 481,000, comprising about 5% of the state's total population. While those numbers show a significant growth for the Catholic Church, those numbers are a drastic underestimation of the current number of Catholics in the state. An accurate assessment of Catholics in North Carolina must include the significant number of undocumented residents participating in the life of the Church. Factoring in undocumented Hispanic Catholics, the number of which is estimated at approximately 250,000 in the Diocese of Raleigh alone ("The Diocese," n.d., para. 2), the percentage of North Carolina's population who are Catholic is closer to 10% ("Percentage of Catholics," n.d.). The dramatic increase in Catholic population appears largely related to Catholic families relocating to North Carolina. This relocation growth includes both immigration of Hispanic Catholics from Latin America as well as migration of Catholic citizens to North Carolina from other states. The Diocese of Raleigh estimates that only five percent of the state's Catholic population is native to North Carolina ("The Diocese," n.d., para. 2). The fact that immigration has contributed to the majority of the Catholic Church's growth in North Carolina indicates that issues of immigration are likely on the minds of the clergy and laity.

In addition, and likely connected to the rapid growth of Catholics in North Carolina, the Catholic Church has also grown in influence in the state's political discourse. The Bishops of the two North Carolina Dioceses have continued the Church's tradition of social teaching and, more

specifically, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' tradition of applying Catholic social teaching to contemporary American social and political issues. The Bishop of Raleigh and the Bishop of Charlotte have established *Catholic Voice NC*, which describes itself as "the nonpartisan voice of North Carolina's Bishops" ("Home," n.d.). *Catholic Voice NC* clearly claims that it operates under the authority of the Bishops. The website explains that the Bishops are updated on pressing state and national political issues. When the Bishops discern that a matter is urgent and important based on Catholic social teachings, they ask *Catholic Voice NC* subscribers to take action by contacting their state and/or national representatives. The website seeks to inform North Carolina Catholics about Church positions on current political issues and to communicate the Catholic perspective on pressing political issues to state and national representatives ("About Us," n.d., para 1). In addition to alerts on specific political actions, the website also highlights the six general issues that *Catholic Voice NC* emphasizes as enduring issues of primary concern. More specifically, the website highlights "Respect Life and Stem Cell Research," "Family Life," "End of Life," "Hunger and Poverty," "Immigration," and "Religious Liberty" ("Issues," n.d.). The website also provides links to resources for Catholic teachings on these six issues. *Catholic Voice NC* serves as an example of how the growing Catholic population in North Carolina might influence the political debates in the state.

The Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge is the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh. Burbidge was appointed Bishop of Raleigh by Pope Benedict XVI on June 8, 2006. Burbidge had previously served as the auxiliary bishop in the Diocese of Philadelphia, his home diocese where he was also ordained as a priest in 1984 ("Bishop," n.d., para. 1). In addition to a responsibility to govern over their diocese, Bishops in the Catholic Church serve as the primary teachers for the diocese ("How We Teach," n.d., para. 3). While a diocese will have multiple

teachers in both the vocations of the priesthood and education, the primary authority resides with the Bishop. As the leader and primary teacher of more than half of the Catholics in North Carolina, Bishop Burbidge is certainly a prominent and influential clergy member on matters of theology, politics, and the rhetorical intersections between theology and politics. The Bishop's choice to co-found *Catholic Voice NC* and his various public statements on pressing political issues, including the statement analyzed in this chapter, demonstrate Burbidge's willingness to wield his theological and political influence in both the Church and the state.

The Bishop Calls for Prayer and Advocacy

Immigration policy is one of the most pressing political issues facing the members of the vibrant Diocese of Raleigh. As noted above, as many as half of the Catholics in the Diocese, approximately 250,000, are undocumented residents ("The Diocese," n.d., para. 2). With such a large percentage of membership experiencing the implications of the national immigration system, Church leadership would be keenly aware and invested in the status of immigration policies. The interest of the Diocese in immigration policy can be observed by its inclusion as one of the six areas of focus on the *Catholic Voice NC* website. In addition to the impact of immigration policy on the Diocese and the positioning of immigration as an area of key social concern for Catholics in North Carolina, Bishop Burbidge is a member of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, a body of Church Leadership that has issued numerous calls for comprehensive immigration reform ("Catholic Church's Position," 2013. USCCB Position.).

The Conference of Catholic Bishops' calls for immigration reform have come in the midst of political debates over comprehensive immigration reform legislation. In 2007, a major comprehensive immigration bill that was endorsed by the United States' Catholic Bishops failed

to pass the United States Senate. The bill's failure was largely due to the "no votes" of thirty-seven Republican Senators. While the bill was crafted by and had support of prominent Republicans, it became increasingly unpopular within conservative ranks of the Republican party (La Jeunesse, 2013). Directly related to the speech analyzed in this chapter, in June 2013, the United States Senate passed Senate Bill 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act ("S.744," 2013). While, like the 2007 legislation, the bill was largely debated along political party lines, the bill garnered enough bipartisan support to pass the Senate and was originally formulated by the bipartisan "gang of eight" (Roeper, 2013). Having passed the Senate, the bill only needed to be approved by the Republican-controlled House of Representatives to enact comprehensive immigration reform. While the bill enjoyed modest bipartisan support in the Senate, Republicans in the House of Representatives refused to bring Senate Bill 744 to the floor for a vote (Gibson, 2013). It appeared that the only hope for comprehensive immigration reform to become a reality in 2013 was for a number of Republican Representatives to break party lines and reverse their opposition to support of Senate Bill 744.

Bishop Burbidge and the members of the Diocese of Raleigh had an opportunity to help meet the immigration needs of their undocumented parishioners by influencing their Congressional Representatives to support Senate Bill 744. The members of the Diocese of Raleigh resided in eight different congressional districts. Two of the Congressional Representatives in those districts were Democrats and six representatives were Republicans. Three of the six Republican Representatives had only recently won their congressional seats as a part of the conservative Republican surge in North Carolina ("Members of Congress," n.d.). As noted above, this conservative wing of the Republican party was staunchly opposed to comprehensive immigration reform. If Senate Bill 744 was going to be passed, or even be

brought to the floor of the House of Representatives, it seemed that at least some of the Republicans representing the Congressional districts in the Diocese of Raleigh would need to change or soften their positions on the bill.

I have chosen to analyze a brief speech given by Bishop Burbidge in support of comprehensive immigration reform. On Sunday, September 8, 2013, the Bishop celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving at Saint Mary Basilica Shrine in Wilmington, North Carolina, in recognition that Pope Francis had designated the church as a Basilica of prayer. At the conclusion of the mass celebrating this significant event for the Diocese, Bishop Burbidge claimed that prayer should lead Catholics to advocacy. He then informed and instructed the congregation, and the entire Diocese through video, to contact their legislators and urge their support of comprehensive immigration reform. Video of the Bishop's statement on comprehensive immigration reform was posted on the Diocese of Raleigh's YouTube page and the text of the statement was posted on the Diocese of Raleigh's official website.

Bishop Burbidge's "Statement on Comprehensive Immigration Reform" called Catholics in the Diocese of Raleigh to join him in support of Senate Bill 744. Burbidge argued that there was a moral imperative to pass the bill, because the nation's current immigration policies failed to recognize the "dignity" of immigrants as human and often violated "the integrity of the family." Burbidge noted that he and the other American Bishops had publicly given their support to Senate Bill 744. The Bishop spent considerable time making the case that the teachings of the Catholic Church call for immediate action to improve the nation's immigration policy, citing Church teachings on the value of immigrants and families and the responsibility of nations to treat immigrants with openness and fairness even as those nations protect their boundaries. Bishop Burbidge claimed that Senate Bill 744 met the Catholic Church's moral standards for

national immigration policy three different ways. First, it provided a pathway for immigrants to come to the United States legally. Second, it recognized the nation's right to regulate and protect its borders. Third, it allowed immigrants to meet their financial needs through labor rights. Finally, the Bishop called Catholics to support Senate Bill 744 in two different ways: praying for immigration reform and asking their congressional representatives to support the bill.

In addition to the overall argument that Burbidge made for the support of the 2013 comprehensive immigration reform bill, the Bishop's speech also directed the argument through his definitions of certain key terms and of the general situation. First, the Bishop transitioned from the Mass of Thanksgiving for the Pope's naming of the Basilica Shrine for prayer to his Statement on Comprehensive Immigration Reform with a definition of prayer. Burbidge invited the audience to join him "where our prayers necessary leads us – to advocacy." This definition prompted the audience who had just celebrated and participated in prayer to also participate in his call to advocacy on behalf of immigrants. Second, before naming the issue of "comprehensive immigration reform," Burbidge defined it as an "important moral issue." This definition set high stakes for the issue. It also placed the political issue in the realm of morality, a realm on which Catholics look to the Church for direction, rather than the realm of partisan politics. Third, the Bishop defined the issue by noting that the Catholic Church embraces people of all nations. This definition both called on the audience's identity as Catholic and positioned the immigration debate in the context of their Catholic practice of welcoming persons of other nationalities, including immigrants. Burbidge further defined the need for immigration reform by contrasting the Church's practice of welcoming all people against the United States' current immigration system, which he further defined as "broken." Finally, Burbidge defined any delay

of immigration reform as “immoral.” This definition of inaction or deferral to act for what is moral as a violation of morality increased the urgency of the Bishop’s call to action.

In review, on September 8, 2013, Bishop Michael Burbidge issued a statement calling Catholics to join him in supporting Senate Bill 744 going before the House of Representatives. My descriptive analysis of this short speech identified the primary arguments and definitions that the Bishop used in the statement. He argued that the current immigration system in the United States does not work and fails to meet the moral standards of Catholic teaching because of the harm it does to immigrants and immigrant families. Burbidge expanded his moral critique, declaring that further delay of immigration reform would be immoral. Finally, the Bishop stated that Catholics should pray for comprehensive immigration reform and advocate for immigrants by asking their congressional representatives to vote for Senate Bill 744.

Bishop Burbidge also gave expression to the purpose and logical framework of his text through the performance of his speech. His performance expressed a trust and commitment to the Catholic tradition. The Bishop’s tone was confident, yet controlled, and warm. Burbidge clearly and carefully listed various citations from the Catholic Church as he built his reasonable case for the audience. Furthermore, his reasonable tone was marked by a sense of fondness as he spoke of Catholic leaders and the Catholic lay audience, which he referred to as the “faithful.” His performance also expressed the importance of morality and action. The Bishop’s tone made one notable shift in intensity and urgency during the speech. It was a shift that fit well with the words he was delivering. Burbidge spoke with urgency and strong conviction toward the end of the speech when he said “morally there can be no delay.”

The Internal Logic of the Call to Prayer and Advocacy

With the explicit tactics in Burbidge's "Statement on Comprehensive Immigration Reform" identified, my next phase of analysis is to conduct a cluster-agon analysis and a narrative arc analysis on the speech in order to uncover the terministic screen and ambiguities in the text. First, I will identify the central conflict at work in the speech's logic. In this speech I have identified the conflict between "morality" and "immorality." Next, I will describe clusters of terms on the two sides of the central conflict. This analysis will include identification of the terms and relationships between terms within and between the two clusters. Then, I will identify the text's underlying narrative of how the central conflict proceeds toward the desired ending of a faithful Church and a moral national immigration system and how the audience may participate in such a narrative. Finally, as my study reveals the text's unique terministic screen, I will take special notice of theology at work in the logical framework of the speech.

