



# themelios

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EDITORIAL

# Kingdom, Ethics, and Individual Salvation

— D. A. Carson —

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## *1. The Challenge*

In recent years a number of stances have arisen that have set themselves over against traditional evangelicalism and traditional Reformed thought, not a few of them arguing, in part, on the basis of a particular understanding of the kingdom. These stances claim to be more biblical and thus more faithful than traditional stances. To some extent they overlap; to some extent each is identifiably different from the others. What are these stances, what can we learn from them, and what should be resisted—and why?

1. The kingdom, especially as emphasized in the Synoptic Gospels, is often tied to communitarian ethics rather than individual ethics. By contrast, Paul downplays the kingdom and focuses rather more on individual salvation. This has played into the individualism of the West, which must be resisted by restoring a return to Jesus himself, achieving a better balance with Pauline emphases.

2. The kingdom is bound up with a way of looking at reality that undermines the perceptions of the fallen and broken world order. Many of the “parables of the kingdom” have this fundamental reversal at their core, so it turns out that the last are first and the wild and wayward son is given the party. In this kingdom, we do not govern the way the world does: the one who wishes to lead must be the slave of all, even as Christ came not to be served but to serve (Matt 20:20–28). The kingdom-cross has more to do with ethics, especially the ethics of reversal, than with atonement.

3. With the triumph of Christ achieved on the cross and through his resurrection, the kingdom has dawned—a glorious anticipation of the spectacular glory of resurrection existence in the new heaven and new earth. That means Christ’s people are mandated to begin now to work out the dimensions of righteousness and justice that will be consummated at the end: saying “No” to raw power, caring for the poor and needy, reversing discrimination, being good stewards of the created order that anticipates the consummated created order. All of this is the mission of Jesus.

4. The clear command of Jesus is to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness—and Jesus makes clear, not least in the Sermon on the Mount, that this entails a range of shocking ethical transformations: turning the other cheek to violence, recognizing that the heart is more fundamental than mere action, and forgiving others (because, quite frankly, we will not be forgiven unless we do). This stance is often associated with the Anabaptist movement, whether in its more traditional guise or in its Hauerwas form. The broad pacifism Jesus mandated finally means that the church in some measure, in some way,

must withdraw from the world: our job is not to transform culture, but to constitute a new people, to live by the shaping constraints and privileges of the kingdom. It is not our job to tell the world what to do, or even to figure out how to interact with the broader culture; it is simply our job to be the people of God.

5. A postmillennial anticipation of the coming of the kingdom, combined with either a soft sphere-sovereignty (think Kuyper) and/or with some form of theonomy, develops its own ways of thinking about the transformation of the culture.

6. At a popular level (think “Left Behind”), it is still not uncommon for some to think of the kingdom as virtually an exclusive reality, so that terms like “gospel” and “church” may be nicely tied to this generation, but “kingdom” has to do with the future, millennially conceived or not.

These are all distinguishable ways of thinking about the dawning of the kingdom. Four of the six devote a lot of thought to the challenge of transforming culture; one (the fourth option, Hauerwas) specifically sets itself against such reflection, but devotes a lot of thought to the challenge of being a distinct society over against the surrounding culture. All but the last tend to depreciate individual salvation, while the last tends to emphasize it to the depreciation of large-scale communitarian and ethical reflection (i.e., where it focuses on ethics, it tends to emphasize the ethics of the priorities of individuals). By contrast, many in these camps who align themselves with social and communitarian ethics would take umbrage at the charge that they downplay individual salvation, since they acknowledge that individuals must repent and believe. Nevertheless, the focus of their frame of reference is one or another of these large visions, usually tied to a distinctive understanding of the kingdom, heavily leaning toward societal transformation (either of the entire society or, in the Anabaptist heritage, the ecclesial society). Individual supporters of these movements tend to emphasize different needs: the overwhelming challenges of poverty, of AIDS and other diseases, of abuse of power, of ecological responsibility, of reconciliation of various sorts (racial, ethnic, religious).

## ***2. Preliminary Responses***

1. Like most positions that claim to right a wrong, there is some level of truth in these proposals. Nevertheless, in each case there is something either reductionistic about the proposal or just plain exegetically wrong or both. For instance, with respect to the first proposal, which tends to pit Jesus and the kingdom over against Paul: once one has noted the difference in both literary genre and temporal location of Gospels and epistles, one can nevertheless trace out the many theological connections between Jesus and Paul.<sup>1</sup> Or again, with respect to the second proposal, which elevates ethics in the Gospels above the atonement, it painfully overlooks just how central the cross is to the entire Bible’s storyline. Even in the Gospels, to abstract the ethics passages from the narrative that drives toward the passion and resurrection (one of Brian McLaren’s approaches), ultimately distorts both the ethics and the narrative—as the better commentaries invariably show, and as Peter Bolt, for instance, has

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<sup>1</sup> See esp. David Wenham, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); or, more briefly, Wenham’s *Paul and Jesus: The True Story* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); or older short books on this topic by Herman Ridderbos and by F. F. Bruce (both titled *Paul and Jesus*); or Paul Barnett, *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity: A History of New Testament Times* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1999).

dramatically demonstrated in Mark.<sup>2</sup> So much of the exegesis in this camp is slightly distorted, but this “slightly” turns out to be massively corrupting. For instance, I recently heard a well-known NT scholar argue that the famous utterance, Mark 10:45 // Matt 20:28, is not *really* about the atonement at all, but about politics and the nature of leadership. Well, yes and no: the entire *pericope* is about the nature of leadership among Christ’s disciples, but the fundamental ground and standard is Christ and his atoning cross-work. Far from pitting ethics and the atonement against each other, the passage grounds the former in the latter. Or again, the third proposal, though not superficially wrong, becomes deeply wrong because (a) the storyline on which it is based is reductionistic, and (b) the applications commonly pursued are merely hyped echoes of contemporary agendas that compared with Scripture are at best decentered and at worst naive. And so we could work through all the proposals.

2. Several of these proposals depend on reductionistic approaches to the nature of the “kingdom” in the NT. The easiest way to demonstrate this is by outlining some of the uses of “kingdom.”

(a) In many uses, the kingdom of God is virtually coextensive with God’s sovereignty: God’s kingdom rules over all, and he does what he wills. Everyone is in the kingdom in that sense—atheists, Buddhists, Christians, and so forth. It is impossible *not* to be in the kingdom. In this sense, the kingdom is neither something to pursue nor something that can be avoided.

(b) On the other hand, in many uses the kingdom of God is that subset of God’s total reign under which there is acceptance with God and eternal life. For example, one can neither see nor enter the kingdom (in this sense) unless one is born again (John 3). One is either in the kingdom or one is not.

(c) Very frequently the Gospels present the kingdom as coming—either in process of dawning now or promised for the future and yet already inaugurated. Often this tension is implicitly cast over against the anticipation of some Jews that the kingdom of God would come in a climactic burst that would usher in righteousness and destroy the ungodly. Instead, it comes like seed sown in various soils, like yeast transforming dough.

(d) This coming or dawning kingdom can itself, at the moment, include both wheat and weeds. That makes it like (a), above—except God’s sovereignty cannot be said to “come” or to be anticipated. That it is not to be identified with all of God’s providential reign makes it akin to (b), above—except that this usage includes both wheat and weeds.

(e) Increasingly in the NT, the kingdom is distinctively Christ’s kingdom. In many of the parables, Jesus speaks of the kingdom *of God*. In some, however, such as the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt 25:31–46), the King is clearly Jesus. That raises the question as to when Jesus *becomes* king. At one level, Jesus is born a king (e.g., Matt 2); at another, he enters into his kingship with the onset of his public ministry; at yet another, in deepest irony he reigns from the cross (e.g., Matt 27:27–53); very frequently in the NT his kingship is thematically connected with his resurrection, ascension, and session at the Father’s right hand, assuring him that all authority is given to him in heaven and on earth (e.g., Matt 28:18). Paul sums up this vision by insisting that all of God’s sovereignty is currently mediated through Christ and that this will continue to be the case until the last enemy has been destroyed (1 Cor 15). That means that Jesus’ mediatorial kingship is contested. The consummation of the ages finally arrives when his foes, including death itself, have been utterly vanquished.

(f) None of this descriptive analysis mentions Matthew’s preference for “kingdom of heaven” over “kingdom of God.” Of the various proposals advanced to explain the semantic difference, that of

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<sup>2</sup> See Peter G. Bolt, *The Cross from a Distance: Atonement in Mark’s Gospel* (New Studies in Biblical Theology 18; Downers Grove: IVP, 2004).

Jonathan Pennington is as believable as any.<sup>3</sup> The difference is not one of referent, but of emphasis or perspective: the kingdom, we might say, is viewed a little more focally from heaven's vantage point.

(g) In no instance is kingdom to be *identified* with church, as if the two words can on occasion become tight synonyms. Even when there is a referential overlap, the domain of "kingdom" is reign, and the domain of "church" is people.

(h) The kingdom is sometimes associated with certain virtues or conduct (e.g., Matt 5:3, 8), even with righteousness (Matt 6:33). Sometimes such passages seem to relish a certain eschatological tension: Does "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10) envisage the consummation, the presence of the future (to take up Ladd's unforgettable title), or both? Certainly there is nothing in the NT quite like the current infatuation for expressions like "kingdom ethics," in which "kingdom" is reduced to a mere adjective.

One could extend this analysis quite a bit further, but this is enough to flag the dangers of reductionism.

3. Several of the proposals mentioned at the beginning of this editorial are difficult to evaluate in short compass because they depend on debatable assumptions regarding the meanings of several other biblical terms or theological themes. Nowhere is this more notable than in current debates over the meaning of "gospel." Someone brings up the expression "the gospel of the kingdom," assures us that the kingdom has to do primarily with ethics, and then assures us that the only way to develop a really "robust" gospel is to integrate kingdom ethics into our gospel. The methodological missteps bound up with such word-association games are too complex to be untangled here. But if "gospel" refers primarily to the great news of what God has done in Christ Jesus to redeem and transform his people, we ought to distinguish what God has done from its entailments in how his people will respond. One could do a lot worse than read Greg Gilbert's *What Is the Gospel?*<sup>4</sup>

4. There is a huge need to test all of these proposals and systems by *all* the great turning-points in redemptive history, keeping in mind *all* of them *all* the time.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Four Concluding Reflections

Here I wish to do no more than prime the pump:

1. There are important and sometimes neglected things to learn from the actual practice and focus of the NT documents. For example, we cannot help but observe that some of the priorities of these stances do not seem to be the first priorities of the Book of Acts or of any of the epistles, Pauline or otherwise. One wonders why, if Paul had been focally concerned about being a good steward of creation in his own time, he did not say a bit more about cleaning up the horse poop in Rome. There is plenty of biblical warrant for thinking through our stewardship of creation on the broadest canvas, but one should be careful to make the first things the first things.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan T. Pennington, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 126; Leiden: Brill, 2007); *ibid.*, "The Kingdom of Heaven in the Gospel of Matthew," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 12, no. 1 (2008): 44–51.

<sup>4</sup> Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Gospel?* (9Marks; Wheaton: Crossway, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> This is one of the larger themes of my *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

2. In much of the contemporary discussion, there is an alarming lack of eternal perspective—or, better put, a mere tipping of the hat toward the eternal, but not any acknowledgement that viscerally and powerfully affects conduct and priorities. “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt 10:28).

3. Doubtless some in the broad evangelical camp overreact and think exclusively of saving souls as opposed to people in all the complexities of their existence (whether because they spring from an older dispensationalism or because they have been burned by the heritage of a 1920s social gospel). But somewhere along the line Christians have to wrestle with what it means to do good to all, even if our first responsibility is toward the household of God, serving as salt in a decaying world, as light in a dark world.

4. Finally, it is desperately important not to try to slaughter the complexity and balance of biblical mandates on all these fronts by the simple expedient of universalizing *our* slot in history and culture. Many of us are quick to identify the ostensible imbalances and errors of Christians in other generations without adequately reflecting on our own blind spots or on the blind spots of our heroes. One wonders what stances Kuyper would have adopted had he been born in China in 1940.

OFF THE RECORD

# From Moral Majority to Evil Disbelievers: Coming Clean about Christian Atheism

— Michael J. Ovey —

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*Mike Ovey is Principal of Oak Hill College in London.*

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People rightly note the way Christians in English-speaking Western culture have moved in a generation from being ‘moral majority’ to ‘immoral minority’. But I wonder whether that really catches the intensity of the dislike and disdain that I see in the two Western societies with which I am most familiar, the UK and Australia. You see, when I read the *Sydney Morning Herald* or the UK’s *Guardian*, what I perceive goes beyond a simple charge of immorality (and I’m not talking just about the articles, but the subsequent reader feedback). It has a religious intensity. The same applies to the so-called New Atheism: Richard Dawkins sounds like an OT prophet denouncing Israel’s unbelief.

It is important, I think, to understand that our surrounding secular culture regards Christians not just as fools, but also—unconsciously—in a religious sense as evil atheists.

Why? Because our culture practices polytheism. This is a paradoxical polytheism which is *both* a kind of atheism itself *and* which will also see us as atheist. We need to grasp this if we are to respond faithfully in our time and place.

We can explore this paradoxical polytheism using three questions: Is our culture polytheist? How can that polytheism also be atheistic? And why should our culture see Christians as atheist?

## ***1. So Is Our Culture Polytheist?***

After all, at first glance this is not how our culture sees itself. But the biblical idea of idolatry sheds a different light. Idolatry has many dimensions, but one key ingredient is that in idolatry we parody the real relationship between us and our creator by using substitutes for God. Substitution is at the heart of the exchange/change language of Rom 1:23 and Jer 2:11.

Tertullian develops this in *De Idololatria* 4 when he points out that an idol stands *pro Deo* (‘for God’). Something can substitute for God either by passing itself off as God and trying to look as much as possible like the real thing (Aaron’s golden calves fall into that category) or simply by distracting and obscuring our view of the real God so that we look at the idol and not at God.

I suspect many of our culture’s idols fall into that latter category. Our gods are not necessarily gods who create from nothing, are omniscient, and are personal. Vitality, they may now be quite small-scale. In particular, we must grasp that idol-gods may be impersonal: wealth is the obvious biblical example of something impersonal that can be treated as a god. For our time, we have many gods, some crass like wealth and sexual pleasure, others not ignoble in the right context, like equality before the law and



freedom of speech—ideological idols. But the cultural memory that a god should be personal obscures the fact that this is idolatry.

Hence, our culture is not only polytheist, in having many small-scale things that stand *pro Deo*, it is an *unaware* polytheist culture. This means that as Christian trinitarian monotheists we are deeply at odds *theologically* with a culture that is polytheist but does not know it.

## ***2. But Why Is Such Polytheism an Atheism?***

Remember that the patristic theologians were set in a polytheistic culture. Ultimately, their analysis of polytheism was that it became atheism. This sounds odd. Wonderful temples were built, staggering works of art made depicting Zeus, etc. How can that be atheism?

Athanasius sums it up nicely when discussing the idea of having two gods (*Contra Gentes* 6). He argues that if you have *two* gods, you have *no* gods in the real sense of the word because to be God means you have no rivals who can resist your will. His base assumption here, drawn from biblical descriptions of God as Lord, is that to be ‘God’ necessarily entails sovereignty. So the multiple impersonal values of our time boil down to this kind of atheism.

But it works the other way too. If you are an atheist in Athanasius’s terms, what are you left with? There is no overall coherence, no God who in himself is the sum of all perfections, and so there’s no reason not to elevate your own personal values into things which function as absolutes for you, and to accept that others are entitled to do the same. In that way, atheism becomes polytheism where there are lots of small, often impersonal gods who function as divine in our lives, even if we don’t see ourselves as worshipping them. Think of G. K. Chesterton’s comment that when people stop worshipping God, they don’t worship nothing; they worship anything. Or indeed, everything.

One of Athanasius’s followers, Gregory of Nazianzen, is useful here. He commented on the worldviews that polytheism and monotheism tend to create and noted that there are three ways of viewing the cosmos (*3<sup>rd</sup> Oration on the Son* 1):

1. A cosmic monarchy (one ruler)
2. A cosmic polyarchy (lots of rulers)
3. A cosmic anarchy (no ruler)

His point was that polytheism involved a cosmic polyarchy, and this in turn became a cosmic anarchy because no one holds things together and integrates them. Atheism and anarchy go together.

But anarchy is unstable. Anarchy is not a self-regulating dynamic equilibrium in human experience, but consistently tends to allow different power-holders to establish themselves at the expense of others. Each power-holder acts and competes against others without restraint—as if absolute. So in the value-anarchy of atheism, each small-scale value can, paradoxically, be treated as if absolute. There is nothing there to restrain it.

But where do Christians fit into a culture caught in polytheism and atheism? This takes us to the third question.

### 3. *Why Should Our Culture See Christians as Atheists?*

Again, think back to the early church. One of the more surprising charges made was that Christians were atheists. Why? Because of the number of gods they denied. No Zeus, Hera, Hermes, Mithras, Isis, or whoever. Similarly, we deny our culture's gods.

Take one of the current cultural idols: equality. This is one of those impersonal gods we were discussing earlier. Does the Bible give us an account of equality? Yes, but in relation to other considerations. We have an integrated account of equality, that is, equality is put in proper perspective and place by the whole Bible's teaching, and crucially, we as creatures are not equal to our creator. In that way, equality is not *the* great overarching theme of Christian thought. But it is one of the gods of the current secular pantheon and pursued with a religious fervour. In the value-anarchy of our time, it competes to be treated as absolute.

So my refusal to accept equality as absolute looks rather like earlier Christians refusing to worship the god Zeus. I am an atheist within that framework of reference.

Hence some of the rage which comes our way on some of the debates of the day. When we oppose same-sex marriage, we are not just discussing different ethical positions, we are demonstrating that we are irreligious atheists because we are denying the 'divinity' of some very popular gods—sexual satisfaction, autonomy, equality, liberty. Of course, what makes it hard for people to see this rage as a religious rage is their self-image as secular people. But then polytheistic idolatry has always had a somewhat delusional, self-deceptive dimension: see Isa 44.

There are some further parallels here in the way early Christians were regarded. The neoplatonist Porphyry famously argues, 'How can people not be in every way impious and atheistic who have apostatized from the customs of our ancestors through which every nation and city is sustained?'

This raises an important dimension. By not worshipping the ancestral 'public' gods, Christians were thought of as atheists who undermined the state. And this is not too far from the way atheist Christians who do not sacrifice at the altar of equality or liberty in personal hedonism can be thought of as atheists who are public enemies, bad citizens. Our assertions of cosmic monarchy destabilise the value-anarchy polytheism of our time.

It's not surprising, then, that Christians in the UK speaking on practising homosexuality as meriting God's condemnation are prosecuted under public-order offences. And such state action is perceived as 'self-defence'. This seems to me to be an extremely important part of the rhetoric the media elite uses against Christians and other cosmic monarchists. It is self-defence because we are thought to undermine a society which is a process of competing and plural forces and persons. The latter half of the twentieth century is replete with arguments that a democratic society can take strong steps in defending itself against those who would overthrow it. In fact, because democracy is so precious (dare one say such an idol?), security services are justified in taking very extreme action to preserve something so precious.

The rhetoric about self-defence is significant. In an instant the claim of self-defence allows one to present oneself as the victim. And a polytheistic culture may readily see itself victimised by the rhetoric of cosmic monarchists—for we are the atheists.

# Abounding in the Work of the Lord (1 Cor 15:58): Everything We Do as Christians or Specific Gospel Work?

— Peter Orr —

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One of the deepest impacts of the Reformation on Western Culture arose from the robust rearticulation of the biblical doctrines of creation and vocation. Luther may have captured the combined impact of these neglected doctrines most strongly by rejecting the enshrined sacred-secular divide that was so prevalent in medieval thought. Luther emphasised the ordinary activities of daily life ‘as examples of a Christian’s return to creation and embrace of vocation.’<sup>1</sup> Luther vividly illustrates this in his reflections on marriage: ‘When a father goes ahead and washes diapers or performs some other menial task for his child, and someone ridicules him as an effeminate fool . . . God with all his angels is smiling.’<sup>2</sup>

Contemporary evangelical theology continues to emphasise this Reformation understanding of the interrelatedness of creation and vocation. Discussions of the Christian understanding of work emphasise that *all* work is intrinsically good.<sup>3</sup> Books on the Christian life stress the biblical emphasis that *all* life is to be lived for God’s glory.<sup>4</sup> Is it possible, though, that in our right desire to affirm the goodness of creation and the validity of every vocation that as evangelicals we have unwittingly downplayed an equally important biblical emphasis: the eschatological *priority* for the church of Christ? While everyday tasks done to the glory of God do please him, there remains a central priority to God’s working in the world. That is, as much as God affirms the goodness (and future) of this creation and hence the validity of all work done in it, his cosmic plan *centres* on his new people created in his Son (Eph 1:22–23). Paul’s great eschatological vision is of the Son as firstborn over his transformed people (Rom 8:29) and parallels John’s vision of a great multitude standing before the throne of the Lamb (Rev 7:9). As well as considering how the goodness of creation should impact our understanding of work, we also need to ask how this *central* eschatological vision shapes our lives in the present.

These are issues that merit a full-blown study of their own. This article, however, considers just one verse which I think helpfully encapsulates the core of the debate. By considering 1 Cor 15:58, we see

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arland, *The Genius of Luther’s Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 112.

<sup>2</sup>Martin Luther, ‘The Estate of Marriage, 1522; LW 45:50; WA 10.2:207 (cited in *ibid.*, 112).

<sup>3</sup>E.g., Tim Keller, *Every Good Endeavour: Connecting Your Work to God’s Plan for the World* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2012).

<sup>4</sup>E.g., Julian Hardyman, *Maximum Life: All for the Glory of God* (Nottingham: IVP, 2009).

how interpreters can rightly stress the goodness of creation and yet underplay the NT's teaching on the eschatological priority of God's work in the world.

In 1 Cor 15:58, Paul concludes his great defence of the resurrection of believers by drawing the ethical implications. Given the resurrection, the Corinthians can and should devote themselves 'to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord [their] labour is not in vain.'<sup>5</sup> But what exactly does Paul mean by the phrase 'the work of the Lord'? In light of the resurrection, what exactly are believers to devote themselves to? One particular interpretation reads this verse in the light of the impact that the resurrection has on the doctrine of creation.

### ***1. The Maximal Interpretation of 1 Cor 15:58: Everything We Do As Christians in Light of the Resurrection***

At a number of points in *Surprised by Hope*, Tom Wright considers Paul's exhortation in 1 Cor 15:58. He suggests that this exhortation, coming as the conclusion to Paul's great defence of the bodily resurrection of believers, implies, 'All that we do in faith, hope and love in the present, in obedience to our ascended Lord and in the power of his Spirit, will be enhanced and transformed at his appearing'<sup>6</sup> He later expands on this to specify that on the basis of this verse, 'What you *do* in the present—by painting, preaching, singing, sewing, praying, teaching, building hospitals, digging wells, campaigning for justice, writing poems, caring for the needy, loving your neighbour as yourself—all these things *will last into God's future*'.<sup>7</sup> Finally, towards the end of the book he again cites 1 Cor 15:58 and concludes,

Every act of love, gratitude and kindness; every work of art or music inspired by the love of God and delight in the beauty of his creation; every minute spent teaching a severely handicapped child to read or to walk; every act of care and nurture, of comfort and support, for one's fellow human beings, and for that matter one's fellow non-human creatures; and of course every prayer, all Spirit-led teaching, every deed which spreads the gospel, builds up the church, embraces and embodies holiness rather than corruption, and makes the name of Jesus honoured in the world—all of this will find its way, through the resurrecting power of God, into the new creation which God will one day make. That is the logic of the mission of God. God's recreation of his wonderful world, which has begun with the resurrection of Jesus and continues mysteriously as God's people live in the risen Christ and in the power of his Spirit, means that what we do in Christ and by the Spirit in the present is not wasted.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, copyright © 2011 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>6</sup>Tom Wright, *Surprised by Hope* (London: SPCK, 2007), 157. Wright explains in note 13, "This is the logic behind, e.g., 1 Cor. 15:58; see my *The Way of the Lord: Christian Pilgrimage in the Holy Land and Beyond* (London: SPCK; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), ch. 9, and below, Chapter 13."

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 205, emphasis original.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 219. In his more extensive treatment on the resurrection, N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 3; London: SPCK, 2003), Wright refers to this verse on several occasions, but his concern is not to unpack the content of the *work* and *labour* in view but to establish that Paul's belief in a *future* resurrection results in a *present* exhortation (e.g., particularly p. 285 but also pp. 223, 231, 359).

In particular, then, the resurrection's affirming and securing the future of creation leads Wright to draw the ethical conclusion that *everything* done in this creation is worthwhile since it will continue into eternity.

Paul Stevens also articulates this idea when he cites 1 Cor 15:58 as teaching that the resurrection 'is proof positive that work in this world is not resultless.'<sup>9</sup> This teaching

brings new meaning to those whose toil is in so-called secular work: the arts, education, business and politics. They too are shaping the future of creation in some limited way just as are missionaries and pastors. Most people think that only religious work will not be in vain (1 Cor 15:58) but if Christ is the first-born from the grave, then all work has eternal consequences, whether homemaking or being a stockbroker. . . . [W]e are co-operating with what Christ wants to do in renewing all creation.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, in his recent book on mission, Christopher Wright argues that because of the resurrection '[a]ll human productive work . . . has its own value and eternal significance' and that 'we know that "the work of the Lord" does not mean just "religious" work, but any work done as "unto the Lord", including even the manual labour of slaves (Col 3:22–24).'<sup>11</sup>

We could label this approach to 1 Cor 15:58 as the '*maximal* interpretation' in that it understands the 'work of the Lord' to be essentially *anything* that Christians do *because* of the resurrection. In other words, this gives weight almost exclusively to the *general* motivation that the rest of the chapter provides rather than to the *specific* meaning of the phrase itself.<sup>12</sup> This understanding of 'the work of the Lord' in 1 Cor 15:58 thus draws on both the doctrines of creation and resurrection. Given that the latter affirms and validates the former, Paul exhorts the Christian to work in this world since that work is 'not in vain' but has an eternal future.

## ***2. A Specific Interpretation of 1 Cor 15:58: Evangelism and Edification***

The obvious strength of the 'maximal' interpretation is that it recognizes the importance of the doctrines of creation and resurrection for Christian ethics. The resurrection's affirmation of creation is an inescapable foundation for Christian ethics.<sup>13</sup> But the problem comes when this ethical reflection cuts itself loose from *specific* paraenesis in Scripture. To do so is to produce an abstract ethic that becomes just as problematic as a wooden proof-texting that merely quarries the Bible for verses which

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<sup>9</sup>R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work and Ministry in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 117.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 237–38. It is not clear whether Stevens is suggesting that 1 Cor 15:58 does teach that *religious* work is not in vain or whether this is a misunderstanding of this verse. However, his earlier citation implies a maximal understanding.

<sup>11</sup>Christopher J. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* (Biblical Theology for Life; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 229.

<sup>12</sup>So, for example, Tim Keller in his *Every Good Endeavour*, 29, acknowledges that in this verse Paul 'was speaking of Christian ministry' but argues that it 'can ultimately be true of all work'.

<sup>13</sup>As argued so persuasively by Oliver O'Donovan in *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics* (2nd ed.; Leicester: Apollos, 1994).

‘tell me what to do.’ Ethical reflection in light of the resurrection must go hand in hand with careful consideration of the application that the NT *itself* makes. It is not enough to read a phrase such as ‘the work of the Lord’ in light of the doctrines of creation and resurrection; we must carefully exegete it in its own context.

The rest of this article argues that with respect to the phrase ‘the work of the Lord,’ Paul actually has something very specific in view.<sup>14</sup> When Paul tells the Corinthians to ‘abound in the work of the Lord,’ he is not issuing a call to *general* Christian living in light of the resurrection. Rather, ‘the work of the Lord’ refers to *what believers do to advance the gospel among unbelievers and to establish believers in the gospel.*<sup>15</sup>

As such, it is not the doctrines of creation and resurrection *in general* that are shaping Paul’s ethic. Rather, the eschatological *priority* of God’s work in Christ shape his ethic by producing a glorified, resurrected people who will bear the image of his Son (1 Cor 15:49). So ‘the work of the Lord’ is not a general description of the Christian life but an activity with a particular goal: more people bearing the image of the Son. The resurrection, in other words, should motivate Christians to devote themselves to the work of proclaiming the gospel to unbelievers and building believers up in that same gospel. Paul essentially makes this point *negatively* in 15:30–32. If men and women are *not* raised, what is the point of Paul’s suffering for proclaiming the gospel to them?<sup>16</sup> Verse 58, then, is the positive side of this. Precisely because they *will* be raised, it is worth it for Paul *and every Christian* to be devoted to the ‘work of the Lord’.

Further, Paul has already told the Corinthians that they are to ‘seek to excel’ (ζητεῖτε ἵνα περισσεύητε) in building the church (πρὸς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας [14:12]). He also wants them to do everything for the glory of God. In doing so they are following Paul’s example and cause offence to no one—Jews, Greeks, or the church of God—so that many might be saved (10:31–11:1).

Thematically, then, understanding the ‘work of the Lord’ to consist of edification and evangelism fits with Paul’s commands to the Corinthians. But to fully establish this interpretation, I examine how ‘the work of the Lord’ fits in the immediate context of 1 Cor 15, the wider context of the letter as a whole, and the still wider context of the Pauline corpus.

<sup>14</sup>I concentrate on the phrase ‘the work of the Lord’ but at points consider the phrase ‘labour in the Lord’.

<sup>15</sup>Most of the commentators acknowledge that this is the meaning of the phrase—most clearly W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (Zurich: Benziger, 1991–2001), 4:385, and Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (SP 7; Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999), 583. Other commentators acknowledge the specific referent of the phrase but tend towards a broader application. So, for example, Gordon D. Fee (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 808) suggests that while Paul frequently employs the word labour ‘to refer to the actual ministry of the gospel,’ ‘the work of the Lord’ here may ‘refer more broadly to whatever one does *as a Christian*, both toward outsiders and fellow believers.’ That is, ‘these are those kinds of activities in which believers engage that are specifically Christian, or specifically in the interest of the gospel.’ Similarly, though Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner (*The First Letter to the Corinthians* [Pillar New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 838) suggest that what ‘is meant is Christian ministry above all,’ they also concede, ‘it probably also includes any activity that would be undertaken out of commitment to Christ . . . that is, any activity that one would not naturally engage in were it not for their faith in Christ.’ Cf. Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 588.

<sup>16</sup>Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 26: ‘Paul has repeatedly put his own life and health at risk in order to proclaim the gospel (see, e.g., 4:11–13; 2 Cor 4:8–12; 6:3–10; 11:23–33). If there is no resurrection, why should he bother?’

## 2.1. The Immediate Context of 1 Cor 15

It is worth starting by considering the nature of the relationship between ‘the work’ and ‘the Lord’. Other biblical texts employ the phrase ‘the work of the Lord’ and parallel phrases (such as ‘the works of the Lord’ and ‘the work[s] of God’) in two ways:

First, when people are doing (or commanded to do) this work, the sense is that these are works that God *requires* or that people do in service to God (e.g., Num 8:11; Jer 48:10). This sense appears in John’s Gospel when the crowd asks Jesus what they must do to do ‘the works of God’ (τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ). Jesus answers them that ‘the work of God’ (τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ) is to believe in the one whom God has sent. In other words, the work of God here is a requirement. So in 1 Cor 15:58, Paul may simply be exhorting the Corinthians to continue to abound in the work that the Lord *requires* of them.

Second, this type of phrase occurs in texts which speak of the work that God himself has done or will do (e.g., Exod 32:16; 34:10; Deut 11:7; Ps 28:5). The second half of 1 Cor 15:58 may indicate that this is what Paul has in mind: the Lord is actively involved in this work, which is *his* work.<sup>17</sup> The reason that Paul gives in 15:58 that the Corinthians should continue in the work of the Lord is that they ‘know that their labour *in the Lord* [ἐν κυρίῳ] is not in vain’. Given the relative frequency and flexibility of Paul’s participatory language, it is probably wise not to rest too much theological weight on the use of ἐν κυρίῳ. Nevertheless, it is certainly *possible* that Paul’s use of the phrase indicates a conviction that as Christians work in this way, they are actually participating in the work of the risen Lord. This is, after all, how Paul understands his own ministry in Rom 15:17–19, namely, it is what Christ has accomplished through him (κατειργάσατο Χριστὸς δι’ ἐμοῦ). As Wagner notes, ‘Paul’s sense of participation in Christ lies at the root of his understanding of his own role as an apostle and missionary’.<sup>18</sup> So it may be that in exhorting the Corinthians to abound in the work ‘of the Lord’ and to labour ‘in the Lord’ he is not simply calling them to be active in the way that the Lord *requires* of them but that they should participate in the work that the Lord himself is doing.

In any case, the motivation to work in this way is the knowledge (εἰδότες) that their labour (κόπος) ‘is not in vain in the Lord’ (οὐκ ἔστιν κενὸς ἐν κυρίῳ). Precisely because there is a resurrection of the dead, what they do ‘in the Lord’ has meaning and value.<sup>19</sup> Here the *maximal* interpretation is absolutely correct: the resurrection motivates and grounds the believers’ working for the Lord. Because of the resurrection, believers can do ‘the work of the Lord’ confident that because of the resurrection their work has meaning and eternal significance.

But by expanding on ‘work’ (ἔργον) by paralleling it with the word ‘labour’ (κόπος), Paul points to a more specific understanding. Paul uses κόπος exclusively to denote activity that requires *exertion*.<sup>20</sup> This at least *suggests* that the ‘work of the Lord’ is *strenuous* work and fits with the idea that the activity is *specific* Christian ministry rather than general Christian activity. Κόπος is a ‘term for missionary work

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<sup>17</sup> This understands the phrase as a subjective genitive.

<sup>18</sup> J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul “In Concert” in the Letter to the Romans* (SNT 101; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 331n94.

