For several decades voices from various sectors of Christianity have decried the loss of compelling language for sin. The atrophying of sin language is of no small moment due to the organic connection between theological loci. Sin-talk relates to salvation-talk, human-talk, and Christ-talk. Further, the loss of compelling sin language threatens to silence the church’s voice in the culture.

Both classic and contemporary theologies of sin, pursuing the essentialist methods of the past, attempt to define sin and derive the fullness of the doctrine of sin from these distillations. However, many of these renderings of sin are insufficiently attentive to the importance of narrative modes of thought in theologizing. Specifically, they often almost completely ignore the witness of the biblical narrative—both individual narratives and the Bible’s overall narrative structure. Furthermore, they tend to appropriate the narratives, and especially the narrative of the fall in Genesis 3, in ways that actually subvert the narratives’ narrativity through historicizing, mythologizing, and decontextualizing. They therefore provide thin descriptions of the human condition and consequently offer distorted depictions of redemption, humanity, and the divine-human relationship. These patterns can be seen in both feminist theologies that build their definitions of sin from particular views of the human and evangelical theology which derive their definition from biblical propositions.

In this dissertation we seek to begin to offer a narrative theology of sin by providing a reading of Genesis 1-11 that attends to its literary character and seeks to identify the reference point for sin and discern its development in the narrative. We will discover that both the reference point for sin and the axis of its development relate to the depiction of the human as the \textit{imago dei}. We will conclude by demonstrating that indexing the doctrine of sin to a narratively construed \textit{imago dei} offers a more robust language for sin and in particular, offers a more natural bridge to Christ. Indeed, in the story of redemption, Christ becomes the ultimate reference point for describing sin.