A Clear Moral Choice

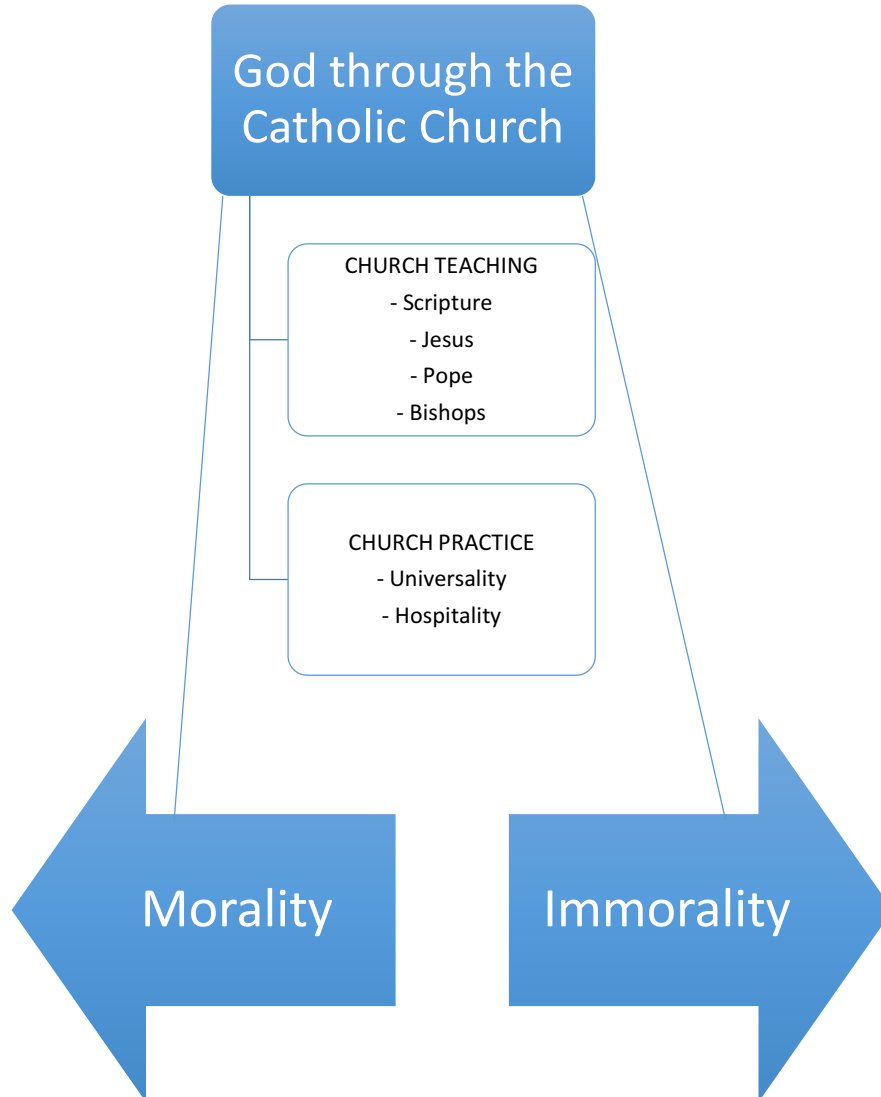


Figure 9. The Immigration Agon

Grounding authority. While each terministic screen in this dissertation includes a set of authoritative sources to ground the logic, my analysis of Bishop Burbidge’s statement on comprehensive immigration reform displays a complex system of authority and the most extensive reliance upon the sources of authority in the logical framework and motivation of the audience. The ultimate source of authority in Bishop Burbidge’s terministic screen is God

through the Catholic Church. With twenty-seven references to the authoritative sources of the Catholic Church in the five-and-a-half-minute speech, it can be said that their presence was central to the Bishops rhetoric and logical framework. I have identified Church practice and Church teaching as two kinds of authoritative sources of God through the Catholic Church in the Bishop's terministic screen. The authority of "Catholic teaching" and the authority of "Catholic practice" are consistent and united in the terministic screen and only differentiated in my analysis to display the scope of the authority of God through the Catholic Church.

The term "Catholic teaching" is used as an umbrella term for a wide variety of guiding teachings recognized by the Catholic Church as collectively having divine authority. In this speech, the Bishop explicitly referred to the Catholic teaching of "Sacred Scripture" as a source of authoritative teaching supporting the principles of comprehensive immigration reform. From "Sacred Scripture," the Bishop identified the authoritative life and teaching of Jesus - called "Christ Himself" in the text - as a reason Catholics should advocate for immigrants. The Bishop appealed to a third source of Catholic teaching in the Pope, including the Pope's praise for the Diocese's embrace of immigrants. Finally, Burbidge's sources of authoritative Catholic teaching also included the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, to which Burbidge belongs. He cited the Conference of Bishops' support of Senate Bill 744 as a reason the audience should act to support the bill.

In addition to God exercising authority through the teaching of the Catholic Church, the Bishop's terministic screen also includes God's authority in the practices of the Church. The practices of the Church serve as a living corporate manifestation of the teachings God has imparted through the Church. Early in the statement, Burbidge highlighted the Pope's praise of the parish where he spoke for embodying the teachings of the Church: "your parish reflects the

catholicity of the Church – the university of Holy Mother Church that necessarily embraces peoples from the many countries of the world.” The Bishop used the Church’s practices of universality and hospitality to highlight the immorality of the United States’ broken immigration system.

The choice between morality and immorality. The divine authority in the Catholic Church provides an authoritative judgment of morality and immorality. That judgment reveals and generates the driving conflict in the speech’s terministic screen, the agon between morality and immorality. Unlike the terministic screens uncovered in my analysis of the two other clergy political action speeches in this dissertation, the terministic screen in Bishop Burbidge’s speech does not include a fierce and urgent battle against a ruthless enemy as an immediate expression of a cosmic battle. Instead, the agon in the Bishop’s terministic screen places “morality” against “immorality” as the conflict driving the Catholic audience’s choice to support the reform of a “broken immigration system” that currently violates the Catholic Church’s moral teaching and practices. While the agon in the Bishop’s terministic screen does not invite the same intensity as a battle against an evil enemy, it does carry high stakes within the speech’s logical framework. The terministic screen heavily emphasizes the God-given authority of the Catholic Church. The Church’s judgment of morality, then, carries a divine authority for those aligned with the speech’s logic, and violation of the Church’s moral judgment is a violation of God’s moral judgment. The Bishop’s placement of his call to support comprehensive immigration reform expands the stakes of the response to the realm of divine moral judgment.

Finally, the “morality” cluster is significantly larger than the “immorality” cluster, comprising the overwhelming majority of the speech. This is another significant difference between the Bishop’s terministic screen and the other terministic screens identified in this

dissertation where the speeches gave approximately equal time to the positive and negative clusters. The Bishop’s emphasis upon the positive cluster contributes to the motivation of the Catholic audience to make the “moral” choice through a celebration and explanation of “morality” according to the commonly accepted God-given authority of the Catholic Church.

The Morality Cluster

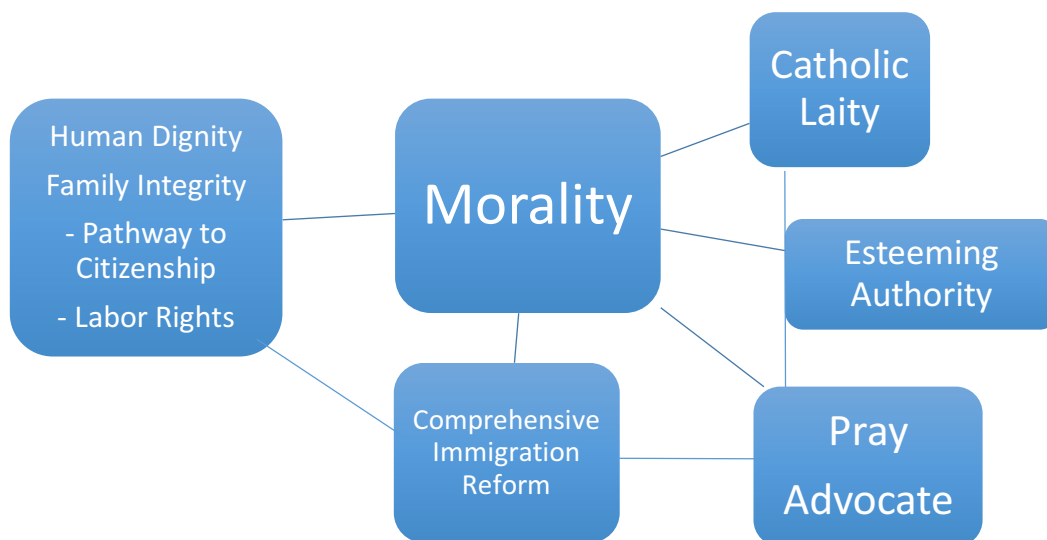


Figure 10. Burbidge’s Positive Cluster

The positive cluster dominates the tone and logic of Bishop Burbidge’s statement on comprehensive immigration reform. The speech was almost entirely about the ideas and practices the Bishop was in favor of, even as he called for support of significant changes to an immoral system. “Morality” is the key term at the center of the positive cluster of Burbidge’s terministic screen. As discussed in the agon section above, the designation of “morality” is grounded in the God-given authority of the Catholic Church. “Morality” is the driving motivation for the agent’s action in the positive cluster of the speech’s terministic screen. The

logic of this motivation can be further explored by examining the various satellites of supporting terms and their relationship with the key term and the other supporting terms.

The first satellite of supporting terms in my analysis of the “morality” cluster is the “Catholic laity.” The YouTube video of Bishop Burbidge’s speech includes introductory comments to frame the speech as one in which “he will be speaking to all of the faithful throughout the Diocese of Raleigh.” He makes a reference that “all of the faithful come here (the Basilica Shrine) to pray” early in the speech. This identification of the intended audience as Catholic laity informs the identity of the audience in the speech’s numerous imperative sentences. Catholic laity is also included in the Bishop’s six references to “the Church.” Laity are a part of the Church, and yet they are distinct from figures such as the Pope and the Bishops who are differentiated in Burbidge’s speech as sources of authority in the Church. While not authorities within the Church, the Catholic laity is the key agent in the central act of the “morality” cluster as the underlying narrative hinges on their action.

The second supporting satellite in the Bishop’s positive cluster is the attitude that the “Catholic laity” carry in the “morality” cluster. I have identified this positive attitude as “esteem for authority.” In his speech directed to Catholic laity, the Bishop repeatedly grounded his moral judgments and call to action in the authority of the Catholic Church. In the “morality” cluster the Catholic laity accept the Bishop’s moral judgment and call to action with an esteem for the authority of the Catholic Church. This attitude serves as a key contrast between the clusters of “morality” and “immorality” as the two clusters have the same sources of authority and the same agents, but they have different attitudes that lead to different acts that lead to opposite ends. The specific attitude of “esteem for authority” in the morality cluster reinforces the importance of the authority of the Catholic Church in the Bishop’s terministic screen.

The third satellite of terms connected to the key term “morality” contains the agencies that the Catholic laity use to accomplish the positive cluster’s primary action. The two means by which Catholic laity can support comprehensive immigration reform are prayer and advocacy. Prayer is a notable term in the terministic screen; it was mentioned six times in the short speech both as a central practice of the religious community and as an avenue of worship and supplication to the Divine. The Bishop concluded the speech by calling the faithful to “pray Our Lord to guide our elected leaders, as they consider the many serious matters of state facing our great nation at this critical time, especially ... the urgent need for immigration reform here at home.” Early in the speech, the Bishop connected the act of prayer to the second agency that Catholic laity can take to support comprehensive immigration reform. Transitioning from the Mass of Thanksgiving for the designation of the Basilica Shrine of prayer to his statement on comprehensive immigration reform, Burbidge stated, “I now invite you to join with our Holy Father and my brother Bishops and I to where our prayer necessary leads us – to advocacy.” This statement met the audience, who had been celebrating and practicing prayer, with the claim, supported by the authority of the Pope and Bishops, that they must also participate in the means of advocacy. After explaining Catholic teachings related to immigration, the Bishop explicitly stated the advocacy the Catholic laity should participate in at that time in addition to their prayer: “Please contact your Congressman or woman in the United States House of Representatives, and ask for their support for passage this year of Senate Bill 744 on behalf of comprehensive immigration reform.” In addition to praying to God to guide the congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform, the Bishop asked the faithful to contact their Congressional Representatives and advocate for the immediate passage of comprehensive immigration reform.