<sup>19</sup> Whether or not ἐν κυρίῳ qualifies the whole phrase does not greatly affect the meaning: whether their ‘labour in the Lord’ is not in vain or their labour ‘is not in vain in the Lord’ essentially amounts to the same thing.

<sup>20</sup> This nuance is explicit in 2 Cor 6:5, 11:3, 11:27; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8 (cf. Rev 14:13). It is implied in 1 Cor 3:8; 2 Cor 10:15; 1 Thess 1:3; 1 Thess 3:5. Cf. BDAG, s.v.: ‘to engage in activity that is burdensome’ (cf. the related meaning of ‘trouble’ [e.g., Gal 6:17]).

and for work in the local church.<sup>21</sup> Throughout Paul's letters the goal of his labour is to proclaim the gospel and establish the churches.<sup>22</sup> To parallel κόπος with 'the work of the Lord' suggests that Paul understands the latter phrase as the same sort of 'gospel' labour that he himself has been involved in.

By telling the Corinthians that they should abound (περισσεύοντες) in the work of the Lord since they know that their labour (κόπος) in the Lord is not in vain, Paul is drawing a parallel with his own apostolic labour. Already in v. 10, he has compared himself to the other apostles by saying that he laboured (ἐκοπίασα) more (περισσότερον) than any one of them. He then corrects himself in that it is not simply his own effort since the grace of God is with him (οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλὰ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ σὺν ἐμοί). Here we have the ideas of God's gracious empowering and of abounding apostolic labour. The thematic and verbal parallels between vv. 10 and 58 suggests that the latter exhortation parallels the former description, which in turn suggests that we understand the labour and work that Paul wants the Corinthians to abound in to parallel his own apostolic labour: it is labour with the goal of the gospel progressing and Christians being built up in the gospel. That is, it consists of evangelism and edification.

As we examine Paul's other uses of 'work of the Lord' and related phrases, we will see that the specific interpretation comes clearly into focus.

## 2.2. The Wider Context of 1 Corinthians As a Whole

In the rest of 1 Corinthians, Paul makes a number of references to work that are germane to our discussion of 'the work of the Lord' in 15:58.<sup>23</sup>

### 2.2.1. 1 Cor 3:9–15

So in 3:9, he describes himself and others such as Apollos as 'fellow workers' (συνεργοί) who belong to God (θεοῦ).<sup>24</sup> Each one will have their work become manifest on the last day (ἐκάστου τὸ ἔργον φανερόν γενήσεται [3:13]) when the nature of each one's work (ἐκάστου τὸ ἔργον ὁποῖόν [3:13]) will be tested 'by fire' leading to the worker's suffering loss or reward (3:14–15). Though Paul does not use the phrase 'work of the Lord', the description of Paul and Apollos as 'God's workers' connects the two passages. The work that Paul and Apollos do as God's workers is work directed to the Christian community, whom Paul describes as 'God's field' and 'God's building' (3:10). Paul and Apollos do the work with the Corinthians as the object of the work: it is the work of building up the people of God (3:10). Verses 11–15 further specify the nature of the work. Again, it is the work of building the people

<sup>21</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission: Volume 2; Paul and the Early Church* (Leicester: Apollos, 2004), 1437.

<sup>22</sup> Schnabel cites 1 Cor 3:8; 2 Cor 10:15; 1 Thess 1:3; 3:5; and 1 Tim 5:17 as well as 1 Cor 15:58 in this regard.

<sup>23</sup> Paul can also refer to 'work' in a more general sense. So, in chapter 4 he defends himself and his fellow apostles in the light of what appears to be Corinthian triumphalism. In doing so, he describes how he and the other apostles 'labour' (κοπιῶμεν) by working with their hands (ἐργαζόμενοι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν [4:12]). Similarly, in chapter 9 it seems as if the Corinthians looked down on Paul and Barnabas compared to the other apostles since Paul asks whether only he and Barnabas do not have the right to be supported (9:11–12) and not to have to work (οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν μὴ ἐργάζεσθαι [9:6]). Paul points out that those who work in the temple (οἱ τὰ ἱερὰ ἐργαζόμενοι) obtain their living from the temple (9:13).

<sup>24</sup> This understands the genitive as possessive as do Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 304, and David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 113. Garland notes that the two other genitives (θεοῦ) in this verse are clearly possessive.



of God, a work that is carried out on the foundation (θεμέλιος) of Jesus Christ (3:11). God's work that Paul and Apollos are engaged in is the work of building the church.

### 2.2.2. 1 Cor 16:10

Then in 16:10, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to put Timothy at ease when he comes since 'he is doing the work of the Lord' (ἔργον κυρίου ἐργάζεται) just as Paul himself is (ὡς κἀγώ). Paul puts himself and Timothy before the Corinthians' eyes as those who do the work of the Lord. Again, this suggests that there is a specific goal to 'the work of the Lord.' It is something that Paul can point to himself and Timothy doing. Paul and Timothy are involved in the work of building the church. Paul has already said that he will be sending Timothy to teach them (4:17).<sup>25</sup> Rather than a general term, 'the work of the Lord' that Timothy is doing has a specific, *identifiable* goal.<sup>26</sup> In applying it here to himself and to Timothy, Paul assumes that the term is concerned with *ministry* to other Christians.

### 2.2.3. 1 Cor 16:15–16

A few verses later in 16:15–16, Paul commends the household of Stephanus and tells the Corinthians that they are to be 'subject to such as these' and to 'every fellow worker and labourer' (παντὶ τῷ συνεργοῦντι καὶ κοπιῶντι). Here Paul includes Stephanus, his household, and others like him in the category of 'worker' and 'labourer'. As he continues he describes the household of Stephanus as 'the first converts in Asia' and as having 'set themselves in service to the saints' (εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἀγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτούς). It seems, then, that the nature of their work and labour is the service to the saints.

As such, in the immediate context of 1 Cor 15:58, Paul identifies his fellow 'workers' and those doing the 'work of the Lord' as those who are active in ministering to and serving the needs of others in the church. In 15:58, he is calling the Corinthians to participate in this ministry, to give themselves also to the work given by the Lord of serving and building his church.

Throughout 1 Corinthians, then, 'the work of God' and 'the work of the Lord' is the particular work extending the gospel and establishing churches. Because of the resurrection, Paul gives himself to this work at great personal cost (15:30–31) and calls the Corinthians to be involved in this work (15:58).

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<sup>25</sup> Specifically to remind them of 'his ways in Christ'. I am assuming the original unity of the letter. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 32; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 49, lists Barrett, Belleville, Bruce, Collins, Conzelmann, Fee, Garland, Hurd, Kümmel, Marxsen, Mitchell, and Murphy-O'Connor as proponents of this position.

<sup>26</sup> C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (2nd ed.; BNTC; London: Black, 1968), 391: 'Paul defends Timothy because "he does the Lord's work as I do myself". That is, he engages in the same task of evangelism and of building up the churches, and conducts it in the same manner as Paul. Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 297: 'The phrase is explained by the idea of church and mission.'

### 2.3. The Wider Context of Paul's Corpus

A similar phenomenon occurs across the rest of Paul's letters: while Paul discusses 'work' in a general way (cf. Col 3:22–24), he draws attention *specifically* to Christian work that is closely tied to the work of establishing and edifying the churches.

#### 2.3.1. Phil 2:30

Perhaps the most significant parallel text in this regard is Phil 2:30, where Paul exhorts the church to receive Epaphroditus in the Lord since he nearly died for 'the work of Christ' (τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ).<sup>27</sup> Though the precise historical details are disputed, commentators generally agree that the Philippians commissioned Epaphroditus and sent him to Paul with gifts (cf. 4:18) in order to complete what was lacking in their ministry (λειτουργίας) to Paul (2:30). In the course of fulfilling this mission, Epaphroditus falls so ill that he is at the point of death (2:27). Thankfully, God has mercy on him so that he recovers, and Paul is now sending him back to the Philippians (2:28). Paul expands on the nature of this work by stating that Epaphroditus risked his life in order to complete what was lacking in the Philippians' ministry to Paul (ἵνα ἀναπληρώσῃ τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα τῆς πρὸς με λειτουργίας). It seems that the mode of his life-risking activity was becoming so ill that he nearly died (2:27). Paul, therefore, sees Epaphroditus' risking his life in this way as nearly dying for 'the work of Christ.' There is 'a clear causal connexion between the bringing of the gift and the risking of his life.'<sup>28</sup> That is, we can identify the 'work of Christ' in this instance with Epaphroditus' work in bringing the Philippians' gift.<sup>29</sup>

In this context, then, 'the work of Christ' means believers ministering to one another for the sake of the progress of the gospel. Epaphroditus is twinned with Timothy, whom Paul (implicitly) describes as seeking the interests of Christ (2:21) and having genuine concern for the Philippians (2:19). Thus, Epaphroditus does the work of Christ by serving Paul while Timothy shares the interests of Christ by being concerned for the welfare of the Philippians. Paul commends Epaphroditus, like Stephanus in 1 Cor 16:16, as his 'co-worker' (συνεργός). And like Stephanus, his church commissioned him to serve Paul (1 Cor 16:17–18).<sup>30</sup> In the context of the letter, Epaphroditus and Timothy both illustrate the attitude that Christ himself displays in 2:5–11.<sup>31</sup> However, Witherington suggests that we should distinguish between Timothy and Epaphroditus: Timothy is a long-term partner of Paul and as such 'an extension of Paul's own ministry,' and Epaphroditus is 'an extension of the Philippians' participation in Paul's ministry.'<sup>32</sup> As Fowl notes, the response due to Epaphroditus 'is not simply the result of his connection to the Philippian congregation. Rather, he has fulfilled exemplary Christian duties, even

<sup>27</sup> Moisés Silva, *Philippians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 141, notes that the textual support for (τοῦ) Χριστοῦ is 'overwhelming'.

<sup>28</sup> B. S. McKay, "Further Thoughts on Philippians," *NTS* 7 (1960–1961): 169, which many commentaries cite.

<sup>29</sup> The specific 'ministry' was probably the provision of finance (cf. 4:16–18)—so Ben Witherington, *Friendship and Finances in Philippi: The Letter of Paul to the Philippians* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), 79.

<sup>30</sup> Witherington (*ibid.*) thinks that this suggests that Epaphroditus was a leader in the Philippian church.

<sup>31</sup> Paul may also be making a specific parallel between Epaphroditus and Christ. While Christ was 'obedient unto death,' Epaphroditus 'came near to death' (Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians* [Pillar New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 208).

<sup>32</sup> Witherington, *Friendship and Finances*, 82.

putting his life in danger, and his reception should befit that.' The use of 'such ones' indicates that Paul 'considers Epaphroditus part of a general class of people'.<sup>33</sup>

'The work of Christ' here, then, is work that is specifically related to Christ's mission in which Paul was engaged and in which Epaphroditus and people like him could share. Paul mentions Epaphroditus partly because Epaphroditus functions as an example of what it means to have the same attitude as Christ (2:5–11). His actions in almost dying 'for the work of Christ' furthered the proclamation of the gospel and the establishment of churches. It is not that Epaphroditus simply risked his life in living out the Christian life in a general way. No, it was his participation in gospel-mission that led him to risk his life. Phil 2:30 is perhaps the closest parallel to 1 Cor 15:58 and strongly suggests that Paul has the same 'work' in view in both passages.

### 2.3.2. *Eph 4:12*

In Eph 4, Paul does not use 'work of the Lord' or a directly related phrase, but he does view the Ephesians as equipped to be involved in the work of ministry (ἔργον διακονίας [Eph 4:12]). This work's purpose is to build up the body of Christ (εἰς οἰκοδομήν). The Ephesians are involved in precisely the same work that Paul himself gives himself to: edifying the church. This work involves the church's articulating the truth of the gospel to one another (4:15).<sup>34</sup> As each member does this 'work' (κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου [4:16]), the church is built up, and Christians share in the very same work that the Lord is doing for the church (cf. 5:29).

## 3. Conclusion: The Priority of Gospel Work

In exhorting the Corinthians to abound in 'the work of the Lord,' Paul is calling on them to give themselves to the specific work of proclaiming the gospel and building the church (i.e., evangelism and edification). Throughout this letter to the Corinthians, this is precisely what Paul has exhorted them to do (1 Cor 10:31–11:1; 14:12). What this looks like in practice will, of course, vary. It could mean risking their lives like Epaphroditus (Phil 2:30); it could be serving the needs of other believers like Stephanus (1 Cor 16:15); and it could be speaking the truth in love like the Ephesians (Eph 4:12). But crucially the *goal* of this work is building the church, and it is this that the Corinthians are to prioritise. Because there is a resurrection and those who are 'dead in Christ' will be raised to bear glorious bodies like Christ, believers must give themselves to the work of calling men and women to faith in Christ and to the work of ensuring they remain in Christ.

In some contemporary evangelical circles, it is not popular to speak of priorities. To prioritise one thing is seen as demeaning and devaluing another. Writers are quick to point out that there is nothing more 'meritorious' or 'valuable' in overtly *Christian* work as opposed to *secular* work and that we should reject the idea of 'our "secular work" in our office or laboratory as having no eternal consequences, whereas our "sacred work" in our Sunday school class has'.<sup>35</sup> But this understanding, in turn, effectively downplays any sense of eschatological priority. Unquestionably, the road sweeper and the pastor stand equal before God, and as the road sweeper does his work, he *is* serving the Lord and will be rewarded

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<sup>33</sup> Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians* (THNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 138.

<sup>34</sup> See particularly Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Pillar New Testament Commentary; Leicester: Apollos, 1999), 310–11, for a defence of this interpretation.

<sup>35</sup> Hardyman, *Maximum Life*, 93.

(Col 3:23–24). Whatever their employment, Christians can and must glorify the Lord through their work. The way that they do their work means that their work has meaning and significance and is valuable. We must not lose this Reformation and biblical emphasis. Nevertheless, it is also true that the work of evangelism and edification, is *the* work that the Lord is doing in the world through his people. We must not lose this priority. It is *this* work that Paul gave his life to. It is *this* work that Paul's colleagues risked their lives for. The resurrection means that it is *this* work that *every* Christian can and must give themselves to.

# Carl F. H. Henry’s Doctrine of the Atonement: A Synthesis and Brief Analysis

— Owen Strachan —

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Carl Ferdinand Howard Henry (1913–2003) was an American theologian in the conservative evangelical tradition.<sup>1</sup> Born on Long Island and trained as a journalist, Henry served as the first editor of *Christianity Today* from 1956 to 1968. Henry earned two doctorates, including a PhD in theology from Boston University. The capstone work of his career was the six-volume series *God, Revelation, and Authority*, published in stages from 1976 to 1983.<sup>2</sup> A treatment primarily of epistemology and the biblical revelation of God, the series established Henry as “the dean of evangelical theologians” of the second half of the twentieth century in the estimation of former colleague Kenneth Kantzer, founding dean of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more on Henry’s life and thought, see Carl Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian: An Autobiography* (Waco, TX: Word, 1986); Bob Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry* (Makers of the Modern Theological Mind; Waco, TX: Word, 1983); and Paul R. House, “Remaking the Modern Mind: Revisiting Carl Henry’s Theological Vision,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 8:4 (2004): 4–25; R. Albert Mohler Jr., “Carl F. H. Henry,” in *Baptist Theologians* (ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1990), 518–38; and a number of the more personal essays in Carl F. H. Henry, *Gods of This Age or God of the Ages?* (ed. R. Albert Mohler Jr.; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority* (6 vols.; Waco, TX: Word, 1976–1983), hereafter *GRA*. The six volumes in order of publication: Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority, Volume One: God Who Speaks and Shows, Preliminary Considerations* (Crossway, 1999 [Word, 1976]); idem, *God, Revelation, and Authority, Volume Two: God Who Speaks and Shows—Fifteen Theses, Part One* (Crossway, 1999 [Word, 1976]); idem, *God, Revelation, and Authority, Volume Three: God Who Speaks and Shows, Fifteen Theses, Part Two* (Crossway, 1999 [Word, 1979]); idem, *God, Revelation, and Authority, Volume Four: God Who Speaks and Shows, Fifteen Theses, Part Three* (Crossway, 1999 [Word, 1979]); idem, *God, Revelation, and Authority, Volume Five: God Who Stands and Stays, Part One* (Crossway, 1999 [Word, 1982]); idem, *God, Revelation, and Authority, Volume Six: God Who Stands and Stays, Part Two* (Crossway, 1999 [Word, 1983]). In conjunction with Crossway, R. Albert Mohler Jr. oversaw the reprinting of these volumes and is in large part responsible for reigniting interest in Henry’s corpus.

<sup>3</sup> See Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry*, 127. Other honors have accrued to Henry in recent years. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary devoted its entire Winter 2004 edition to evaluating and honoring Henry (available at <http://www.sbts.edu/resources/category/journal-of-theology/sbjt-84-winter-2004/>). In that issue, Baptist theologian Russell D. Moore writes, “Carl F. H. Henry, from his early career on the founding faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary to his editorship of *Christianity Today* to his authorship of his theological *magnum opus*, *God, Revelation and Authority*, served as the intellectual powerhouse behind the evangelical renaissance in the

Though Henry passed away in 2003, his contributions live on, as theologians in the upper echelons of the academy continue to ponder his contributions on such subjects as propositional revelation, foundationalism, the kingdom, and the relationship between church and society.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, we are witnessing something of a Henry renaissance in our time. Gregory Alan Thornbury just published a slim yet muscular work entitled *Recovering Classic Evangelicalism: Applying the Wisdom and Vision of Carl F. H. Henry*,<sup>5</sup> and G. Wright Doyle recently published *Carl Henry—A Theologian for All Seasons: An Introduction and Guide to Carl Henry’s God, Revelation and Authority*.<sup>6</sup> The Carl F. H. Henry Center for Theological Understanding will hold a symposium in 2014 on Henry’s life and thought.<sup>7</sup>

It is right to pay attention to Henry’s major contributions, as an increasing number of scholars are. In doing so, however, we would be unwise to neglect other areas of his scholarly work—for example, his positions on ethics or eschatology or the atonement. This is not true only of Henry, of course; there is much value in examining Barth’s doctrine of the Spirit, for example, or Jonathan Edwards’s understanding of baptism. A historical-theological curiosity may justly animate such investigation, as may an earnest and appropriate desire to fill out contemporary understanding of leading scholars of the past. If we ought not to confine our study of figures like Henry to their subsidiary views, neither should we ignore them.

This article examines Henry’s conception of the atonement to exhume it from its long sleep and to critically engage it. Though *GRA* is not a full-fledged systematic theology and though Henry did not cover the doctrine of the atonement in one full section, his understanding of the cross-work of Christ crops up in numerous places in this text. If Kantzer is correct that Henry is the most significant conservative theologian of his era, then it is no small thing to think critically about his doctrine of the atonement in our own age—when penal substitutionary atonement is contested ground—even if this

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United States” (“God, Revelation, and Community: Ecclesiology and Baptist Identity in the Life of Carl F. H. Henry,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 8:4 [2004], 26). Wheaton systematician Kevin J. Vanhoozer cites Henry as the exemplar of “propositionalist” theologians of modern conservative evangelicals (*The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005], 45, 87). In terms of institutional commitment, Henry’s name has graced the nameplates of no less than three scholarly centers: the Carl F. H. Henry Center for Theological Understanding at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, the Carl F. H. Henry Institute for Intellectual Discipleship at Union University, and the Carl F. H. Henry Institute for Evangelical Engagement at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (no longer in operation). Capitol Hill Baptist Church of Washington, D. C. has for over a decade sponsored “Henry Forums” on theology and culture in honor of its former member, Sunday School teacher, and mentor to pastor Mark Dever.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine*; Stanley Grenz and John Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001); Russell D. Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Wheaton: Crossway, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> 2013 is the one hundredth anniversary of Henry’s birthday, and numerous blog posts and social media interactions have explored the theologian’s legacy and contributions. See Jason Duesing, “After 100 years, Grateful for Carl F. H. Henry, our Once and Future Theologian,” *Theological Matters*, January 22, 2013, <http://www.theologicalmatters.com/index.php/2013/01/22/after-100-years-grateful-for-carl-f-h-henry-our-once-and-future-theologian>; Duesing, *Carl F. H. Henry—Seven Summits Worth Climbing in Church History*, May 8, 2013, <http://blog.bhphublishinggroup.com/academic/b/blog/archive/2013/05/08/carl-f-h-henry.aspx>.

must involve a systematic doctrinal reconstruction of the kind Henry did not offer himself.<sup>8</sup> This article pieces together Henry's doctrine by working primarily with *GRA*, observing that Henry believed that the atonement was (1) disclosed by revelation, (2) the central focus of history, (3) the fulfillment of the OT, (4) the manifestation of God's saving love, (5) the payment for sin and absorber of divine wrath, (6) the engine of the kingdom, (7) the satisfaction of God's wrath and ground of reconciliation between God and man, and (8) the foundation of ethics.

In reconstructing Henry's doctrine of the atonement in a logical format, this article shows that Henry vigorously rearticulated the classic model of penal substitution. It also reveals, perhaps surprisingly, that Henry linked the atonement inextricably with ethics. He reformulated the moral-influence theory of the atonement along objective grounds rather than the subjective grounds that former theologians staked out. In this area Henry made a contribution, generally unnoticed, to a properly complex evangelical understanding of the atonement. After examining this contribution, the article concludes by noting how Henry's theological work on the atonement matters today.

## ***1. An Eight-Part Synthesis of Henry's Doctrine of the Atonement***

### **1.1. Disclosed by Revelation**

The foundation of Henry's theological program is propositional revelation. Henry vividly illustrates the significance of revelation:

By the unannounced intrusion of its omnipotent actuality, divine revelation lifts the present into the eternal and unmask our pretensions of human omniscience. As if an invisible Concorde had burst the sound barrier overhead, it drives us to ponder whether the Other World has finally pinned us to the ground for a life-and-death response. Confronting us with a sense of cosmic arrest, it makes us ask whether the end of our world is at hand and propels us unmasked before the Judge and Lord of the universe.<sup>9</sup>

The Bible had pride of place in Henry's theology. To understand truth about God, oneself, and the world, one must know this "omnipotent actuality." This description of revelation makes clear that Henry viewed revelation as a personal communication from a personal God, without which humankind would know nothing of God and his mind.

The Scripture discloses truth about all kinds of spiritual and theological matters. The Bible thus dictates the truth about the matter of Christ's atoning work. Revelation discloses the content and significance of the Savior's sacrifice:

Christianity manifests its superiority by providing valid propositional information: God is sovereign, personal Spirit: he is causally related to the universe as the Creator of man and the world: he reveals his will intelligibly to chosen prophets and apostles: despite man's moral revolt he shows his love in the offer of redemption: he is supremely revealed

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<sup>8</sup> See, as a starting point, Steve Jeffrey, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2007) and one of the major works with which they interact: Steve Chalke, *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Henry, *GRA* 2:17.

in Jesus Christ in once-for-all incarnation: he has coped decisively with the problem of human sin in the death and resurrection and ascension of the incarnate Logos.<sup>10</sup>

Henry believed that Scripture has core content. The gospel, of which the atonement is a central part, represents the Bible's fundamental message. Scripture tells man the story of his past; Scripture promises man the only hope of his future, the "offer of redemption" grounded "in the death and resurrection and ascension" of Jesus Christ.

### 1.2. The Central Focus of History

Henry covered many matters in his body of writing, particularly his capstone work *GRA*, but he considered the atonement, with the resurrection, to mark the central point of history. Disclosed in revelation, "Jesus' incarnation, death, and resurrection are the turning point of the ages."<sup>11</sup> Various scriptural voices testified to this reality. The NT epistles, for example, "all emphasize the substitutionary death of God's only Son upon the cross as the high point of God's love and in no way obscure the fact that God no less than man is reconciled by the mediatorial work of Christ."<sup>12</sup> The work of Christ on the cross marks "the high point of God's love" in his history of dealings with mankind. God's love displayed was no incidental matter in Henry's view but was the divine answer to the central problem of human existence: sin. Sin had existed since the fall of Adam and Eve in Henry's view and would continue to exist until Christ's return. Accordingly, "That rude cross outside Jerusalem," Henry argues, "becomes the central reference point in history."<sup>13</sup> No other event compared to the crucifixion of Christ. The death of the Savior fundamentally reshaped not only the lives of fallen sinners (see §1.8 below) but world history.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.3. The Fulfillment of the Old Testament

Henry believed that the cross-work of Christ stood not only at the center of history, but at the center of Scripture. All that came before the crucifixion points to it; all that comes after the crucifixion takes shape from it. In a number of sections in *GRA*, Henry discusses how Christ and his atoning work form the center of the Bible and the fulfillment of the OT. He does so in both specific and general terms. For example, Henry gives considerable attention to how Christ fulfilled specific OT prophecies. Reflecting on Isa 53, which foretells the coming of a "suffering servant," Henry contends,

At every turn Jesus set his life, death and resurrection in the context of Old Testament promise and prophecy. In the prophecy of the suffering servant (Isaiah 53) who dies for others Jesus saw the vicarious dimensions of his own substitutionary self-giving (Matt. 20:28). In the Isaian prophecy the servant can in no way be identified merely with Israel, since Israel is to benefit from the servant's work. Christianity insists that "Christ died

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 1:69.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 3:73.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 6:354.

<sup>13</sup> Carl Henry, *Carl Henry at His Best: A Lifetime of Quotable Thoughts* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1989), 111.

<sup>14</sup> So says Henry: "The other consideration is that the historical fact of Christ's death, like that of his resurrection, towers above all other events in the history of religion as that moment in time when an alienated God and sinful humanity were reconciled by the provision of the objective sacrifice necessary for the forgiveness of human sin" (*GRA* 6:335).



for our sins according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3, KJV) and that Israel's holy God is propitiated only by the redemptive work of the incarnate sacrifice Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:21–26).<sup>15</sup>

The theologian believed not only that the death of Christ fulfilled the OT, but that the death of Christ fit the specific categories of the OT sacrificial system. This system required a personal sacrifice for the sins of the people, a requirement met by the suffering “substitutionary self-giving” of Christ. Henry's conception of the atonement, which we are developing logically, clearly fits the “penal-substitution” model or theory. As Henry's citation of Paul's letter to the Romans shows, this model, propounded by Isaiah, became the emphasis, albeit an enlarged one, of Paul and the NT apostles.<sup>16</sup>

Even as Christ fulfilled Isa 53 and other prophetic passages, so he met the demands of the OT law. Henry muses regarding Christ's incarnation,

Christ models human nature resplendent with the very will and law of God (John 1:14; 2 Cor. 4:6). He alone truly keeps covenant, and in doing so fulfills God's righteousness redemptively for contrite sinners whether Jew or Gentile. By his resurrection the crucified Jesus reverses the undeserved death of the cross; he is victor over the pretensions of self-assertive sinners and over the hollow authority of arbitrary rulers. By vindicating righteousness he validates all legitimate rights. Jesus Christ mediates the new and final covenant between God and man: once again human rights and responsibilities are seen to stem from the justice and justification of God who openly declares his will for humankind.<sup>17</sup>

In Henry's conception of Christ's ministry, Jesus “fulfills God's righteousness redemptively” for sinners. The only man to “truly keep covenant,” Jesus met the just demands of God's holy law, a feat that removed the sting of the law and enabled the merits of the Savior's obedience to become the sinner's merit before God. Henry believed in both the active and passive obedience of Christ and considered each necessary for the full salvation of the sinner.<sup>18</sup>

In sum, then, Jesus fulfilled the Messianic prophecies of the OT and perfectly met the demands of the OT law. Henry did not, however, view Christ merely as the divine answer to a select but weighty group of types and institutions of the OT. In Henry's reading of Scripture, the person and work of Jesus fulfills more than a few passages.<sup>19</sup> As the atoning Messiah promised by writers of old, Jesus of Nazareth

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<sup>15</sup> Henry, *GRA* 3:131.

<sup>16</sup> According to Henry, “Jesus contemplates his death not in a merely private or even individual prophetic role, but in integral fulfillment of messianic prediction. He connects the absolute indispensability of his death not with his human nature, nor with the hostility of his foes, but with the Old Testament teaching; it was necessary that he die for the sake of God's salvific provision in accordance with the biblical representations (Luke 18:31)” (*GRA* 3:132).

<sup>17</sup> Henry, *GRA* 6:432.

<sup>18</sup> Henry believed in the passive obedience of Christ as well (*ibid.*, 431–33).

<sup>19</sup> For contemporary treatments of the ways that Christ fulfills the OT, see Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2007) and Vern Poythress, *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1995), available at <http://www.frame-poythress.org/ebooks/the-shadow-of-christ-in-the-law-of-moses/>.

represents “the climax and comprehensive fulfillment of the entire Old Testament.”<sup>20</sup> The one whom the OT authors never saw was the one they always awaited.

#### 1.4. The Manifestation of God’s Saving Love

In Henry’s view, the love of God and the atonement of Christ possessed an unbreakable connection. One could not speak of the atonement without reference to divine love; neither could one speak of divine love without reference to the atonement. God had manifested his love for his people at various points and in various ways, though none of these demonstrations compared to the gift of Christ as a substitute. Henry synthesized passages from all corners of the NT to show that love was the motivation of the atonement:

It is *for you* the Lord’s body was given and his blood shed (Luke 22:19–20); “this is my body,” said Jesus, “which is broken for you” (1 Cor. 11:24, KJV). He the Holy One who died “for all” (2 Cor. 2:14, KJV) is made “to be sin for us” (2 Cor. 5:21, KJV). He sacrificed himself “for our sins” (Gal. 1:4, KJV). The Son of God “loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20, KJV). He was “made a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13, KJV). Christ “suffered for us” (1 Pet. 2:21, KJV); Christ “laid down his life for us” (1 John 3:16, KJV); Christ “loved you and gave himself up on your behalf” (Eph. 5:2, NEB).<sup>21</sup>

God dealt with sin, Henry averred, out of love. He could have responded to human sin by acting merely out of wrath. This would have been just. But God chose to intervene in the sinful world of men in a personal way. This personal intervention, of course, did not mean simply that God became involved with the salvation of humanity. God sacrificed his own Son for humanity. Henry did not see the atonement only in forensic terms, as if the death of Christ was little more than a logically necessitated transaction. It was a transaction, but this transaction was rooted in love:

Jesus Christ is the meaning of divine *agapē*; where he is ignored the love of God is also ignored. And when Christ’s death for sinners is considered marginal then God’s love in Christ loses its central focus. In the New Testament the high point of the divine *agapē* is found on Mount Calvary.<sup>22</sup>

In the cross, divine love and divine righteousness meet:

The witness of Scripture is that divine love and divine righteousness, already united in the simplicity of God, find their historical meeting ground in the reality of justification by faith. The Psalmist (85:10) says anticipatively of messianic substitution on the cross: “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” If there is in God no divine perfection of justice distinguishable from sheer benevolence then there need be no justification—indeed, there can be no justification. As an act of the sovereign there may be pardon that restores an offender to favor by remitting penalty, but no declaration is possible that can satisfy the demands of justice. The warp of the biblical doctrine of justification is love, its woof is righteousness or justice.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Henry, *GRA* 3:134.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 6:33.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 6:356.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

Henry found this linkage of righteousness and love throughout the pages of Scripture:

The author of Hebrews declares that Noah was already an “heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb. 11:7) even as Paul declares that Abraham shared in “the righteousness of faith” (Rom. 4:13, κῆρυξ). The principle of justification by faith is constantly stressed by Paul, and centrally so in the epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians. Though “none is righteous, no not one” (Rom. 4:7), the substituted righteousness of the Redeemer’s holy love and propitiatory death is imputed by the God of holy love on the occasion of the sinner’s personal faith (Rom. 4:16).<sup>24</sup>

As Henry saw things, both “the Redeemer’s holy love and propitiatory death” came to sinner through the instigation of “the God of holy love.”<sup>25</sup> When a sinner expressed “personal faith” in Christ, in other words, Henry believed that God imputed the righteousness of Christ to them, clearing them of guilt and justifying them in his holy visage. The theologian set justification through imputation in the context of divine love.<sup>26</sup> The Father sent Christ to the cross because of his love. He applied the accomplishment of Christ’s cross-work to the sinner because of his love. The atonement, then, was nothing if not a work of divine love, the primary manifestation of the kindness of God to a sinful race.

### 1.5. The Payment for Sin and Absorber of Divine Wrath

In Henry’s view, the central problem with which the atonement dealt was sin. The Father sent Christ as a substitute, one who would not only suffer for sin but die to pay the full penalty for it. In paying this penalty, Christ defeated sin, allowing the sinful to go free and experience transformation.

Some in Henry’s day argued that mankind could have fellowship with God through right conduct and a devoted heart. Such thinkers, Henry contended, minimized the gravity of sin and thus offended the justice of God.<sup>27</sup> Sin stood as a massive barrier between God and man in Henry’s eyes, a barrier that required a decisive, punctiliar, divine blow to fall. The death of Christ, he writes,

symbolizes the staggering judgment to which man is doomed, and his crucifixion by professed devotees of God’s will exposes the deceit that deludes those who think they fully keep the law. However much Scripture speaks about God’s holy love and mercy, and of God’s provision of his Son as the penitent sinner’s righteous substitute, Scripture

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 6:357.

<sup>25</sup> Henry also believed in expiation (ibid., 6:357).

<sup>26</sup> For a helpful contemporary treatment on imputation, see Brian Vickers, *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Imputation* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006); John Piper, *Counted Righteous in Christ: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness?* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2002); D. A. Carson, “The Vindication of Imputation: On Fields of Discourse and Semantic Fields,” in *Justification: What’s at Stake in the Current Debates* (ed. Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier; Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 46–78; Daniel C. Huffstutler, “Clothed in His Righteousness: Defending the Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness” (ThM thesis, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008).

