CONCLUSION

BECAUSE YOU BEAR THIS NAME

Conceptual metaphor grounded in basic embodied human experience recognizes a shared moral language and discourse between the NT writers and readers of the NT today. In the reading and interpretive process, moral dispositions are generated and moral imagination is shaped via conceptual metaphor and blended mental spaces. This theory of metaphor provide links between the fields of NT studies and Christian ethics and offers more productive ways to look at the relationship between Scripture and constructive ethics.

Metaphor is not “mere” and imagination is not magic. Metaphor is neither a category mistake nor a mysterious (or intrinsically divine), magical catalyst or connecting spark. On one level, reading a text like 1 Peter imaginatively is both ordinary and simple. Scripture is, like every other written text, a human language product, and reading it requires only ordinary actions of our human minds. Scripture is not more—nor is it less—metaphorical or imaginative than any other body of human writing. But that is not to deny the complexity of the cognitive, imaginative work required in ordinary reading and reflection. Just let us not consign Scriptural texts to some “odd duck” category, as though the language were particularly difficult to decipher, intrinsically ‘other’ because ‘religious’ or ‘classic,’ or opaque to linguistic analysis because it is accorded divine authority. Conceptual metaphors shape Scriptural moral discourse in powerful, evocative, ubiquitous, mentally charged, bodily grounded ways—just as they shape all discourse.

To draw this study to a conclusion, let us return to some of the questions that engendered it. Is it possible to have a shared moral language and discourse between the NT writers and readers of the NT today? Can we find a more productive way to look at the relationship between Scripture and Christian ethics? Can the impasse between the fields of NT studies and Christian ethics be broken; can reliable links between the fields be forged? What roles does metaphor play in the moral meaning of 1 Peter? Does noticing the metaphorical dynamics help us understand 1 Peter? The methods and insights of cognitive
metaphor analysis point to new ways to address these questions. Our 1 Peter study has some implications for the field of cognitive linguistics, too. Since it is written that “the last shall be first,” let us take these issues in reverse order, beginning with the contribution to linguistics.

**Implications for Cognitive Linguistics**

A survey of metaphors for morality in 1 Peter produces plentiful evidence that the koine Greek of the NT employs many conceptual metaphors and frames familiar to those of us working on compiling lists of stock moral metaphors. Good Is Up (and Light, and Clean) and Evil Is Down (and Dark, and Dirty) in Greek, as in English.\(^1\) I Peter also offers some new candidates for inclusion in cognitive linguists’ comprehensive lists of metaphors for morality, and certain culturally nuanced spins on the stock metaphors. 1st-century social structures and practices—among them the slavery system, patron-client relationships, a justice model whose concern is restoration of honor and social balance, and remedies for debt centered on ‘release’ and ‘deliverance’—are key to understanding Moral Accounting in 1 Peter. The way the text blends financial accounting domain concepts with legal justice and household management frames to create a coherent, composite Moral Accounting scenario is unexpectedly complex (and interesting). In addition, I Peter works with interesting variations on the conventional Great Chain of Being metaphor, and certain culturally grounded time concepts (καιρός, χρόνος) lend unique flavor to the discourse. Primary social relationships and experiences in households prove to be an especially rich source domain for metaphors for morality in 1 Peter, and these are also culturally constrained and nuanced.

Metaphor analysis methods are useful in other aspects of NT study, as well—not just in discourse analysis. Mental space blending theory contributes incisive tools for locating the metaphorical functions evoked by the Two Worlds model. The ability to identify the compression at work in that model is crucial to the analysis of the ‘problem’ scholars face in the Scripture and ethics field. These methods also allow a deeper and more accurate assessment and critique of the ways anal-

\(^1\) Comprehensive lists of metaphors located in the text are compiled in the Appendices.