The primary act of the positive cluster is found in the fourth satellite. The act of supporting comprehensive immigration reform is the primary act for agents to take in the “morality” cluster of the speech’s terministic screen. First, the Bishop directly made the connection between morality and comprehensive immigration reform with an emotional plea at the end of the speech, “Morally, it can be no longer delayed; morally, it must not be delayed.” Second, the morality of comprehensive immigration reform, and thus its support, was repeatedly affirmed in the speech with the support of the authority of Catholic practice and teaching. Third, the morality of Senate Bill 744 for comprehensive immigration reform and the morality of the support of the bill was identified when the Bishop stated, “My brother Bishops and I, as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, have stated that while this legislation is not perfect, it is one in which the Church can support.” While the Catholic laity do not have the agency to directly pass Senate Bill 744 for comprehensive immigration reform, they do have the means of prayer and advocacy, addressed in the previous paragraph, that the Bishop openly called them to devote to support the bill.

The fifth satellite of terms in the “morality” cluster consists of the ends of comprehensive immigration reform. The ends of comprehensive immigration reform are connected to the cluster’s key term “morality” as they have been judged moral by the authority of the Catholic Church, and thus are motivational for an audience aligned with the logic of the speech’s terministic screen. The ends satellite includes two primary ends directly designated as moral in the teaching of the Catholic Church and two secondary ends that have been affirmed as moral and serving the larger ends by the Catholic Church. The two primary ends of supporting comprehensive immigration reform are found in the middle of the Bishop’s statement, “we recognize that those who are immigrants have an inherent dignity given to them as members of

God's human family. This same human dignity also extends to the institution of family, such that no law should threaten the integrity of family life." According to the text, comprehensive immigration reform will result in the nation having an immigration system that treats immigrants with the dignity that Catholic teaching states is possessed by all humans. The Bishop also stated that comprehensive immigration reform would lead to a system that better respected the dignity in the integrity of the family unit as recognized by the Catholic Church. While the Bishop acknowledged that Senate Bill 744 was not a morally perfect expression of Catholic teaching, he and the United States Council of Bishops supported the bill because it included "a pathway to citizenship" and a "pathway for individuals to provide for basic needs for themselves and their families." The Catholic Church affirmed these ends of comprehensive immigration reform as they served the greater moral ends of human dignity and family integrity. While the Catholic laity serving as the agents of the "moral" cluster did not have the agency to directly pass comprehensive immigration into law, the logical framework of the speech shows that they have the means to support the legislation, and the act of supporting legislation with strong moral ends is considered a moral act.

The Immorality Cluster

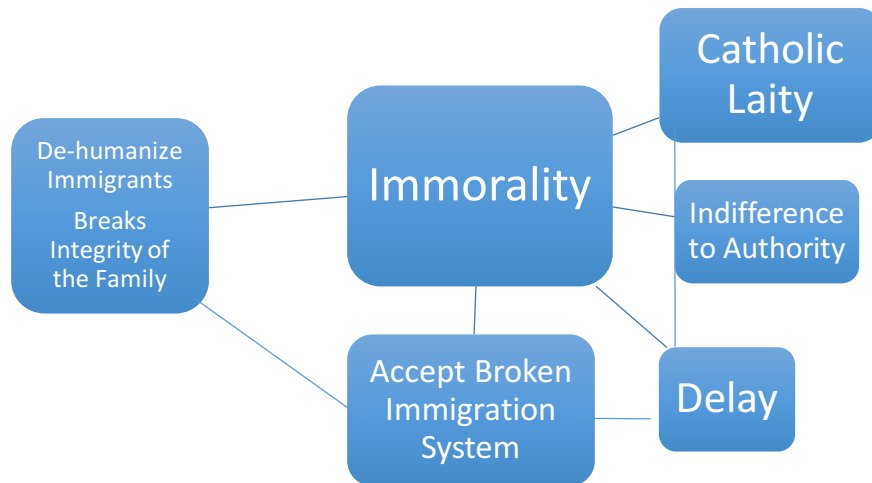


Figure 11. Burbidge’s Negative Cluster

The negative cluster of Bishop Burbidge’s September 8, 2013 statement on comprehensive immigration reform is considerably smaller than the positive cluster in terms of the amount of content and emphasis it was given during the speech. However, the cluster has a parallel structure and opposing terminology to the positive cluster, reflecting a sharp division between the two clusters in the speech’s terministic screen. The division between clusters is rooted in the opposition of the key terms: the key term in the negative cluster is “immorality” which acts in direct opposition to the positive cluster’s key term of “morality.” As discussed in the agon section, the designation of “immorality” is grounded in the God-given authority of the Catholic Church. The following description of the satellites of supporting terms and their relationship with other terms in both the “morality” and “immorality” clusters provides the logic of the negative cluster within the speech’s terministic screen.

The primary agent in the Bishop’s negative cluster, located in the cluster’s first satellite of terms, is the Catholic laity that he directly addressed in the speech. This means that the

“morality” cluster and the “immorality” cluster have the same agent. The duplication of agents in the speech’s positive and negative cluster, a duplication not seen in the other terministic screens in this study, is related to the lack of an enemy agent in the Bishop’s terministic screen. Instead of facing a rhetorically constructed enemy in the terministic screen’s central conflict, the Catholic laity in Bishop Burbidge’s terministic screen faces the possibility of being a part of either the “morality” or “immorality” side of the conflict.

The second satellite of the negative cluster contains the attitude of the Catholic laity in the “immorality” cluster and possible key to the difference between the agents in the two clusters. The Catholic laity in the “immorality” cluster carry an attitude of indifference to the authority of the Catholic Church. While the agents of the “morality” cluster have an attitude of esteem toward the authority of the Catholic Church, Catholic laity in the “immorality” cluster display no motivation to follow either the Church’s historic teachings related to immigration or the recent statements by authoritative Church leaders on comprehensive immigration reform. The Catholic laity in the “immorality” cluster is indifferent to the authority of the Bishop in his call for the laity to support comprehensive immigration reform.

The third satellite in the “immorality” cluster is the agency that the Catholic laity uses to accomplish the central act in the negative cluster. The agency in the “immorality” cluster is “delay.” Burbidge clearly condemned the delay of action on comprehensive immigration reform toward the conclusion of his speech, “Morally, it can be no longer delayed; morally, it must not be delayed.” The agency “delay” informs the terministic screen in three ways. First, “delay” connotes some level of inevitability for comprehensive immigration reform. The implied inevitability could provide a source of motivation for the audience to work toward passing the legislation knowing that there will one day be success. Second, the term “delay” in the negative

cluster of the logical framework introduces an urgency to exercise the agencies of the positive cluster as waiting to act can be described as immoral delay. Finally, the term “delay” presents the agency as a choice not to do the moral act rather than acting to do what is morally wrong. While the agency of delay carries less aggression and intent to harm than an action of open political attack, it is still a choice deemed immoral by the source of authority in the terministic screen. In the negative cluster of the Bishop’s speech, the choice of delay is the means not of inaction, but of the primary act of immorality.

The central act in the “immorality” cluster in the terministic screen of Bishop Burbidge’s statement on comprehensive immigration reform is the acceptance of the broken immigration system. Bishop Burbidge declared that “the way in which immigrants come to our country, does not work; it is broken and in serious need of reform.” Within the logical framework of the Bishop’s speech, “broken” should be understood in terms of the Catholic Church’s authoritative moral standards. Burbidge also emphasized that the broken immigration system presented an “urgent need.” Again, in the speech’s terministic screen, the urgent need should be understood as an urgent moral need. Furthermore, the moral failing of the nation’s immigration system is not something to be tolerated by the Catholic laity addressed in the Bishop’s speech. Instead, in the logical framework of Bishop Burbidge’s speech, the acceptance of an immoral immigration system is an act of immorality. The negative cluster’s primary act of acceptance of the broken immigration system is in direct opposition to the positive cluster’s primary act of supporting comprehensive immigration reform, presenting a clear choice for the audience. The Catholic laity’s choice between accepting the system or supporting comprehensive reform of the system is a choice between morality and immorality.

The final satellite identified in my analysis of the negative cluster consists of certain ends of the broken immigration system. The ends of the broken immigration system are judged as an expression of immorality by the terministic screen's grounding authority in the Catholic Church, expressing a sharp contrast with the ends of comprehensive immigration reform in the "morality" cluster in the Bishop's terministic screen. There are two ends emphasized in the satellite of ends connected to "immorality." The first end of the broken immigration system is the "de-humanizing of immigrants." The Bishop claimed that the current immigration system failed to treat immigrants with the dignity that the Church teaches is owed to all human beings. The Bishop identified the lack of dignity in the system's failure to offer a way for immigrants to "provide for basic needs for themselves and their families." The second end of the broken immigration system is that it breaks the "integrity of family life." The Bishop explicitly condemned the current immigration system stating, "no law should threaten the integrity of family life by separating spouses or children from their parents." Bishop Burbidge argued that the system's separation of families was a moral violation of the Church's teaching that "human dignity also extends to the institution of family." The text could address the separation of family members because of the lack of opportunities to meet family needs. Separation could also be a reference to the practice of separating family members through deportation. While the Catholic laity serving as agents in the "immorality" cluster do not have the agency to directly act in a way to create these immoral ends, the logical framework of the speech does connect their agency of delay with the act of accepting the morally broken immigration system which leads to the immoral ends in the cluster's fifth satellite of terms. The moral judgment against contributing to ends deemed immoral by the Catholic Church would provide a motivation to change for the Catholic faithful aligned with the Bishop's logical framework.

From Immorality to Morality

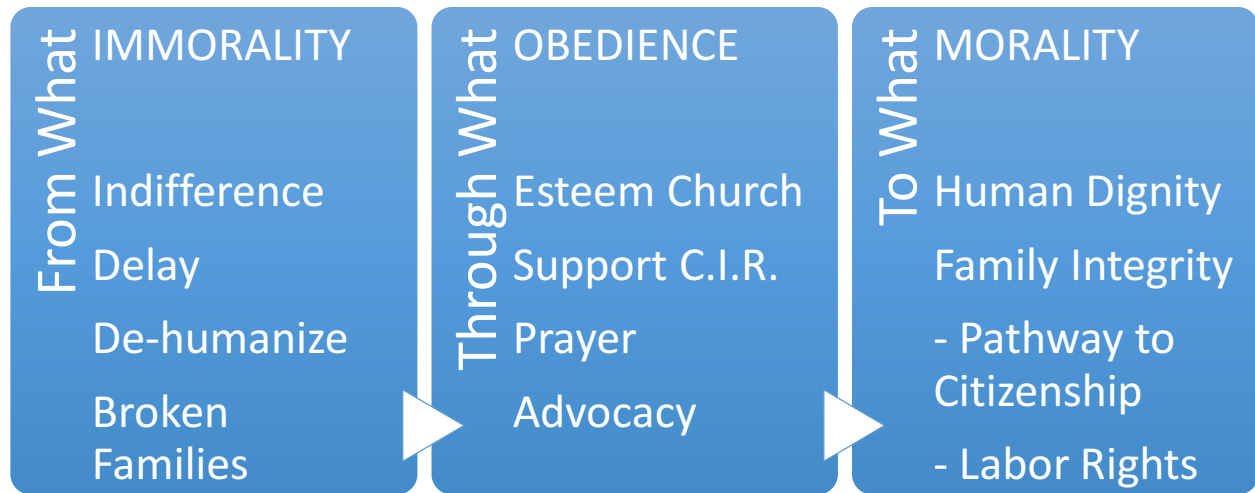


Figure 12. Narrative Arc Analysis

As seen in the previous two case studies, my quest to uncover the terministic screen in a clergy rhetor's political action text includes both a cluster-agon analysis and a narrative arc analysis. While the guiding narrative development is not explicit in Bishop Burbidge's speech, it is present in the text and a central piece of the terministic screen. The narrative arc can be found in the speech in the answers to the questions "from what," "through what," and "to what?" Asking these questions of the Bishop's speech helped identify a three-part narrative in which the audience was invited to participate. The narrative tells of how the Catholic laity can move from immorality to morality through obedience to the Catholic Church.