<sup>27</sup> In *GRA* 6:411–14, Henry engages with Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics, Vol II, The Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1964). For concerns of space, this article does not document Henry’s polemical work on the doctrine of the atonement. Much work remains to be done on this point, however, for Henry repeatedly referenced the atonement doctrines of Barth, Emil Brunner, and others.

focuses first and foremost upon God's transcendent righteousness that rewards moral creatures according to their works and requires reparation for sin.<sup>28</sup>

Henry continues, outlining how Christ paid the price of sin and defeated it:

Not from ourselves, but only from the just and justifying God known in his revelation, only from his prophetic-apostolic disclosure crowned by the gifted Redeemer, and henceforth now only from the objective literary deposit of Scripture can we gain both this bad news and this good news about and for ourselves. . . . Though our iniquities "deserve to be rewarded" (cf. Ps. 103:8) with unmitigated judgment, God mercifully spares us on condition of faith in the righteous Redeemer. Incomparable grace remains what it is even though some reject it.<sup>29</sup>

Mankind could not presume upon the mercy of God in Henry's mind. The natural "iniquities" that humans commit deserve and call forth "unmitigated judgment." The death of Christ, however, absorbs the full force of this judgment. In the process, it defeats sin and Satan decisively.

### 1.6. The Engine of the Kingdom

The matter of God's defeat of sin, a key point within Henry's theology of the cross, leads effortlessly into the theologian's understanding of how the kingdom of Christ factors into the crucifixion. For Henry, the cross advances the work of God's kingdom in a profound way. Christ's death not only accomplishes the salvation of individuals, but actually redeems the *cosmos*:

God has much more in mind and at stake in nature than a backdrop for man's comfort and convenience, or even a stage for the drama of salvation. His purpose includes redemption of the cosmos that man has implicated in the fall.<sup>30</sup>

On this same point, Henry says elsewhere with force,

Jesus in his own person is the embodied sovereignty of God. He lives out that sovereignty in the flesh. He manifests the kingdom of God by enthroning the creation-will of God and demonstrating his lordship over Satan. Jesus conducts himself as Lord and true King, ruling over demons, ruling over nature at its fiercest, ruling over sickness, conquering death itself. With the coming of Jesus the kingdom is not merely immanent; it gains the larger scope of incursion and invasion. Jesus points to his release of the victims of Satan, and to his own devastation of demons and the demonic, as attesting that 'the kingdom of God has come upon you' (Matt. 12:28). He reveals God's royal power in its salvific activity."<sup>31</sup>

The death of Christ, in Henry's words, "conquer[ed] death itself" even as it defeated Satan. In Henry's economy, one could not pick and choose between kingdom and cross. The two were ever bound together, preeminently so in the death of the Son. When Christ ascended to the full height of His "salvific activity"

<sup>28</sup> Henry, *GRA* 6:413.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 6:414.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:99 (cited in Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ*, 89).

<sup>31</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, "Reflections on the Kingdom of God," *JETS* 35 (1992): 42 (cited in Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ*, 89).

by rising high on a cross at Calvary, He showed the full weight of His “royal power,” his kingly splendor. The king was the Messiah; the Messiah, in a way that overturned prevailing notions on the matter, was the king.

Theologian Russell D. Moore comments that this reality meant for Henry that “evangelicals cannot divorce personal salvation from its creational context, as a restoration of the rule of humanity in the image of God, or from its Christological focus on Jesus as the goal of creation.”<sup>32</sup> The crucifixion was a multidimensional reality for Henry. It was not only the payment for sin and the means by which God’s wrath against his people was assuaged, but was also the cosmic renewal agent for all of fallen creation, the engine of the kingdom.

### 1.7. The Satisfaction of God’s Wrath and the Ground of Reconciliation

In the economy of salvation Henry proposes, God’s love in the face of mankind’s sin brings about the payment for and defeat of sin. This payment and defeat, in turn, propitiates God’s wrath. Because Christ paid the price of sin and thus defeated sin, God’s just wrath in the face of sin is assuaged. Henry summarizes,

According to the New Testament, sinful mankind has no right to expect from God anything other than wrath, any judgment other than rejection and eternal punishment. But God’s righteousness and wrath, it declares, are related in a surprising way to his love, a way that fallen mankind could never have conceived or perceived apart from God’s gracious self-revelation. The righteous Judge himself, in the gift of the holy Christ as voluntary Suffering Servant, provides in the alienated sinner’s stead a substituted righteousness which he offers “from faith to faith” (Rom. 1:16, 3:21–26).<sup>33</sup>

Because the price of sin is paid, God’s wrath is assuaged. As impossible as it sounds to those who recognize the depth of human depravity, God and man may meet, know one another, and love one another. In the traditional theological language, once the wrath of God is satisfied, *reconciliation* between God and man takes place. Some in his day focused too much, Henry thought, on the “manward” aspect of reconciliation in which man, through the atoning death of Christ, discovers free and clear access to the Almighty:

The Christian doctrine of atonement is distinguished, then, by two important considerations. For one thing, the sacrifice is both provided by God and offered to God; God offers himself in the gift of his Son to achieve a just and merciful forgiveness of sinners. It is God himself who makes the complete sacrifice.<sup>34</sup>

That there is a Godward as well as manward aspect of reconciliation is integral to New Testament teaching. That Christ’s death removes God’s enmity against man—that a new relation exists of God toward the sinner no less than of the sinner toward God—is at the heart of the doctrine of salvation. Nowhere is the fact stated more succinctly

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<sup>32</sup> Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ*, 89.

<sup>33</sup> Henry, *GRA* 6:334.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 6:335.

than in 2 Corinthians 5:17 ff.: “God . . . reconciled us to himself through Christ . . . be reconciled to God.”<sup>35</sup>

In Henry’s mind, God’s righteous offering (i.e., Christ) satisfied the demands of God’s holy standards.<sup>36</sup> This made it possible for God to offer and have fellowship with his fallen creation. Once the wrath of God is appeased, the sinner may know and approach the Lord:

Jesus liberates the sinner from the dread wrath of God. Divine love and mercy open a way of escape from divine wrath: Christ’s substitutionary, propitiatory death provides deliverance from both the present wrath and the wrath to come. We are justified by his holy life and substitutionary death (Rom. 5:9); all who turn to Christ in faith are no longer enemies (Rom. 5:10) under divine condemnation (Rom. 8:1). Messiah took upon himself the wrath of God, bearing it in himself and in our stead. To receive Christ is to be free from wrath; to reject Christ is to remain under the wrath.<sup>37</sup>

Without the sacrifice of Christ on man’s behalf, man must meet “the dread wrath of God” in its full force, on its own terms, so to speak. No hope presents itself in the face of this encounter. Man cannot approach God; he cannot meet God. He will find himself engulfed in a torrent of God’s holy wrath. But Christ’s “holy life and substitutionary death” make it possible for God and man to meet. Because of the propitiation of Christ, God is reconciled to man; man is reconciled to God.

### 1.8. The Foundation of Ethics

Thus far we have explored the logical flow of Henry’s doctrine of the atonement. §§1.1–7 synthetically present the twentieth-century theologian’s conception of penal substitution, a conception that includes some significant work on the matter of the kingdom and how it plays into the atonement.<sup>38</sup> Though it must be pulled together to some degree, Henry’s doctrine of the cross includes another clever—and generally unrecognized—wrinkle on the matter of how Christ’s death undergirds ethics.<sup>39</sup>

In a little-known essay entitled “Christian Ethics as Predicated on the Atonement” in his 1957 book *Christian Personal Ethics*, Henry reworked the moral-influence theory along substitutionary lines. That is to say, he infused the moral-influence theory with an objective character that previous advocates

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 6:358.

<sup>36</sup> Henry’s doctrine of the atonement thus includes the satisfaction theory. For more on this view, see Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo* in *St. Anselm Basic Writings: Proslogium, Mologium, Gaunilo’s in Behalf of the Fool, Cur Deus Homo* (Chicago: Open Court, 1998).

<sup>37</sup> Henry, *GRA* 6:334.

<sup>38</sup> For more on the penal-substitution view, see J. I. Packer and Mark Dever, *In My Place Condemned He Stood: Celebrating the Glory of the Atonement* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008); Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III, eds., *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical and Practical Perspectives: Essays in Honor of Roger R. Nicole* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004); Jeffrey, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*; and John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove: 1986). For the model as originally developed by Calvin, see John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (trans. F. L. Battles; vol. 1; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), II.xvi.2, 504–11.

<sup>39</sup> This nuance is not mentioned in extant sources on Henry, including Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry*; Joel A. Carpenter, ed., *Two Reformers of Fundamentalism: Harold J. Ockenga and Carl F. H. Henry* (New York: Garland, 1988).

of the moral-influence model had not.<sup>40</sup> In this final section of the outline of Henry's doctrine of the atonement, we examine the theologian's unique linkage of atonement and ethics.

For Henry, the background of morality, of ethics, was the atonement. On this note he begins his essay with a characteristically bold tone:

The indispensable background for the doctrine of the good life, if forged in Christian dimensions, must always be the fact of a divinely provided redemption. Ethics is not primarily a matter of human relationships, but is fundamentally a man-to-God relationship. The question which Christian ethics poses in view of man's failure in sin is not "What works must we do to become righteous?" Such an inquiry can only come from a profound misunderstanding of the moral situation. Rather, the question is, "How can we as sinners be considered righteous?" The Christian answer is that by redemption man becomes rightly related to the will of God.<sup>41</sup>

For Henry, ethics was not simply the adjudication of moral behavior. It was this, but it was more. He counted God as the foundational reality of the world. He considered sin as a fact of human existence. He thus could not abstract ethics from God or from the reality of indwelling sin. The fundamental moral question of human existence, then, was this: "How can we as sinners be considered righteous?" To this question, Henry suggests an answer both simple and profound: "redemption," in back of which is the atonement of Christ.

Some theological ethicists, Henry avers, bypassed the matter of redemption by appealing to the loving nature of the Father. Henry has strong words for those who argue along these lines:

God maintains a relationship to his rational and ethical creatures not only of a beneficent Father, but also of a righteous moral governor, with a concern for the authority of his laws and the rectitude of his creatures.

The guilty sinner owes more than future obedience; his debt includes satisfaction for past sin. Our Lord's mission included the payment of man's penal debt; he met the Divine displeasure against sin, and to be our Redeemer, it was not possible that the cup of death should pass from him, though he had lived a sinless life. Hence the Christian community has always recognized it to be a perversion for one to regard his work as that only of a moral example.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> The most famous recent proponent of the moral-influence theory was Hastings Rashdall; see his *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology: Being the Bampton Lectures for 1915* (London: MacMillan, 1919). For Rashdall, the atonement was wholly subjective; it affected the believer's moral life, but did not objectively clear the guilty. The foremost advocate of this theory in the Christian past was Peter Abelard; see his "Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans," in *Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham* (ed. Eugene R. Fairweather; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956). Abelard's view is complicated to a degree that is not always recognized. In his theological comments that open his "Exposition," he lays groundwork for understanding the cross in objective terms. In his dialectical section, however, he moves away from this view and advocates for a subjective theory of the cross. In the end, it is appropriate to consider him a proponent of the moral-influence view, but his view is complex and calls for further analysis. See Abelard, "Exposition," 280–84.

<sup>41</sup> Carl Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 363.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

With these words Henry rejects all conceptions of the moral-influence theory that do not find their grounding in the cross-work of Christ. God, Henry argues, is indeed a “beneficent Father,” but he is equally “a righteous moral governor.” The existence of sin and the subsequent “Divine displeasure” with it made it impossible for mankind to live virtuously and pleasingly before the Lord without “the payment of man’s penal debt.” Much as Christ’s death on the cross called for admiration and emulation, Henry effectively argued, it could never secure these responses in a God-pleasing way without the efficacious work of the Savior.<sup>43</sup>

The moral-influence theory as historically articulated had no foundation to undergird it in Henry’s mind, for it had no engine by which sinful mankind might change his heart and live virtuously. A theory of this kind could not truly influence the sinner in a subjective sense without an objective, transformative work in the heart secured by the atoning death of Christ. Henry makes this clear in a subsequent section:

By giving justification a subjective turn, it takes away the sinner’s assurance of absolute acceptance with God on the basis of Christ’s death. It thus violates the biblical position that in the work of justification God alone acts on the condition of faith in Christ, whereas in the work of sanctification the regenerate sinner cooperates with the renewing activity of the Holy Spirit. But internally it faces an equally profound difficulty. The theory views the death of Christ as the supreme example of Divine displeasure against sin, calculated to move the minds of men to an abhorrence of evil. But that the sinless Christ should be made such an object of displeasure seems a violent contradiction of the nature of God and an intolerable anomaly in his moral government of the world.<sup>44</sup>

Instead of bifurcating ethics from the atonement, as Henry believed proponents of the moral-influence theory had done, he argued that the two came as a bounded whole. The atonement, he effectively argued, creates Christian ethics. One cannot choose one or the other:

Christianity is a religion of redemption, and it is equally an ethics of salvation. Christian salvation is no unmoral and unspiritual scheme. From start to finish, in and through the atonement, its ideal life is a life of vital ethical experience through a living union with Christ. While it may be true that examples can be found of those who presume on Divine goodness by living a life of unholiness while they fool themselves with the hope that they will escape the consequences of their sins through Christ’s sacrifice, this is not characteristic of the evangelical temper. Note the sobering word of James: “show me your works and I will show you your faith” (Jas. 2:18). The atonement is regarded as God’s counter-stroke to sin. While the penal theory does not start out with the subjective significance of the atonement, nonetheless it firmly insists that the atonement must directly touch and transform the moral life of man.<sup>45</sup>

Where the atonement does “touch and transform” the sinner by divine intervention, Henry argues, a subjective work takes place. The “living union with Christ” that all the children of God possess through the indwelling power of the Spirit makes possible the transformation of the heart and mind such that

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<sup>43</sup>For more on this point, see Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), 50–52.

<sup>44</sup>Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics*, 373.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 375.



once-ruined sinners become obedient (though imperfect) worshippers of the living God. Henry spelled out this idea more extensively in *Christian Personal Ethics* as he argued that the cross

establishes a causal connection between redemption and the good life. The spiritual development of the justified sinner and his "growth in grace" is an extension of perfect reliance upon Christ, whose death gains our pardon and whose resurrection life imparts those influences of the Spirit which are basic to sanctification. "If . . . we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son," the great Apostle writes, "much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). The one unitary outflowing of supernatural grace secures both the justification and the sanctification of the sinner. Faith in Christ involves union with him, union with him in his deliverance of us from the Father's wrath, and union with him as the inward principle of the Christian life.<sup>46</sup>

Here Henry reinforces his refashioning of the moral-influence theory by noting the "causal connection" between the cross and the Christian life. He makes explicit the ground of this connection, noting that it is Jesus' "death [that] gains our pardon" and the "resurrection life" driven by "those influences of the Spirit which are basic to salvation" that actually brings forth virtue as an emulation of Christ and his holy life in the redeemed. Henry offers further scriptural grounding for this claim that the biblical authors root their calls to holiness (subjective behavior) in the objective work of the cross:

[N]ote the appeal Paul makes for purity in 1 Corinthians 6:13ff. He does not say, "If you commit fornication you are accursed." Indeed he does say many times that fornicators and murderers will never enter the kingdom of God. However, passages relating to this (e.g., 1 Cor. 6:9, 10) refer to unbelievers, not believers. These passages simply do not say that a believing man is accursed if he falls into sin. Such a statement would be false. Paul does not appeal, therefore, to the principle of condemnation when exhorting the believer, for it just does not apply. Rather, he says, "Do you not know that you were bought with a price?" (1 Cor. 6:19f.). It is granted that fornication is utterly opposed to God's holy will. But the highest reason to abstain from such an abominable act is not fear of condemnation. It is love for Christ.<sup>47</sup>

The passage Henry cites seems to make the strength of his assertion immediately clear. The exhortations to moral living Paul directs to the Corinthians proceed from his understanding that the people who will hear and obey these exhortations are transformed by the redeeming work of Jesus and thus able to live in a holy manner. Paul, as with numerous other scriptural authors Henry cites, does not call his charges to follow Christ out of a mere emotive sense, however powerful such may be. Instead, he makes his call to holiness on the grounds of God's objective work in the hearts of his Corinthian audience.

To summarize: In Henry, the foundation of ethics is the atonement, the means by which repentant sinners acquire the vision and ability to live virtuously and honor God. It is not too much to say, reciprocally, that the ultimate aim of the atonement is the God-glorifying transformation of fallen mankind.<sup>48</sup> Henry's clever reappropriation of a historic model of the atonement helps inform the

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 377.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 382.

<sup>48</sup> Henry powerfully concludes, "The Cross stands therefore at the religious and moral center of history. The whole of human decision and life and destiny is tied to Christ and his atonement. . . . Nowhere in the history

present-day emphasis on holy living common in various theological and denominational circles. Where Christians are interested in living a holy life, they will find much ground for motivation in the moral influence model, especially (and only) if it is grounded in the objective, finished work of Christ, as Henry's formulation clearly was.

## ***2. Three Strengths of Henry's View That Commend It to Modern Usage***

### **2.1. Three Strengths**

The first strength of Henry's doctrine of the atonement is that its central model is that of penal substitution (with the person and work of Jesus forming the core of all Scripture).<sup>49</sup> Starting with the *protoevangelium* in Gen 3:15 and moving to Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac in Gen 22, the day of atonement in Lev 16, the suffering servant passage of Isa 53, the "good shepherd" passages of John 11, the capstone summary of penal substitution in Rom 3–5, and closing with the discussion of justification in Gal 2, the biblical authors from various angles locate the center of the atonement in penal and substitutionary categories.<sup>50</sup> One could go to a plethora of passages in Scripture that in some way present penal substitution as the center of Christ's atonement, but for the interest of space, Rom 5:6–8 serves nicely as a summary: "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."<sup>51</sup>

A second strength is Henry's synthesis of cross and kingdom, staunchly biblical themes that some Christians struggle even today to reconcile. Some emphasize the kingdom; others emphasize the atonement. Henry's writing is blissfully free of such unbiblical divergence. In his writing, Jesus is the king of the spiritual kingdom, and his death accomplishes the decisive victory of his kingly rule.<sup>52</sup> To conceptualize this, the kingdom seems to provide the framework for the entirety of Christ's person and

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of the race has the moral quest found a truer center, nor a more vigorous motivation for holy living than in the atonement" (ibid).

<sup>49</sup>As seen above, he approves of the satisfaction model. He reworks the moral influence view. This overall doctrine of the atonement, folding in several models or theories and grounded in the penal substitution view, is biblically and theologically sound.

<sup>50</sup>This is to cite just a handful of passages. For considerably more, see Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 33–99. Also, note Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "The Atonement in Postmodernity: Guilt, Goats, and Gifts," in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological and Practical Perspectives* (ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III; Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 367–404. Vanhoozer ranges over recent postmodern interaction with concepts related to atonement and offers a helpful, covenant-focused constructive proposal that helps modern-day Christian scholars and thinkers interact with contemporary theological ideas and challenges.

<sup>51</sup>Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from 'The Holy Bible, English Standard Version', copyright © 2011 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>52</sup>In *Uneasy Conscience*, Henry notes that the kingdom is for believers in the period before Christ's return "a spiritual relationship of individuals to Jesus Christ as their redemptive King" (50).

work within which the death of Christ, featuring penal-substitution at the core, is the center.<sup>53</sup> Henry's theological work on this point helps us to dive back into the Scripture and see how closely connected the cross and kingdom truly are.<sup>54</sup> It avoids unhelpful dichotomies even in the present day between "kingdom" people and "cross" people, showing that truly scriptural Christians cannot be one without the other.

A third major strength of Henry's model is his linkage of the atonement with ethics. As noted previously, Henry's helpful refashioning of the moral-influence theory gives this theory needed objectivity and restructures ethics along more robustly biblical lines. Henry's doctrine shows us that we cannot isolate the death of Christ from the life of the believer as is sometimes the case. Those who do so are left to wonder, "What hath Golgotha to do with Arimathea?" Instead, we should gladly look to the cross on a daily basis, and find there profound motivation for holy living and self-sacrifice. If Jesus emptied himself for us, so we can empty ourselves for our families, churches, and neighbors.

## 2.2. Relevance for Today

Henry shows that the atonement, the engine of the kingdom, drives the resurrection life, forming its ontological ground and its motivating principle. The foregoing is relevant for our modern day, in which ethics and living like Jesus are hot topics and are sometimes pitted against rich, thick theology.<sup>55</sup> In the

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<sup>53</sup>For a treatment that builds upon Henry's work in the area of kingdom and cross, see Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ*, 114–16. Also see Graham A. Cole, *God the Peacemaker: How Atonement Brings Shalom* (New Studies in Biblical Theology 25; Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), 127–30, 157–83.

<sup>54</sup>See, for example, the Matthean passion narrative, which D. A. Carson notes knits together at numerous points these two major scriptural ideas (*Scandalous: The Cross and Resurrection of Jesus* [Wheaton: Crossway, 2010]), 16–20. To only begin to plumb this matter, another major passage to consider is Rev 1:6, in which these themes intersect. More work, both exegetically and doctrinally, needs to be done on this rich biblical-theological concept.

<sup>55</sup>One thinks here of various players within the "emergent church" who make this mistake. Though their work is not intended to be technical theology for the academy, one thinks of Rob Bell and Don Golden, *Jesus Wants to Save Christians: A Manifesto for the Church in Exile* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), which discusses Jesus as a "suffering servant" but has little to say about how he suffers and, furthermore, what his suffering—on the cross in particular—accomplishes (88). In addition, Bell and Golden write extensively about doing what "Jesus had in mind"—primarily social justice work—yet in their discussions of Jesus' death, they never quite zero in on how the cross saves and transforms fallen sinners. "Jesus is the representative of the entire human family. His blood covers the entire created order. Jesus is saving everyone and everything. Jesus is leading all of creation out of the Egypt of violence, sin, and death" (147). There is truth here, but this is also a perilously incomplete and inchoate theological statement. It is true that "in Jesus' body and blood, everything has been reconciled to God" (154). Yet there is little clear discussion on how exactly this reality produces the new reality of resurrection faith. Bell and Golden affirm in numerous places that Jesus died for us, but their writing suffers from a disconnection between cross and ethics. The same problems crop up in Bell's recent *Love Wins: A Book about Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 124–25. The atonement is a factor in the work of salvation in Bell's mind, but exactly how this plays out in terms of legal shortcoming, personal guilt, and propitiation is wholly unclear.

In a similar vein, the work of leading emergent writer and pastor Brian D. McLaren (*The Last Word and the Word after That: A Tale of Faith, Doubt, and a New Kind of Christianity* [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005]) offers a passionate plea for Jesus-followers to live like him yet fails to locate this laudable cry in the cross, without which we simply cannot ever be transformed. Riffing off a forceful passage on hell from "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards, McLaren writes, "Whatever you think of Edwards's sermon, the conven-

writing of some modern commentators, the atonement and ethics are approached in what one could call a “neo-moral-government” way. In this thinking, we follow Jesus, who loved people and showed them a better way and who made a way for us to know God through his death, which seemingly tipped God’s scales in our favor. This view attempts, it seems, to avoid the visceral nature of substitutionary sacrifice.

While Jesus certainly did love people and show them a better way, he did so preeminently in his death on the cross. The crucifixion meets the central need of the sinner—forgiveness and freedom from wrath—even as it forms the objective ground for God-honoring living. However persuasively this reworked view of Jesus is urged upon us, we do far better to hew closely to the faithful evangelical thinking of theologians like Henry. The true foundation of a God-honoring life, in Henry’s mind and in the evangelical tradition he served, is the cross of Christ. It is wise, and not merely sentimental, to look to the cross and be at once profoundly moved and ethically influenced to live self-sacrificially for God’s glory.

This is sorely needed material in contemporary intra-evangelical discussions of the relationship between grace and obedience. In a day and age that rightly celebrates the finished work of Christ on our behalf, it is possible to so emphasize what is sometimes called the “done-ness” of Jesus’ death that we lose sight of what we could call the “do-ness” of the life the cross creates. In apprehending the benefits of Christ for us extended through the cross and realized by Spirit-wrought union with the Savior, we could overlook the biblical fact that Christ saves us to transform us.<sup>56</sup> We are not redeemed only to treasure the cross, magnificent and spiritually central as such meditation is, but are enabled through the Spirit to take it up in a life of ongoing, upward, and yet unfinished obedience.<sup>57</sup>

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tional doctrine of hell has too often engendered a view of a deity who suffers from borderline personality disorder or some worse sociopathic diagnosis. *God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, and if you don’t love God back and cooperate with God’s plans in exactly the prescribed way, God will torture you with unimaginable abuse, forever*—that sort of thing. Human parents who ‘love’ their children with these kinds of implied ultimatums tend to produce the most dysfunctional families, and perhaps the dysfunctions of the Christian religion can be traced not to God as God really is but to views of God that are not easy for people [to] swallow while remaining sane and functional” (xii). We do not have space to investigate McLaren or others in detail in this particular essay, but this quotation makes clear that he has a very different view of the atonement than Henry and other adherents of traditional orthodoxy do. Working from this understanding of the crucifixion, McLaren goes on to suggest that it somehow “leads to a reduction of injustice by breaking the offense-revenge cycle” (166). One wonders once more how it is that this ‘reduction’ is produced without an objective atonement. Similar problems of considerable magnitude crop up in Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions That Are Transforming the Faith* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2010). Cf. Kevin DeYoung, “Christianity and McLarenism,” February 17–18, 2010, <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevindeyoung/2010/02/17/christianity-and-mclarenism-1/> and <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevindeyoung/2010/02/18/christianity-and-mclarenism-2/>.

<sup>56</sup> On this crucial theological doctrine, see K. Scott Oliphint, *God with Us: Divine Condescension and the Attributes of God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011); J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011). It is tempting to try to integrate Christic union with the foregoing, but the discussion is already sufficiently freighted, and so we will leave such work for another article.

<sup>57</sup> Texts like Rom 6:12–14; 8:37; Eph 4:22–24; Col 3:5; and 2 Pet 1:5 all bear on this issue, for starters. For a helpful pastoral perspective on this discussion, see Kevin DeYoung, *The Hole in Our Holiness: Filling the Gap between Gospel Passion and the Pursuit of Godliness* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012).

If we lean on Henry on this point (and I commend such dependence), Christ, and no other substitute, is the death-killing, life-giving influence that alone can impel us on an ongoing basis to think and act in God-glorifying ways.

### 3. Conclusion

Carl F. H. Henry contributed greatly to the church's conception of various doctrines: revelation, the kingdom, and the doctrine of God. While his work in these areas is widely known and referenced, Henry's doctrine of the atonement is unfairly neglected. By a fresh treatment of his thought on subjects like the atonement, we are poised to appreciate his fresh work in integrating cross and kingdom and in grounding the moral influence view of the atonement, a model sometimes ignored or underemphasized by conservative evangelicals, in the substitutionary model. Clearly, on this and many other matters, we owe Henry a debt.<sup>58</sup>

Just one more comment is needed, without which this reconstruction would be incomplete. Carl Henry did not only write about the atonement, as many do from various perspectives. He also preached the cross all over the world. His autobiography memorably recounts many of these remarkable opportunities, but the story about Henry that most sticks with me is one shared by a Fuller Theological Seminary alumnus with historian George Marsden.<sup>59</sup> Henry, it seems, sometimes showed up to a Saturday morning seminar looking rather haggard. Later, the student and his classmates learned that on a regular basis, Henry ventured out on Friday night to the streets of Los Angeles, telling the poor and needy of Christ and his cross-work and helping them find shelter.

This anecdote does not tie up every theological knot. It does show, however, that Carl Henry believed in what he preached, and that he put his doctrine to work. As we carefully analyze his doctrine of the atonement, considering its insights, we should also remember his example, and consider the relationship between our own theology and practice. In so doing, we may find ourselves, perhaps without initially intending to do so, extending Henry's influence.

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<sup>58</sup> Henry deserves further study than this piece can offer. One hopes that the evangelical future will include continued interaction with his life and legacy, his thought and work. I am personally thankful for a connection to this legacy. It was my privilege to work from 2008 to 2010 under the direction of historian and theologian Douglas A. Sweeney at the Carl F. H. Henry Center for Theological Understanding at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, a center that seeks to promote the theological vision of Henry. I wish also to thank Andy Naselli, Doug Sweeney, Greg Thornbury, and Graham Cole for providing insight and feedback to this article.

<sup>59</sup> George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 91.

# Will All Be Saved?<sup>1</sup>

— Gerald R. McDermott —

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**W**ill everyone one day be saved? Is hell only temporary, if it exists at all? If the answer is yes to either of these questions, the historic Christian commitment to the conversion of the world to Christ would appear to be somewhat silly. Why go to such effort and expense trying to persuade people that Jesus is the only way if they all will see that eventually anyway? Why risk offending people—especially those who follow other religious traditions—with the presumption that their way is insufficient without knowledge of Jesus Christ if we will all one day enjoy the full truth in peace and joy?

For most of the twentieth century, belief in universal salvation was found primarily among liberal Protestants or otherwise-orthodox Protestant and Catholic thinkers influenced by Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Balthasar. Recently, however, evangelicals have started to make their own proposals to advance this view. This article outlines the arguments of the major proponents of universalism in the last century and then critically analyzes them. It closes by briefly commenting on the danger of universalism.

## *1. A Brief History of Universalism*

But before we look at recent claims for universalism, it would be well to sketch its history briefly.<sup>2</sup> Overall, it is a short one. That is, the notion that all will or might be saved has come into vogue among a significant number of major theologians only since the mid-twentieth century. There was not a hint of universalism in the first two centuries of Christianity. Then in the next three centuries there were some noted proponents of the notion, but they were in the minority. Many Greek Fathers such as Irenaeus (d. ca. 200), Basil (d. ca. 379), and Cyril of Jerusalem (d. ca. 387) said that hell would be the destiny for most human beings.

Origen's (d. ca. 254) doctrine of *apokatastasis* (the restoration of all beings to their original state in God) seems to imply a rudimentary form of universalism.<sup>3</sup> Theophilus of Alexandria (d. 412) took issue

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<sup>1</sup>This article adapts part of a chapter in Gerald McDermott and Harold Netland, *A Trinitarian Theology of Religions: An Evangelical Proposal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>2</sup>One of the best comprehensive reviews of this history is Laurence Malcolm Blanchard, "Universalism: Its Historic Development and Its Contemporary Expression in Western Theology" (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2007). Much of the bibliography and thinking in these pages on universalism is indebted to portions of the analytical history of universalism by Michael J. McClymond, the working title of which is *The Devil's Redemption: An Interpretation of the Christian Debate Over Universalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014).

<sup>3</sup>See Frederick W. Norris, "Universal Salvation in Origen and Maximus," in *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell* (ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 35–72.

with Origen's teaching, and Basil the Great rejected his brother Gregory of Nyssa's (d. ca. 394) version of the same.<sup>4</sup> Augustine (d. 430) attacked it with gusto in the *City of God*, and in the anathemas published after the Fifth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople (553), it was condemned in no uncertain words: "If anyone says or thinks that the punishment of demons and of impious men is only temporary, and will one day have an end, and that a restoration (*ἀποκατάστασις*) will take place of demons and of impious men, let him be anathema."<sup>5</sup>

Church creeds from the early Middle Ages through the Reformation and into the modern era regularly affirmed the eternal punishment of the wicked. A sampling includes the Athanasian Creed (early sixth century); the Fourth Lateran Council, Canon 1 (1215 A.D.); the Augsburg Confession, ch. 17 (1530 A.D.); the Second Helvetic Confession, ch. 26 (1564 A.D.); the Dordrecht Confession, art. 18 (1632 A.D.); and the Westminster Confession of Faith, ch. 33 (1646)—as well as many later denominational statements of faith from the seventeenth century onward.<sup>6</sup> The reality of hell and eternal punishment was thought to be as basic to Christian belief as the Trinity and incarnation.

There were ripples of interest in universalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when Socinians, Deists, and Enlightenment *philosophes* doubted the traditional doctrine of hell. Then in the nineteenth century the father of liberal Protestant theology, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), challenged the teaching on hell by suggesting that divine election was corporate, not individual. Thus, anticipating Barth, Schleiermacher intimated that all human beings were elected for salvation.<sup>7</sup> Later in the nineteenth century, Scottish novelist and poet George MacDonald (1824–1905) suggested that the fire of God's love would burn away sin and impurity in some sort of purgatorial state after death. Significantly, MacDonald's disciple C. S. Lewis elected not to follow his master's lead.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Richard Bauckham, "Universalism: An Historical Survey," *Them* 4 (1978): 47–54; Avery Cardinal Dulles, "The Population of Hell," *First Things* (May 2003): 36–41.

<sup>5</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, Book XXI; for the anathemas of the Fifth Council (Constantinople II), see *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church* (ed. Henry Percival; 14 vols.; Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers [Second Series] 14; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 320. Some have claimed that this condemnation applied only to the doctrine's association with the preexistence of souls (as other anathemas suggest), but the language in this anathema undermines that claim. Others discount these anathemas because they were added later to the text of the council proceedings, but Blanchard ("Universalism," 68–69) notes that the universal church nevertheless drew from these anathemas the conclusion that universal salvation had been officially proscribed.

<sup>6</sup>See Bauckham, "Universalism," 47n2.

<sup>7</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 548–51, 720–22.

<sup>8</sup>George MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons: Series I, II, and III in One Volume* (1867, 1885, 1889; repr., Whitethorn, CA: Johannesen, 1997); see "The Consuming Fire" (18–33), "It Shall Not Be Forgiven" (45–66), "The Last Farthing" (259–74), "Justice" (501–40), "Righteousness" (577–92), "The Final Unmasking" (593–606), and "The Inheritance" (607–19). For a secondary account, see David M. Kelly, "The Treatment of Universalism in Anglican Thought from George Macdonald (1824–1905) to C. S. Lewis (1898–1963)" (PhD diss., University of Ottawa, 1989). In C. S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), after the narrator finds MacDonald in heaven and reminds him that he had been a universalist while on earth, MacDonald indicates that he has changed his mind. The problem with universalism, Lewis's MacDonald now advises, is that it removes "freedom, which is the deeper truth of the two." The other truth of the two is predestination, "which shows (truly enough) that external reality is not waiting for a future in which to be real" (124–25). "Deep truth" for Lewis seems to mean that there will always be some who want nothing to do with a God who invites them to confess their sins, serve persons other than themselves, and worship someone other than themselves. As John Milton puts it, "The choice

Already by the mid-twentieth century, fewer people in the West accepted traditional teaching on hell so that the atheist philosopher Bertrand Russell was able to observe, “Hell is neither so certain nor so hot as it used to be.”<sup>9</sup> Prominent theologians too rejected the idea of eternal damnation and began to teach various forms of universalism. The most influential has been Karl Barth (1886–1968), the great Reformed theologian from Switzerland. Barth taught that all human beings were both damned and elected in Christ and that the damnation took place on the cross. The mystery of salvation is not that some are saved, as Augustine and the Reformers taught, but that some sin against grace and reject salvation. Yet we have reason to hope for the salvation of all because there is always more grace in God than sin in us. Barth insisted that we cannot say that all are saved because such a statement is a theological abstraction divorced from the particularities of the biblical witness to Jesus Christ.<sup>10</sup> Yet most of Barth’s interpreters conclude that Barth’s theological logic points to universalism, and this was exactly the conclusion reached by those influenced by Barth: John A. T. Robinson, Jacques Ellul, Jan Bonda, Eberhard Jüngel, and Jürgen Moltmann.<sup>11</sup>

From a quite different perspective, theologian and philosopher John Hick advocated universalism as the only credible response to the vexing problem of evil and suffering: only if ultimately all are saved can we believe in a God of love.<sup>12</sup>

Some twentieth-century Catholic theologians also questioned the traditional Catholic doctrine of hell. Jacques Maritain speculated that there might be a limbo (without punishment) for the damned. Karl Rahner said that we have no clear revelation that anyone is damned forever and that we must uphold God’s universal salvific will. Hans Urs von Balthasar opined that we have an obligation to hope for the salvation of all. Even Pope John Paul II speculated that hell is not a punishment but a condition of those who separate themselves from God and that we do not know if humans are actually damned in the ways that traditional belief conceived.<sup>13</sup> Yet more recent Catholic statements from the Vatican have shown greater adherence to traditional eschatology. *Dominus Iesus* (2000) warns that those in other religions who do not accept the gospel face an “obstacle to salvation” that puts them “in a gravely deficient situation.”<sup>14</sup> The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches “the existence of hell and its eternity” and

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of every lost soul can be expressed in the words, ‘Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven’” (*Paradise Lost*, line 263; quoted in Lewis, *The Great Divorce*, 69).

<sup>9</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957), 195.

<sup>10</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958), 520; George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 134; Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958), 417–18.

<sup>11</sup> John A. T. Robinson, *In the End God: A Study of the Christian Doctrine of the Last Things* (London: Clarke, 1950); Jacques Ellul, *What I Believe* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); Eberhard Jüngel, “The Last Judgment as an Act of Grace,” *Louvain Studies* 15 (1990): 389–405; Jan Bonda, *The One Purpose of God: An Answer to the Doctrine of Eternal Punishment* (trans. R. Bruinsma; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology* (trans. M. Kohl; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), esp. 235–55.

<sup>12</sup> See John Hick, *Death and Eternal Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976) and idem, *Evil and the God of Love* (2nd ed.; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977).

<sup>13</sup> Dulles, “The Population of Hell,” 38–39.

<sup>14</sup> “Dominus Iesus,” para. nos. 21–22: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20000806\\_dominus-iesus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html).



that those who die in a state of mortal sin “suffer the punishments of hell, ‘eternal fire.’”<sup>15</sup> Commenting on statements such as these, the late Avery Cardinal Dulles remarked on the “thoughtless optimism” of previous and contemporary theologians.<sup>16</sup>

In Eastern Orthodoxy, the story has been similar. For most of its history, its official documents have taught two destinations for humans: heaven and hell. Only since the 1970s have two Orthodox theologians begun to call for a revised view—Kallistos Ware and Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev of Russia.<sup>17</sup>

Evangelicals and Pentecostals are newcomers to this conversation. Robin Parry, sometimes under the penname of Gregory MacDonald, has brought out a number of volumes dedicated to “evangelical universalism,” which includes several varieties but all of which agree that ultimately God will save all through the work of Christ.<sup>18</sup> Parry argues that neither orthodoxy nor evangelicalism need preclude universalism; in other words, an evangelical and orthodox Christian can embrace universalism without a sense of theological incoherence. Yet in what is perhaps his most interesting volume, Parry edits a variety of essays on universalists who are theologically unorthodox (Schleiermacher, Robinson, and Hick, for example) or un-evangelical (Julian of Norwich, Barth, Balthasar, and Moltmann).<sup>19</sup> Thomas Talbott is an evangelical philosopher whose work on universalism has attracted wide attention.<sup>20</sup> In 2012 megachurch pastor Rob Bell’s book *Love Wins*, which implicitly recommends a hopeful universalism (like Balthasar’s: we can hope without knowing for sure), sparked a perfect storm of controversy both within and without the evangelical world.<sup>21</sup> *Time* magazine featured the book on one of its covers. If evangelicals had not known that some of its theologians and pastors had been challenging traditional eschatology, this new book made them suddenly aware.

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<sup>15</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, MO: Liguori, 1994), sect. no. 1035.

<sup>16</sup> Dulles, “The Population of Hell,” 40.

<sup>17</sup> Kallistos Ware, *The Inner Kingdom* (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2000), 193–215; Hieromonk Hilarion Alfeyev, *Christ the Conqueror of Hell: The Descent into Hades from an Orthodox Perspective* (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Robin A. Parry and Christopher H. Partridge, eds., *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), xv–xxvii. See also Gregory MacDonald (pseudonym for Robin Parry), *The Evangelical Universalist* (Eugene: Cascade, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> Gregory MacDonald, ed., *“All Shall Be Well”: Explorations in Universal Salvation and Christian Theology from Origen to Moltmann* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011). The volume also contains essays on a few universalists, such as George MacDonald, who are closer to evangelical sensibilities.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Talbott, *The Inescapable Love of God* (n.p.: Universal, 1999). Talbott also writes the first three chapters in *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate* (ed. Robin Parry and Christopher H. Partridge).

<sup>21</sup> Rob Bell, *Love Wins: A Book about Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person who Ever Lived* (New York: HarperOne, 2012). Cf. Kevin DeYoung, “God Is Still Holy and What You Learned in Sunday School Is Still True: A Review of *Love Wins*,” March 14, 2011, <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevindeyoung/2011/03/14/rob-bell-love-wins-review/>; Michael E. Wittmer, *Christ Alone: An Evangelical Response to Rob Bell’s Love Wins* (Grand Rapids: Edenridge, 2011).

## **2. Three Ways That Universalists Treat Biblical Texts on Eternal Punishment and Banishment**

How do universalists make their case? It might be helpful first to examine three ways they have interpreted the many biblical texts that speak of eternal punishment and banishment from God's presence. Some of these are overlapping, but all three represent different ways of interpreting problem texts.

A first group believes that these texts mean something other than what appears on the surface. Clement of Alexandria and Origen, for example, believed that texts about the fires of hell refer to the fire of God's love, which will purge sinners of their impurities over the course of many lives.<sup>22</sup> Karl Rahner maintained that "hell" is simply a metaphor for lostness. Emil Brunner thought that texts talking about two destinations for sinners are not intended to give theoretical information but are existential invitations to sinners to come out of a state of perdition.<sup>23</sup> For Brunner and others, these are threats, not predictions—like the exasperated mother warning her son, "If you don't clean up your room right now, I'll kill you!" She does not really mean it but hopes it will motivate her son to change.

A second group of universalist interpreters thinks that the biblical authors really did mean that there would be eternal punishment for the wicked, but they conclude that these authors were simply mistaken. They were benighted by what Schleiermacher called the "alleviating influence of custom" and so were prevented from seeing straight.<sup>24</sup> Ancient culture was not as clear-eyed as modern sensibility. If the ancient authors had really understood the implications of what they *did* see about God's love, they would not have sketched eschatology as they did.

A last group sees two different themes in Scripture and regards them as paradoxical. So Barth taught that Scripture teaches both that God elected all in Christ and that some reject that election, which is the greatest mystery of all.<sup>25</sup> It is a paradox that we can hope that God finally resolves. For German Lutheran theologian Paul Althaus, the paradox of God's damnation of some and universal will to save must remain an open question. For Emil Brunner these two conflicting strands of teaching are incompatible. John A. T. Robinson said that universal restoration and final division are the NT's two eschatological myths, the reconciliation of which is paradoxical.<sup>26</sup> In the end God's omnipotent love will break the deadlock by forcing everyone to a free choice prompted by that love.

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<sup>22</sup> See, for example, *Origen: On First Principles* (trans. G. W. Butterworth; New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 145.

<sup>23</sup> Karl Rahner, "Hell," in *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi* (ed. Karl Rahner; New York: Continuum, 1975), 603; Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation*, vol. 3 of *Dogmatics* (trans. David Cairns; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 421–24.

<sup>24</sup> Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 720.

<sup>25</sup> See §1 above.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Althaus, *Die letzten Dinge* (10th ed.; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1970); Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church*, 423; John A. T. Robinson, *In the End God: A Study of the Christian Doctrine of the Last Things* (London: Clarke, 1950). As we saw in §1 above, Brunner resolves this incompatibility by means of a metaphorical understanding.

### ***3. Three Positive Arguments That Universalists Use***

If these are three basic ways of construing texts that pose problems for universalism, there are also three kinds of positive arguments universalists use—philosophical, theological, and biblical.

#### **3.1. Philosophical Arguments**

The philosophical is best represented by evangelical Thomas Talbott, who sets out three philosophico-theological axioms: (1) God is love and therefore must love all his creatures, not just some; (2) if God is love, he must will the salvation of all he loves, which means all his human creatures; and (3) since God is all-powerful, he will achieve all his purposes, which includes the salvation of all. Talbott considers the objection that this might override the freedom of those creatures, but responds that once they are fully informed of God's offer, all humans will realize that to reject the offer would be irrational. Thus they will accept freely, without coercion.<sup>27</sup> Parry adds that those in hell must have a second chance to repent since a God of love would not refuse one who repents and calls for help, no matter where that one is.<sup>28</sup>

#### **3.2. Theological Arguments**

Universalists' theological warrants are various, but nearly all of them come down to an argument from divine love. This is very similar to the philosophical arguments for universalism, but whereas Talbott argues that logic forbids an eternal hell, Parry and others focus on the meaning of love for theological understandings of God's nature. As Parry puts it, "Any view of hell as *purely* retributive punishment brings God's justice and wrath into serious conflict with God's love and is in danger of dividing the divine nature." But even when Parry considers that traditional eschatology might attribute other reasons for hell than simply retribution, including eternal conscious torment makes it "very hard to square with God's love for the damned."<sup>29</sup> The only way that some universalists can accept hell is to think of it as therapeutic and therefore temporary—progressive and restorative rather than punitive and final. For God's compassion and love, they aver, would never permit a soul's final exclusion from the company of the redeemed.

#### **3.3. Biblical Arguments**

Universalists believe that the Bible supports their view. They point to a number of biblical texts that seem to predict the salvation of all. For example, Jesus claims, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32),<sup>30</sup> and Paul declares, "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Phil 2:10).<sup>31</sup> They also proffer NT texts that seem to announce God's intention to save all (1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9) and others that they see linking the cross of Christ to the salvation of all, such as Heb 2:9: "But we see him who for a little while was made lower than

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<sup>27</sup> *Universal Salvation?* (ed. Parry and Partridge), chs. 1–3.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiv.

<sup>29</sup> Robin Parry, "Evangelical Universalism: Oxymoron?" in *Evangelical Quarterly* 84.1 (2012): 9.

<sup>30</sup> Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from 'The Holy Bible, English Standard Version', copyright © 2011 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>31</sup> Other Scriptures they use to support this claim are Acts 3:21; Rom 5:18; 11:32; 1 Cor 15:22–28.

the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”<sup>32</sup>

#### 4. Critical Examination

Now let us critically examine these arguments for universal salvation. A full response is impossible here, and in any event we must tread carefully since there is much we simply do not understand about God’s love and mercy, not to mention his wrath and judgment.<sup>33</sup> There is mystery here, and we must avoid speculation that conflicts with what Scripture clearly attests. But several brief comments are in order.

##### 4.1 Freedom to Reject God

First, Talbott’s argument from God’s love to universal salvation problematically assumes that all people will freely respond positively to God’s love. Why should we accept this assumption? Many have argued that significant freedom must include the freedom ultimately to reject God, thereby choosing for oneself the terrible reality of hell.<sup>34</sup> Philosopher Jerry Walls thoughtfully responds to Talbott’s case for universalism: “A person can so deceive himself into believing evil is good, or at least holds sufficient advantage to be gained, that he comes to the point where he consistently and thoroughly prefers evil to good.”<sup>35</sup> In such cases, it is plausible to believe that God will allow the person the evil reality he prefers, an awful reality apart from God’s presence (i.e., hell).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> They also point to 2 Cor 5:19; Titus 2:11; 1 John 2:2.

<sup>33</sup> Moderns beginning to rethink divine wrath and judgment would do well to reconsider Jonathan Edwards, who wrote famously on the subject but was obsessed by God’s beauty (see Michael McClymond and Gerald McDermott, “Eschatology,” in *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2012], 566–79), and C. S. Lewis, whose allegory *The Great Divorce* is seminal. Also helpful are R. V. G. Tasker, *The Biblical Doctrine of the Wrath of God* (London: Tyndale, 1951); Leon Morris, *The Biblical Doctrine of Judgment* (London: Tyndale, 1960); Marius Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997); D.A. Carson, “The Wrath of God,” in *Engaging the Doctrine of God: Contemporary Protestant Perspectives* (ed. Bruce L. McCormack; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 37–63; Christopher W. Morgan, *Jonathan Edwards and Hell* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2004); Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, eds., *Hell under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004); idem, *Faith Comes by Hearing: A Response to Inclusivism* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2008); idem, *Suffering and the Goodness of God* (Theology in Community; Wheaton: Crossway, 2008); Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, *What Is Hell?* (Basics of the Faith Series; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Richard Swinburne, “A Theodicy of Heaven and Hell,” in *The Existence and Nature of God* (ed. Alfred J. Freddoso; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 49.

<sup>35</sup> Jerry L. Walls, *Hell: The Logic of Damnation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 138.

<sup>36</sup> See also Daniel Strange, “A Calvinist Response to Talbott’s Universalism,” in Parry and Partridge, *Universal Salvation?* 145–68.

#### 4.2 Abstracting God's Attributes

Second, the theological argument based on love has come under fire from assorted critics for abstracting that divine attribute from others such as justice.<sup>37</sup> No good reason is given for preferring love to justice in the order of divine attributes, except the modern sentimentalist presumption that love must finally prevail over justice. Besides, some argue, the very idea that love prevails over justice misunderstands the nature of God and replaces the biblical vision of divine love with a modern sentimentalist one. Moreover, if the biblical authors are right, divine love is very different from human love. It is a love that is fiercely holy and not averse to punishment. The same Jesus who emphasizes the importance of love also says, “These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matt 25:46).

Karl Barth was right to reject theological abstractions in eschatology that are divorced from the concrete revelation of God in Christ. But when he rests his hopeful universalism (we may or should hope for the salvation of all) on the knowledge that there is always more grace in God than in us and that God is free to enlarge “the circle of redemption,” he embraces his own sort of abstraction—that God’s freedom and election will always prevail over human resistance. Barth compared willful blindness and deafness to a dam against a rising and surging stream. “But the stream is too strong and the dam too weak for us to be able *reasonably* to expect anything but the collapse of the dam and the onrush of the waters.”<sup>38</sup> Barth’s point here seems to be similar to Talbott’s noted above and thus faces the problem Walls articulates in his response to Talbott. Moreover, it seems to be at odds with the actual biblical witness, which Barth insisted should direct theology. To this witness we now turn.

#### 4.3 OT Judgments That Hardened Hearts

We have seen that universalists stress the restorative function of God’s justice. They also highlight OT texts that emphasize repentance and mercy after threats of judgment. So, for example, some point to Jonah’s delivery of God’s message that Nineveh would be overturned in forty days. The result was not destruction but restoration. Nineveh repented, and the promised destruction never ensued—at least at that time.<sup>39</sup> Others point to Judah’s exile to Babylon, which led eventually to repentance and return to both God and the land.<sup>40</sup> They also cite Egypt, Assyria, and Elam, all of whom were judged with punishment but were later given or promised mercy and blessing.<sup>41</sup>

But traditional eschatologists point out that the OT contains hundreds of stories and passages that feature judgment, illustrating vividly that the God of Israel is “judge of all the earth” (Gen 18:25). The prophets regularly spoke of two different outcomes, depending on the behavior of Israel and the nations. Rewards were contingent on obedience. Judah and the nations mentioned above received mercy as

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<sup>37</sup> See, e.g., D.A. Carson, “How Can We Reconcile the Love and the Transcendent Sovereignty of God?” in *God Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents God* (ed. Douglas S. Huffman and Eric L. Johnson; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 279–312.

<sup>38</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2, 418; IV/3, 355–56 (emphasis added).

<sup>39</sup> The prophecy of Nahum suggests that judgment eventually came at some point to Nineveh.

<sup>40</sup> The Israelites returned to God and the land after their exile to Babylon. After their earlier conquest by Assyria, some were deported and, it seems, never returned.

<sup>41</sup> Jeremiah writes of Elam, “But in the latter days I will restore the fortunes of Elam, declares the Lord” (Jer 49:39). Much the same is written of Moab too (Jer. 48:47). Of Egypt and Assyria, see Is. 19:24–25.

well as judgment, but there were others such as Babylon and Edom who received only judgment. They were said to be perpetual wastes, symbols of eternal destruction.<sup>42</sup> Therefore some judgment in the OT led to softening the heart and to restoration. But other judgments hardened hearts, and the fate of those hearts mirrored that of the generation of Jews who came out of Egypt and “fell” in the wilderness because they never changed in repentance. They were like those Jeremiah criticized for refusing “to take correction. . . . they have refused to repent”; as a result God “struck them down” (Jer 5:3).

#### 4.4 Two Different NT Outcomes

The Gospels present a similar eschatology of two different outcomes. The evidence is overwhelming. As NT scholar Richard Bauckham wrote in his survey of universalist thought, “Few would now doubt that many New Testament texts clearly teach a *final* division of mankind into saved and lost, and the most that universalists now commonly claim is that alongside these texts there are others which hold out a universalist hope (e.g., Eph 1:10; Col 1:20).”<sup>43</sup> I. Howard Marshall, another NT scholar, argues that the NT authors both teach and assume that there is a double outcome for humanity and that this outcome is final.<sup>44</sup> Jesus said that he would deny before the Father those who denied him during their lives (Matt 10:33) and that many would seek to enter the kingdom but would not be able (Luke 13:24). In his parables of the wheat and the tares and the dragnet, he said that some would be excluded from his kingdom (Matt 13:24–30, 36–43, 47–50). He taught that there is an eternal sin that cannot be forgiven (Mark 3:28–30). The foolish bridesmaids and those indifferent to the needy would be given chilling sentences: “I do not know you. . . . Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt 25:12, 41). Luke says that Jesus stressed repentance and warned that some would knock but be told by the master of the house, “Depart from me, you workers of evil” (Luke 13:25–28).

Was the judgment Jesus proclaimed only temporary and thus restorative? In Matt 25:41, Jesus says that he will send the goats to the same place he will send the devil and his angels: “the eternal fire.” Orthodox Christians have always believed and taught that all of Scripture is inspired by the same Spirit so that the book of Revelation is divinely inspired just as are the Gospels. Revelation speaks of the smoke of the fire of hell that goes up “forever and ever” (Rev 14:11; 20:10). Universalists object that the word for “forever” (*aiōnios*) means only “age-long.” Yet it is used in the Gospels in the phrase “eternal life,” where clearly the meaning is life that goes on forever.<sup>45</sup> *Aiōnios* also occurs in the Gospel phrases “eternal weight of glory,” “eternal glory,” “eternal covenant,” and “eternal gospel,” all of which seem to denote things that go on without end. In the words of the early-nineteenth-century scholar Moses Stuart, “We must either admit the endless misery of hell or give up the endless happiness of heaven.”<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup>Jeremiah compares the destruction of Bozrah—the Edomites’ capital city—to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jer 49:18). On Babylon, see Rev 17–18.

<sup>43</sup>Bauckham, “Universalism: An Historical Survey,” 52 (emphasis in original).

<sup>44</sup>I. Howard Marshall, “The New Testament Does *Not* Teach Universal Salvation,” in *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate* (ed. Robin A. Parry and Christopher H. Partridge; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 55–76.

<sup>45</sup>On issues relating to interpreting the language used of hell, see D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 515–36.

<sup>46</sup>Moses Stuart, *Exegetical Essays on Several Words Relating to Future Punishment* (Andover: Codman, 1830), 62.

We concur with Scot McKnight in his conclusion that Jesus clearly taught “punishment in an individual, eternal, sense.”<sup>47</sup>

Nor does the rest of the NT support universalism. The Gospel of John never mentions hell, but the theme of judgment is pervasive throughout (cf. John 3:19–21, 36; 17:3). Judgment begins now when people fail to believe the gospel message; they bring judgment on themselves. Jesus evokes two responses—welcome from those who embrace him and refusal from those who reject him or are indifferent to him. Faith is needed to come into the eternal life he offers in his person; there is no automatic entry.

#### 4.5 Favorite Pauline Passages

The Pauline epistles are more challenging, for they have always offered to universalists more apparent support than any other part of the Bible. Yet at the same time the Pauline epistles contain eighty references to divine judgment.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, universalists point to the texts that use the word “all,” such as Rom 5:18, one of their favorites: “Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.” The interpretive problem in the whole passage, which runs from verses 12 to 21, is that Paul uses two different terms for the same group: both “many” (vv. 15, 16, 19) and “all” (vv. 12, 18). So “all” are also “many”—not a conclusive case for universalism. Paul probably uses “all” in the way the author of Joshua does when he writes that “all Israel stoned Achan” (Josh 7:25). A small representative portion of Israel participated in the stoning.<sup>49</sup>

Another favorite for universalists is Phil 2:19–11: “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every other name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” It seems to affirm universal salvation in its depiction of every knee bowing to the lordship of Jesus. But it is important to recognize that this is almost a direct quote from Isa 45:22–25:

Turn to me and be saved,  
all the ends of the earth!  
For I am God and there is no other.  
By myself I have sworn;  
from my mouth has gone out in righteousness

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<sup>47</sup> Scot McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 38.

<sup>48</sup> Francis Chan and Preston Sprinkle, *Erasing Hell: What God Said About Eternity, and the Things We Made Up* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2011), 98. For “death” and “die” in Paul’s letters, see Rom 1:32; 5:12, 14, 15, 17, 21; 6:16, 21, 23; 7:5, 9, 10, 11, 13; 8:2, 6, 13; 1 Cor 15:21, 22; 2 Cor 2:16; 3:6, 7; 7:10; Eph 2:1. For “perish,” “destroy,” and “destruction,” see Rom 2:12; 9:22; 14:15, 20; 1 Cor 1:18; 15:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3; Gal 6:8; Phil 1:28; 3:19; 1 Thess 5:3; 2 Thess 1:9; 2:10; 1 Tim 6:9. For “wrath,” see Rom 1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5; 5:9; 9:22; Eph 2:3; 5:6; Col 3:6; 1 Thess 1:10; 2:16; 5:9. For “condemn,” “condemnation,” or “judge,” see Rom 2:1, 2, 3, 5, 12; 3:7, 8; 5:16, 18; 8:1; 1 Cor 11:32; 2 Cor 3:9; 2 Thess 2:12; 1 Tim 5:24. For “curse” or “cursed,” see Rom 9:3; 1 Cor 12:3; 16:22; Gal 1:8, 9; 3:10, 13. For “punish,” see 1 Thess 4:6; 2 Thess 1:8–9. References taken from Douglas J. Moo, “Paul on Hell,” in *Hell Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment* (ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 92–93.

<sup>49</sup> On this passage, see N. T. Wright in his Romans commentary in vol. 10 of *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (ed. Leander Keck; Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 529–30.

a word that shall not return:  
 “To me every knee shall bow,  
 every tongue shall swear allegiance.”  
 Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me,  
 are righteousness and strength;  
 to him shall come and be ashamed  
 all who were incensed against him.  
 In the LORD all the offspring of Israel  
 shall be justified and shall glory.

The context in Isaiah is a speech by Yahweh declaring his reality against the unreality of the gods of the nations.<sup>50</sup> Those of Israel who trust in him shall not be put to shame (Isa 45:17), but those who trust in other gods will be ashamed (Isa 45:24). These are people “incensed against him” (Isa 45:24). This was a familiar picture to residents of the ancient world: conquering kings and generals would return from battle with their prisoners of war who would be forced to bend their knees in subjection to the victor. The native subjects of those kings and generals would also bend the knee, but in joyous submission. Yahweh’s speech ends with a prediction of destructive fire for those who do not submit to his reality and reign (Isa 47:14–15).<sup>51</sup> The language in Phil 2 about every knee bowing and every tongue confessing Jesus as Lord must be understood in light of the background to Isa 45. In the NT in general and in the Pauline letters in particular, then, there is a prediction of future universal submission that takes place in two different ways: there is voluntary submission for some and involuntary submission for others.

Two other notes are instructive for this brief discussion. First, the declaration that God desires all to be saved in 1 Tim 2:4 is qualified by warnings in the same epistle that faith is necessary for salvation (1 Tim 1:16; 4:10). Second, the eternal destruction of the wicked in 2 Thess 1 is retributive, not restorative or remedial. Why will the wicked “suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might” (2 Thess 1:9)? Two reasons are given: “God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you” (2 Thess 1:6). Furthermore, the punishment inflicts “vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus” (2 Thess 1:8). Robin Parry acknowledges that this text is a problem for universalists.<sup>52</sup> For this punishment is said to be both eternal and vindictive. No restoration is in sight.

#### 4.6 The Book of Revelation

The book of Revelation adds to the problems for universalists. The God portrayed in these apocalyptic dramas does not try to persuade unbelievers, waiting forever until they accept his loving offer, as many universalist accounts suggest. Instead, the God of Revelation attacks, defeats, and subjugates his enemies. Nor do we read, as some universalists claim, that every tribe is redeemed. It is only some *from* (*ek*) every tribe who are redeemed (Rev 5:9; 7:9). This is what Michael McClymond calls “representative universalism,” which is the pattern many have observed in the OT—people from all the nations (but not

<sup>50</sup> As Richard Bauckham notes, “The allusion to Isaiah 45 in verses 10–11 . . . is universally agreed, though its full significance is by no means always appreciated” (*God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 58).

<sup>51</sup> The divine speech runs for three chapters with the same recurring theme: the idols of Babylon cannot save, and the idolaters face judgment.

<sup>52</sup> MacDonald, *Evangelical Universalist*, 151–55.



all of the people in all the nations) will join Israel in the latter days to worship the true God.<sup>53</sup> For the biblical and especially NT authors, hell is not a problem but a solution. It helps answer the question, “Why does God permit evil to continue unpunished?” Rather than create a problem for theodicy, as it does for moderns, hell for the ancients was a solution to difficult problems of theodicy. People of God in biblical books like Habakkuk, Job, and Revelation—not to mention Matthew—struggle with God’s patience in permitting sin and wickedness but seldom with his judgment on evildoers. For them, the ultimate horror of the universe is not the suffering of the wicked but the suffering of the innocent because of the oppression of the wicked.

### *5. Conclusion*

Universalism is attractive to many because of modern presumptions about love and justice that were not shared by the biblical authors. The philosophical and theological underpinnings of universalism do not survive careful scrutiny, and the biblical witness is to an eschatology that flatly contradicts it. But it is not simply its shaky theological and biblical moorings that should cause the church to reject universalism. It is also dangerous.

The church is now facing an aggressive and hegemonic secularism that is at war with both Christian anthropology and public theism. The new secularism says that religion is only incidental to the human being, perhaps even alienating, and therefore a private matter that should be kept out of the public square. Hence the claims of conscience, especially those that religious persons make, are irrelevant to government policy that regulates public not private affairs.

Many evangelicals, not to mention John Paul II and Benedict XVI, have taught that the church’s best response to this new secularism is a robustly evangelical response—a new evangelization that includes both the promise of salvation to individuals and the counter-cultural witness to life and freedom through the public claims of the church.

But the new evangelization for the conversion of the world will founder if Christians believe that there is no need for conversion. This has happened before. When universalism captured the theological heights of liberal Protestantism in the mid-twentieth century, few were surprised when in 1973 the World Council of Churches declared a moratorium on missions. Instead of those churches converting the world for the gospel, the world converted the churches to its vision of sexual and gender liberation. A new complacency settled over the world of mainline Protestantism, replacing the urgency of the nineteenth-century missionary movement that sparked the spectacular growth of Christianity in the global South. At the time, it seemed to make sense. If everyone would eventually be saved, why risk lives and reputations to get them saved now? And if spiritual salvation was not urgent, why not focus on social liberation from poverty and oppression?

The same lethargy will come to Christian churches if the new universalism prevails. Although historic orthodoxy has always held that eternal salvation and earthly justice are inextricably connected, Christians will focus nearly exclusively on this-worldly justice once the need for conversion has been jettisoned. Many Christians have already come to that conclusion. The result will be a lost opportunity. Just when orthodoxy has gained new strength in the global South and parts of the North, momentum will slowly change direction. The new evangelization will sputter and a new Dark Age for orthodoxy will ensue.

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<sup>53</sup>From McClymond’s draft (see n. 1 above).

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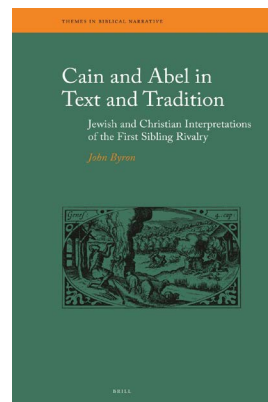
— OLD TESTAMENT —

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John Byron. *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition: Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the First Sibling Rivalry*. Themes in Biblical Narrative 14. Leiden: Brill, 2011. 268 pp. \$137.00.

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John Byron is associate professor of New Testament at Ashland Theological Seminary. His other books include *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (2003) and *Recent Research on Paul and Slavery* (2008). Focusing this time on the history of traditional exegesis of the well-known story of Cain and Abel, Byron's new study situates this primeval narrative in the historico-theological context of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. It emerges that Byron opts for the first sibling rivalry as a case study of an ominous Hebrew text that has multiple exegetical difficulties taken over by Jewish and Christian interpreters. This study therefore aims to trace the various exegetical techniques and interpretations attached to the story of Cain and Abel throughout antiquity.



*Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition* consists of a brief introduction (pp. 1–9) and seven chapters:

1. Like Father, Like Son (Genesis 4:1–2)
2. Rejecting Offering-Dejected Person (Genesis 4:3–7)
3. Crime and Punishment (Genesis 4:8–10)
4. Far as the Curse Is Found (Genesis 4:11–16)
5. Raising Cain (Genesis 4:17–26)
6. The Blood of Righteous Abel
7. The Way of Cain

Finally, the book is furnished with a bibliography and indexes of Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Latin texts. In the introduction, Byron sets the stage for the forthcoming analysis of the history of exegesis as follows:

The purpose of the present volume is to trace the interpretative history of the Cain and Abel in the first millennium CE. Rather than focus on critical questions like historicity, cultural background and manuscript evidence, I examine how the story was understood by Jewish and Christian interpreters. Because the Hebrew version of Genesis 4 contains a number of linguistic ambiguities and narrative gaps, it raises more questions than answers. Ancient exegetes expanded the story in ways that helped to fill in the gaps as well as to answer some of the more important questions. The focus of the book is not so much on analysis of Genesis 4 as it is making the Cain and Abel traditions available to a wider audience. (p. 6)

The primary sources are well-documented insofar as the book provides valuable insights into numerous Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and Latin extrabiblical sources, including the Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, Targums, Midrashim, Talmud, Gnostic texts, and Patristic literature. As such the story of Cain and Abel is read through the lens of different religious perspectives that developed against the backdrop of rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity. Byron's *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition* allows the reader to consider new solutions to old exegetical problems embedded within Gen 4. For

example, the fact that Cain's death is not recorded in Genesis brought about new interpretations of divine retribution. In antiquity, some biblical exegetes believed Cain's death was accidental. Others filled the gap in the narrative by recounting Cain's death as a result of Lamech killing him or a divine punishment in the flood (see a summary of this question on p. 164). Another fascinating discovery is the hamartiological comparison of Cain's deadly sin with Adam's transgression in Eden. In some early Jewish and Christian literary settings, the prototypical sinner is neither Adam nor Eve but Cain (e.g., Wisdom of Solomon, Philo, Clement, and Irenaeus of Lyons). Byron readily admits that this interpretation of the original sin might be at odds with Pauline hamartiology (see especially the hamartiological discourse in Rom 5); however, even from a cursory reading of Gen 4 it becomes clear that the first death actually occurs with the murder of Abel. Moreover, it is an irrefutable fact the Hebrew noun 'sin' (חטאת) appears for the first time in Gen 4:7 (see pp. 219–25).

Apart from the apparent strengths of this book, two typos are spotted in the book: (1) "In an unexplainable error, Augustine attributes Eve's statement in Gen 4:6 to Adam (*City of God* 15.15)" (p. 14n9). Eve's statement is actually found in Gen 4:1. (2) "But in 4:2 there is a double occurrence of the **אָהוּ**, once before **אֶת־אָהוּ**, 'his brother,' and again before the name 'Abel,' **אֶת־הַבֵּל**" (p. 25). Here the Hebrew word **אָהוּ** is misspelled; the correct form is **אָחִיו** ("his brother").

To sum up, I warmly recommend *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition* as a solid historico-theological study of Gen 4 for readers interested in the pre-modern history of Genesis hermeneutics. There is no doubt that this book will spark further debate in the field of *Wirkungsgeschichte*. John Byron should be commended for producing a fine monograph that allows students and scholars from different faith communities to fruitfully converse with one another. Biblical scholars, historians, and theologians will certainly benefit by using this book in research and teaching.

Igal German

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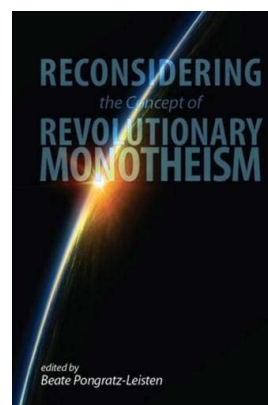
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Beate Pongratz-Leisten, ed. *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011. xii + 370 pp. £38.00/\$59.50.