The first stage of the narrative in Bishop Burbidge's terministic screen is composed of the various terms that the Bishop is calling the audience to move from. The key term defining this stage is "immorality." As stated in the analysis of the speech's "immorality" cluster, the moral judgment in the terministic screen is grounded in the God-given authority of the Catholic Church. The first term in the "immorality" stage of the narrative is the attitude of indifference to

Church authority. This indifference is expressed in a second term “delay.” In the “immorality” stage of the narrative, the Catholic laity show their indifference to the authority of the Church by delaying action to support comprehensive immigration reform as called for by the Church. The delay of action by the Catholic laity allows for the continuation of a morally broken immigration system that produces two other terms in the immorality stage. The third term in the stage is the “de-humanizing of immigrants” by the broken immigration system that prevents them from meeting even their basic human needs. The fourth and final term in the immorality stage is “broken families” produced by the broken immigration system’s immoral violation of the integrity of the institution of the family.

The second phase of the narrative in the logical framework in the Bishop’s statement on comprehensive immigration reform contains the elements of the story that the audience must go “through” to move from the “immorality” stage to the “morality” stage. I have defined this phase with the key term “obedience.” In this narrative, the Catholic laity move from immorality to morality by obedience to the God-given authority of the Catholic Church. The first term in the “obedience” stage is the attitude of “esteem for Church authority.” The laity’s esteem for the authority of the Church leads to their obedience to the Church’s call for the second term in the “obedience” stage, “support for comprehensive immigration reform.” The second narrative stage also includes the two means by which Catholic laity could support comprehensive immigration reform. “Prayer” is the fourth term in the “obedience” stage. Bishop Burbidge called his audience to pray for God to guide government leaders on the need for comprehensive immigration reform. The fourth and final term in the “obedience” stage of the narrative arc is “advocacy.” The Bishop urged his audience to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform

by asking their congressional representatives to support Senate Bill 744. Moving to the final stage of the narrative was dependent upon the audience obeying the Bishop's directive.

"Morality" is the key term for the conclusion of the narrative that the speech invites the audience to desire and work toward. The positive moral judgment of the Catholic Church grounded in the Church's God-given authority carries motivation in the speech's logical framework. In this narrative, the Catholic laity's obedience to the Church by acting in support of comprehensive immigration reform leads to a reality in which the nation's immigration system would produce ends judged as moral by the Catholic Church. First, in the narrative's "morality" stage, immigrants are treated with human dignity as called for by Church teaching. Second, the nation's immigration system honors what the Church teaches as the integrity of the institution of the family. The final two terms of the "morality" stage of the narrative are more specific ends of the immigration system - "pathway to citizenship" and "labor rights" - that the Catholic Church has identified as expressions of human dignity and the integrity of the family and thus absolutely necessary for any moral immigration system. The narrative concludes with the government more fully fulfilling its moral responsibilities, in large part, according to the terministic screen, because of the Catholic laity's prayers and advocacy in support of comprehensive immigration reform in obedience to the authority of the Church, advancing the morality of the nation.

My narrative arc analysis of Bishop Burbidge's 2013 statement of support for comprehensive immigration reform reveals a three-part story within the speech that calls the audience of Catholic laity to move from immorality to morality through obedience to the Church. The story begins with the immorality of the Catholic laity's indifference to Church authority manifested in their delay in supporting comprehensive immigration reform and resulting in the immoral ends of the broken immigration system. Then the story turns as the Catholic laity obey

the Church in esteem to Church authority and support comprehensive immigration reform through prayer and advocacy. Finally, in the conclusion of the terministic screen's underlying narrative, the moral obedience of the Catholic laity leads to an immigration system that more fully reflects the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church by treating immigrants with dignity and respecting the integrity of immigrant families.

The Theological Logic of Prayer and Advocacy

Having uncovered the terministic screen in Bishop Burbidge's statement on comprehensive immigration reform, I will now highlight some of the theological inspirations in the terministic screen in order to analyze how specific theology interacts with other elements of the text's logical framework. The Bishop's terministic screen presents a conflict between morality and immorality. Theology plays a significant role in defining the central conflict, and theology can be found at work in the various satellites of terms supporting both sides of the conflict between morality and immorality. Morality, as defined in the speech's terministic screen, has Divine origin and goodness and is judged through the God-given authority of the Catholic Church. So while the purpose of the Bishop's speech is to mobilize Catholic laity to act in support of comprehensive immigration reform, the speech's terministic screen reveals that the difference between morality and immorality hinges on the audience's response to the Church. This primacy of the Catholic Church in the terministic screen emphasizes the importance of theology, and a specific theology, at work in the rhetoric's logical framework.

While the Bishop certainly came to the speech with theological commitments influenced in part by his theological tradition, the focus of my study is on the theology expressed in the text of this particular speech, so I only reference the Bishop's theological tradition when it is

mentioned in the text and when most relevant for the study. As noted in previous chapters, this study considers theology to be part of a dynamic relationship with logic and rhetoric in a clergy member's political action text. In this dynamic relationship, theology, rhetoric, and logic inform, constrain, and animate one another. In the following analysis of the terministic screen's theological statements, I will frequently mention only one or two elements of the theology – logic – rhetoric dynamic; in such cases the dynamic of the relationship should be implicitly understood. I do not explicitly name all three elements on every occasion as it would become burdensome for the reader and because mentioning one or two elements can at times provide more direct entry points into analysis and at other times more precise observations. The naming of specific elements should be understood in the context of the ongoing dynamic relationship of theology, logic, and rhetoric in the text.

I will now highlight six different theological emphases in Bishop Burbidge's terministic screen as identified through my cluster-agon analysis and narrative arc analysis of the Bishop's statement on comprehensive immigration reform. First, God speaks and acts authoritatively through the Catholic Church. Second, following the God-given authority of the Catholic Church leads to morality. Third, God calls the Church to engage in the sacred and the secular. Fourth, God's moral authority applies to both the Church and the state. Fifth, God and humans act in the world. Finally, God has given dignity to all humans and family units. I propose that these six theological emphases are active and significant elements of Burbidge's terministic screen. They have influence and are influenced by the logic and other rhetorics in the text. Furthermore, these particular theological emphases interact in the text in ways that other theological statements would not interact in the text.

God Speaks and Acts Authoritatively Through the Catholic Church

The first theology I will identify in Bishop Burbidge's terministic screen exhibits significant influence on the speech's logic. The Bishop's speech includes a theology that God speaks and acts through the Catholic Church with authority. This authority was addressed at length in this chapter's agon analysis. The teaching, leadership, and practices of the Catholic Church operate with a high level of authority in the Bishop's terministic screen, grounding judgments of what is moral and immoral and adding motivation of the importance of audience action. In the speech's logical framework, the Church acts and speaks on behalf of God in unique and authoritative ways. The uniqueness of the Church can be seen in the designation of various elements, including, for example, the "Holy Father" and the "Sacred Scriptures," as special and uncommon. The authority of the Church can be seen in the text's call for the application of Church teachings on government policies. For example, the Church teaches that humans have dignity and the Church calls for Catholic laity to advocate for government policies that treat humans with dignity. As the Church has authority in the world, the terministic screen reveals that there are sources of authority within the Church. As these authorities, including the Pope, Scripture, and Bishops, speak to the Church, they also speak to the world.

This theology offers a motivation of a shared and recognized authority, namely the Catholic Church, in the Bishop's political action text. The claim that this common authority is uniquely sanctioned by God provides a still greater motivation lifting the Church to the highest levels of authority, wisdom, and goodness in the speech's logical framework. This significant theological claim may logically lead the audience to consider the teaching of the Church above political ideology or personal opinion in matters of political debate. The strong central divinely-endorsed authority also helps to provide a confident clarity on contested issues, which can

generate united conviction and action from the audience. Finally, the God-given authority of the Catholic Church contributes to a motivation for action by the Bishop's Catholic audience by contributing to the audience's identity in the logical framework as agents of God.

While the logic of this theology provides a powerful motivation for Catholics to actively support comprehensive immigration reform, the theology also seems to contain a weakness for the application of the Bishop's requested action of advocating for comprehensive immigration reform. The Bishop's audience may likely be motivated by this theology's logic to support Senate Bill 744 because of Catholic teaching and practice. However, this theology does not seem likely to facilitate effective engagement with persons who do not recognize Catholic sources of authority. For instance, it seems that Catholics who accept the Bishop's terministic screen and contact their Congressional Representatives may only offer Catholic teaching and practice as reasons for passing Senate Bill 744.

Following the God-given Authority of the Catholic Church Leads to Morality

The second theology I identify in Bishop Burbidge's terministic screen is closely related to the first theology. The Bishop's speech contains a theology that following the God-given authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church leads to morality and rejecting or ignoring the teaching of the Catholic Church leads to immorality. As God, through the Church, is the terministic screen's highest authority and logical grounding, the terms in the terministic screen are evaluated by the authority of the Church. Likewise, agents in the logical framework make choices in light of the authority of the Church. As God makes judgment of morality and immorality through the Catholic Church in the Bishop's terministic screen, agents' moral choices are directly connected to the judgment of the Church. The attitude that the agents take toward the

Church is pivotal in their morality; indifference to the Church leads to immorality and esteeming the Church leads to morality.

This theological logic contributes to a motivation for acting on Bishop Burbidge's call to pray and advocate in support of the comprehensive immigration reform bill because the Bishop extensively cited the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church to make a positive moral judgment on supporting the bill. In this theological logic, choosing not to act for what the Church has taught as moral is an act of immorality. Furthermore, the speech's logical framework positions indifference to the Church's moral teaching as an attitude of immorality and delaying action as the agency of immorality. This theologically-inspired terministic screen removes a middle ground for the audience and leaves them with a clear choice between morality or immorality.

The audience may challenge the theological logic that following the God-given authority of the Catholic Church leads to morality as a potential point of weakness in the Bishop's terministic screen. First, audience members may question the theology because the well-publicized moral failures by Catholic Church leadership seem to contradict the claim of moral authority. Second, the audience may question the theological logic as too narrow a view of morality for contemporary moral issues. Third, the audience may identify apparent contradictions among the vast amount of Church teaching as too ambiguous for moral clarity. These potential oppositions to the theological logic may be reduced by the breadth and depth of Catholic Church teaching and practice. The term "the Church" is a single entity, but in Bishop Burbidge's speech there are indications of the diversity and complexity of the Church. Viewing the Catholic Church as a diverse worldwide community spanning centuries of ongoing practices and conversations may provide the complexity and ambiguity that can bear occasional moral

failure or contradiction and it provides the rigor and intricacy to engage with complicated moral dilemmas.

God calls the Church to Engage in the Sacred and the Secular

Bishop Burbidge's terministic screen contains a theological logic that God has called the Catholic Church to engage in both the sacred and the secular realms of the world. This theology can be seen in the two agencies that the Catholic faithful are urged to engage in the "morality" cluster of the terministic screen: prayer and advocacy. The Bishop spoke of prayer - communication with God - as a holy and sacred practice of the Catholic Church. The Bishop, speaking with divine authority, was also explicitly direct that "our prayer necessary leads us – to advocacy," meaning political advocacy to the secular state. Furthermore, Bishop Burbidge supported his call for Catholic laity to communicate with their government leaders about changing a government system by citing Catholic teachings that engaged both sacred and secular.