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From where do concepts come? To what extent can they derive from a given context yet be distinct, even different, from that context? Do concepts develop identically in different historical settings? The answers one gives to questions like these have immense consequences for the way one interprets history and its various currents; the answer of "revolutionary monotheism" to the question "from where or what did monotheism come" is no exception. The present volume critically examines the interpretative consequences of revolutionary monotheism, defined as both an Israelite reaction to Assyrian politics of the late eighth and seventh centuries and as an Israelite religious innovation in a world until then filled with polytheism (p. 11). The papers in the volume were originally presented at a conference held at Princeton University in 2007, and they cover New Kingdom and later Egypt, Early Mesopotamia, the OT, early Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. (The table of contents with the contributors is available at <http://www>.





[eisenbrauns.com/item/PONRECONS](http://eisenbrauns.com/item/PONRECONS).) The volume contains author, Scripture, and other ancient sources indexes, and it is well-printed and bound in hardback.

Despite their varying foci, B. Pongratz-Leisten explains that the ten essays that compose the volume are characterized by a common understanding of

cultural contact as a dynamic process occurring perpetually within networking systems. Culture in the making conceives of the ancient Near East as an intellectual community that, despite linguistic, regional, and local distinctions, displays features of cultural cohesion, drawing upon a common reservoir of religious practices, tropes, ideas, and cultural strategies. (pp. 3–4)

But this perspective does not lead inexorably to a common religion of the ancient Near East (*pace* Jan Assmann). Rather, while “cultural strategies and patterns” such as treaty-making, god-lists, scribal and intellectual traditions, and rituals were often common across geographical boundaries, they resulted in neither “a common religion nor in the recognition of a single deity. . . . The strategies might have been the same, but their realization was framed by local or regional traditions” (p. 9). It seems, then, that the volume sets for itself a healthy breadth of opinion on matters of cultural (and religious) similarity and difference

The answers offered by this volume to the types of questions posed at the outset are generally sociological and anthropological: “The participants in this conference worked on the premise that analysis of the cultural mechanisms and strategies underpinning the polytheistic religions of the eastern Mediterranean can inform methodological approaches to the study of the formation of monotheism” (p. 16). To see this premise put into practice, we will consider two well-known examples to which the volume dedicates two chapters: the henotheism promoted by the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten (ca. 1350–1332) and the effort in Sargonid Neo-Assyria (late-eighth to mid-seventh century) to elevate the national god Assur to unparalleled superiority. The analyses and answers offered by these two contributors (and several others) exhibit some interesting differences that merit reflection.

In the case of Akhenaten, John Baines argues that the Pharaoh seems to have taken “literally what were otherwise poetic meditations on the nature of the sun god,” essentially de-anthropomorphizing him (p. 59). Still, it is not clear to Baines that even this exceptional case merits the term monotheism, and in any case Akhenaten’s reforms were quickly swept away by his immediate successor (p. 65). Notably, Baines offers no cultural explanations for Akhenaten’s radical reforms, leaving that task to others (p. 88). He does, however, offer two notable observations. First, he sees “influence from one culture to another as being likely to inhere more in how deities are presented than in the substance of beliefs” (p. 87). In other words, even if some theological categories appear in more than one culture, it should not be assumed that their semantic content is identical. Second, noting that centuries elapsed between Akhenaten’s fourteenth-century reforms and at least some (first-millennium) Israelite expressions of monotheism, he states that the Egyptian episode shows that “comparably radical change, although of a very different character, can arise more than once without there being any close connection between developments, even in adjacent regions” (p. 88). This seems to run more or less counter to the volume’s premise regarding cultural contact and its networking systems, and Baines’s two observations together favor the *a priori* assumption of a given culture’s (or corpus’s) uniqueness before considering the possibility of influence or commonality (compare F. Rochberg’s similar conclusion regarding early Mesopotamian deities, p. 136).

Turning to the elevation of Assur in the late Neo-Assyrian period, B. Pongratz-Leisten explains Assur's absorption of other, astral gods' characteristics as a means of giving him full control of the heavens and the pantheon that inhabits it (pp. 177–78). She suggests that this theological change was driven by various political changes in the empire, particularly the need to integrate Babylon and the Arameans into the empire. This was therefore not a revolutionary monotheism. The relationship between Israelite and Neo-Assyrian data is approached with a broad brush that all the same assigns very precise dates to different biblical passages (following M. Smith at a few points), and she concludes that “the disappearance of the solarized Assur in the Assyrian palatial context overlaps with the disappearance of the solarized Yahweh in the Judean material in favor of an increasing astralization of both deities” (p. 184). While the author argues that the solarization of various gods was “impelled primarily by the political agenda,” she suggests that astralization in Babylon, Assyria, and Israel in the ninth, eighth, and seventh centuries “must be interpreted as a theological attempt to express divine supreme control over the universe. This theological development occurred against the backdrop of the rise of astronomy as a science and ought to be considered a product of the professional elites with whom it is linked” (pp. 184–85). The precision of the causes and means that Pongratz-Leisten identifies, as well as their inclusive chronological and geographic/cultural scope, manifest a method and a set of assumptions very different from those of Baines and Rochberg (although Pongratz-Leisten frequently cites Rochberg approvingly).

This review must pass over other valuable essays, including those of P. Machinist and M. Smith, in order to conclude. This volume's contribution is not that it offers a definitive response to the idea of revolutionary monotheism (it does not, nor does it claim to do so). Rather, it is valuable because it significantly advances the discussion by clarifying (mostly by example, and thus without analysis) the conceptual models with which historians and theologians have approached the data, the assumptions on which these models are based, and how those models influence one's conclusions. Somewhat ironically, the contribution of the collection thus lies in its heterogeneity, which prompts the reader to push the discussion further than the collection itself. One might pose the following questions: (1) What is one to make of Pongratz-Leisten's suggestion that we should “depart from the books of the Bible as they have come down to us in their final redaction” in order to “do justice to an analysis of the conceptual shift that occurred in a long historical process requiring changes on all cultural levels”? (p. 40). Can or should the researcher be equally dismissive of the other written sources under review? (2) Despite the fact that there were significant commonalities between the cultures under review, and even if those commonalities outweigh or outnumber their differences, one cannot simply ignore differences. How is the historian to articulate the relationship between the exceptional (e.g., the “normative” biblical perspective, viz. monotheism) and the common (e.g., the “descriptive” perspective, viz. polytheism)? (3) Finally, what should be done when the interpreter's worldview is incompatible with that of the historical source under examination? Claims of divine revelation, common to all the cultures treated in the volume, raise questions that go beyond the purview of sociology and anthropology. If a deity has spoken into time and space, are not explanations of religious development other than dominant social processes and political strategies possible? Perhaps the limits that some argue are inherent in religious studies, and its corresponding non-evaluative mandate in matters of theology, merit more attention in interdisciplinary conversations like this one.

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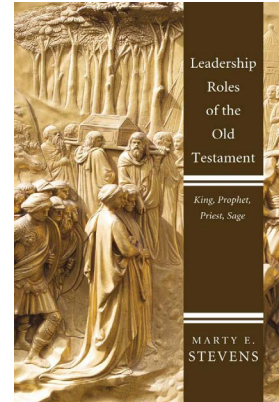
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Marty E. Stevens. *Leadership Roles of the Old Testament: King, Prophet, Priest, and Sage*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012. xii + 122 pp. \$17.00.

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Stevens teaches biblical studies at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Although this book is a loose sequel to her previous book, *Theological Themes of the Old Testament*, it can be read as a standalone book (p. x), as it is in this review. The book is aimed at laypeople (church groups, college classrooms, seminary courses; p. x) so there are no footnotes (p. xi). The book contains four chapters, one each for the four leadership roles Stevens identifies in the OT: king, prophet, priest, and sage. Each chapter follows a similar structure: terminology and then a combination of vocation, roles, or duties. A brief list of books for further reading and a Scripture index complete the book.



Chapter 1 outlines the role of an Israelite king, emphasizing the human king's rule under God, the true King of Israel. The duties of the king are described under the categories of securing the property (physical land and its boundaries), securing the progeny (royal succession), and securing the divine presence (temple and religious rituals). The chapter ends with a helpful discussion of the Israelite kings falling short of their task to “mirror the reign of the Divine King” (p. 28). Mention is made of Jesus the Messiah as the endpoint of a “theological trajectory,” which takes place “in the early Church” (p. 30). Considering the intended audience, clearer links could have been made to the NT, especially how Jesus is the ultimate king in David's line (e.g., Matt 1:1).

The next chapter discusses the prophetic vocation. This is set on the background of ancient Greek and ancient Near Eastern prophets who speak in the name of the divine (pp. 33–34). The social location of prophets is also described, along with a short section on true and false prophets. Different forms of prophetic speech are outlined, followed by a summary of the prophets' message: covenant faithfulness, exclusive loyalty, economic injustice, ritual without righteousness, and hope of ultimate salvation. The last element of the prophetic message outlined here focuses on salvation by God's grace and mercy (pp. 62–63) but does not follow the trajectory through to the ultimate expression and anticipated fulfillment of God's salvation in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 3 outlines the priestly vocation, which functions as the intermediary between “the divine” and the people. The duties of a priest are described under the headings of sacrifice, purification, divination, and teaching the law. The sections on sacrifice and purification helpfully sketch the different sacrifices, along with the concepts of consecration/profanation and purification/defilement. The section on divination could have been condensed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the difference between Levitical and Aaronite priests, based on a reconstruction of the historical development of biblical texts (pp. 85–90).

The final chapter traces the role of a sage, a wise advisor of the family and a community, and the king. The leadership role of judges is mentioned briefly as a task of elders. The chapter then discusses the place of a sage as a teacher, both in the royal court (royal school) and in a family setting (parent-child). This is followed by short summaries of the type of wisdom found in Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and Psalms. The chapter ends with a paragraph that concludes the book as a whole: all four kinds of leaders in the OT long for “a lasting relationship with God”; all roles reflect God's character: “gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (p. 112). However, some evaluation of

relative importance of the different leadership roles would have been welcome. For example, does the order of presentation of the leaders in Deut 17–18 suggest a certain hierarchy?

There are many good aspects of this book. The language is suitable for the intended audience, and it is clearly written. The definitions at the beginning of each chapter provide insight into the background of the four roles and are a helpful entry into the subsequent discussion in the chapters. There are not many books on leadership in the OT; other books cover similar but not identical leadership roles, e.g., Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priests, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995); Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995). So this book, especially since it is aimed at the layperson, helps to fill the gap.

However, I would recommend it with some caution. Not all readers will agree with the historical-critical assumptions underlying this book. For instance, “Third Isaiah” is mentioned (p. 2), along with “Second Isaiah” (pp. 6, 75, 98), and “The Deuteronomist” (p. 75). The prominence of textual history and sources is mentioned above in relation to the discussion about the priestly lines. Elsewhere, the biblical descriptions of the kings are described as an “exaggeration” (pp. 21, 23; cf. p. 96) or “tendentious” (p. 97). I acknowledge that different views about the production and theological stance of biblical texts are possible. Even so, alternative views are not offered for evaluation. This may be due to the constraints of this type of book. Yet it is in more accessible books that the influence of ideological positions can be more pernicious.

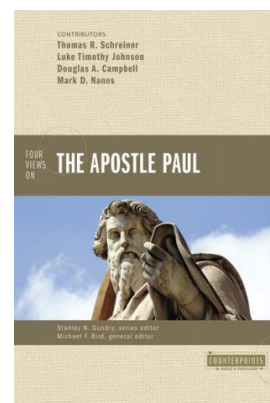
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## — NEW TESTAMENT —

Michael F. Bird, ed. *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*. Counterpoints. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 236 pp. \$17.99.

Many readers are already familiar with previous volumes in Zondervan’s Counterpoints series. The idea is to invite several respected scholars who hold different positions on a challenging topic to present their views and interact with each other’s essays. In this latest entry, the challenging topic is the Apostle Paul.

Michael F. Bird serves capably as the editor of the volume. His own views on Paul can be found in several publications, including *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification, and the New Perspective* (Paternoster, 2007) and *Introducing Paul: The Man, His Mission, His Message* (IVP, 2009). His introduction summarizes the credentials and views of each contributor to prepare the reader for their respective essays. Even more significantly, Bird highlights the four key areas each essay is supposed to address: (1) Paul’s understanding of salvation; (2) the significance of Christ; (3) the best framework for describing Paul’s theological perspective; and (4)



Paul's vision for the churches. His concluding chapter helpfully synthesizes areas of agreement between the contributors as well as points of disagreement.

The four contributors are well-selected. Thomas R. Schreiner presents a "Reformed Reading" of Paul. He is well-known for his commentaries on Romans (Baker Exegetical, 1998) and Galatians (Zondervan Exegetical, 2010), but also for *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Baker, 2006). Luke Timothy Johnson argues for a "Catholic Perspective" on Paul. He is the author of the widely used *The Writings of the New Testament* (3rd ed.; Fortress, 2010) as well as commentaries on the Pastorals (*Letters to Paul's Delegates*, 1996), 1–2 Timothy (Anchor Bible; 2001) and Romans (Reading the New Testament; 2013). Douglas A. Campbell offers a "Post-New Perspective Account" of Paul. He has authored two major works on Paul: *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (T&T Clark, 2005) and most recently *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Eerdmans, 2009). Mark D. Nanos provides a "Jewish View" of Paul. In addition to a number of essays on aspects of Paul's thought, Nanos has produced two significant volumes: *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Fortress, 1996) and *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context* (Fortress, 2002).

Since the primary value of these sorts of books is introducing readers to a challenging topic and key viewpoints on that subject, this book accomplishes its main objective. Asking the contributors to address the four key areas helpfully attempts to focus each essay, though some contributors are better at "playing by the rules" than others. Furthermore, the responses to each chapter allow the reader to see weak points in the argument they otherwise might have missed.

For those who are already familiar with some of the different views on the Apostle Paul, this book provides reasonably short summaries of what each contributor has argued for at length elsewhere. This is especially true for the contributions by Campbell and Nanos. Since Campbell's 1,200+ page tome *The Deliverance of God* will prove too lengthy for most outside of the academy (and many inside it!), having a 30-page overview will benefit many readers. [Editor's note: see Mark Seifrid's review of Nanos's *The Deliverance of God* in *Themelios* 35:2 (July 2010): 307–9.] Similarly, many readers will likely be unfamiliar with Nanos's unique Jewish perspective on Paul, so his contribution will introduce them to the broader spectrum of academic approaches to Paul.

Overall, the interaction between the contributors is both respectful towards each other and helpful to the reader. Schreiner stands out as especially gracious in his interaction with the other contributors, taking great pains to note areas of agreement before noting his points of disagreement. Unfortunately, Nanos does not extend the same courtesy to Schreiner. Rather than focus on Schreiner's essay, Nanos devotes more than half of his response to comments Schreiner makes in his Galatians commentary regarding Nanos's views. Not only is this likely to confuse the reader, but it comes across as an attempt to "settle the score" with Schreiner. There is certainly room for sharp disagreement—as demonstrated at several points in the responses—but grinding axes does not serve the reader well.

The most surprising element of this book is not having a contributor represent the New Perspective(s) on Paul. Each contributor interacts with the New Perspective(s) at varying levels, with Campbell and Nanos leading the way. Indeed, Campbell's view is even labeled as "Post-New Perspective." If the goal is to introduce readers to the spectrum of views on the Apostle Paul, including a contribution from a New Perspective advocate would have been especially valuable. Given the length of the book, adding a fifth contributor and the necessary 40–50 pages would not only have been feasible but beneficial. As it

stands, the reader is left to piece together the New Perspective and its ramifications from bits and pieces scattered throughout the essays.

For the reader looking for some of the key interpretive approaches to the Apostle Paul, this book will be a valuable, albeit slightly incomplete, resource. Those most likely to benefit from it are seminary students being introduced to the academic study of Paul, as well as pastors who feel the need to understand some of the more recent trends in Pauline studies.

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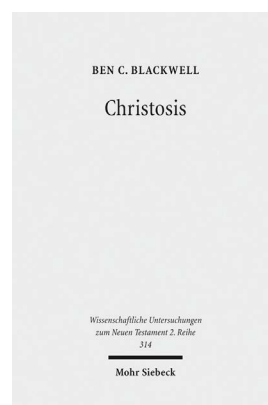
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Ben C. Blackwell. *Christosis: Pauline Soteriology in Light of Deification in Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 314. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2011. xiv + 312 pp. £79.00/\$157.50.

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The past two decades have witnessed a serious resurgence of interest in the reception history of the biblical texts. In particular, scholars have sought to recover the voices of the church fathers as important dialogue partners for biblical interpretation. One thinks, for example, of the Ancient Christian Commentary Series (IVP), Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Wiley-Blackwell), and the Evangelical Ressourcement: Ancient Sources for the Church's Future series (Baker) to name a few. Ben Blackwell joins these voices as he examines whether the church fathers, particularly Irenaeus and Cyril, can illuminate Paul's soteriology. In particular, he seeks "to explore whether and to what extent theosis helpfully captures Paul's presentation of the anthropological dimension of soteriology. That is, does this admittedly later, and thus anachronistic, notion help us to read Paul in a way that draws out and connects aspects of his theology that Western readers have routinely missed or underplayed?" (p. 3).

Blackwell devotes two chapters to an exploration of deification in Irenaeus and Cyril. Both fathers emphasize humanity as distinct from God as a derivative created being, and yet similar to God based on their creation in God's image. Humanity shares or participates (by grace, not nature) in God's incorruption and life. Adam was created in a state of childlike understanding and was to use his rationality and freedom to grow in his likeness to God (esp. Irenaeus). Cyril argues that God bestowed the Spirit upon Adam at creation (Gen 2:7) but that this Spirit was lost when Adam sinned, thereby resulting in humanity's downward spiral into ever-increasing defacement of the image. Participation in the life of God is lost, and mortality, death, sin, and defacement of God's image enters into human experience. Salvation, in the words of Irenaeus, is for the purpose "that what we had lost in Adam—namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God—we might recover in Jesus Christ" (*Against Heresies*, 3.18.1). Irenaeus and Cyril frequently draw upon 1 Cor 15 to argue that Christ, the second Adam, takes on human flesh in order to transmit incorruption, adoption, knowledge of God, and the Spirit to humanity. In addition to Paul's Adam-Christ typology, Irenaeus and Cyril frequently draw upon the Pauline exchange formulae to depict how the narrative of Christ's descent and ascent serves as a pattern for believers (e.g., Phil 2:5–11; 2 Cor 8:9). The work of Christ functions to unite believers to



the Spirit who then recreates humanity in *the* image of God (i.e., his Son), which enables humanity to participate in the life of the immortal God. Irenaeus and Cyril draw upon Ps 82:6 (“I said you are gods and sons of the Most High”) to indicate that believers’ deification takes place *by participation* as they share in the sonship of *the Son*.

Based upon the shape of the authors’ depiction of deification, Blackwell poses four questions to Paul’s soteriology: “1) What is the shape of Pauline soteriology? 2) When do these soteriological changes occur? 3) How do these soteriological changes of the human condition come about? 4) How does this transformation of the human condition relate to creation?” (p. 117). Given their soteriological focus and the variety of themes discussed, Blackwell chooses to analyze Rom 8 and 2 Cor 3–5. In response to his questions, Blackwell argues that both texts depict the believer as liberated from an enslaving situation of sin, death, alienation from God. The believer transitions, then, from a situation of death into life. This is both a present and future, noetic and somatic reality. Perhaps most significant for Blackwell’s argument is that this eschatological life and incorruption occurs through the believers’ participation in Christ. Believers’ participate both in his sufferings and death as well as his bodily resurrection and glory. Both Rom 8 and 2 Cor 3–5 use the protological language of Genesis (image, likeness, knowledge, glory, etc.) to suggest that “believers in some sense fulfil what humanity in Adam was supposed to fulfil” although this is “an elevation to a greater, even divine, mode of existence” (p. 237). Paul’s soteriology, Blackwell states, “is about embodying the life of God. The life comes through a transformation wrought by the Spirit by incorporation into the life of Christ” (p. 237). Paul’s construal of salvation is internal to the believers as they participate in the divine presence of Christ and the Spirit.

Blackwell concludes his study by summarizing patristic soteriology as seen in Irenaeus and Cyril as well as Paul’s soteriology and suggests that they share three emphases: (1) life, incorruption, and glory; (2) the restoration of the image of God through the second Adam; and (3) participation in the work of God’s triune activity. As to whether Paul’s soteriology is properly termed theosis or deification, Blackwell suggests the language of *christosis*, for while Paul does indeed depict believers as participating in the divine life through being conformed to Christ by the Spirit, this term is true “to the particularly christo-form nature of the experience” (p. 265).

Overall, this monograph makes a nice contribution to the shape of Pauline soteriology in light of the concerns of two significant readers of Paul. I particularly appreciate Blackwell’s emphasis on the Second Adam recovering the glory, life, and incorruptibility that the first Adam lost as he maps this onto us through our sharing in his resurrection. His exegesis of the Pauline texts are sound and justify his conclusion that humanity’s salvation is Christo-morphic in nature. I have two criticisms of the work, however. First, there is a significant amount of repetition throughout the work and too many summaries. These tend to distract from the otherwise fine argument of the book. Second, I’m not sure if Blackwell has succeeded in having a “conversation” between Paul and the two authors. I understand his concern to let Paul be Paul and let Cyril be Cyril so to speak, but more integration is needed. It would have been helpful had Blackwell been more explicit about what particular aspects of Paul’s soteriology—readings *that have been underplayed by contemporary readers*—he had recovered based on using Irenaeus and Cyril as his guides. Nevertheless, Blackwell’s method, even if in need of some fine-tuning, holds great

promise, his reading of Paul, Irenaeus, and Cyril is sound, and in my opinion, *Christosis* is not a bad title at all for describing the heart of Paul's soteriology.

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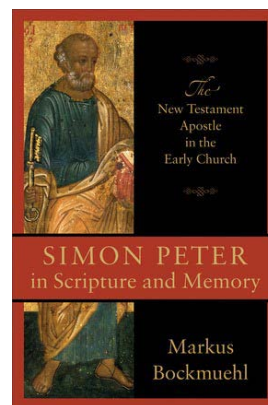
Markus Bockmuehl. *Simon Peter in Scripture and Memory: The New Testament Apostle in the Early Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. xvi + 223 pp. \$24.99.

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Markus Bockmuehl is a Fellow of Keble College and professor of biblical and early Christian studies at the University of Oxford. He is the author and editor of several books. The present work is his second of two volumes concerning the apostle Peter, with the first a technical study for specialists (*The Remembered Peter in Ancient Reception and Modern Debate*; WUNT 262; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010). [Editor's note: see the review of this book by Joshua Jipp in *Themelios* 36:1 (May 2011): 83–85.] The present work builds upon the first yet is for a wider audience ("serviceable especially to students at graduate or senior undergraduate levels, and perhaps to their teachers and pastors" [p. xiv]).

The book is a quest for the "historical Peter," although not a conventional one. It attempts to push beyond the standard questions (and limitations) of historical criticism. The author endeavors to do so by seeking "to attend more carefully to the way Christianity's originating figures left a footprint in living memory" (pp. xiv–xv). The historical Peter available to us is always an *interpreted* Peter mediated to us by documents written by interested members of diverse ecclesial communities (p. xv). The study therefore provides "a narrative of exegetical engagement with the NT Peter and his reception in the second century" (p. xiv). Of great interest is this latter emphasis: the book explores how members of the period immediately following the apostolic age portrayed Peter, since they lived during this period of "living memory." This is the period when members who had received testimony from eyewitnesses still lived or whose recollections were still fresh. Bockmuehl writes, "We may safely conclude that the early church recognized well into the second century a select group of what we might call sub-apostolic bearers of memory, who were widely regarded as—and in some cases perhaps were in fact—living links between the leaders of the apostolic generation and the churches that followed them" (p. 16). The author hopes that greater attention to the church's living memory, as preserved in these writings, will encourage a healthier NT discipline otherwise largely fragmented and unsatisfied with yesterday's historical-critical "assured results." The author's thesis is that "the otherwise nebulous figure of Simon Peter assumes an unexpectedly vital role close to the epicenter of Christian origins" (p. xvi).

The author divides his book into three parts, each of which contains two chapters. Part 1, "Peter in Canon and Memory," introduces the concept of living memory (chapter 1) and provides an overview of the NT portrait of Peter (chapter 2). Part 2, "Peter in the 'Living Memory' of East and West," which comprises the bulk of the study, sketches Petrine living memory from the late second-century back to the apostolic documents in the Roman imperial East (ch. 3) and West (ch. 4). Here students are introduced to fascinating yet largely unfamiliar figures, such as Serapion of Antioch, Justin Martyr,





Ignatius, Dionysius of Corinth, and Clement of Rome. Part 3, “History and Memory—Two Case Studies,” offers two case studies that apply the insights of Petrine living memory to help answer puzzling questions concerning Peter: his conversion (ch. 5) and surprising international missionary career (ch. 6). In both case studies, Bockmuehl seeks to show how “the relationship between the historical Peter of critical reconstruction and the historic Peter of memory” give rise to rich “interwoven strands of tradition and memory” (p. 153).

The book is evidence of a larger recent upsurge of academic interest in early Christian origins and its aftermath, i.e., in its reception or effective history in general (to include the history of the interpretation of biblical texts) and in second-century Christianity in particular. It stands as a genuine contribution to the field. It wedes the insights of historical-critical reconstruction of Peter, the NT’s depiction of Peter, and the second-century living memory of Peter into a fascinating and largely convincing portrait. Living memory, among other memories, univocally maintained that Peter died in Rome under Emperor Nero, authored 1 Peter, and cofounded (with Paul) the church at Corinth. Without early living memory, such information would not be available to us or be so strongly attested.

One of the most penetrating observations is the author’s discussion concerning the oft-overlooked statement in John’s Gospel that Peter originated from Bethsaida (not Capernaum, as popularly thought [see John 1:44; pp. 126–27; 165–76]). Located in tetrarch Philip’s Gaulanitis just east of the Jordan River on the Sea of Galilee, the city was predominantly Hellenistic in culture, and Greek would have been the primary language spoken. It is therefore historically probable that Peter grew up bilingual. As a Palestinian Jew from a devout family (cf. Acts 10:14), Peter would have spoken Aramaic. As a Jew dwelling in the Hellenistic city of Bethsaida, however, Peter grew up surrounded by Greek speakers and almost certainly could speak at least “tolerable” Greek. Bockmuehl writes, “His childhood in Bethsaida, a village with little Jewish presence, in which his brother Andrew and close friend Philip were known exclusively by their Greek names, would have ensured his ability to speak tolerable Greek from a young age, even if not perhaps to read or write it” (p. 127).

Bockmuehl connects this to the question of the authorship of 1 Peter, but does not press the point. I suggest, however, that his insight may have significant ramifications for the debate over the authorship of 1 Peter. (As an aside, how else do scholars think that Peter ministered at Corinth and Rome? Do they envision a bilingual Jewish companion as a full-time translator and guide, constantly holding his hand?) Some Western scholars do not seem to be able to envisage a truly bilingual yet uneducated or only modestly educated person. My experience of living in Ethiopia over the past seven years has revealed that uneducated (or modestly educated) bilingual and trilingual speaking ability is a reality in several regions of the country. Furthermore, given the almost certain use of an amanuensis in the composition of 1 Peter (whether Silvanus or not; see 5:12), the argument against Petrine composition (however broadly defined) due to a supposed inability in Greek becomes moot.

Methodologically, Bockmuehl’s decision to divide the material geographically into East and West is serviceable but not the only or even possibly best way to go about the task. Evangelicals will rankle that Bockmuehl thinks it unlikely that the apostle wrote 2 Peter (they will have to wrestle with his formidable argument on pp. 89–91). But the work is a solid, if exploratory, contribution to Christian origins and its subsequent reverberations into the following century. It should also stand as a wake-up call to more

than a few within the Protestant Church to stop (mis-)reading the entire NT through Pauline-shaped lenses.

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Wm. Randolph Bynum. *The Fourth Gospel and the Scriptures: Illuminating the Form and Meaning of Scriptural Citation in John 19:37*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 144. Leiden: Brill, 2012. xii + 213 pp. £101.00/\$140.00.

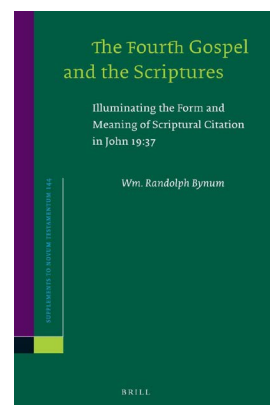
In this monograph (a revised PhD thesis from the University of Manchester; supervised by Dwight D. Swanson and George J. Brooke), Bynum analyses the use of Scripture in the Fourth Gospel (FG). Specifically, his study “seeks an adequate explanation for the unusual form of Zechariah 12:10 as cited in John 19:37, and the role it plays in the Johannine narrative” (p. 1). Bynum undertakes this technical task by reevaluating the textual evidence from the Judean Desert with an emphasis on “R”—a revision of the Old Greek (OG) text toward the Massoretic Text (MT) found at Nahal Hever (8HevXIIGr)—and other textual traditions.

Bynum’s opening chapter introduces the problem in need of investigation: the citation in John 19:37 does not cohere with any known manuscript or textual tradition of Zech 12:10. He introduces the other prevalent theories and suggests that R is the best option for the source text of this citation. In chapter two, Bynum briefly describes the “life setting” of the FG.

Chapter three “provides an overview of the use of the Jewish Scriptures by John within the *Sitz im Leben* outlined in chapter 2” (p. 17). In this section Bynum discusses the function of citations in the FG generally and notes that the textual situation of the Hebrew Bible in the first century was complex. He states that “the biblical text of the era was not to be found in a single, monolithic text, either in Hebrew or Greek, but in pluriform textual traditions existing side-by-side” (p. 20).

In chapter four, Bynum provides a detailed sketch of the textual history of the book of Zechariah. He contends that, based on the existing textual evidence from Qumran and elsewhere in antiquity, the Hebrew text of the Twelve does not offer overwhelming evidence of “significantly diverse textual traditions” in the first century, while it does “indeed present evidence of variant textual traditions” (p. 44). Bynum also makes this same case for the OG and early Greek revisions, arguing for textual pluriformity in the Greek textual tradition. According to Bynum, the MT was likely not the *Vorlage* of the OG translation, and early revisions—including R—illustrate an impulse to revise the OG toward the MT, perhaps even as early as the second century BCE (p. 55). For Bynum, this is important because the textual milieu in which the FG was composed was one in which textual pluriformity was an accepted reality.

Bynum continues the discussion, in chapter five, by delving into a detailed analysis of Zech 12:10 (pp. 59–109). He attempts to reconstruct the original reading of Zech 12:10 “with the greatest overall amount of textual certainty” (p. 65). He accomplishes this task by discussing textual criticism generally, translation technique in the OG, and other textual issues in Zech 12:10. He posits two emendations



to the text of the MT: the removal of the accusative marker and the alteration of the vocalization and/or consonants of the preposition **אֶל**. He states that “the traditional Massoretic vocalisation of **אֶל** complicates both syntax and theology” (p. 107).

In chapter six, Bynum analyses the source text of Johannine citations generally. He demonstrates that the identification of the textual sources of John’s citations is complex. The FG sometimes cites the Septuagint verbatim, quotes a Greek text with variations (demonstrating a possible awareness of early OG revisions), and possibly cites Hebrew traditions. Bynum notes that this use of Scripture fits well within the framework of “accepted Jewish editorial and exegetical practices in the first century C.E.” (p. 137).

In chapter seven, Bynum attempts to identify the particular textual tradition that underlies the citation in John 19:37. He compares the retroverted citation to all known Hebrew textual traditions and the citation itself to all known Greek versions. None match exactly. Next, Bynum presents twelve characteristics of R and notes that almost every characteristic matches John’s quotation (p. 156). He finishes the chapter by, again, reviewing the other perspectives on the source text of John 19:37 and notes that “the concept of John quoting R vindicates the rightly perceived elements of truth in the many disparate scholarly opinions regarding this quotation” (p. 169).

Bynum concludes the study by exploring the implications of his findings on the broader field of Johannine studies. He briefly discusses critical and theological issues, and he offers further avenues of research.

Bynum’s monograph presents an innovative critical approach to the use and interpretation of Scripture in nascent Christianity. His emphasis on textual pluriformity places the composition of the FG squarely in its textual milieu, and he builds a good foundation from which to ask serious theological and thematic questions of the FG. Bynum also interacts with all the relevant textual evidence including Judean Desert scriptural manuscripts, Hexaplaric evidence, and other versions along with the MT and OG/LXX. In doing so, he exhibits significant linguistic skill. His writing is clear, and he guides the reader successfully through a vast array of technical data.

Despite its strengths, Bynum’s approach does evidence some minor weaknesses. First, it is unclear why it is necessary to reconstruct the “best” Hebrew text of Zech 12:10 (ch. 5). The preceding chapter demonstrates that textual pluriformity in John’s milieu was a reality and that, most likely, the evangelist did not have access to the “original Hebrew.” This reconstruction of a hypothetical textual form adds little to his primary argument. However, his reconstructed “best” text does match his reconstructed Hebrew *Vorlage* of R. Also, some of Bynum’s terminology is anachronistic. He correctly avoids the term “biblical” throughout the discussion. However, on multiple occasions, he refers to the textual culture of the first century as John’s “biblical textual milieu.” This phrase would be better expressed by omitting “biblical.”

Overall, Bynum’s approach is original, erudite, and important for the study of allusions and citations in the NT. His emphasis on textual form and first-century textual culture is a helpful corrective to “OT in the NT” approaches that do not thoughtfully interact with these important dynamics. This volume is aimed primarily at specialists. For those with knowledge of (at least) Hebrew and Greek, I strongly recommend this volume.

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Constantine R. Campbell. *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 480 pp. \$34.99.

The strength of this work is that it attempts a comprehensive, inductive study of “union with Christ” in the Pauline letters. The weakness of this work is that it attempts a comprehensive, inductive study of “union with Christ” in the Pauline letters.

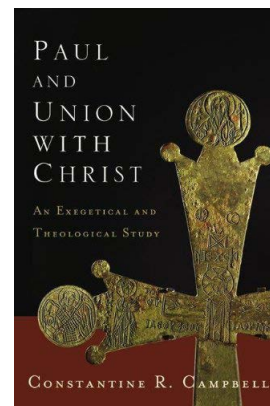
Campbell is to be admired for the scope of his investigation, his history-of-research, his inclusion of all the relevant Pauline texts, his discussion of relevant Pauline metaphors (body of Christ, temple, marriage, clothing), and his series of summary chapters in which he draws out the implications of his study. The work makes a clear contribution to the discussion of the various themes it takes up.

Nevertheless, the virtue of the work becomes its vice: the attempt at a comprehensive, inductive approach results in rather thin treatment of the relevant texts and (given the breadth of the topic) relatively brief theological reflection. The exegetical chapters of the study necessarily present brief discussions, rather than detailed exegesis. The interaction with secondary literature is likewise quite limited, and understandably so. Yet the texts under consideration often have been the focus of intense exegetical debate. One wishes for more depth, not least because Campbell not infrequently presents his judgments on the usage in brief, summary fashion.

He often finds an instrumental sense or that of agency in Paul’s usage of ἐν Χριστῷ. One wonders if the local sense is not much more pervasive than Campbell sees it. It is not implausible that local connotation is present throughout Paul’s usage: more on this thought in a moment. Precisely for this reason, however, I need more persuasive arguments in order to embrace a good number of Campbell’s judgments in favor of instrumentality or agency (e.g., the discussions of Rom 3:24; 6:23; 1 Cor 1:2, 4; 2 Cor 5:19; Gal 2:17; 3:14; Phil 4:7, 19). The same is true of those instances in which he finds causality or other meanings (e.g., the discussions of 1 Cor 4:10; 15:31; Phil 1:26; 2:1; Col 1:28; Phlm 8). The list could be expanded. Campbell is thoughtful and often brings acute observations to bear upon his exegesis. But the contexts that he examines are necessarily brief and often do not provide the weight necessary to sustain his case. That is all the more so in the frequent instances in which there has been considerable debate concerning Paul’s meaning. Thus, for example, even in Phil 2:5, where Campbell finds a local sense, he quickly moves to a moral-ethical model: the Philippians are to have the mind that is or was in Christ (pp. 105–6). The thought that Paul may be speaking of Christ’s saving lordship (“the mind that is given to you in Christ”), famously represented by Ernst Käsemann, does not come up for discussion.

Furthermore, as Campbell rightly notes at various points, a rich history of doctrine and interpretation lies behind the idea of “union with Christ.” The concept bears obvious significance in Orthodox Christianity, as it did in medieval mysticism, and in early Protestant orthodoxy. It is too bad that Campbell could not more fully engage current discussion of the history of interpretation. But the book is already lengthy enough.

Three general questions of method and interpretation come to mind. First, there is no doubt that in a number of instances the Pauline usage of ἐν Χριστῷ (or related expressions) signifies instrumentality or agency. Yet, as Campbell recognizes, this usage most likely represents a semantic choice (conscious or unconscious) over against the alternative expression διὰ Χριστοῦ or the (bare) dative of instrument or



agency. In one way or another ἐν Χριστῷ probably signifies something different from the alternatives. That difference should manifest itself in one way or another in the context. Synonymy with the alternatives is not to be ruled out, but it is not likely. That is all the more so in that the metaphorical uses of the preposition ἐν are derived from the local sense and that the instrumental use of ἐν found in the NT is a relatively new development in Hellenistic Greek. Even if the usage varies from a strictly local sense, a local connotation is likely. It is not at all clear to me with respect to the expression that it is necessary to determine “(one) function in any given situation” (p. 81n46). Of course, one wants to avoid assigning arbitrary meanings to the expression. As we have noted, some contextual indication of connotation is necessary. But is double entendre to be ruled out *a priori*? It seems to me that the expression ἐν Χριστῷ (in its various forms) does express a local sense, either directly or as a connotation, in most, if not all of its usages.

Second, if a number of the occurrences of the expression ἐν Χριστῷ signify simply instrumentality or agency, they should be excluded from a theological analysis of Paul’s understanding of “union with Christ.” That God has done something savingly for us through Christ, or that Christ has performed his saving work for us, or provided saving benefits does not in itself entail a saving union with Christ. It is a bit puzzling, therefore, that Campbell takes up the instances of instrumentality or agency in his discussion of the theological significance of union with Christ. Indeed, at this point he seems to allow that even in the instrumental usage, the phrase designates Christ as the locus of “God’s enacted will” (pp. 328, 409). It may be that the distinction he draws earlier between exegesis and theological analysis is operative here (p. 81n46). But one can hardly assess theologically something that one judges exegetically to be absent. Perhaps I am slightly confused here.

Third, as Campbell indicates, “union with Christ” is a rather loosely defined expression. He himself adopts the terms, “participation, identification, and incorporation,” alongside it (p. 17) and indicates that union with Christ also must be understood in relation to location, instrumentality, Trinity, “spiritual union” (!?), eschatology, and “spiritual reality” (pp. 406–11). He concludes that the term “union” itself does not convey all that Paul envisions and urges a fourfold description of union with Christ in terms of faith union (!?), participation, identification, and incorporation (pp. 412–14). As the redundant description of “union” as an adjectivally modified “union” shows, a certain lack of clarity remains at this point, one that is compounded by repeated references to “union (sc. with Christ)” in the body of the work, apart from the provision of a definition or description of what is meant by it. As Campbell recognizes, one cannot operate entirely inductively. The study would have profited from a more fully developed discussion of what it might mean to speak of “union with Christ” at its very outset. Campbell never really arrives at a definition of the expression. It is questionable as to whether he should even have attempted to do so (pp. 406–20). Even when one affirms that the union between husband and wife is that of “one flesh,” one has not defined or explained that union. Indeed, who could do so? The same applies to the Pauline language about union with Christ. We must content ourselves with mere description. In this regard, I suspect that Campbell might have gained more ground in his study, if he had focussed less on categorizing the usage of the ἐν Χριστῷ and had given more attention to the significance of the saving work and benefits of the Χριστῷ. That would have required fuller engagement of the individual contexts and exegetical debates. If I may once more appeal to the category of “locality,” it is remarkable and significant how Paul identifies Christ’s person with Christ’s work in his usage. That is to say, he understands Christ in terms of his work (*hoc est Christum cognoscere, beneficia eius cognoscere!*) and locates that work and its saving benefits in the person. The upshot of the latter thought,

in brief, is a decided exclusivity that underscores the communicative nature of Christ's person (e.g., 2 Cor 5:21 and the usage of *συν*- compounds), the critical function of the apostolic proclamation of Christ (e.g., in connection with 1 Cor 1:30), and the likewise critical function of the response of faith in which participation, incorporation, and identification with Christ come to reality in individual persons (e.g., Gal 2:19–21).

Despite these criticisms, the study is careful and thoughtful, open yet cautious at the proper points. There is much to commend it. I am sure that others will profit from it.

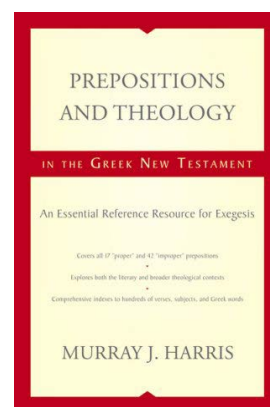
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Murray J. Harris. *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 304 pp. \$42.99.

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“People seem never to have taken prepositions seriously” (Ray Jackendoff, “The Base Rules for Prepositional Phrases,” in *A Festschrift for Morris Halle* [New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973], 345). This often cited quote from Jackendoff was true of Koine Greek until the recent publications of Constantine Campbell's *Paul and Union with Christ* and Murray Harris's *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament*. While both volumes advance our understanding of prepositions in the NT, they are quite different in scope and nature. Campbell focuses on how prepositional phrases that involve Christ (with Christ, in Christ, etc.) shed light on our mysterious union with Christ. Harris's work is much broader in scope and nature. This review focuses on Harris's contribution. [Editor's note: See Mark Seifrid's review of *Paul and Union with Christ* in this edition of *Themelios*.]



*Prepositions and Theology* evidences the love and dedication that Murray Harris has for the original language of the NT. As he states in the preface, the current work revises and expands his appendix in volume 3 of *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, “Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament” (3:1171–1215). Like that appendix, this book serves two primary purposes: (1) surveys the prepositions in the NT and (2) explores particular passages where “prepositions contribute significantly to the theological meaning of the text” (13).

The first three chapters lay the methodological framework to this work. The first chapter introduces the reader to the study of prepositions. Chapter 2 explores the increased frequency in use of prepositions during the period of the NT and possible Semitic influences, and chapter 3 details five exegetical dangers to avoid when interpreting a prepositional phrase.

The lion's share of this book (pp. 45–223) is dedicated to a discussion of the seventeen proper prepositions found in the NT. Each preposition is given its own chapter that opens with a brief description of the preposition's meaning, its history of use, and its relationship to other prepositions that may share some of the same semantic range. This is followed by the main ways in which that preposition is used in the biblical text. If you are familiar with BDAG's system of classification or Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, then you will find Harris's system of classification very familiar.

When considering the various uses of the prepositions, extended discussions are given to texts in which a particular preposition plays a significant role in how we read and interpret that passage. This is where the phrase “and Theology” in the title comes in. These condensed exegetical explorations often cover far more ground than the contribution a preposition may be making. In a text that attempts to cover as much territory as this one does, it is easy to find instances where you may not agree with his take on a passage. However, I find this one of the strengths of the book. Harris’s attention to the exegetical significance of each preposition kindles your thought about how these tiny words can have such a huge impact on the meaning of a verse. These sections afford the reader a condensed glimpse into the thoughts of how a senior scholar reads and interprets the text in its original language. Most chapters close with a short discussion of the use of that preposition in compound forms (prefixed to nouns and verbs).

Chapters 21 and 22 examine the use of prepositions in constructions with the verbs βαπτίζω (baptize) and πιστεύω (believe) and with the noun πίστις (faith). Since prepositions by definition are small words that create relationships between other words within a sentence, they form constructions, some of which are more frequently employed than others. These two chapters are an excellent example of how the NT authors frequently employ these constructions and of the particular meanings these constructions convey. I found myself wanting more, wishing that he had also included chapters on the verbs περιπατέω (walk) and μένω (remain, live; c.f. pp. 134–36) as well. In regard to the use of prepositions with Χριστός, we have Constantine Campbell’s recent work (*Paul and Union with Christ*) that more than fleshes out the meaning and theological significance of these prepositional constructions in much greater detail.

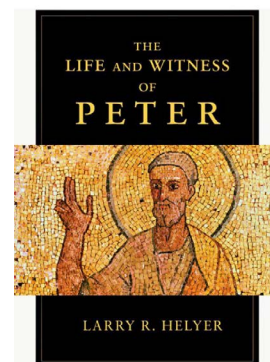
In order to situate this book among recent studies published on the grammar of Koine Greek, I would like to make an analogy to recent studies on the Greek verb system. Most of the grammars published for the past 100 or so years have approached the Greek verbal system from an Aktionsart perspective. However, for the past 30 years a number of scholars have turned to linguistic approaches that take a verbal-aspect approach (Campbell, Fanning, Porter, etc.). Harris’s book finds its home in the traditional approaches to Greek grammar. This is rather surprising given that he cites Piertro Bortone’s recent linguistic study *Greek Prepositions from Antiquity to the Present* in almost every chapter. It would have been great to see a more thorough incorporation of Bortone’s methodological approach and analysis by Murray Harris. This is not so much a weakness of Harris’s work but more of a hole in our current understanding of the Greek text of the NT that calls for further work.

This is not a difficult book to recommend, but the difficulty comes “how” to recommend it. On the one hand, the material on the meaning and classification of the prepositions is clearly a Greek reference book. On the other hand, the exegetical discussions don’t seem to fall neatly into a single category. Despite the dual nature of this book, it thoroughly surveys the meaning of the various prepositions and presents short exegetical studies that examine the theological significance of those little words that demand serious attention.

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Larry R. Helyer. *The Life and Witness of Peter*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012. 329 pp. \$26.00.

*The Life and Witness of Peter* would be one of the first books I would recommend for students, pastors, and others interested in the life and legacy of the Apostle Peter. It is thoroughly readable, refreshingly conservative, and written by a brother whose interpretative posture has been benefited by the word he is handling. It is a humble, gracious, charitable reading of Peter in which the author clearly appreciates the truths he explores. This is not to say, however, that his work is not also academically robust and reflective of significant knowledge in numerous requisite disciplines (such as NT theology, systematic theology, the Greco-Roman world, and biblical theology). This is unsurprising given that Helyer has published such books as *Exploring Jewish Literature in the Second Temple Period* and perhaps more significant for the present work, *The Witness of Jesus, Paul and John*.



The warmth of his writing is noteworthy because in the field of Petrine studies, the Petrine material in the NT has been subjected to critical and quite clinical dissections for well over a century. Events pertaining to Peter in the Gospels and the Book of Acts have been treated as unreliable accounts, and the letters of 1 and 2 Peter sometimes dismissed altogether. Helyer declares in the preface that he considers not only the Gospels to be historically reliable, but also the Book of Acts, and most notably, even the letters of 1 and 2 Peter. As a result, and atypically, in Helyer's work all of the NT sources pertaining to Peter are permitted to naturally inform one another. It is therefore an unusually rich reading.

*The Life and Witness of Peter* adopts a chronological approach for what is essentially a biographical work. That is, it traces Peter's life chronologically rather than thematically, or through other grids that might excessively impose themselves on the texts. Accordingly, in chapter 1 provides a helpful background of Simon Peter the Galilean fisherman. Chapters 2 and 3 examine Peter's early period in the Gospels. Particularly insightful are the highlighted similarities and differences between the four Gospel accounts. Chapter 4 describes "Peter and the Early Church" as recorded in the Book of Acts. References to "Peter in Paul's Letters" are then examined in chapter 5. Though there is little to criticise in each of these chapters, I was somewhat perplexed by the weight Helyer gives to Hengel's (in my view spurious) argument for a chronic, bitter rift between Peter and Paul (pp. 94–96, 102–3). This seemed a jarring intrusion in an otherwise convincing chapter. Chapter 6 introduces Peter's first epistle followed by four chapters covering dominant theological themes from 1 Peter: "Peter's Christology" (ch. 7); "Christ and the Spirits, Christ and the Holy Spirit" (ch. 8); "Suffering for Jesus" (ch. 9); and "The People of God" (ch. 10). Helyer deemed it worthwhile in chapter 11 to guide readers through the authorship debate of 2 Peter and to provide the reasoning, albeit briefly, for his view that Peter himself was responsible for its composition. Chapters 12 to 14 then examine "Theological Themes in 2 Peter," "The Character and Destiny of the False Teachers," and the "Eschatology of 2 Peter." The final three chapters may be particularly helpful for students who have not looked far beyond the NT documents' portrayal of Peter. The Church Fathers' portrayal of Peter is surveyed in "The Rest of the Story: Tradition" (ch. 15), followed by accounts (often venerating Peter) in the pseudepigraphic writings of the second- and third-century AD (ch. 16). Chapter 17 provides an edifying conclusion that expresses well the essence of Peter's life and legacy.



Helyer pitches his work at readers who may have little knowledge of Petrine and theological disciplines. The entry-level accessibility and readability of *The Life and Witness of Peter* will be deemed a strength by those new to Petrine studies, but potentially a weakness by those already familiar with the Petrine, NT, or biblical studies. For this reviewer, too much attention was given to retelling very familiar events from Peter's life (rather than a short reference to the event) or explaining themes like "Messiah" from the OT that perhaps need not have been the job of this volume. This assumption of ignorance can have a numbing effect for those familiar with these events and themes. Helyer does however occasionally recapture and reward the attention of his readers with quite insightful comments sprinkled through these sections.

While more advanced readers could argue that breadth is provided at the cost of depth, there is a sense in which, by the end of the book, one feels a certain depth comes as a result of that breadth. That is, after a long journey with Helyer through so many moments in Peter's extraordinary life, the reader feels deeply acquainted with the Apostle.

Helyer is clearly a most able scholar and teacher, and while this book is accessible to all, it does not avoid the tough questions. He manages throughout the book to simply, but not simplistically, explain and suggest sensible resolutions to a whole range of complex issues that surround the topics under discussion in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Petrine Epistles most specifically. As an introduction to Peter, it is deceptively perceptive and will enrich students and scholars alike.

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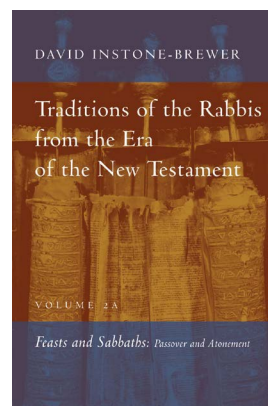
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David Instone-Brewer. *Feasts and Sabbaths: Passover and Atonement*. Volume 2a in *Traditions of the Rabbis in the Era of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. 400 pp. \$62.00/£41.99.

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Those of us who find value in examining the NT in its Judaic context find an embarrassment of riches in Josephus, Philo, the OT "Apocrypha," select works often dubbed OT "Pseudepigrapha," and the Dead Sea Scrolls along with a few other documents from the Judean desert. Yet the soils of rabbinic literature are seldom responsibly tilled. Either they are dismissed outright *because of* their late date (the compilation of the Mishnah is typically dated to ca. A.D. 200), or too often they are indiscriminately pillaged *regardless of* their late date. Very few of us have the skill and patience to pore over rabbinic material to discern what may actually predate the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in A.D. 70 for comparative analysis with the NT. In this second of a projected six-volume project, David Instone-Brewer, senior research fellow in rabbinics and the New Testament at Tyndale House, Cambridge, does this very thing.

His method for determining material dating prior to A.D. 70 is cogently summarized as part of an extended introduction to rabbinic traditions in *Prayer and Agriculture*, volume 1 of *Traditions of the Rabbis in the Era of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 1–40. This summary distills Instone-Brewer's published doctoral thesis, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 CE* (TSAJ 30; Tübingen: Mohr, 1992).



The present work is organized according to mishnaic tractates: *Shabbat* (Sabbath), *Érubin* (“Communities” for the Sabbath), *Pesachim* (Passovers), *Sheqalim* (Temple Tax), *Yoma* (Day of Atonement). At first the organization seemed awkward to me, as I would have preferred something organized according to NT texts or subjects. Yet Instone-Brewer’s important observation that many treatments of rabbinic literature are driven by NT studies and fail to deal with rabbinic material in a systematic manner (p. xi) quickly cured me of my misconception. Readers not intimately familiar with rabbinic material have found an able guide in this volume. Each division of the book begins with definitions and outlines of the respective tractates. Transliteration of Hebrew terms are always present alongside, happily, original languages. Segments of the Mishnah are helpfully summarized in terms of content, and key texts for analysis are provided in English translation alongside (unpointed) Hebrew. The text is followed by commentary and a discussion of dating. The latter is accompanied by an indication of the degree of certainty regarding the date. This is often, but not always, followed by comments on points of commonality with various NT texts. These analyses are accompanied by a glossary of technical terms (organized alphabetically by transliteration and accompanied by [pointed] Hebrew; pp. 341–50). Indices of subjects, people and places, biblical, rabbinic, and other Jewish texts ensure the utility of Instone-Brewer’s work as a valuable reference tool.

The practicality of this book can be illustrated with a brief example. Amid an extensive discussion on tractate *Shabbat*, Instone-Brewer comments on *m. Shab.* 16.7 pertaining to the minimum amount of work permitted on the Sabbath to prevent harm. The rabbis allowed for the preserving of life, such as covering a lamp so as to prevent the burning down of a house, or placing a dish on a scorpion to prevent its sting. Instone-Brewer dates the tradition confidently before 70 C.E. and observes similarities to Jesus’ teaching pertaining to healing on the Sabbath (Mark 3:4//Luke 6:9; pp. 51–52). It is worth noting that Instone-Brewer deliberately avoids wrangling with secondary sources, and his engagement with the NT is far from comprehensive. Yet the primary value of this work is skillfully sifting through the volumes of rabbinic traditions in search of material that predates 70. This in itself is a monumental feat. That he provides the original text alongside English translation, analysis of the dating of respective texts while bringing attention to select NT texts enhances the project all the more. As a reference tool, *Traditions of the Rabbis in the Era of the New Testament* allows students of the NT to bring carefully selected rabbinic traditions into consideration alongside other Second Temple Jewish texts to which they belong. If assessing this book in terms of its aim—“to present the primary texts of the earliest layers of rabbinic literature in a way that is accessible to the non-specialist” (p. xi)—it can only be a most welcome success.

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Kenneth R. Jones. *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70: Apocalypses and Related Pseudepigrapha*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 151. Leiden: Brill, 2011. xi + 305 pp. £121.00/\$166.00.

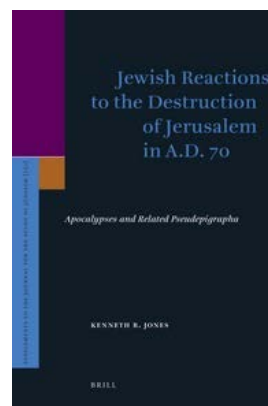
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In an expanded version of his doctoral dissertation, Kenneth R. Jones, who is Assistant Professor of History and Classics at Baylor University, provides a study on the variety of Jewish reactions to the destruction of Jerusalem. Jones aims to look at the relevant texts as sources of Roman history, written as provincial literature from the vantage point of the colonized.

Each chapter of the book looks at a different pseudepigraphal Jewish text. A summary and brief discussion on the dating and composition history of the text is offered before the perspective on Rome's prominence is analyzed. This is done while contrasting these perspectives with Josephus, whose retelling of history suggests that the rise of the Roman Empire was a sign of God's favor and thus Jews ought to be obedient to Rome, even after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Jones begins with *4 Ezra* (ch. 2), suggesting that it was written to combat a particular perspective—that Rome's ascendancy as a world power was divinely sanctioned—in light of the sinfulness of the Empire. In *2 Baruch* (ch. 3), Jones notes that the future judgment that will come upon the nations is not the result of their mistreatment of the Jews, but rather from contravening God's laws (p. 96). *3 Baruch* (ch. 4) addresses the question of God's presence in light of the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem and answers with an affirmation of God's providential care of creation. The message of *4 Baruch* (ch. 5) is one of separation: the Jews are 'to avoid Rome and all things Roman' (p. 154). *Sibylline Oracle 4* (ch. 6) looks beyond the political realm to God's future salvation and vengeance. *Sibylline Oracle 5* (ch. 7) focuses on Rome's inferiority in relation to God. Finally, in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (ch. 8) attention is given primarily to idolatry, which in this milieu would relate to the imperial cult, and the implications this has for Jewish identity.

As Jones rightly demonstrates, these texts have political contours designed to speak into the present situation. Since most of the texts analyzed in this volume are designated as 'apocalyptic,' this raises the question regarding the social function of that literature. Did the genre emerge as a vehicle to express hope in the midst of the cognitive dissonance that unmet expectations create? Regardless of the specifics of the conveyed message (Jones demonstrates that the authors of these texts shared different perspectives), it certainly appears that the genre communicates to some sort of crisis (as analysis of these and other apocalyptic texts demonstrate). Unfortunately, Jones does not address implications for the genre of apocalyptic but confines his study to the selected texts. Recently, however, Anthea E. Portier-Young has argued convincingly in her book *Apocalypse Against Empire* that the earliest examples of 'apocalyptic' literature—Daniel, the Apocalypse of Weeks (*1 Enoch* 93.1–10 + 91.11–17), and the Book of Dreams (*1 Enoch* 83–90)—contain theologies of resistance to the domination and hegemony of empire (in this case the actions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes are in the forefront). Intriguingly though, Jones explicitly denies that resistance forms part of the function of the later apocalyptic texts that he is addressing (p. 278). However, resistance is inevitable, though this need not be seditious or require a violent response. Through the medium of 'apocalyptic' the imagination is conditioned to resist the empire's broad-sweeping claims about itself, its subjects, and the nature of reality. I see the evidence



that Jones offers as a complement to Portier-Young's study and thus find it odd that Jones concluded that these texts were not in some sense 'resisting' Rome.

As one final critique of omission, I think it would have been helpful to include a chapter on Revelation in this volume. Given that early Christianity was a Jewish movement and Revelation was an apocalyptic text critiquing Rome in most likely a post-70 A.D. time period, it would have fallen within the scope of the present volume. Additionally, the texts analyzed in this volume were preserved among Christian communities, so bifurcating Revelation from these texts seems problematic. Revelation could have been analyzed with the appropriate caveats regarding the Christian theology of the text, providing intriguing points of contrast. If it was countered that Christianity represents a sectarian movement and thus would not be representative of mainstream Judaism, this opens the question of whether or not apocalyptic texts were written for conventicle groups on the periphery of Judaism. How mainstream was apocalypticism in the first and second century? Perhaps the perspectives of these texts represent various sectarian movements. Due to the uncertainty surrounding these questions, it seems appropriate to include Revelation as another 'Jewish reaction' to Rome's destruction of Jerusalem.

Overall, Jones' volume is a fine study worth commending; his analysis of the relevant texts is compelling and worth considering. It is a beneficial read both for its analysis of the various Jewish reactions to the destruction of Jerusalem and for correlating these texts within Roman history.

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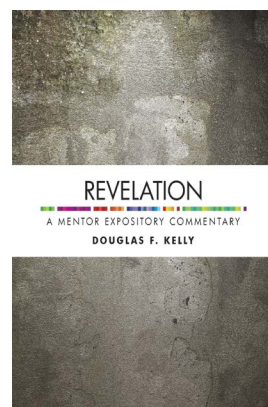
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Douglas F. Kelly. *Revelation: A Mentor Expository Commentary*. Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2012. 463 pp. £24.99/\$39.99.

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Douglas F. Kelly is Richard Jordan Professor of Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina. His latest book consists of verbatim transcriptions from audio tapes of sixty-five sermons preached at a local Presbyterian church from 2001 to 2003. These sermons become the sixty-five chapters of the book (pp. 15–437) followed by 2 pages of endnotes, a 17-page subject index, and a 5-page Scripture index. The content is effectively double this amount, however, since each page consists of two full columns of text.

The commentary has some notable strengths and weaknesses. First the strengths: Kelly fittingly and repeatedly emphasizes God's sovereignty over all time and all things. Here his Reformed predilections serve him well given that the theme of Revelation is arguably that God is in control (i.e., on the throne). Related to this, Kelly offers much pastoral wisdom and comfort to those struggling with such things as persecution, suffering, doubt, and unanswered prayer. His own love for the lost and an evangelistic urgency to reach them with the gospel permeate the book. Above all, Christ's person and work are unswervingly exalted, and many passages incline the reader to pause in gratitude and worship the Savior. Indeed, the book is often quite devotional.



As for weaknesses: The countless Scripture citations (which could have been a potential strength) are in archaic Elizabethan English. (Kelly follows Dean Burgon [1813–1888] in matters text-critical, so it is no surprise that the text he preaches from and expositis is the King James Version [AV].) Kelly follows the KJV uncritically both when it mistranslates and when it blunders textually: e.g., “*washed* us from our sins” in Rev 1:5 (p. 24); “*And I stood*” in Rev 13:1 (cf. p. 235); “*book of life*” in Rev 22:19 (p. 18). The author’s overall approach to the Book of Revelation is preterist, or rather “semi-preterist,” in that he allows (albeit without clear controls or justification) that in addition to describing AD 70 and the events leading up to it, Revelation also (often simultaneously) describes ongoing and/or future realities. The white-horse rider in Rev 6:2, the bowls of wrath, and the fall of “Babylon” all describe Jerusalem and Christ’s first-century coming to it in judgment. Oddly, the sword in Christ’s mouth in Rev 19:15 does not refer to the *parousia* but to Christ’s *salvific* conquest of the nations with the gospel during the church age (pp. 363–67). (Given the unquestionable finality and totality of that conquest, one would think Kelly would be a postmillennialist rather than an amillennialist!) Surely, though, this sword was defined otherwise earlier in the book (Rev 2:16), making Kelly’s interpretation impossible. Other questionable and idiosyncratic interpretations abound: e.g., the opening of the “pit” in Rev 9:1–11 (cf. Rev 18:2) took place in AD 66 and released “demons” into the hearts and minds of the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem; moreover, this is something that God *regularly* does throughout human history to punish recalcitrant, unbelieving humanity (pp. 169; 173–77; 185–87; cf. 314). The “two witnesses” were John the Baptist and James, or possibly Jesus (pp. 202–3); the Holy Family’s flight to Egypt is mentioned in Rev 12:6 (p. 218); there are countless “trees of life” by the river that flows from God’s throne (pp. 422–23); etc. Ironically, the author’s penchant for finding woodenly literal fulfillments of Revelation’s symbols *in the past* (e.g., “hailstones” equal Roman catapults) puts him precisely on a par with the literalist dispensationalists he rejects who are equally bent on finding woodenly literal fulfillments *in the future*. In much of this he is simply following the likes of David Chilton, Gary DeMar, and R. J. Rushdoony, interpreters who are themselves on the fringes of Reformed millenarian and theonomist thought. With but a single exception (i.e., Simon Kistemaker’s commentary), there is no interaction with contemporary scholarship on Revelation in particular or apocalyptic in general. One minor item: all entries in the book’s two indexes are off by two pages due to a minor error in pagination.

Additional preaching resources for Revelation remain a desideratum. Meanwhile, one might wish to peruse Dennis Johnson’s *The Triumph of the Lamb*, Eugene Peterson’s *Reversed Thunder*, Darrell Johnson’s *Discipleship on the Edge*, or N. T. Wright’s recent *Revelation for Everyone*, in which each section begins with an illustration.

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Edward W. Klink III and Darian R. Lockett. *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 193 pp. \$17.99.

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The authors are both NT professors at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University. Both completed their PhDs at St. Andrews in Scotland. Both found inspiration for this book in the Scripture and Theology seminar at St. Andrews directed by Christopher Seitz when they were doctoral students. “It was in that seminar room that biblical theology became both the problem and the promise of our academic and ministerial work” (p. 9).

The book tackles the problem. The problem is that biblical theology (hereafter BT, except in quotes) is a much talked-about enterprise. But people define it in all sorts of ways. The authors are emphatic that their book “is not an answer to the problem of defining biblical theology” (p. 25; cf. p. 183). Yet they do attempt to sketch a framework for a definition “by describing various theories and practices of contemporary biblical theology” (p. 20). Or again: the book “is an attempt to draw attention to some of the central issues . . . along with a practical consideration of some of the more visible thinkers working in this area” (p. 183).

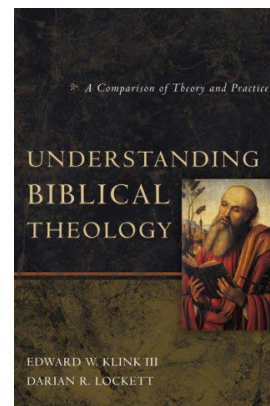
What we find in the book, then, is a taxonomy of approaches to BT that the authors take to be prominent in recent years. They isolate five types: (1) historical description, (2) history of redemption, (3) worldview-story, (4) canonical, and (5) theological construction.

To describe type 1, the authors unpack the definition of BT set forth by Krister Stendahl, who thought it should “affirm the exegetical or descriptive nature” of BT while at the same time denying it any theological or normative status (p. 31). They then move from Stendahl the theoretician to James Barr the practitioner. While they appreciate various facets of Barr’s scholarship, as far as BT they emphasize the limitations of Barr’s primarily negative, reductionist, and too often naturalistic methodology.

Type 2 features D. A. Carson, Brian Rosner, and others as theoreticians. This group views BT as discerning the historical progression of God’s redemptive work through inductive analysis of biblical themes like the kingdom of God or covenant in their biblical and historical unfolding. Geerhardus Vos and Graeme Goldsworthy are also placed in this school of thought, which is further divided (somewhat tongue-in-cheek) into the “Dallas school” associated with Dallas Seminary and the “Chicago school,” so-named for D. A. Carson’s prominence in it and his location at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School near Chicago. There is also the “Philadelphia school” associated with figures like Geerhardus Vos of Old Princeton and more recently Richard Gaffin and John Murray at Westminster Seminary. The assessment of these contrasting yet similar trajectories is mainly positive, with the main strength of BT in this mode “its exegetically driven and historically sensitive reading of Scripture” (p. 74).

After discussion of type 2 in theory, a chapter is devoted to D. A. Carson’s works on and about BT. The assessment is more positive than not, though the authors suggest that Carson “seems to underplay the abstracting character of history alongside that of reason and philosophy. History is not as neutral as Carson’s implicit construction suggests” (p. 89). The implicit charge of historiographical naiveté on Carson’s part is hardly warranted given the hermeneutical sophistication that characterizes the Carson corpus.

Type 3 features N. T. Wright and “biblical theology as worldview-story.” His approach is accorded high marks for balancing history and theology, but Klink and Lockett are uncertain to what extent



Wright's series *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (three volumes complete thus far) "actually achieves this difficult balance" (p. 121). The question is raised whether Wright's dependence on historical reconstruction and seeming "methodological naturalism" (cf. C. Stephen Evans) may work against "a variety of the church's traditional theological positions" (p. 122).

Type 4 is presented as a step away from historical emphasis per se and toward the theological, "with the foundational axis being the canon" (p. 125). Brevard Childs and his program come to the fore. Klink and Lockett peer behind Childs's stress on canon to recognize that his "attempt to relate exegesis and dogmatics is probably his greatest contribution" (p. 152). Criticisms of Childs center on ambiguity about the meaning of "canon," on whether his approach is as amenable to "the church" (which one?) as he affirms, and whether he has succeeded at integrating theological reading and the results of historical criticism. Does he end up being, in Dale Brueggeman's phrase, a postcritical biblicist—"a strange mixture of some of the tendencies of 'conservatism' alongside the standard, more 'liberal' appropriation of historical criticism" (p. 153)?