The theology that God calls the Church to engage in both the sacred and the secular strengthens the speech's logical framework in at least three ways. First, this theology is consistent with the theological logic that God speaks and acts authoritatively through the Catholic Church. In order to fulfill the calling to speak and act on behalf of God in the world, the Catholic church would need to interact with both God (sacred) and the world (secular). If the Church fails to engage and communicate with either God or the world, then it seems God would not be speaking to the world through the Church. Second, the theology enhances the motivation of the audience to respond to the Bishop's call for action in support of comprehensive immigration reform. The theological logic provides resistance against competing theological, social, or political logics that restrict the Church's divine calling to the realm of the sacred. The

theology expands the scope of the Church's calling and identity to include common and shared public life. Finally, the theology that the Church is called to engage in both the sacred and the secular provides a logic that maintains the Church's calling and identity in the sacred while extending the calling and identity into public life. The Church's long-term motivation to respond to calls for political action seems strengthened as this theology provides resistance against competing theological, social, or political logics that may attempt to consume the Church's calling and identity into the secular realm.

While the theology strengthens the speech's logical framework, strengthening the motivation for audience members who accept the terministic screen, the logic that God calls the Church to engage in the sacred and secular has potential weaknesses in application. This potential weakness is consistent with the weakness identified in a previous theological logic. While the theology enhances motivation for the audience of Catholic laity to engage with the secular world, the terministic screen does little to provide the audience with resources for engagement with members of the secular world who do not share the audience's source of authority in the Catholic Church. The audience may have access to those resources, but the availability, possibility, or need of resources for secular engagement is unclear from the terministic screen identified in my textual analysis.

God's Moral Authority Applies to Church and State

The fourth theological logic in Bishop Burbidge's terministic screen that I will analyze states that God's moral authority applies to both Church and State. This theology fits logically within the theological emphasis in the Bishop's terministic screen. If, as expressed in the terministic screen, God speaks through the Catholic Church with authority, following Church teachings leads to morality, and the Church is called to engage in both the sacred and the secular,

then it seems to follow that God's moral authority expressed through the Church applies to institutions outside of the Church, including the state. In this theological logic in Bishop Burbidge's political action text, as with the theologies at work in the terministic screens identified in previous chapters, God's rule extends beyond the Church and includes politics and government. However, in the Bishop's terministic screen, the theology that the Catholic Church speaks and acts with God-given authority also influences the logical framework, seemingly placing the Church in authority over the state.

The theological logic that God's moral authority applies to both Church and state contributes to the audience's motivation to engage with the state. More specifically, the theology contributes to a logical framework that, if accepted, prompts the audience to heed the Bishop's call to ask their congressional representative to support Senate Bill 744 for comprehensive immigration reform. The theological emphasis of God's moral authority extending to the state in Bishop Burbidge's speech offers a sense of confidence for the audience in their political engagement with the state for at least three reasons. First, the audience has confidence in the teachings of the Catholic Church as the authoritative source of God's moral judgments. Second, the audience will likely have confidence in referencing Catholic teachings on political issues because they have developed trust and familiarity with Church teachings in other areas of life. Third, as members of the Church, the audience may have confidence in their theologically-informed identity as God's agents in the world. Acceptance of the Bishop's theological logic that the Church's moral authority applies to the state will incline the audience to follow Church directives to advocate to the state.

While this theology is likely motivational in the logical framework of the speech, it also has the potential to blur the line in the framework's separate roles for the Church and the state.

The speech indicates that the nation's immigration laws should follow the Church's moral teachings, even implying that the nation should welcome immigrants as the Catholic Church welcomes all people. This theological logic could raise concerns about a lack of distinction of roles, ethics, and practice between the Church and the nation state. While such a concern would be higher for those who do not accept Bishop Burbidge's terministic screen, the Bishop's logical framework indicates that the Church and the state have distinct roles in the world, and that distinctness might be strained by the theological logic addressed here. However, this potential tension in logic is likely avoided as the terministic screen includes both the logic that the Church's voice has moral authority over the state and the state fulfills a role that is distinct from that of the Church. For example, the Bishop referenced Catholic teachings on the responsibilities of the state in which the Church set the moral standard for the nation state to uphold in its unique role that was distinct from the role of the Church.

Divine and Human Action in the World

A fifth theological logic in the Bishop's terministic screen is that there is both Divine and human activity at work in God's world. This theology can be seen at work in the Bishop's statement that prayer leads to advocacy. The logic of Burbidge's theology will lead an audience member to ask both God and their congressperson to help the immigrants by passing comprehensive immigration reform, recognizing that both agents have the ability to act toward this end.

This theology provides a balance between the responsibility of human agency and the hope of Divine intervention in pressing political issues. The theology carries a logic that human actions make a difference in God's world. In addition to supporting the call for audience members to advocate to government authorities, the logic also prompts the audience to recognize

the importance of their choice to act upon the instructions given to them by the Bishop. There is an urgency of action that comes from a logic that claims that human actions matter in God's world. On the other hand, the theology also presents God as active in the world, providing a hope in something beyond their own actions. In the terministic screen, God is active through the teaching and witness of the Church and God is able to directly engage situations. When urging the audience to prayer, the Bishop described God as being able to "guide" human actions. The theology participates in a logic in which an audience member would both request that a human take an action and request that God guide that same human in taking that action.

The theology of both Divine and human action in the world has the potential to create a tension in the logic of Burbidge's terministic screen. The theological logic could create a logical tension in the identity of the agent acting for comprehensive immigration reform. However, the potential tension can avoid a logical contradiction in two ways. First, the agent in Bishop Burbidge's terministic screen was the Catholic laity praying and advocating, consistent with the theological logic, in support of comprehensive immigration reform. Second, the logical fidelity can be maintained as the logical framework has God and humans in a non-competitive relationship. The God who is not a being as a human can act without competing with free human action. In other words, God can act in the world without violating human agency to act in the world.

God has Given Dignity to All Humans and the Family Unit

The final theological logic at work in Bishop Burbidge's terministic screen that I will explore in this chapter is that God has given dignity to all people and all families. The Bishop claimed that all humans have "inherent dignity given to them as members of God's human family." This theology of Divinely-rooted dignity of all humans animates the rhetoric about

immigrants through a logic that people of all nationalities, including immigrants, have a dignity that cannot be taken away and should be honored by all humans and human systems. The theology is supported in the speech's description of the Lord Jesus himself as a refugee while on earth and by the claim that people welcome Jesus when they welcome immigrants. This theological logic is also consistent with the speech's celebration of the universality of the Catholic Church. The Bishop's theology extends the dignity of humans to a God-given dignity for the family unit. The family unit in the Bishop's speech consists of spouses and their children. In the speech's theologically-inspired logical framework, the God-given dignity of the family is recognized by maintaining the integrity of the family unit, that is, keeping the spouses and children together.

In the logical framework of the speech, the theology that all humans and families have God-given dignity contributes to the motivation for supporting comprehensive immigration reform. The theological logic grounds the dignity of immigrants and immigrant families in the terministic screen's highest source of authority, God. The theology frames immigration from the perspective of the God-given dignity of the immigrant and immigrant family rather than considering immigration primarily through other frames such as nationalism, security, or economics. This framing of immigrant as bearer-of-Divine-dignity likely inspires the audience to be receptive to expanding the rights and opportunities of immigrants by supporting comprehensive immigration reform. The theological logic also contributes motivation in the terministic screen because it presents a sharp contrast with the act of accepting the broken immigration system and its ends in the "immorality" cluster. The nation's current immigration system was presented as keeping immigrants from providing for their family's basic human

needs and as violating the integrity of the family by separating family members, and is therefore judged as immoral.

While the theology that God has given dignity to all humans and to the family unit does not seem to create any significant weaknesses in the speech's terministic screen, there are two points of tension worth noting. First, there was not a direct connection established between the theological statement and support of Senate Bill 744. It seems logically possible that a person could hold this theological position and logically reject the specific legislation addressed in the speech. While a direct cause and effect connection was not established in the speech, I propose that the Bishop provided enough additional material, such as a theology of the family, the practices of the Church, and statements of Bishops, to support the connection between the theology of human dignity and support of Senate Bill 744, showing the connection consistent with a broad range of authoritative Church teachings. If nothing else, the theology provided logical fertile ground for supporting comprehensive immigration reform. Second, there may be a weakness in the logic of the transition from the theology of human dignity to the dignity of the family unit. The Divine dignity of the family unit was not given as extensive support in Catholic teaching as was the theology of the God-given dignity of humans. However, this may not be a significant issue within the logical framework in which statements by Bishops carry significant authority and presumes connection with the Church's larger body of teaching.

Prayer and Advocacy Theology's Logical Patterns of Motivation

The insights gained to this point in the chapter provide textually-grounded suggestions as to how the theologically-inspired logical framework in Bishop Michael Burbidge's terministic screen might recommend future rhetoric and actions. I began the chapter with descriptions of

both the context and explicit arguments and definitions in Bishop Burbidge's 2013 statement on comprehensive immigration reform. Next, I identified the Bishop's terministic screen through careful textual analysis of the speech. Then, I provided additional analysis of six theological logics active in Burbidge's terministic screen. Finally, in this section I will identify three ways the Bishop's theological logic explored in this chapter may influence those adhering to his terministic screen as they encounter other political controversies in the future.

Safeguards for the Integrity of Catholic Identity

The theological emphases in Bishop Burbidge's terministic screen provide a strong motivation for political action while providing logical buffers to deter the Catholic Church from being used as a tool for political action. While the Bishop's statement in support of comprehensive immigration reform was a political action text with a clear call to Catholic laity in the Diocese of Raleigh to act in support of Senate Bill 744, the terministic screen focuses on the Catholic Church as the Divinely-appointed judge of morality and logical grounding. The theological emphases in the Bishop's terministic screen acknowledge the important role of the state, but places the definition of the role of the state and the moral judgment on the actions of the state as subject to the God-given authority of the Church. The theological emphases at work in the Bishop's speech inform Catholic political action with the theological logic that God calls the Church to engage in both the sacred and the secular aspects of the world, deterring the Bishop's Catholic audience, for example, from either neglecting secular advocacy to exclusively practice sacred prayer or neglecting sacred prayer to exclusively practice secular advocacy.

Engagement May Create Opportunities

A second theological inspiration to the Bishop's logical framework that will likely direct the speech's Catholic audience in future political action is the divine calling for moral engagement

with the secular world, including the state. While the speech's terministic screen is driven by a clear conflict between morality and immorality and the Catholic Church is placed as the authoritative judge in the conflict, even in issues of the state, the terministic screen also places the focus of the conflict between morality and immorality on the Catholic laity and their choice to respond to Church teaching. The theological emphases in the Bishop's terministic screen contained a cosmic struggle, but did so without a godless "other" acting as the oppositional agent. This theological logic may lead audience members who embrace the Bishop's terministic screen to engage the secular world, including the state, with a motivation to do what is moral and build or repair the morality that the Catholic Church teaches should be a part of the state and secular public. This theology provides a more positive motivation and constructive perspective for political debate than the theological logics at work in the other terministic screens identified in this dissertation that place God's agents in conflict with agents of evil or injustice. For example, the Bishop's theological emphases are less likely to demonize the political opposition and more likely to open opportunities for dialogue and partnerships than the culture war theology described in chapter four's discussion of Rev. Mark Creech's political action rhetoric.

Emphasis on Identity Could Limit Opportunities

A final logical outworking of the Bishop's terministic screen is that the theology's strong emphasis upon the authority of the Catholic Church could act as a weakness when the Church answers the theological calling to engage the secular world. As the lack of an evil enemy in the theological logic may help foster political dialogue, the theological emphases on the Catholic Church's authority on moral judgment in all areas of life and that recognizing the Church's authority is the way to morality may limit the Church's engagement with the secular world, not out of animosity, but because of a lack of shared logical groundings. The Catholic audience's

sources of authority are recognized, while clearly with a range of interpretations, within the Church, but would not act as a shared logical grounding in secular public advocacy. The argument that a public policy should be passed because it is consistent with Catholic teaching is not persuasive to those who do not identify as Catholic or value Catholic teaching. Claiming the Divine authority of the Catholic Church as the grounding reason in a public policy discussion may deter non-Catholics as they may dismiss the public policy position as only a position for people claiming a Catholic identity.