Lockett and Klink relate type 5 of BT to today's popular "theological interpretation of Scripture." This type seeks to move from burying the Bible in its ancient setting, determining instead to view it as "contemporary Christian Scripture" (p. 157). "The true home of biblical theology" in this view is "in the worshipping context of the church" (p. 158), not the academy with its historicist and often naturalistic hermeneutics. Francis Watson is the featured proponent of type 5. He is lauded for his theological interest and openness, but the jury is out regarding the future of his simultaneous appeal to systematic theology, BT, and NT scholarship, to say nothing of "the domain of the church, which figures so prominently in his hermeneutic" (p. 180). His breadth leaves him open to criticisms from purists in each of the domains from which he draws.

The book is helpful as a means of ordering and comparing related yet contrasting synthetic readings of the Bible (see especially the chart on pp. 186–89). Not all names found in the footnotes appear in the author index. The absence of discussion of the German contribution (apart from Gabler to kick things off, pp. 14–17, and occasional nods to Barth) depicts accurately how many in the English-speaking world understand things. But the English-language discussion is heavily indebted to patterns, rules, and publications emanating from the *Vaterland* of contemporary biblical studies. Taxonomy of BT that pays too little attention to foundations risks being epiphenomenal, grasping mainly surface features of what it is looking at. Still, as a point of entry into a wide-ranging and often contrasting series of approaches proceeding (confusingly) under the catch-all banner of "biblical theology," this book will prove useful. Its greatest strength may be its concise and generally accurate summaries (and critique) of some of today's biggest names in their fields. A nagging question is whether by refusing to settle on a definition of BT, and thus opening the gates so wide, the book herds together much that is in the end disparate.

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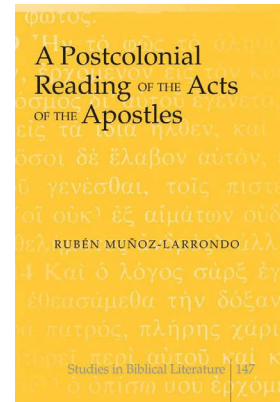
Rubén Muñoz-Larrondo. *A Postcolonial Reading of the Acts of the Apostles*. Studies in Biblical Literature 147. Frankfurt: Lang, 2012. xiv + 249 pp. \$80.95.

This book slightly reworks the author's doctoral dissertation at Vanderbilt University under the supervision of Professor Fernando Segovia. The aim of the work is primarily hermeneutical, and that in two ways. First, it attempts to shed light on the Acts of the Apostles by subjecting it to an alternative reading. Second, this alternative reading is used to interpret the interpreters of Acts and the biases that inform their interpretations of the biblical text. The particular reading that Muñoz-Larrondo employs is Postcolonial criticism.

The first chapter of the book, therefore, explains what Postcolonial criticism is. I can only summarize the author's summary given limitations of space. Muñoz-Larrondo wisely indicates that there is not such a thing as a dominant definition of Postcolonial criticism. Rather, it is better to view it as "a way of reading, a criticism, an optic that intends to decolonize the theories and practices of biblical interpretation and theology from the centers of the West, compared and contrasted with the readings of base communities or of social-groups, and 'from my place'" (p. 7). Further, he speaks of Postcolonial *strategies* that "embrace the premise that many dimensions exist in the text that have been overlooked if not ignored by the traditional historical critical approaches" (p. 37). To that end Postcolonial criticism engages a number of categories that can, positively, fill gaps in more dominant methods (read historical-critical) and, negatively, "disturb" and "interrogate" the imperial presuppositions carried by the more dominant methods. Muñoz-Larrondo develops five categories: hybridity, diaspora-alterity, mimicry/mockery, identity, and race in imperialism and colonialism (pp. 9–24). The author suggests that these categories help to unmask the imperialistic presuppositions that dominate the representation of the Other on the part of European interpreters and thereby help to read the text of Acts in a more inclusive manner. He completes the chapter by providing brief descriptions of ancient "imperialistic" strategies. In particular, he attempts to place Acts in the context of ancient labeling of barbarism as done by the Greeks, Romans, and Jews. As a community that inhabits the margins of ancient society, the readers of Acts must learn to legitimize themselves in the crucible of these three cultures.

Chapter two serves as the entry to the exegesis of Acts. Here Muñoz-Larrondo examines Acts 12:20–24, which describes the death of Herod Agrippa I. Again, the analysis has a double foci: criticism of previous interpretations of the passage that have been blinded by European-centric presuppositions (i.e., historical-critical method) and retrieval of a meaning less tainted by invalid presuppositions. The author views Acts 12:20–24 as not having received enough attention (despite a full-length monograph by Wesley Allen) and as playing "a key role in Acts" (despite the fact that it is only five verses). His argument is the following: "Luke uses Herod's death as a type-scene to represent the destiny of the Empire and of anyone who shows allegiance to those who call themselves divine and rulers of this world" (p. 45). The Acts 12 passage is thus important in itself; but it is also a nudge to the readers of Acts to be on the alert for similar dynamics in the rest of the narrative. But we have said that Muñoz-Larrondo's aim is not just an interpretation of the text of Acts but also a questioning of previous readings of Acts, so the next chapter tackles this issue.

Chapter three examines Roman imperial worship and previous interpretations of it. The subject, as Muñoz-Larrondo admits, is immensely complex. Again, I can only summarize his conclusions, which





build primarily on the work of Barbara Burrell. The imperial cult was not just adulation on the part of the populace but a sincere religious act; the emperor was truly viewed as divine; it was broad enough to affect just about every dweller of the Roman Empire. This is vital for Muñoz-Larrondo's thesis, for he will argue that this is the sort of emperor worship that Acts is decrying "between the lines" of its narrative.

Chapter four turns to the portrayal in the book of Acts of the institutions of Judaism. Here Muñoz-Larrondo examines a number of passages in Acts that show the Christians (to be viewed as a "manifestation" of first century Judaism) interacting with the institutions of Judaism, primarily the Sanhedrin. There is some intriguing discussion of Paul's relationship with the leaders of the Jerusalem church, where Muñoz-Larrondo pits Paul against the leaders.

The final chapter, in my opinion the most persuasive, debunks the idea that Roman authorities are presented *in toto* as benevolent. Rather, the tendency of Acts' presentation is to show the authorities as false, partial, and in some ways dominated by the power of Satan.

To summarize (pp. 230–35): Muñoz-Larrondo argues that by using Postcolonial criticism it is possible to see Luke presenting "a hidden transcript of resistance" against the claims of the Roman Empire, particularly when it seeks to appropriate for itself divine attributes. Luke does this by his narration of Herod Agrippa's punishment, which, for the readers of Acts, demonstrates that a similar fate awaits those who seek to take on divine prerogatives. Using this same Postcolonial reading helps in examining the reception of Acts' scholarship in a European-centered mode of exegesis. It helps in uncovering the biases of such exegesis, thereby clarifying some crucial aspects of the narrative of Acts.

Muñoz-Larrondo has succeeded in demonstrating that Acts is, in some ways, not a politically innocent text. It surely does not call for revolution; but there are sufficient clues—for those with eyes to see—that indicate that when imperial powers attempt to usurp the authority that alone is God's by repression of the Jesus movement, judgment and destruction awaits them. What Muñoz-Larrondo does not succeed in doing is showing that a Postcolonial reading *significantly* clarifies this picture. In other words, although the method is helpful, it is not as powerful in uncovering new dimensions of Acts in the way the author implies in the first chapter. There are other problems with this work that could be developed (e.g., lack of interaction with primary sources, lack of interaction with secondary works in foreign languages [surely a doctoral dissertation must include research in languages such as French and German, which is essentially non-existent in this work], exaggeration on the importance of Acts 12:20–24), but I focus on two that I am afraid may jeopardize the credibility of this work as a whole.

First, as I mentioned earlier, one of the most significant chapters in the book is that on imperial worship. Muñoz-Larrondo is aware of the complexities of this matter in both classical and NT scholarship. He opts for what I would call the maximalist view (see above). But to debunk the other view, he engages in a crass *ad hominem* argument. Those scholars who support the minimalist view do so because they "try to safeguard their reputations as postmodern, free-thinkers, and want to appear unbiased regarding such claims of divinity. Though they find enough evidence . . . in the end they refrain from reaching a conclusion and leave the case ambivalent. It seems to me that they do not want to be the laughing-stock of the rest of their peers" (p. 115). This is simply breathtaking. That as scholars we do not want to be ridiculed and that this sometimes distorts our scholarship, I do not doubt (we are humans); but to make a sweeping generalization that those who do not agree with Muñoz-Larrondo's view of the nature of imperial worship do so because of deep-seated psychological insecurities is not scholarship.

The other significant problem that I find in this work is its conclusion *vis-à-vis* other scholarship on Acts. Here is what Muñoz-Larrondo says about his contribution in using Postcolonial criticism: “*Such a reading is not better or worse than others, but it is a reading from my particular location*” (p. 230, my italics). I thought the author had labored on more than 235 pages because he wanted to persuade me that his reading was an improvement on previous European-centered (and therefore biased) appraisals of Acts. At the end, what matters is that this is *his* reading. How one can engage in critical dialogue with this posture I do not know.

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M. David Litwa. *We Are Being Transformed: Deification in Paul's Soteriology*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 187. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012. xv + 327 pp. £89.95/\$126.00.

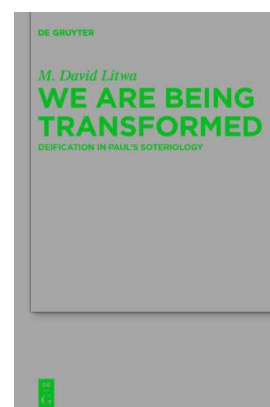
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This monograph offers a reading of Paul against the background of Graeco-Roman concepts of deification. The author argues that read against this background, Paul's soteriology constitutes a type of deification.

In the introduction, Litwa overviews ancient forms of deification, a history of research on the subject, and a methodology for his own study. On the latter, he points out that he is not attempting to argue for a *genetic* influence of ancient concepts of deification on Paul. Rather, he argues that Paul was influenced on deeper, structural, and conceptual levels so that his soteriology can be fruitfully analysed in terms of ancient deification. Litwa defines deification in stronger terms than mere 'likeness' to deity. It is a sharing in a/the divine identity, i.e., sharing in those distinctive qualities which make (a) God (a) God (p. 32).

The first part of the study surveys deification in Paul's context. Chapter 1 offers a definition of divinity in the ancient world. He argues that Jews, Greeks, and Paul himself all agreed that the concepts of power and immortality were central (if not *the* central) traits of the divine. Chapter 2 surveys Graeco-Roman concepts of deification, particularly specific examples of ruler cults whereby rulers are assimilated to specific deities. Chapter 3 offers an account of Jewish roots of deification, arguing that Paul's Bible contained the 'images and stories' which would later enable Jews to imagine a deification soteriology (p. 115).

The second part of the monograph makes the argument for a Pauline form of assimilation to the divine being, namely, Christ. Chapter 4 focusses on Paul's concept of the 'pneumatic body' in 1 Cor 15:44. Reading this particularly against a Stoic background, he argues that Paul understands the glorification of Christians to involve a conformity to the body of Christ and hence a share in his attributes of incorruptibility and immortality, i.e., deification. Chapters 5–7 seek to underscore the idea that what we see in Paul (particularly in 1 Cor 15), namely, partaking in Christ's celestial immortality (ch. 5), sharing in his divine power (ch. 6), and being assimilated to his moral character (ch. 7), together constitute a form of deification. When these central soteriological aspects are read against ancient concepts of deification, it becomes clear, Litwa argues, that Paul's soteriology is a form of deification.



Part three deals with potential objections to Litwa's argument, namely, that the concepts of monotheism and divine transcendence rule out the idea that humans can participate in divinity. Neither of these ideas, Litwa argues, are fatal objections. So chapter 8 argues that the Jewish concept of monotheism did not exclude human assimilation to the divine identity with respect to the sharing of divine characteristics such as power and immortality. Similarly, chapter 9 argues that Paul's understanding of deification is not *absolute* such that it negates God's uniqueness.

In the conclusion of the book, Litwa offers what he sees as the benefits of his study. Fundamentally, to understand Paul's soteriology as a form of deification unlocks the heart of his soteriology in connecting the central ideas of transformation, divine reality, and union.

This is an important and useful study. It very carefully situates Paul's soteriology in its ancient context and shows how it unquestionably has parallels in the wider Graeco-Roman world. As such, it advances our understanding of the background against which we should understand the apostle's theology. Nevertheless, two questions in particular stood out for me. First is the fundamental question of terminology. Litwa is very careful to point out that deification for Paul does not involve a 'fusion' of the human being and God. They share an identity but remain distinct. This is careful nuancing, but one wonders, then, that if Paul's form of deification is unique in the ancient world, how useful it is to employ deification as a summary category of his soteriology. Litwa has demonstrated that Paul's soteriology shared certain characteristics with other ancient soteriologies, but I don't think that is enough to establish that his overall soteriology should be *fundamentally* characterised as 'deification'.

Second, although Litwa suggests his model preserves the distinction between humans and God, nevertheless, at points this distinction does seem to be elided. In 1 Cor 15, Litwa maintains that Paul's description of Christ means that he 'far outstrips the nature of a human being' and has made the transition *from* a human *to* a divine being (p. 164). Likewise, 'deified humans *transcend* corruptible, frail, mortal *human* nature' (p. 298). Here Litwa equates *humanity* with *frailty*, *corruptibility*, and *mortality*. But this misses the force of Paul's argument in 1 Cor 15: Christ does not *destroy* or even *transpose* our humanity into deity, but he redeems, transforms, and fulfils it (1 Cor 15:20–28; Rom 8:29). If deification is understood to entail the transcending of human nature, then it distorts Paul's soteriology at a vital point.

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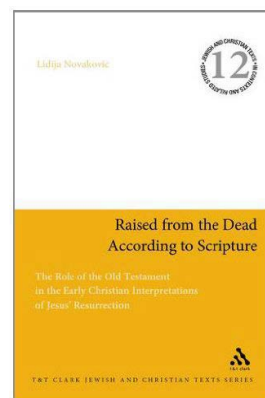
Lidija Novakovic. *Raised from the Dead according to Scripture: The Role of 'the Old Testament in the Early Christian Interpretations of Jesus' Resurrection*. Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies Series. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2012. xxii + 269 pp. £70.00/\$130.00.

One of the greatest intellectual demands laid upon the earliest Christians was the demonstration that Israel's Scriptures witnessed to the surprising events of the resurrection of Jesus as Israel's Messiah (e.g., Luke 24:25–27, 44–45; 1 Cor 15:3–4). Particularly difficult is the fact that no Second Temple Jewish text clearly anticipates the Messiah's resurrection. In *Raised from the Dead according to Scripture*, Novakovic examines Israel's exegetical methods and traditions and shows how they were put to use to undergird the NT texts' claim that Scripture predicts the Messiah's resurrection.

Novakovic's methodological starting point is that the authors of the NT use the same interpretative methods and strategies as their Jewish counterparts. Her first chapter is thereby devoted to a lengthy discussion of scriptural interpretation in Second Temple Jewish literature. In this chapter she treats such matters as the distinction between implicit and explicit exegesis, Targums, rewritten Bible, Qumran's commentaries on Scripture, Philo's exegetical techniques, rabbinic interpretation, *and* the strategies used to make sense of the biblical text. While the chapter provides a helpful introduction to these matters, a good deal of her work here is not taken up again (some is) to make sense of early Christian scriptural interpretation. For example, how does Philo's exegetical techniques or rewritten Scripture illuminate the hermeneutical methods of the NT authors with respect to the matter of the resurrection?

Before Novakovic turns to the NT evidence, she rightly works through the OT and early Jewish material related to the resurrection "in order to establish the hermeneutical framework within which Christian exegetical endeavours took place" (p. 68). While others have recently provided helpful studies of this material (one thinks of N. T. Wright, Alan Segal, and Dale Allison to name just a few), Novakovic's chapter demonstrates "that resurrection hope was a major form of belief in the afterlife among Jews in the late Second Temple and early rabbinic periods" despite the fact that "the expectation of the resurrection of the dead was by no means uniform" (p. 112). She rightly notes that Ezek 37, Isa 26, Hos 6, and Dan 12 provide the resources for later interpreters' articulation of resurrection from the dead whether or not this is the precise "meaning of these passages in their original literary and historical settings" (p. 112). Further, while some writings (e.g., 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch) anticipate resurrection during the time of the Messiah, no early Jewish texts predict the resurrection of the Messiah himself—which is the very event the NT claims the Scriptures make.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are the heart of the work where Novakovic examines the passages and exegetical techniques drawn upon by Paul, the Gospel writers, and the author of the Acts of the Apostles. She argues that the frequent claim that Jesus was raised on the third day (e.g., Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34), a claim Paul states is "in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3–4), most likely derives from reflection on Hos 6:2. This conclusion is bolstered by the early Jewish and rabbinic texts that argue, "God does not leave the righteous in distress for more than three days" (p. 129). She has a helpful section on Rom 1:3–4 where she notes the influence of the Davidic psalms upon Paul's depiction of Jesus' resurrection as his royal enthronement. Further, in 1 Cor 15:20–58, Paul reads Gen 2:7 through a christological lens to present Jesus as the last Adam who became, through his resurrection, a life-giving spirit.



In the Gospels Jesus draws upon the story of Jonah and compares his own time in the grave with Jonah's time in the belly of the fish "in order to demonstrate that [his] resurrection functions as the sole authentication of his messianic identity" (p. 218). The accusations against Jesus at his trial, namely, that he would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days (Mark 14:58; cf. John 2:18–21), are plausibly understood within the messianic framework of the son of David as a temple builder (e.g., 2 Sam 7:10–13; Zech 6:12–13; 4Q174), and it is the resurrection that "becomes the specific moment at which the messianic building of the temple begins" (p. 196).

In Acts both Peter and Paul draw upon Davidic traditions to show that the Messiah's resurrection has been foretold in Scripture (Acts 2 and 13). David is a prophet (Acts 2:30), and therefore his psalms are resurrection prophecies (e.g., Ps 16). Further, for Acts it is the resurrection of the Messiah that inaugurates the fulfillment of God's royal promises to eternally seat one of David's descendants upon his throne (2 Sam 7:12–16; Pss 2:7; 132:10–11).

Novakovic has produced a helpful resource for any student or scholar wanting to examine (1) early Jewish scriptural methods and techniques; (2) the hope for resurrection in the OT and early Jewish writings; and (c) how the NT authors use and interpret Scripture with respect to Jesus' resurrection. While the argument is not groundbreaking, the book is as a useful, clearly written, well-researched guide to anyone interested in these topics. A frequent refrain throughout her examination of the NT evidence is that belief in Jesus the Messiah's resurrection from the dead goes beyond scriptural argumentation and must proceed from revelation. More attention to the way in which early Christian experience produced a retrospective reading of the NT texts, therefore, would have been helpful. Likewise, given the enormous role the Psalms play in the NT's articulation of Jesus' resurrection—one only need to think of the speeches in Acts, Rom 1:3–4, and 1 Cor 15:20–28—I wondered why they were not examined as part of the second chapter on resurrection hope.

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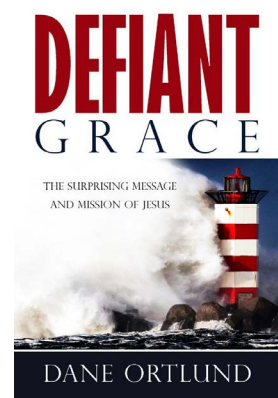
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Dane Ortlund. *Defiant Grace: The Surprising Message and Mission of Jesus*. Carlisle, PA: Evangelical, 2011. 139 pp. \$11.99.

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J. I. Packer wrote that we ought to constantly meditate on the four Gospels "over and above the rest of our Bible reading: for gospel study enables us both to keep our Lord in clear view and to hold before our minds the relational frame of discipleship to him" (*Keep in Step with the Spirit* [2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005], 61). An abundance of works have filled the evangelical catalogs on the Gospels, each seeking in its own way to help us follow Packer's wise advice, but the vast majority of them have trended toward the explicitly apologetic or the purely didactic. There are of course ample commentaries on the Gospels and plenty of entries in the category of "historical Jesus" studies. But Dane Ortlund's little book *Defiant Grace* fills a big gap.

Neither apologetic argument for the historicity of Christ or the veracity of his miracles nor a series of lessons from Jesus' life, *Defiant Grace* is a short but powerful exultation in



the gospel at the heart of the proclamation of the four Gospels. Setting his course straightaway in the introduction, Ortlund shows us his “Packerian” aim with the work:

Like a bad back that needs to return repeatedly to the chiropractor for straightening out, our understanding of Jesus needs to be straightened out over and over again as our poor spiritual posture throws our perception of him out of line—domesticating himself and conforming him to our image, rather than transforming us into his. (p. 11)

And yet *Defiant Grace* does not serve up this straightening out in as sober a fashion as a chiropractic treatment might indicate. Indeed, “the grace that comes to us in Jesus Christ is not measured” (p. 11), Ortlund goes on to say, and while his book is no longer than necessary, Ortlund’s exhilaration in highlighting the measureless grace in the life and ministry of Jesus is measureless as well. The effect is one of worship, a quality sorely lacking in far too many Christian books. If “grace feels like moral vertigo” (p. 13), *Defiant Grace* feels like the discombobulation of the self-interested hearts and minds Jesus keeps confronting and comforting in the stories of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. What we have in this book is four shots of doxological whisky.

As it is not Ortlund’s purpose to provide a commentary or a textbook, his insight into the historical and cultural context of Jesus’ ministry is not substantial, but that does not prevent it from being substantive. Remaining measured in his examination of the relevant texts allows more room to revel in them. There is ample evidence on every page of the author’s scholarly cred—confirmed by the prevalence of academic texts in the copious endnotes—but he plays the technical stuff close to the vest, deftly trading in professorial exegesis for literary allusions (Lewis by far the most frequent, but also Chesterton, Tolstoy, A. A. Milne, and even Disney) and pastoral reflections (via fellows ancient and modern, from Luther to Lloyd-Jones, Athanasius to Tchividjian). And in sweet juxtaposition, the book stays imminently useful by downplaying the immediately practical. Its crosshairs, like Jesus’, are placed squarely on the reader’s heart.

Gospel by Gospel, we are taken through some of Jesus’ most central teachings, parables, and miracles. Ortlund reveals the composite portrait of Christ and his gospel revealed in Matthew’s gracious dismantling of moralism, Mark’s revolutionary exaltation of a cross-carrying king, Luke’s upending of our “social intuitions” (p. 72), and John’s cosmic evangelism. It’s a wonder of a book, really, how in such brief span we see not only the distinct perspectives of the four Gospels but also the unity they present of gospel-centrality (grace for sin and contra law). This is really a unique aspect of the book, as so many authors today, even inadvertently in what they neglect to preach on and write about, have not shown us the central truths of justification by grace alone through faith alone in the four Gospels, unwittingly aiding the assertion that Paul’s gospel differs in substance from Jesus’ gospel. *Defiant Grace* over and over shows us this is not the case.

In each of the four chapters, Ortlund also shows us how the history and prophecy of the OT inform and consummate in the first advent of Christ, providing a good overview of the types and shadows we could not see more clearly otherwise. In his treatment of Matthew, then, we get a law-primer (pp. 20, 25); in Mark an explanation of apocalyptic language in Daniel (pp. 46–48); in Luke the OT narrative arc of the “gospel problem” of atonement, access, and shalom (pp. 89–92); and in John the creational echoes of Genesis in the incarnation and new creation (pp. 94–95) and the fulfillment of the long-revered Logos of God (pp. 98–99). The result is masterful, really.

To complain about what *Defiant Grace* is not would seem to be approaching with cross-purposes to it. As I said, there are plenty of entries in the category of what this book isn’t. But there are too few of

what it is. The only noticeable weakness of the book is that one reaches the end and wishes there were more of it. I once heard that John Piper said so many commentaries were sermon-killers because it was rare to find a commentary with the word “oh!” in it. In that respect, Dane Ortlund has made an offering most valuable in the growing “gospel-centered” canon—he has given us a book on the four Gospels that *sings*, that shows us Christ in his word and helps us say “oh!”

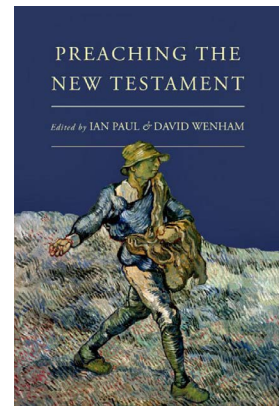
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Ian Paul and David Wenham, eds. *Preaching the New Testament*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2013. 263 pp. \$26.00.

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*Preaching the New Testament* is a set of seventeen articles from an international (mostly European) slate of scholars discussing the task of preaching the various books of the NT. This volume of essays originated out of a meeting of the New Testament Group of the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical and Theological Research held in July 2011. In the introduction, the editors assert that this book was written out of the conviction that “preaching matters” (p. 13). Yet, they add, this is not a book on technique or persuasive communication. Instead, it is a book by “New Testament scholars who are also preachers, sharing some insights about how to interpret and communicate the New Testament today” (p. 15). With the hope of offering a succinct review of a book that includes eighteen different authors, I have divided the book into three sections, at what seems to be natural divisions (though the editors did not divide the book up into parts), and have offered descriptions of the sections, homing in along the way on a few specific articles or points that were of particular interest.



The first five chapters take up the challenge of preaching the Gospels. The opening chapter (D. A. Carson) overviews preaching the Gospels in general and then chapters 2 through 5 (R. T. France, Klyne Snodgrass, Stephen I. Wright, and David Wenham) each discuss how to preach particular types of stories and micro-genres within the Gospels. For me, these opening five chapters are undoubtedly the highlight of this volume. Carson’s article, full of practical advice and insights for the preacher, is alone worth the price of admission. To name just one of his points, Carson encourages the preacher to be willing to select larger sections of the Gospels for his sermon and explains the value in this, an important reminder for the expositor who at times might be guilty of preaching about the trees but never getting to the forest. Moreover, the editors’ note that the article on the infancy narratives was likely the last publication in which R. T. France—former Principal and New Testament Tutor at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford—wrote before his death. Using the “Christmas Story” as an example, France’s discussion on how to deal with historical matters helpfully encourages pastoral sensitivity to the congregation’s level of sophistication, yet at the same time calls preachers to avoid always skirting difficult historical questions.

Chapters 6 through 11—beginning with Acts and closing with the book of Revelation—discuss how to approach preaching particular NT books (Christoph Stenschke, Justin K. Hardin, Jason Maston, I.

Howard Marshall, Charles A. Anderson, Mariam J. Kamell, and Ian Paul). Perhaps the most beneficial portion of these chapters are the times when the authors point out the unique hermeneutical challenges and opportunities that arise when preaching particular books or corpuses and the test cases of how particular passages might be preached. For instance, Justin K. Hardin and Jason Maston offer a brief theory of interpretation that leads to the use of 1 Cor 1–4 as a test case for how one might preach the Apostle’s letters. I. H. Marshall takes a similar approach as he closes his essay with examples from the book of Titus.

The final six chapters are on a range of subjects related to preaching the NT: archaeology and history (Peter Oakes), ethics (John Nolland), hope and judgment (Stephen Travis), the hermeneutics of relationship (William Olhausen), engaging the “New Homiletic” (Helge Stadelmann), and preaching the gospel from the Gospels (Paul Weston). While these articles contain many true and important points, some of the essays in this section will likely feel a bit cumbersome and less practical to many preachers. For instance, however beneficial an understanding of “the hermeneutics of relationships” or “engaging with the ‘New Homiletic’” might seem to the scholar, I can’t help but think that most preachers will fail to find them as valuable.

At various places readers will likely find ancillary points with which they disagree. For example, some of the readers of *Themelios* will question openness toward the view that the Pastoral Epistles were written by someone other than Paul and to someone other than Timothy and Titus (p. 118). And even more significant to the book’s main agenda, many readers will object to the answer of “not necessarily” to the question of “whether one should always preach explicitly about the cross in gospel sermons” (p. 252). Yet the benefit of this book is that scholars with different backgrounds, approaches, and theology have come together for a common purpose, and the points that will be met with disapproval by some readers do not detract from this volume helping to bridge the gap between the academy and the pulpit. While some of the articles were no doubt more successful in building this bridge than others, the attempt to facilitate more discussion between scholars and preachers is a noble one. In the future, I will return to *Preaching the New Testament* as a “kick-start” when preparing for a new sermon series on a particular NT book, and I would suggest other pastors consider using this book in a similar way.

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Vern Sheridan Poythress. *Inerrancy and the Gospels: A God-Centered Approach to the Challenges of Harmonization*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012. 238 pp. \$17.99.

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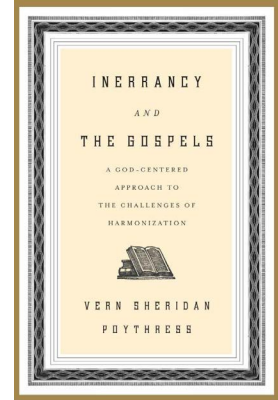
*Inerrancy and the Gospels* is the latest in a series of related books written by Vern Poythress that Crossway has published. Building upon his book *Inerrancy and Worldview*, Poythress defends an approach for harmonizing the various differences between the four Gospels.

The book divides into seven sections. Section one sets the inerrancy of the Bible as the foundation for harmonizing the Gospels. He briefly summarizes the contributions of various works in favor of the view that the Bible is self-authenticating in regards to its inspiration and authority. Next, he surveys the alleged discrepancies in the story of the centurion's servant (Matt 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10) in order to help readers see how various proposed reconstructions use the data provided by the texts to harmonize the accounts. With this opening example, he demonstrates how differences, while not contradictory, often highlight certain theological emphases being drawn out by the evangelists.

Section two offers various principles for harmonization. Poythress avoids the glib approach to harmonization that evangelicals are often characterized as instituting. Overly rigid approaches, which force modern standards for recording history into a first-century context, have unfortunately not only plagued the Bible's critic but also some of its most dogmatic defenders. Fortunately, Poythress, while maintaining the doctrine of inerrancy, carefully guides the reader through principles for harmonization that display sensitivity to the cultural context, the limited nature of the data for each event described in the Gospels, the way language works, and the theology inherent in all events in the Bible.

Most evangelical NT scholars will approve of the careful explanations and insights Poythress makes in the first two sections; the third section, which discusses various attitudes in harmonization, could have more of a mixed response. Poythress approaches the task of harmonization from what could be termed the "top-down": the NT makes self-attesting claims to its inerrancy as the Word of God, and one should accept this claim and, thus, seek to harmonize discrepant passages. He is aware that critics will charge this approach with being biased and involving circular reasoning. Yet in response he explains that in some sense all truth claims are circular because they are relying on certain presuppositions derived from some source of authority (e.g., one's own reason). Furthermore, he rightly suggests that once someone has made the commitment to see the NT as completely true based on its self-attesting authority and the internal witness of the Holy Spirit, it is insincere for the person to act as if they are approaching the text as completely neutral. He is also correct to challenge the critics' assumption concerning their own neutrality. Yet without disregarding the validity and helpfulness of the "top-down" approach, many would prefer to begin with a "bottom-up" approach when engaging the skeptic. For example, in his chapter entitled "The Legitimacy and Limits of Harmonization," in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, Craig Blomberg argues for the legitimacy of harmonization within the canon by appealing to the standard approach taken by scholars in extrabiblical historiography.

In other words, instead of starting with inerrancy, many apologists lead off with the general historical reliability of the Gospels as witnesses to Jesus when engaging with non-believers concerning discrepancies. At least with the unbeliever, perhaps Christology serves as a better starting point, rather



than Bibliology (see Daniel B. Wallace, “My Take on Inerrancy” [<http://bible.org/article/my-take-inerrancy>]).

It is important to note that Poythress does give credence to various studies that seek to demonstrate the general historical reliability of the NT. Nevertheless, though there is overlap, readers should be aware that there is a difference between Poythress and some other scholars who affirm inerrancy, such as Blomberg and Wallace, in their approach to harmonization (i.e., what I have labeled as “top-down” versus “bottom-up” approaches).

Section four addresses the synoptic problem and temporal order of events in the Gospels. Concerning the synoptic problem, Poythress affirms the possibility of many sources—both written and oral—in use by the evangelists. However, he deems the “situation far too complex for us to draw firm conclusions” and that the synoptic problem is “unsolvable,” which provides another reason to focus on the Gospels in their present form (p. 123). Concerning chronology, Poythress notes that the Gospels should not be understood to be in chronological order unless an event includes a temporal marker. He recognizes that in some cases two episodes can appear linked, yet it can remain unclear if the events are linked temporally or topically.

In sections five through seven, Poythress provides numerous test cases of alleged discrepant accounts to demonstrate how one should proceed with the task of harmonization. In part five, Poythress analyzes four individual cases. Part six focuses on how to handle the differences in the speeches reported in parallel Gospel passages. Finally, in part seven the book closes with two final examples of harmonization (raising Jairus’s daughter and blind Bartimaeus). Throughout these test cases, Poythress overviews how past scholars have harmonized and offers his preferred solution by carefully analyzing the information given by the Gospels and not allowing mental pictures of the event to provide added details that in many cases cause the difficulty. He rightly expresses humility in acknowledging his preferred harmonization is only a possible solution.

As the comments in appreciation of the book throughout this review indicate, I would recommend this book to those who want to think deeply about the differences in the Gospels. Combined with other resources, *Inerrancy and the Gospels* would make a helpful addition to the assigned texts in a course focusing on the Gospels and could facilitate further discussion on different approaches to the task of harmonization.

Josh Chatraw

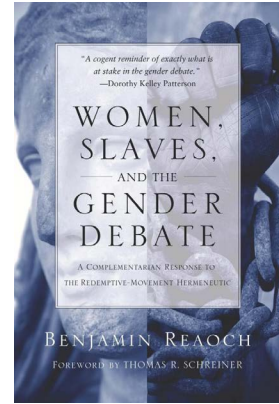
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Benjamin Reaoch. *Women, Slaves, and the Gender Debate: A Complementarian Response to the Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2012. v + 176 pp. \$16.49.