While this study focused on theology as an active participant in a political action text's terministic screen and the interactions of that theology at work in the text rather than theology as an external tradition, the theology in the Bishop's text repeatedly referenced and claimed heritage in the theological tradition of the Catholic Church. If my claim that specific theological logics influence texts in specific ways, and if there is a resemblance between the theological emphases in Bishop Burbidge's statement on comprehensive immigration reform and the theological emphases in other Catholic political action texts, then the common theological logics in the texts will likely exhibit similar interactions in each text's terministic screen. The animations and constraints exercised by the common theological logics should be observable to rhetorical scholars. Dave Tell (2007) and James Ferrell (2004) have both written on the resources of Catholic theology in public discourse and political rhetoric. Tell and Ferrell have also observed the motivational logic of Catholic theological emphases such as the God-given authority of the Catholic Church, the divine calling of the Church to engage in both the sacred and the secular, and shared Divine and human action in the world. Their analyses have similarly noted the logics of Catholic political action texts to carry a deep logical grounding in the Church that drives political engagement with the state. The common findings between my analysis of

Bishop Burbidge's speech and Tell's and Ferrell's studies of similar theological logics acting similarly in the logical frameworks of different texts suggests that the specific shared theological emphases at work in Bishop Burbidge's political action text contribute to the text's terministic screen in part because of their specific logics. This suggested implication from the brief comparison of findings in other rhetorical studies of Catholic theology at work in political action rhetoric is strengthened by comparing the activity of the specific theological logics analyzed in the three terministic screens revealed in this dissertations careful analysis of three political action texts by contemporary clergy in North Carolina. Specific theological logics appear to act in unique ways.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This dissertation explored how various Christian theologies animate clergy rhetoric when supporting different political positions as expressed in contemporary North Carolina political debates. I carefully analyzed speeches that were representative of three prominent clergy members' political action rhetoric between 2010 and 2015 in order to identify the texts' terministic screens and the theological emphases therein. I conducted additional analysis on numerous theological logics that the texts revealed as actively participating in the texts' terministic screens. My work in this dissertation went beyond identifying the frequency of the use of theology as a resource by also identifying patterns of theological logics' interactions among terms in the text's terministic screen. My study focused on how specific theological logics engaged other rhetorics in the coherent overarching logical frameworks of speeches by contemporary Christian clergy speaking to mobilize people for political action. My study sought to add depth and focus to ongoing scholarship on religion in public discourse by highlighting the rhetorical resources of theology in political discourse.

The definition of theology I used in this dissertation is discourse about God and God's ways in the world that act as interpretative systems in rhetorical texts. I have also identified three levels of theology along with this broad definition. First, I recognize theological traditions that predate and may or may not influence a text. Second, I recognize the text itself which includes theologically-inspired rhetoric. Third, the focus of the study is on what I referred to as textual theology, the mediating level of theology between the text and the tradition that serves as an interpretive framework. Within a text, one can examine evidence of and patterns in how the rhetoric was animated and constrained in practice by the interpretive logic of its active discourse

about God and God's interactions with the world. The focus of my study was on the rhetorical practice of theology and the logic systems of theology in rhetorical practice. I approached the study with an understanding that theological assumptions participate in a text's terministic screen and therefore animate and constrain how a situation is interpreted and evaluated in a way that recommends how a situation should be responded to.

I contributed to disciplinary understanding of the rhetorical roles of theology in contemporary political discourse through the pursuit of my primary research question: how might the political action rhetoric of contemporary American clergy rely on resources in various Christian theologies? This question guided me to analyze contemporary political action texts by clergy, not as a theologian, pastor, or political analyst, but as a rhetorical scholar seeking insights into the rhetorical functions of Christian theology in one contemporary controversy. In this concluding chapter, I will highlight some of the significant discoveries in the dissertation in relation to the project's primary purpose. First, I will review the key theological systems within the terministic screen of each of the three clergy's political action texts analyzed in this dissertation. Next, I will identify some of the similarities and differences in the theologies found in the texts. Then, I will demonstrate how theology can make contributions to the logic of a terministic screen and how specific theologies make specific contributions. Finally, I will conclude by answering my primary research question and making the claim that theology engages a text in the same ways that other interpretive logics make a difference in a text and should therefore be given careful attention by rhetorical scholars.

Three Different Theologies Identified

The three clergy speeches analyzed in this study provided examples of political action texts with theological logics in the texts' interpretive frameworks. These texts were chosen because they represented the rhetoric of influential clergy during the selected time period and exhibited theological terms and claims in their explicit arguments and definitions. My dissertation included careful textual analysis using a cluster-agon and a narrative arc to identify the terministic screen in each clergy's political action rhetoric. This analysis revealed a theological logic about God and God's interactions in the world participating in each speech's terministic screen.

Theology in Each Text

My cluster-agon analysis and narrative arc analysis of Rev. Dr. William Barber's February 8, 2014 "Higher Ground" speech revealed a number of theological statements in the text's terministic screen. I highlighted the following six theological emphases as prominent in the speech's logical framework: (1) God speaks through a variety of sources, including religious scriptures, government constitutions, and people; (2) God is on the side of moral and just public policy; (3) God works through a variety of people to establish public morality; (4) God acts on behalf of people who work to establish morality; (5) God establishes the standards of public morality and judges all people on those standards; (6) God can be experienced in political and spiritual higher ground.

The detailed textual analysis of Rev. Mark Creech's keynote address at the April 30, 2012 marriage amendment rally described in the fourth chapter uncovered the theology at work in the speech's terministic screen. The following are prominent theological emphases in Creech's terministic screen: (1) God speaks primarily through the Bible; (2) God works in the world

primarily through God's people's political action; (3) Traditional marriage is God's good purpose and the Cause of Christ; (4) The cosmic battle between good and evil is currently expressed in conflict between God's people and left-wing activists; (5) God supports religious freedom for conservative evangelicals.

My cluster-agon analysis and narrative arc analysis of Bishop Burbidge's September 8, 2013 statement on comprehensive immigration reform revealed the theology participating in the Bishop's terministic screen. Five theological emphases emerge: (1) God speaks and acts in authoritative ways through the Catholic Church; (2) Following the God-given authority of the Catholic Church leads to morality; (3) God calls the Church to engage in both the sacred and the secular; (4) God has given dignity to all humans and family units; (5) God and humans both act in the world; (6) God's moral authority applies to both the church and the state.

My analysis revealed that there were at least three theological emphases present in all three terministic screens examined in this dissertation. First, each of the speeches contained a moral hierarchy that placed God as the highest authority. Second, each terministic screen placed Christian scripture as an expression of God's moral authority and as an authority that should inform political debate and ultimately inform the law of the land. Third, each clergy member expressed a theology that God works through people. The presence of common theological emphases in different texts does not necessitate that the texts contain the same precise theological logic or the same overarching logical framework. It simply indicates that diverse theologies can share some emphases. The presence of common theological emphases also demonstrates that theologies can have both common elements and significant differences in how those common elements are logically expressed.

While the three political action texts all had theological emphases in their terministic screens, including some common theological emphases, the three political action texts also had different theological logics that engage their texts in unique ways. For example, each text contained different logics about God and God's interactions with the world. Even though all three terministic screens placed God as the highest authority, each text included a different theology of how God expressed that authority, resulting in different logical hierarchies of authority under God. In other words, each text had a specific theological logic on how God interacts with the world, and those differences in theology contributed to the three texts' particular logical frameworks and recommendations.

Differences in Theologies

The three political action texts analyzed were all given by Christian clergy and all contained statements of Christian theology in both their explicit arguments and in the speeches' terministic screens. The theologies in the political action speeches explored in this project also reflect some of the diversity in Christian theology as the three texts delivered in the same state in the same time period by Christian clergy contained not only political and rhetorical differences but also contained significant theological differences. I will identify some of the theological differences in the following paragraphs. I propose that an awareness of these theological differences, identified through careful textual analysis and attention to the intricacies of the theology in the texts' internal logic, better positions a rhetorical scholar to identify meanings available in the texts rather than broadly characterizing all three texts as "religious rhetoric" or "Christian rhetoric."

All three political action texts contain a theology that God communicates to humanity. This theology is an important piece of each text's logical framework, grounding the moral

judgments that drive the central conflict in each terministic screen. The three speeches also contain differences in how, or through what means, God speaks to humanity. The theology in Rev. Barber's text indicates that God communicates to humans about public morality through a variety of sources including the Jewish and Christian scriptures and the state and national constitutions. The theology in Rev. Creech's terministic screen states that God communicates primarily, almost exclusively, through the Bible. Bishop Burbidge's terministic screen in his statement on comprehensive immigration reform claims that God speaks with authority through the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church.

All three texts contain a theology that God has a people. In all three theologies, God's people are, or have the opportunity and responsibility to be, closely connected to God's will and work in the world. Yet, "God's people" is identified differently in the theologies uncovered in the three different political action texts. Interestingly, my analyses revealed a logical connection between the theology of how God communicates in the world and the theology of who are considered God's people. In the theology in Rev. Barber's speech, the designation of being one of God's people and working on God's behalf is open to anyone who chooses to do God's work of justice and public morality. Rev. Creech expressed a theology that essentially limited "God's people" to conservative evangelical Christians, a group that would identify with both his conservative politics and, more importantly for this study, his theology that God speaks primarily through the Bible. In Bishop Burbidge's theology, God's people are the "Catholic faithful," that is those who are a part of the Catholic Church.

Each of the three clergy political action texts have a logical framework that includes a theology that the Christian scriptures contain revelations of God's moral code that should be implemented through government legislation. This theology contributes to the motivation within

the text. However, the theology of each terministic screen has differences in what aspects of Biblical moral teaching should influence the state. The theology expressed in Rev. Barber's speech emphasized the need for government policies to align with biblical teaching about public morality that promotes the good of all people including the poor and needy. The theology in Rev. Creech's political action text emphasized the need for government policies to enforce biblical teaching on sexual morality and family life as the key to a prospering society. Bishop Burbidge's terministic screen contained a theology that emphasized the importance of government policies reflecting Catholic teaching on the dignity of every human being and family.

All three terministic screens uncovered in the analyses of the three political action texts contained a central battle grounded in God's authoritative moral judgment. However, the theologies differ on where this battle is waged. These differences have a logical consistency with the text's theological differences addressed above. Rev. Barber's theology identifies a cosmic battle between justice and injustice that includes all people with the differentiation based on choice and action of each person. In the theology expressed in Rev. Creech's speech, there is a cosmic battle between good and evil that includes choice and action but is primarily based on sharp division of identity between conservative evangelicals (good) and liberal activists (evil). The theology of Bishop Burbidge's terministic screen recognizes the immorality in a government system, but emphasizes the conflict between morality and immorality in the Catholic laity's choice to obey or ignore the teaching of the Church.

Different Theologies make Unique Differences

In addition to identifying that there is theology in the terministic screens of the three clergy political action texts and that there are numerous differences in the theologies in the three

terministic screens, this project has also displayed that theologies make contributions to the logic of a text's terministic screen and that specific theologies make specific contributions. In this section I will argue these last two claims. First, I will explain how theology makes a difference in a text's terministic screen, providing an example from the case studies. Then, I will explain how different theologies make different differences, again providing examples from the case studies.

One of the central claims of this dissertation is that theology matters in rhetoric. In other words, theology has an impact on the motivational logic of the rhetorical text. Theology is not neutral in a text; it participates in a dynamic interaction with the text's logic and other rhetorics. Theology shapes and is shaped in those interactions in the text. I will now review ways that particular theologies were shown to engage the logical framework of their given political action text.

Rev. William Barber's (2014) terministic screen contained the theological emphases that God works through people to establish moral and just public policy and that God works for people working to establish moral and just public policy. These theological claims made a number of contributions to the logic and motivation of the text. The audience was presented with the choice of a divine purpose and responsibility. Joining the Moral Monday movement carried the logic of joining in God's work and taking on the identity of God's agent in the world. The theology moved the scope of the action from addressing a specific state policy debate to the realm of a cosmic venture in service of the Almighty. Likewise, the second theological claim, that God works for those working to advance public morality, influences the logic of the text from being heroic but vastly overmatched political underdogs to having the hope of being the inevitably victorious agents of the Almighty.

The terministic screen in Rev. Mark Creech's (2012) speech at the marriage amendment rally included the theological claim that God works primarily through "God's people." This theological claim has significant impact on the logical framework of the speech. The theology lends to a logic in which public policy debates between "God's people" and other groups is a cosmic battle against an evil enemy. In such a battle, "God's people" are, by the identity given in the logic of the theology, acting on God's behalf, and the battle carries cosmic stakes. Furthermore, the desirable conclusion in the underlying narrative is dependent upon God's people defeating the evil enemy for the salvation of the world.

Bishop Michael Burbidge's (2013) terministic screen contained the theological logic that God works in authoritative ways through the Catholic Church. This theology contributes to a logic that places the Church on the side of morality by default. The choice between morality and immorality is connected to the attitudes to esteem the Church or treat the Church's God-given moral authority with indifference. The theology also affords a logic in which the Church can, and at times should, call upon the government to make policies that are consistent with the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church.

The textual analysis of clergy political action speeches in this project has demonstrated that a theology's participation in a text makes a difference in the text's terministic screen. It has also demonstrated that specific theological logics have contrasting interactions with the logic and rhetoric in the text and consequently make specific contributions to the terministic screen. It can be said that all theology is not created equal. It can also be said that all theology does not equally create logical animations and constraints in rhetorical action. Theology is not uniform; it carries complexity, ambiguity, and differences. Different theologies do not act the same in a text. The element of a theological logic that engages the text's terministic screen in a certain way may not

be present in a different theological logic. The logics and rhetorical functions of theologies are more complex than a single uniform category. Rhetorical scholars risk missing the rich complexity of theology when they place theological statements into broad categories such as “religious rhetoric” or “Christian rhetoric.” Instead, the complexities of theological logics in texts should be explored individually to better understand the meanings available in the text.

I will support this claim by looking at theological statements from the case studies and highlighting differences in how specific theologies engage logic systems and other rhetorics in texts. For example, the theology of how God speaks to humanity demonstrates the necessity of exploring theological logics individually. All three political action texts contain theologies that state that God communicates with humanity. However, the theologies in the three texts contained significant differences on how God communicates with humanity. Those theological differences create distinct interactions between theology, rhetoric, and logic in the text and therefore, have different expressions in the text’s terministic screen.

Rev. Barber’s (2014) text contained the theology that God speaks to humanity about public morality through a variety of sources. In the speech’s terministic screen, a variety of sources, including the Christian and Jewish scriptures and the state and federal constitutions, are used to ground the moral claims in the text. The logic was manifest in the text as a variety of sources were used to support Barber’s moral judgments on various public policies. Barber used these moral judgments based in a variety of sources to call a diverse audience, who themselves likely held a wide range of sources as moral authority, to act in order to advance public morality. Likewise, Barber’s terministic screen displays the influence the text’s theological logic as a diverse coalition of individuals of goodwill serving as the agents in the positive cluster; these

agents of the higher ground hear God's call for public morality through a variety of sources and come together to do God's work for the advancement of public morality.

Rev. Creech's (2012) text contained the theology that God speaks primarily, perhaps exclusively, through the Bible. The terministic screen primarily grounds the text's moral arguments about marriage and Amendment One in the Bible. The majority of the argument in Creech's speech about the upcoming vote for an amendment to the constitution was based in his exposition of a short biblical text, a passage Creech defined as the only way to know God's purpose. The agents of the terministic screen's positive cluster were "God's people," whom Creech defined as conservative evangelical Christians, the people of a religious tradition that would largely share the text's theological claim that God primarily communicates to humanity through the Bible.

Bishop Burbidge's (2013) speech contained a theology that God speaks with authority through the Catholic Church. The text's terministic screen grounds its moral claims about immigration and the need to reform the nation's immigration system in the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church. In the text of the speech, the Bishop's argument for why the audience should support comprehensive immigration reform consisted of various teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. The agent in the positive cluster of the text's terministic screen is the Catholic faithful who esteem the authority of the Church.

This study has demonstrated that theology makes a difference in a text as it interacts with logic and other rhetorics. This study has also demonstrated that in a small sampling of clergy political action rhetoric within a single religion and a single state in a limited span of years, a diversity of theological emphases can be identified in the different texts. Furthermore, the study has revealed that the specific theological logics engage in different interactions in the texts that

can be seen in distinct terministic screens. I have proposed that, in light of differences facilitated by different theologies, theological rhetorics should be given careful attention when present in a text.

How Theology is Not Different

While this study has demonstrated that theology makes a difference in a text's terministic screen, it should also be noted that, at least in the findings of this study, theology does not seem to make a difference inherently because it is theology or because it addresses "God." I have broadly defined theology as discourse about God and God's interactions with the world. I have recognized that there are theological traditions predating the texts in study. I have also identified that theology can be identified in rhetorical texts. However, the primary emphasis of my dissertation has been on uncovering the textual theology that serves as an interpretive framework within the text. This study appears to demonstrate that textual theology does not make a difference in a text's terministic screen because it is about God and God's interactions in the world. Rather, textual theology makes a difference rhetorically because it contains a logic that participates in the text. Various rhetorics interact, animate, and constrain in the text according to the logics of rhetoric and make a difference in a text's terministic screen. This dissertation's analysis of theology at work in clergy political action texts showed the theologies participating in the texts in ways similar to ways any authorizing assumption of any type, theological or not, functions in other discourses.

Theology may, as in these three case studies, play a prominent role in a text's terministic screen, leading a critic to attribute the prominence of the role of theology to theology's address of the transcendent Divine. Textual theology is frequently a feature that holds the highest

authority in a text's logical framework. Additionally, theology often expands the horizon of the scene to the widest possible scope. In these common cases, theology is extremely active, even influential, in a text and plays a vital role in the rhetorical functions of a text. However, it is not clear from this study that textual theology acts differently than other discourses that may also serve in the role of ultimate authority in a text's logical framework or may also expand the purview of the scene to the widest scope available in the text's logical framework. For example, the Cold War rhetoric of conservative Americans often contained a logical framework in which "freedom" was the highest authority and totalitarian Communist nations were designated as "evil" (Rowland & Jones, 2006, p. 34). Instead of producing unique rhetorical patterns, the textual analysis of three clergy political action texts showed that textual theology functions as other rhetorics function when serving particular roles in the logic of a text. Textual theology does not appear to transcend or differ essentially from other logics of rhetoric.

Theology appears to function in a text the same way that other grand authorizing assumption rhetorics function when they are in the same role. As noted above, and demonstrated in this dissertation's case studies, the theology of a text may place God in the place of highest authority in the terministic screen. More specifically, the theology in a text may claim a particular text or tradition as the authoritative expression of God's authority, as was the case for Creech's (2012) theology of the Bible and Bishop Burbidge's (2013) theology of the Catholic Church. In the logics of rhetoric, the "thing" in the role of highest authority will regularly act in the logic of the terministic screen in a number of ways. Below I list three ways that the role of the highest authority in the terministic screen engages the logic of the terministic screen. I will also identify how the logical expression of the role of highest authority was exercised in the terministic screen of texts analyzed in this dissertation, suggesting that the theologically-based

authority interacted with the text according to the logic of its role rather than a quality inherently unique to theology.

First, the highest authority in a logical framework will act as grounding, explicitly or implicitly, for the arguments and claims in the text. This function of the terministic screen's highest authority was seen in Bishop Burbidge's (2013) continual grounding of his moral claims about immigration in the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church. The logical grounding of moral claims in the Church is clearly related to the theology in the text that God speaks with authority through the Catholic Church which positioned the Catholic Church as the highest authority in the text's logical framework. However, the function of logical grounding of moral claims seems to be more related to the role of highest authority in the text's terministic screen than to the origin of the positioning in that role due to a theological statement.

Second, the highest authority in the hierarchy of the logical framework will influence the identity of the agent in the positive cluster. The hierarchy places some constraints upon the identity that will logically fit in the role of positive agent in the text's terministic screen. This logic of rhetoric was expressed in Rev. Creech's (2012) terministic screen. Creech's theological statement in the speech that God's purpose for marriage, sexuality, and relationships is only revealed in the Bible, logically positioned the Bible in the highest place of authority in the text's terministic screen. The agent in the positive cluster of Creech's terministic screen was "God's people," who I argued were defined as conservative evangelical Christians. While not a direct result of the theological logic that the Bible is the highest authority in the terministic screen, the designation of people who recognize the Bible as the highest authority in the role of positive agent reflects a coherent logic in the text's terministic screen. Once again, this dynamic seems to have more to do with the logic of rhetoric than the transcendence of theology beyond such logic.

Third, the highest authority in the terministic screen will influence the “to what” stage of the text’s underlying narrative arc. The logic of the desirable ending of the text’s underlying narrative will be influenced by the authority in that logic. This logical expression of the role of highest authority was seen in Bishop Burbidge’s (2013) terministic screen as the narrative invited the audience to act toward a conclusion that manifested morality as defined in the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church and instituted it in law. The logic of coherence in the terministic screen and the theology positioning the Catholic Church in the role of highest authority placed constraints on the kind of narrative conclusion that the terministic screen would hold as motivational.

Each of the texts in this dissertation had theological uniqueness that contributed to what served as the highest authority in the text’s logical framework. I have given examples of how different theological logics’ sources of Divine communication performed the role of highest authority in their respective terministic screen. The source of highest authority in each terministic screen served as the logical grounding for each text’s claims, judgments, and interactions between terms. The differences in theology led to different logical outcomes in the exchanges, but the nature of the exchange between theology, rhetoric, and logic followed a similar pattern in each terministic screen. Furthermore, the theologically-based sources of highest authority follow the same logics of rhetoric that then are succeeded by other sources of highest authority not based in theological statements. For example, Thomas Lessl (2009) has claimed that “science” serves as the highest authority in logical frameworks he described as “evolutionism” and extensively argued that science-centered logical frameworks enact resources in contemporary public communication.

This summary and processing of the findings of my case studies leads me to the answer of the primary research question of this dissertation: How might the political action rhetoric of contemporary American clergy rely on resources in various Christian theologies? My answer is that the resources of Christian theologies are relied on in political action rhetoric the same way that political action rhetoric uses, and is used by, other rhetorics. This study has shown that theology contributes to a text's terministic screen and that theological logics create variation in a text precisely because they function in parallel ways to the patterns of other types of rhetoric.

It may be tempting to say that theologically-infused rhetoric is different from other types of rhetoric, especially based on the critic's beliefs for or against particular theological claims. However, while this study shows that theology makes a difference, it does not show theology making a difference in ways other than those also enacted by non-theological authoritative assumptions that influence rhetorics. It may be tempting to claim that the passion, depth, and breadth of motivation is unique to theology. However, this study has demonstrated that theology provides a deep, broad, and powerful motivation in a text's terministic screen, but it does not show theology contributing to motivation in ways not seen in other rhetorics with different types of authority driving their terministic screens.

Kenneth Burke (1969b) claimed that a rhetoric of an "act conceived in the name of God" was "objectively different" than a rhetoric of an "act conceived in the name of a godless nature" (p. 6). But it is unclear, in either Burke or in this study, exactly how the reference to God is rhetorically different from a reference to nature if nature is a "god term" in a text's terministic screen (Burke, 1969a, p. 111). For example, Burke (1969a) himself identified money as the "rationalizing ground of action" for much of American culture (p. 113). The theological terms in this study clearly had an impact on the text's logical framework. However, the impact seemed to

follow the patterns of the other elements of rhetoric within the terministic screen. This study revealed a dynamic interaction among theology, other rhetoric, and logic in the text. In this dynamic interaction, theology appeared to function along with the other elements, functioning in a logical and common role in a text's terministic screen. Even when "God" was a "god term" in a text, the theological term appeared to act consistent with non-theological "god terms" in other texts. When "God" was the ultimate authority and grounding in a clergy's political action text, the term seemed to function no differently than non-theological ultimate sources of authority and grounding in other texts. This conclusion seems consistent with Burke's (1970) *The Rhetoric of Religion*, which I read as confirming a religious quality to the mystery and power in the patterns of any rhetoric, theological or non-theological (p. vi).

Theology Deserves the Attention of Rhetorical Scholars

As a person trained in theology, I recognize that many theologians will have different answers to the questions I have asked in this project. Indeed, some theologians will also ask different questions. However, from the perspective of a rhetorical scholar looking at recent clergy political action texts, I can say that theology matters when it animates a text, but it matters in the ways that other words and rhetorics are instructive in a given text. I propose that my observation that theology functions in a text according to the general logics of rhetoric, rather than transcending the logics of rhetoric because it addresses the Divine, should make room for the study of theology in mainstream rhetorical scholarship. The findings of this dissertation indicate that the theology in a text is important and should be carefully studied by rhetorical scholars, regardless of the scholar's personal theological belief but because of the scholar's belief that all words and their interactions with other words contain power (Burke, 1970, p. vi).

In this project I have proposed that theology is a more helpful focus than religion, or spirituality for that matter, for rhetorical analysis because theology provides an actual material discourse about God and God's interactions with the world for a critic to analyze as it is manifested in a particular text. The textual theology has power in a text and the specifics of the textual theology have specific power. Different theologies, discourses about God and God's interactions with the world, offer varied resources, constraints, and patterns and merit careful consideration by rhetorical scholars.

While the constraints and resources in theological rhetoric seem to manifest, mold, animate, and contribute to a text's terministic screen in ways similar to the constraints and resources of other types of rhetoric, such an observation should not be seen as an assessment of the metaphysical reality or epistemological accuracy of any particular theology, nor as equating the substance of theology with the substances of other rhetorics. It is, rather, an observation on how human discourse about God and God's interactions with the world functions rhetorically in a text, specifically in a political action text. Given rhetorical scholars' recognition of the power of rhetoric and the logic of rhetoric in texts and in the world that receives such texts, I hope that this dissertation's observations about the functions of theology in texts might prompt rhetorical scholars to approach theology with the same careful critical attention that they give to other types of rhetorics.

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Zarefsky, D. (2008). Knowledge claims in rhetorical criticism. *Journal of*

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Education

2016 Ph.D.

Department of Communication
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, WI
Emphasis: Rhetoric and Public Communication
Certificate in Rhetorical Leadership
Advisor: Dr. Kathryn M. Olson

2002 M.A.

Communication and Culture
Trinity Graduate School
Deerfield, IL
Emphasis: Communication in Postmodern American Cultures
Cum Laude

2001 M.A.

Religion
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Deerfield, IL
Emphasis: Practical Theology, Hermeneutics, Faith and Culture
Cum Laude

1996 B.A.

Christian Education, Biblical Literature, Youth Ministry (certificate)
Taylor University
Upland, IN
Emphasis: Urban Ministry

Manuscripts Under Review (Academic Journals)

Vining, James W. (2015). "The Ambiguity of Faithfulness: Progressive Evangelicals and the 1973 Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern." Revise and resubmit for The Journal of Communication and Religion.

Presentations (Academic Conference)

Vining, James W. (2016, May). "A Different Kind of Repentance: The Ambiguity of Evangelical Theological Frameworks and Social Concerns in the Early 1970s." Paper presented at the Rhetoric Society of America Convention, Atlanta, GA.

- Vining, James W. (2016, April). "The Power of North Carolina's Progressive Prophet: How Rev. Dr. William Barber's theological expertise animates his political rhetoric." Paper presented at the Central States Communication Association Annual Convention, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Vining, James W. (2015, November). "Where Does My Help Come From?: God, Guns, and Salvation Psalms." Paper presented at the National Communication Association Convention, Las Vegas, NV.
- Vining, James W. (2015, November). "When Paper Meets Fire: Bureaucratic and Prophetic Rhetoric in Faith-Based Non-Profit Organizations." Paper presented at the conference of the Religious Communication Association, Las Vegas, NV.
- Vining, James W. (2015, April). "The Ambiguity of Faithfulness: Progressive Evangelicals and the 1973 Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern." Paper presented at the Central States Communication Association Annual Convention, Madison, WI.
- Vining, James W. (2014, November). "American Evangelicals at Mars Hill." Paper presented at the conference of the Religious Communication Association, Chicago, IL.
- Vining, James W. (2014, November). "The Women Shall Remain Silent: Rachel Held Evans confronts John Piper's Masculine Christianity." Paper presented at the conference of the Religious Communication Association, Chicago, IL.
- Vining, James W. (2013, November). "Voices of a Green God: Climate Change, Prophetic Rhetoric, and American Evangelicals." Paper presented at the National Communication Association Convention, Washington, DC.

Academic Workshops

- Vining, James W. (2015, June). "Where Does My Help Come From?" Paper presented at the Religion and Rhetoric Workshop at Rhetoric Society of America, Madison, WI.
- Vining, James W. (2014, November). "'Moral Monday and Progressive Religious Rhetoric.'" Paper presented in the Rhetoric Research Roundtable at the National Communication Association Convention, Chicago, IL.

Professional Development

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 2012- present | Professional Development Series, Department of Communication UW Milwaukee |
| 2013- present | Development Workshops, The Graduate School UW Milwaukee |
| 2015 | University Wisconsin Faculty Development on Competency-based Education. |
| 2015 | The Rhetoric Society of America Summer Workshop |
| 2015 | The Central States Communication Association Annual Convention |
| 2014 | The Religious Communication Association Annual Convention |
| 2014 | The National Communication Association Annual Convention |
| 2013 | The National Communication Association Annual Convention |

Professional Memberships

Central States Communication Association
Christianity and Communication Studies Network
National Communication Association
Religious Communication Association
Rhetoric Society of America

Teaching

2012-present **Graduate Teaching Assistant**, Communication Department, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Critical Analysis (Comm 335)

- Designed course to fulfill the university's Oral Written Communication Competence
- Created the D2L site for the course
- Created learning activities for rhetorical analysis
- Facilitated classroom discussions
- Graded and provided feedback on assignments

Introduction to Public Speaking (Comm 103)

- Lectured on Public Speaking
- Ensured department and university policies
- Facilitated learning activities
- Graded and provided feedback on assignments
- Contributed to panel for new GTAs
- Engaged a diverse student population

2013-2015 **Graduate Project and Teaching Assistant**, English Department, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Business and Technical Communications Certificate, UW-FLEX: Nationally recognized competency-based education program. (flex.wisconsin.edu)

- Assisted in the development of a new competency-based on-line program
- Trained new instructors
- Collaborated with various university systems
- Developed course notes
- Compiled curated content for students
- Managed D2L sites for courses
- Graded assessments and gave substantive feedback for six courses
 - Introduction to Business and Technical Communications (Eng 206x)
 - Strategic Writing for Organizations (Eng 428x)
 - Technical Communication and Organizational Leadership (Eng 429x)
 - Advanced Business and Technical Communications (Eng 435x)
 - Project Management (Eng 437x)
 - Information Design (Eng 439x)

2007-2008 Field Education Supervisor, Bethel University

2001-2002 Field Education Supervisor, Trinity Graduate School

1994-1995 Teaching Assistant - Urban Ministry, Taylor University

Awards

2012	Chancellor's Graduate Student Award, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
2002	Practical Theology Innovation Award, Trinity International University
2000, 2001	YMCA Community Leadership Award, Akron Area YMCA
1996	Christian Education Award, Taylor University

Service (University)

2015-2016	President of the Governance Committee. Graduate Student Advisory Council, University Wisconsin Milwaukee
2015-2016	Graduate Student Representative. Graduate Faculty Committee, University Wisconsin Milwaukee
2015-2016	Graduate Student Representative. Graduate Assistant Appeals Committee, University Wisconsin Milwaukee
2015	Judge at Public Speaking Showcase, University Wisconsin Milwaukee
2012-2014	Vice President of the Eastbrook International Students Association, University Wisconsin Milwaukee
2001-2002	Vice President Student Government Association, Trinity Graduate School
2001-2002	Student Affairs Committee, Trinity Graduate School
2001-2002	Academic Affairs Committee, Trinity Graduate School
1993-1994	Spiritual Life Coordinator, Taylor University

Service (Discipline)

2016	Slated to chair the panel "Incorporating Issues of Gender and Sexuality Studies into the Non-Gender Themed Class" at the Central States Communication Association Annual Convention, Grand Rapids, MI.
2015	Reviewed paper submissions for the Public Address Division of the 101 st annual convention of the National Communication Association.

Service (Community)

2014-2015	Planning team for inter-faith collaborative addressing poverty in Wisconsin
1998-2014	Guest speaker at a number of churches and organizations.
1989-2013	Volunteer at a number of urban nonprofits in WI, TX, OH, CA, IN, and NY.
2008-2011	Established partnership between a Guatemalan nonprofit in Guatemala City Dump community and young adults in Wisconsin
2004	Initiated a grass-roots neighborhood food drive in Akron, OH.

Non-academic employment

- 2012-2013 **Pastor of University Ministry**, Eastbrook Church, Milwaukee, WI
- Integrated University students into an international, intergenerational, interdenominational urban faith community
 - Taught students on theological foundations of education and vocation
- 2007-2011 **Associate Pastor**, Elmbrook Church, Brookfield, WI
- Supervised Graduate Interns
 - Developed volunteer leaders
 - Facilitated local service projects
 - Designed weekend retreats
 - Initiated the use of social media
 - Taught church-wide staff training sessions
 - Built long term partnership with international mission
 - Established a community groups structure
 - Taught weekly in a large group setting
 - Participated in significant leadership transitions
- 2005-2007 **Director of College and Young Adult Ministry** Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, Houston, TX.
- Developed a new church worship service
 - Taught in large and small group settings
 - Led both social and service activities
 - Established a holistic small group ministry
- 2002-2005 **Church Planting Pastor**, Church on the Square, Akron, OH
- Developed and executed an extensive strategy for starting an urban church
 - Recruited launch team and support team
 - Established a spiritual formation structure
 - Initiated community service events
 - Led teaching and worship gatherings
- 2001-2002 **College Ministry Pastor**, Christ Church Lake Forest, Lake Forest, IL
- Developed new strategies for ministry
 - Supervised Graduate Field Education
 - Built networks on a diverse college campus
 - Designed small group curriculum
- 1998-2000 **Director Christian Education**, First Presbyterian Church, Akron, OH
- Developed philosophy of student ministry
 - Taught in large and small group settings
 - Designed urban service projects and trips
 - Trained student leaders for peer ministry
- 1997-1998 **Urban Exposure Coordinator**, World Impact, Fresno, CA
- Designed and led short-term cross-cultural urban trips for college students
 - Mentored urban teens
 - Trained urban church leaders for teaching
- 1996-1997 **AmeriCorps Member**, John H. Boner Community Center, Indianapolis, IN
- Designed and led a life-skills and community service program for at-risk students as an alternative to suspension program at an urban middle school

Non-academic workshop and retreats created

Ecclesia: Being a Community of Faith Today
Imago: Personal Identity and What it Means to Be Human
Spiritual Formation in the Way of Jesus
Ancient Paths: Spiritual Disciplines for Today
Discerning your Vocational Calling

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

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