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Benjamin Reaoch, a PhD graduate from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and pastor of Three Rivers Grace Church in Pittsburgh, PA, critiques the redemptive-movement hermeneutic (henceforth RMH) used by many egalitarians.

RMH-interpreters argue that “there are indications in the Bible that move us *beyond* the specific instructions of the Bible and toward an ultimate ethic” (p. xvii, emphasis original). Believers must follow the trajectory that the NT sets and even, in some cases, move beyond specific restrictions of women’s roles found in the NT. Proponents of the RMH suggest that while the NT does not specifically renounce women’s submission, it sets a trajectory (RMH is also called the “trajectory hermeneutic”) that leads to the equality of the sexes. Further, many RMH scholars draw parallels between the gender debate and the slavery issue. Consequently, they maintain that, as the NT establishes an ethic that ultimately led to the manumission of slaves, so too it frees women.



Arguing from a complementarian perspective, Reaoch rejects a RMH. He summarizes his main argument as follows:

The significant differences between the New Testament instructions to slaves and women seriously undermine the conclusions made by the redemptive-movement hermeneutic. The fact that the New Testament “points beyond” the institution of slavery does not indicate that it likewise points beyond God’s design for gender roles. (p. xix)

Chapter 1 surveys proponents of a RMH and reviews complementarian responses. Specifically, he identifies Krister Stendahl’s 1966 publication *The Bible and the Role of Women* as a forerunner for the RMH. Reaoch explains that Stendahl’s ideas have been endorsed and expanded by R. T. France, Richard Longenecker, David Thompson, William Webb, Kevin Giles, and I. Howard Marshall. Near the end of the chapter, Reaoch offers preliminary observations about how complementarian theologians Wayne Grudem, Thomas Schreiner, and Robert Yarbrough have responded.

Chapters 2–3 trace NT teaching on the slavery and gender issues. Although some proponents of a trajectory hermeneutic claim that the case for slavery is just as strong as the case for women’s submission in the NT, Reaoch demonstrates differences between how the NT treats these issues. First, he considers important texts about slavery including a lengthy discussion of the book of Philemon. Reaoch concludes that although Paul does not directly condemn slavery in Philemon, he does “undermine it [slavery] by setting master and slave on equal footing” (p. 39).

Second, Reaoch interacts with seven NT passages that address the role of women. His discussion of a few of these texts deserves mention. For instance, he criticizes the view of some scholars who claim that 1 Tim 2:19–25 teaches that women are more gullible than men. William Webb, a major voice for the RMH, explains that Paul could speak this way of women’s naivety because first-century women did not receive adequate education. Reaoch demonstrates, however, that Webb’s assumptions about this text are unproven and responds by saying that 1 Tim 2 does not address the gullibility of women. Further, Reaoch explains that Webb’s assumptions about the intellectual capacity and educational

pedigree of first-century women are wrong. Later in the chapter, Reaoch discusses the silence of women in 1 Cor 14. He assumes that this silence is not absolute silence because of Paul's earlier discussion of women praying in the church (1 Cor 11). Unfortunately, Reaoch's treatment of 1 Cor 14 falls short of his thorough exegetical analysis of other related texts. He fails to discuss various scholarly opinions on the silence of women and does not offer sufficient justification of his view that women must refrain from judging the prophecies of men (p. 64). A final note about Reaoch's treatment of key NT texts about women involves his omission of at least one relevant text. Although Reaoch addresses the submission of slaves in 1 Cor 7:21, he fails to treat the parallel exhortations to women in 1 Cor 7:14–15. Further attention to ground and result clauses in these verses might contribute to a fuller picture of a woman's obligations within marriage.

Reaoch draws similarities and differences between what the NT says about gender and slavery in chapter 4. One important similarity is that *both* slaves and women were instructed to submit for evangelistic purposes. An important dissimilarity between NT texts on gender and slavery is that women's submission is grounded in the creation narrative, whereas the NT never teaches slaves to submit to masters because of a pattern established in creation.

Chapters 5 and 6 analyze Webb's hermeneutical criteria and make the following observations. First, Reaoch fundamentally agrees with Webb's view of theological analogy. Some explanations of theological analogy state that when practices are rooted in God's character they are transcultural. In other words, if NT authors call for obedience on the basis of God's personality, then interpreters must strictly adhere to what the NT author says. Webb suggests, however, that sometimes theological analogy is mixed with cultural components that make following the exact practice of the original admonition unnecessary. Although Reaoch disagrees with much of Webb's exegesis in this section, he ultimately concurs about how much weight should be given to theological analogy. Second, Reaoch demonstrates that Webb's concepts of "preliminary movement" and "seed ideas" are too subjective to hold much value for interpreters. Webb describes preliminary movement as NT authors pushing society away from archaic practices. Webb believes that NT authors planted seed ideas within their texts to encourage believers to go beyond the cultural norms of the first century. NT authors went as far as they could go at the time since they did not desire to create an immediate cultural revolution. Modern interpreters must move beyond culturally bound scriptural instruction to broader positions rooted in an ultimate ethic. In response, Reaoch capably argues that Webb does not give sufficient criteria to determine whether a text indicates movement away from first-century cultural norms. Third, Reaoch describes Webb's preference of "new creation" (i.e., "redemption") principles instead of those found in "old creation." In response, Reaoch demonstrates that *both* old and new creation teach the submission of women.

Reaoch's treatment of the RMH is well-balanced and fair and sheds much insight on key NT passages related to the role of woman. His work agrees with other complementarian responses, but he offers a more thorough and systematic analysis of the key NT passages related to the submission of slaves and women. Of special note is his comprehensive discussion of every ground and purpose clause in these texts. Both egalitarians and complementarians should consult his work as they wrestle through the implications of NT teaching.

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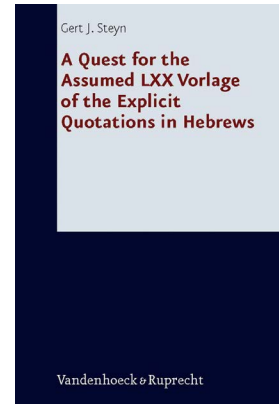
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Gert J. Steyn. *A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews*. Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 235. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011. 458 pp. \$210.00.

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Many studies exist on the use of the OT in Hebrews—that, Steyn argues, is precisely the problem: studies exist on the *use* of the OT in Hebrews rather than the *form* of the OT possessed by Hebrews. We need, he suggests, to discern where Hebrews obtained its OT citations before we decide what it does with those citations. Some of the texts that Hebrews combines appear together in other, earlier texts (e.g., Ps 2 and 2 Sam 7 in 4QFlor): does this suggest a liturgical “*testimonium*-collection” (p. 6)? Some citations by Hebrews do not match any extant OT text: did Hebrews cite these imprecisely from memory, deliberately change his text, or simply possess a version no longer in existence? Is it merely coincidental that Philo of Alexandria also cites every text that Hebrews cites (save one)?



This book is organized by text-pairs; Steyn suggests that the *citations* (which he limits to cases involving an explicit introductory formula) may be grouped into fourteen pairs, the first seven of which come primarily from the Psalms, while the latter seven usually cite the Torah plus either a psalm or prophet (p. 27). Following the introduction, each chapter deals with one of these fourteen citation-pairs. In each chapter he deals extensively with the manuscript evidence for the OT text as well as its form in Hebrews, identifying in each case the likely OT source of the quotation and engaging the questions noted above.

Steyn closes with twenty-five conclusions, a few of which I mention here. First, Steyn dismisses the notion that the author of Hebrews drew from a preexisting collection of texts (a “Testimony Book” [p. 409]), but does acknowledge that many of its texts have liturgical connections, and furthermore states, “there is no doubt that the author of Hebrews tapped into the *existing early Jewish and early Christian quotation traditions*” (p. 410, italics original). Second, Steyn notes a significant overlap between Hebrews’ choice of OT texts and that of Romans and 1 Corinthians. Third, Steyn suggests a eucharistic connection via the combination of Exod 24:8 (blood) and Ps 40:7–9 (body) (ch. 10; pp. 272–97). Fourth, he argues that Hebrews made both stylistic and “theological” changes to his received text (p. 412).

This book should be treated as a *reference* source. Steyn has compiled an impressive collection of data, much of which (especially the text-critical sections of each chapter, which deal with the manuscript tradition on a level unattainable by even the average NT or OT scholar) will simply overwhelm the casual reader with an interest in the OT in Hebrews. The most fruitful approach will be to read the introduction and conclusion and then read particular chapters as one’s own projects render it necessary to do so.

The positives: as already mentioned, this sizeable book (the main body of text is about 400 pages) contains a wealth of data for anyone interested in the OT in Hebrews. Its basic premise, moreover, is spot-on: Hebrews scholarship is weak with respect to the source(s) from which Hebrews drew its OT citations. This book will go a long way toward fixing that problem. It is an excellent reference tool insofar as it provides excellent summaries of varying positions on the issues it discusses, as well as clear arguments on behalf of Steyn’s preference in each case, and a simple organizational principle (the text-pairs) that make it very easy to find the right section of the book.

The negatives: in pursuit of comprehensiveness Steyn sometimes belabors relatively straightforward points. Who, for example, would dispute his claim that Pss 2 and 110 are of particular importance for Hebrews (pp. 410–11)? One also finds some unnecessary repetition within sections, such as the discussions of Christ as “enthroned King” on pp. 36–37 and as κύριος on p. 111. Furthermore, while Steyn’s research is admirable, the footnotes are often excessive. In some sections Steyn hardly has a sentence without a corresponding reference: chapter four, for example, has 232 footnotes in 29 pages. And though I certainly cannot stand in judgment over someone who has successfully composed scholarly literature in a non-native tongue, I would say that the book could have used an additional editing cycle vis-à-vis grammar and style.

Regarding Steyn’s central thesis, I agree that the *Vorlage* of Hebrews’ OT citations is an important issue that requires more attention than it has received. But I do not agree that the study of the *Vorlage* of Hebrews’ citations *must* precede engaging their function. First, many of Steyn’s conclusions match the prevailing views of Hebrews scholars who have said nothing at all about such issues, so he can hardly claim to have broken new ground at every point. Second, Steyn is—and he certainly does not deny this—limited by the same lack of data that plagues every historical study of ancient texts: we simply do not have most of the information that we need to make definitive claims at every point. Thus when the OT text as given in Hebrews differs by a word or two from all our available manuscripts, we can often do no more than make educated guesses about why that is the case. And in such cases we need to be careful about letting that guess determine too closely our subsequent exegetical decisions.

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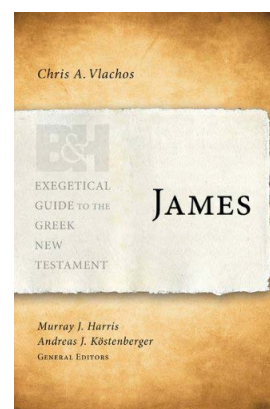
Chris A. Vlachos. *James*. Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2013. 225 pp. \$24.99.

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A unique and useful tool, Chris Vlachos’s *James* fills an unexpected gap in the field. Neither a commentary nor simply a grammatical guide, this book distills both in easy-to-use form. Vlachos helpfully integrates the best of older Greek commentaries (it is telling that the most recent commentary on James to have come out was Martin’s in 1988) with the insights from more recent commentaries, articles, and monographs, while remaining incredibly concise.

The book follows a straightforward format, unfolding in ways similar to a commentary. First there is a very brief (six-page!) introduction that lays out issues of authorship, date, occasion, and purpose and marshals very brief arguments for early authorship by James, the brother of Jesus. Vlachos does not, however, make a huge point out of his position, instead allowing the reader to draw their conclusion from his briefly highlighted reasoning. This introduction in no way substitutes for a commentary’s lengthier exposition, but that statement may hold for the book more generally.

The rest of the book cycles through a consistent format: first is a descriptive summary of a small portion of the text, highlighting the structural links holding the section together. This is followed by a detailed verse-by-verse exposition in which every grammatical tag is given, but unlike books that focus



solely on the grammar, Vlachos balances grammatical issues with lexical and syntactical ones so that the full breadth of exegetical complexities are on the table. Where there are two or more positions of interpretive significance, these appear in outline form, followed by translations and commentators that defend each. Where relevant, a star (\*) signals the position supported in the text. The third section, "Further Study," provides a select bibliography on any number of topics the text raises, whether larger theological dilemmas or more precise exegetical questions. These are not intended as comprehensive bibliographies, but as starting-points for further study on the given issue. Fourth and finally, each cycle concludes with the category of "Homiletical Suggestions," which offers two to three sermon outlines of various types.

The strengths of the book are fairly self-evident. Because of the highly streamlined nature of this text, it works exceedingly well as a quick-reference guide for the student or pastor who needs an orientation to the issues within the text of James. Overall, Vlachos proves to be a relatively uncontroversial interpreter of the text, but even where he may vary from the most widely held positions, he presents the variety fairly and generally explains why each is supported. Even better, for those who can find the lengthy discussions in commentaries confusing, the formatting highlights the controversies in outline format first, and discussion follows in an orderly fashion. Vlachos surveys a wide range of sources, from grammatical tools generally inaccessible to the average pastor not near a library to a wide diversity of commentaries and translations. The homiletical outlines would prove a boon to preachers who find themselves uncertain how to jump from deep exegetical effort to a workable sermon outline.

The weaknesses, however, are matched to the strengths of the book. First, the brevity of each discussion (at longest two paragraphs are dedicated to a significant interpretive issue) can lead the uninformed student to think that conclusions can be drawn quite so quickly. Second, the homiletical outlines are given only for each small subsection of the text, leading to multiple sermons on a single verse, and the book is broken into twenty-one separate sections. There is no sense given for how the smaller exegetical sections may fit together under the larger headings, nor how James lends itself to anything other than disjointed sermons on small sections of text. The book would have been stronger had there been a greater emphasis at points on the rhetorical unity of the epistle, which Vlachos appears to argue exists.

This book, however, is a bit of a surprise prize: it succinctly distills the best of the commentaries for those who wish to continue developing their familiarity with the Greek of James. While it cannot replace commentaries, it serves those meeting the complexity of James for the first time, and it offers a great deal of condensed detail for the scholar who needs a quick refresher on the issues in the text.

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## — HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY —

Augustine. *The City of God (De Civitate Dei): Books 1–10*. The Works of Saint Augustine I/6. Translated by William Babcock. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2012. lvi + 348 pp. \$59.00.

*City of God* is the longest text centered on a single argument to have survived from Greco-Roman antiquity. The challenges of translating such a work arise not just from the brute size of the task, but also from the variety of topics Augustine treats, the complexity of his Latin, and the intricacy of his argument. It is thus no small accomplishment—and service—that William Babcock has rendered Augustine’s prose with such skill, vibrancy, and verve. This new translation will deservedly become the standard for many years to come.

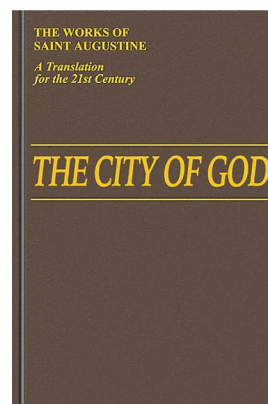
Babcock’s translation is the latest volume from *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, a series that aims to produce the first complete English translation of Augustine’s corpus. Since the late-nineteenth century, *City of God* has been translated in its entirety into English five times.

Henry Bettenson (Penguin, 1972) and R. W. Dyson (Cambridge University Press, 1998) have enjoyed pride of place, though each has its weaknesses. Bettenson is lively but free, while Dyson intentionally sacrifices “elegance to accuracy” (p. xv). Both rely on the critical edition of B. Dombart and A. Kalb (4th ed., 1928–29), reprinted in the *Corpus Christianorum Latinorum* (1955), as does Babcock.

Babcock’s translation succeeds in both fidelity and style. Books 1–10 present some of Augustine’s most energetic polemic. Babcock stays close to the Latin while communicating the briskness of Augustine’s arguments with punchy prose and memorable turns of phrase. The Romans were an “empty-headed multitude of fools” (4.23; *stultorum hominum multitudo vana*), obsessed with a “throng of godlings” (4.9; *turba minutorum deorum*) in their “prissy craze for theatrical shows” (1.32; *ludorum scaenicorum delicata . . . insania*). Sulla’s victory over Marius exercised such cruelty against the condemned that “it was as if Rome’s own bright eyes were on a rampage against her own limbs” (3.29; *tamquam suorum luminum in sua membra ferocitatem*). Yet what counts in trial is not the suffering but the sufferer: “In one and the same fire, gold glows red but chaff smokes . . . Stirred by the same motion, filth gives out a foul stench, but perfume a sweet fragrance” (1.8; *sub uno igne aurum rutilat palea fumat . . . nam pari motu exagitatum et exhalat horribiliter caenum et suaviter fragrat unguentum*).

Babcock’s most obvious innovation is the decision to replace the subheadings that typically precede each of the chapters (but are not original to Augustine) with his own, inserted at longer intervals according to conceptual inflection points. The new subheadings elucidate Augustine’s arguments and provide the text a different “feel”—less a series of points than an exposition with units—though some decisions might be questioned. The subheading on the demons as intermediaries would be more appropriate before 8.18, for instance, than in the middle of 8.19. Babcock’s summaries of each book reflect close attention to textual and conceptual detail, but the summary of Book 2 makes Cicero’s argument concerning republics and justice sound like Sallust’s.

Babcock’s general introduction is thirty-eight pages (pp. ix–xlvi) and consists almost entirely of a summary of the text. This reading is itself an achievement, covering seemingly every significant facet of Augustine’s textured argument without getting bogged down in details or lengthy explanatory remarks. There are, however, no sections dedicated to composition, sources, key themes, influence, or the place





of *City of God* in Augustine's larger *oeuvre*. Babcock also provides thoughtful remarks on critical translation decisions, along with a brief but well-chosen bibliography. The second volume of this text will include a Scripture index and an index for subjects and names. (I am grateful to New City Press for allowing me to see the indices in advance.)

In a translation of this length, some quibbles will naturally arise. Some words could have been rendered more consistently without trouble: *luxuria* is "extravagance" in 1.31, but "luxury" in 3.21 and "self-indulgence" in 5.12. A more challenging case is *felicitas*, which can refer either to the goddess or to the synonym for "happiness." At least in discussions that connect *Felicitas* with *felicitas*, consistent use would have matched Augustine's rather literalistic point, yet Babcock often switches between "felicity" and "happiness" (4.18, 4.23, 4.25, 4.33). Babcock has chosen to translate *res publica* as "republic" and *res populi* as "the common good of a people." His reasons for doing so are carefully considered (p. l), but the notes on the critical discussion in 2.21 could have made this connection clearer. The same applies for the relation between "a common sense for what is right" (*iuris consensus*) and "justice" (*iustitia*). Babcock does not promise to eliminate all generic uses of "man" or "men," but given his discussion (p. lii) of the distinction between *homo* ("human") and *vir* (usually but not always "man") as well as Augustine's own discussion in 22.18, one might have expected closer attention to gender-neutral language (5.14, 7.30, 8.24, 9.10 *inter alia*).

The notes, prepared by Boniface Ramsey, provide helpful background information, particularly for classical references, drawing often on *Bibliothèque Augustinienne*. One note on 2.21 (56n62), however, misidentifies P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Minor with the Scipio of 1.30 (actually two, whom Augustine conflates: P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica and his son, P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica Corculum).

With its painstaking treatment of Roman history, religion, and philosophy, the first half of *City of God* has sometimes been neglected in favor of the more explicitly scriptural Books 11–22. Yet Books 1–10 are no prologue to Augustine's biblical exposition, nor do they record matters of merely antiquarian interest. These books advance an extraordinarily incisive critique of communities consumed by temporal loves whose penetrating relevance for contemporary Western culture continues to impress. For the "massive and arduous work" (1.*praef*) of presenting this case anew, future readers are indeed in Babcock's debt.

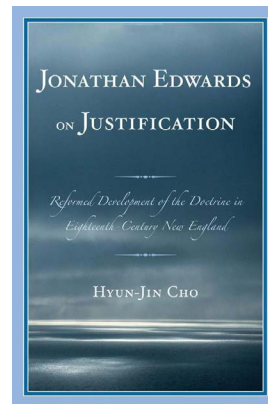
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Hyun-Jin Cho. *Jonathan Edwards on Justification: Reformed Development of the Doctrine in Eighteenth-Century New England*. New York: University Press of America, 2012. vii + 154 pp. \$27.95.

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In the past year, there has been a rash of activity on Jonathan Edwards and justification. From edited volumes like Josh Moody's *Jonathan Edwards and Justification* (Crossway, 2012) to broader works like McDermott and McClymond's behemoth *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (OUP, 2012) to dissertation-turned-monographs like Michael McClenahan's *Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith* (Ashgate, 2012), scholars have focused their interest on Edwards and justification. While the publishing blitz hints at a deeper interest in both Edwards and the doctrine of justification, what the non-Edwards specialist may fail to realize is the broad disagreement among Edwards scholars that these works point to. For instance, the Moody volume directs focused attention against views of Edwards that paint him with a crypto-Catholic brush, something that McDermott and McClymond are accused of doing to one degree or another. In contrast to the prevailing method in these other volumes, McClymond and McDermott attempt to read Edwards broadly within the theological trajectories we come to know and assume in our modern context. In this sense, their goal is to talk about Edwards, not necessarily within the confines of his own milieu, but within the categories we have come to accept. Cho's book, like McClenahan's, seeks to do the opposite. By pushing back to the historical context itself, grounding Edwards within the eighteenth-century debates that were the backdrop to his work, they believe we will gain greater clarity on his views.



While McClenahan's work deals with more narrow matters, focusing specifically on Edwards's sources material and polemical intent, Cho tries to give us the broad picture. While both hope to speak meaningfully into the relevant theological issues, both works are also decisively historical in method and goal (this is an important point I will pick up on below). In a relatively short space (a mere 154 pages that includes the bibliography and the index), Cho addresses the historical development of the doctrine of justification prior to Edwards, the historical context with the doctrine for Edwards, and then turns to focus on Edwards's doctrine itself. Cho wraps this development together with a final chapter assessing Edwards and his continuity with the Reformed tradition (a key issue in contemporary discussions, as noted above). He then concludes the volume with some constructive thoughts concerning Edwards's view and Reformed theology.

Overall, this volume is well-done. It is, perhaps, the best place to start when looking for secondary literature on the question of Edwards and justification. It does not cover everything, by any means, but it does not claim to. Instead, Cho highlights what he believes is necessary to give us a broad sweeping look at the movement of justification in the Reformed tradition (as the subtitle notes). A failure to address this movement in the doctrine's history is often the reason why it is misunderstood. Cho rightly focuses our attention on these issues.

That said, there are a handful of weaknesses to a volume like this. First, a brief glance at the table of contents shows that Edwards's main work on justification—not just his published work on the topic, but the doctrine throughout his corpus—is really given only one chapter out of the four main chapters. Even commentators who restrict themselves to Edwards's main work on justification by faith find themselves in completely different interpretive camps, so one has to wonder if there is enough focused material in

this volume on the topic of justification *in Edwards's thought itself*. Second, and building on the first, as a theologian who has written on the topic, I found myself underwhelmed by Cho's development of Edwards's view. It was not that his view was wrong as much as it seemed under-cooked. For instance, one of the more interesting and provocative (in my mind) aspects of Edwards's doctrine is the notion of participation and the role it plays in justification. It is not the believer who is justified, on Edwards's view, but Christ. Justification is found *in the person* of Christ. There is a real and robust christological recasting of Edwards's doctrine, and Cho fails to address participation (both broadly and narrowly) in the book.

Furthermore, again from a theological angle, while Cho does some work in relation to the *ordo salutis*, one is left wondering about how this functions within (or under) Edwards's doctrine of *theosis*. A failure to focus on some of the formal theological issues has led, I believe, to some muddiness in the account. For instance, at some points Cho talks about an "ontological change" in justification itself, and at others talks about justification as forensic, and yet it is unclear how these relate. It appears as if the doctrine of justification becomes bloated, taking on aspects of broader soteriological categories that are not proper to it (this is where a discussion of *theosis* and how it functions formally in Edwards's thought might help). Third, and similarly, Cho seeks to utilize Sang Lee's dispositional ontology to ground justification, arguing that this was an aspect of Edwards's unique development of the doctrine. Oddly, Cho then goes on to argue that everything that Edwards's dispositional language does is mimicked in full by the Puritan and High Orthodox tradition preceding him. Again, one is left to wonder why dispositional ontology is meaningful for justification if it is simply a relatively standard discussion of dispositions within anthropology.

While none of these points undermines the importance of this volume, they do point to the need to read it alongside others, such as McClenahan's and Moody's, to help round out Edwards's account in full. Along with those other volumes, what one finds is an ever-growing case that Edwards's doctrine of justification finds its home within the development of this doctrine in Reformed theology. Cho's book does an excellent job of putting Edwards's account within that broad movement. In this sense, Cho's book is more appropriately a volume outlining the movement of the doctrine of justification with a stop along the way to tour Edwards's thought. In this sense, this is an incredibly helpful work. This would be a useful volume for seminary classes on Edwards's theology or on the history of the doctrine of justification. Furthermore, because of its accessibility, those with an interest in the doctrine of justification who are formally untrained in theology would also find this work helpful. Its relatively inexpensive price and size would also make it suitable for these venues.

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Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney, eds. *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. xvi + 339 pp. \$35.00.

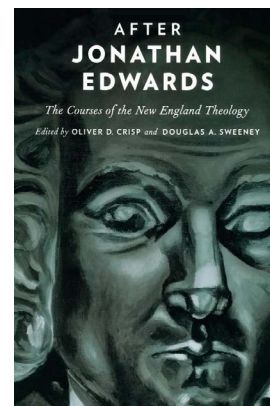
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The recent attention given to Jonathan Edwards has now generated interest in his theological and historical legacy. Who were Edwards's theological heirs, and where do we find them? Scholars have been reexamining these questions afresh. Oliver Crisp and Douglas Sweeney admirably bring together the latest scholarship on the topic in an effort to reintroduce readers to "the New England Theology," a theological tradition that has been misunderstood, misinterpreted, and largely neglected.

Numerous reasons can account for this neglect. For much of the twentieth century, liberal historical theologians painted the New England theologians like Joseph Bellamy, Samuel Hopkins, and Nathanael Emmons as moralists overly obsessed with metaphysical theories of causality and the will. Reformed historical theologians likewise have regarded them with considerable suspicion because they introduced several doctrines (see below) that led many away from classic Calvinism. These interpreters often sharply separate Edwards from his followers who are viewed as distorting their mentor's original ideas, leading to a narrative that underscores the theological "fall" of the Edwardsean tradition.

This book attempts to offer a more complex narrative of the history of Reformed theology in North America. Its aim is to demonstrate that "the theologians of the New England school were creative contributors to a living American tradition of theological reflection" and that "the older 'decline and fall' narrative often associated with [them] is, in fact, . . . mistaken" (p. 5). The essays ably demonstrate that the New England theological tradition (also called the "New Divinity" or the "Edwardsians") was the legitimate theological offspring of Jonathan Edwards.

The book contains seventeen essays divided into three sections. The first section, "New Light in the New World," examines the unique theological features of New Divinity Calvinism. As Mark Valeri and others demonstrate, these features derived from their desire to construct an intellectually defensible system that combined pietism, revivalism, and predestinarianism. The unique distinctives of Edwardsean Calvinism include (1) an understanding of the will that features Edwards's famous distinction between the fallen will's *natural ability* to repent and believe and its *moral inability* to do so (Allen Guelzo's essay), (2) a version of original sin that rejected the federal theory of imputation (Guelzo again), (3) an aesthetic spirituality that Samuel Hopkins developed into a full-blown theory of virtue known as "disinterested benevolence" (James Byrd's essay), and (4) a moral governmental theory of the atonement (Crisp's essay). Crisp ably tackles a vexing question: how can Edwards, who affirmed a substitutionary theory of the atonement, commend the writings of his pupil Joseph Bellamy, who promoted the moral governmental theory? Crisp demonstrates how Bellamy's doctrine actually built upon themes found in Edwards writings, themes which Edwards "did not have the opportunity, or perhaps the inclination, to develop . . . in his own work" (p. 78). He concludes that Edwards saw a sufficient "family resemblance between his doctrine and Bellamy's that he was willing to endorse Bellamy's work" (p. 89). Paul Helm rounds out the section with an astute review of the differences between Edwardsean Calvinism and "older forms" of Calvinism by noting that the differences stem from Edwards himself. "Jonathan Edwards," he concludes, "was certainly a Calvinist, though one of a rather different kind" (p. 103). The overall tone of these chapters is charitable, objective, and historical. Gone is the lamentable narrative of a "fall" from



grace, replaced by a historical narrative of development that charts the surprising transformation of a theological tradition over time.

Part two, “Carrying the Torch,” provides vivid snapshots of the New England theology in the century after Edwards’s death. Entries explore the contributions of particular Edwardsean theologians—Samuel Hopkins (by Peter Jauhiainen), Nathanael Emmons (by Gerald McDermott), and Edwards Amasa Park (by Charles Phillips)—and two well-known Edwardsean revivalists from the Second Great Awakening, Edward Dorr Griffin and Asahel Nettleton (by David Kling). Part three, “Edwardsian Light Refracted,” examines the different ways New England theology took root at home and abroad. Edwards’s thought was noticed by European intellectuals in the nineteenth century who lamented that such brilliance went wasted in the American wilderness. For these European observers, the “great tragedy of Edwards’s life was [that he had] . . . been born on the wrong continent” (p. 222). Evangelicals in Japan, China, and Korea have discovered Edwards’s devotional writings in the twentieth century, a brief history explored by Anri Morimoto. However, it was in English-speaking denominations with strong roots in pre-Awakening Calvinism where we find the most volatile reception of Edwardsian theology. Both British Baptists and American Presbyterians endured significant controversies over Edwardsean theology. Mark Noll and Michael Haykin detail the complexities of these controversies among American Presbyterians (Noll) and British Baptists (Haykin). They demonstrate that wherever Edwardsian theology was deeply digested, significant strife resulted within the Calvinist household.

The greatest strength of *After Jonathan Edwards* lies in its historical orientation. All of the contributors possess a mature historical sense: they are well-aware of the complexities associated with the birth and development of a theological tradition, and generally they set aside their own theological predilections as they practice history. This does not mean the authors’ views are completely hidden from sight. Indeed, readers will discern a variety of stances the authors take toward the New England theology, from admiration to caution. The work of assessing the value of a theological tradition is often tricky business, and can only be done after that tradition has been accurately understood historically. *After Jonathan Edwards* accomplishes this historical task with excellence, giving readers the materials needed to make a well-informed judgment for themselves.

I recommend *After Jonathan Edwards* to anyone interested in the complex history of theology in America, especially the history of reformed theology and its relation to revivalism. Pastors, theologians, and general fans of Jonathan Edwards will find a theologically rich narrative of the Edwardsean theological tradition. Anyone who has ever wondered what would happen to the church if scores of pastors, missionaries, and institutional leaders embraced Edwards’s grand theological vision need not dream further. This “what if?” has already been realized in American church history. To see this, one only needs to take up this book and read.

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G. R. Evans. *The Roots of the Reformation: Tradition, Emergence, and Rupture*. 2nd ed. Downers Grove: IVP, 2013. 480 pp. \$30.00.

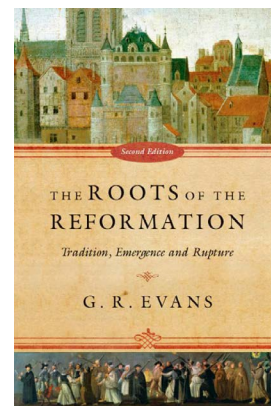
It is not often that a history textbook has its own distinctive and controversial history, but that is certainly true of the second edition of G. R. Evans's book *The Roots of the Reformation: Tradition, Emergence and Rupture*. The first edition of this volume was met with stout criticism; especially trenchant was the May 2012 [review](#) by Professor Carl Trueman of Westminster Theological Seminary, who identified a number of historical inaccuracies. In response, the publisher, InterVarsity Press, withdrew the book and asked Evans to provide an extensive revision, hence the second edition.

Now retired as Professor of Intellectual History and Medieval Theology at Cambridge University, Dr. Gillian Evans has enjoyed a distinguished career and has been a prolific author of numerous patristic and medieval studies, including well-regarded works on Augustine, Anselm, Gregory the Great, John Wyclif, and Bernard of Clairvaux. The field of medieval theology often seems rather crowded with arcane and arid monographs, but Evans bucks that trend and has enjoyed a solid reputation as an unusually lucid writer who is able to connect with academics as well as reach a popular readership. This latest venture is intended as an introductory textbook accessible to a broad audience, and Evans succeeds admirably.

Professor Evans's book begins rather elegantly by establishing a vantage point from which to survey the first sixteen centuries of the church. She employs the fourteenth-century English poet William Langland's allegorical narrative poem *Piers Plowman* as a window into the multiple complexities of a past world. Not unlike Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Langland's world is one in which the church dominates the social, political, and religious landscape for everyone from cradle to grave and from peasants to princes. Langland is more than willing to aim a few well-selected satirical barbs at the church or to sling arrows at friars who preach "to the people for profit to themselves." *Piers Plowman* allows Evans to remind readers that the story of the church, for all of its virtues, has a long history of self-indulgence and power-mongering.

The book divides into three chronological sections: Early Church, Middle Ages, and the Reformation, or as Evans puts it in her subtitle: *Tradition, Emergence and Rupture*. Within these historical boundaries, she tells a marvelous theological tale of recurring issues that have troubled the church from the outset and finally exploded in the Reformation. These "perennial issues" center largely on ecclesiology and the role of the Bible. In each of these two broad categories, Evans considers ongoing perplexities. In ecclesiology, she examines the themes of authority, ministry, religious education, sacraments, lay religion, dissent, and church-state relations.

Regarding the Bible, she gives careful attention to vernacular translations, canonicity of NT writings, hermeneutics, the role of creeds, and soteriological implications. In all of these, Evans weaves a theological tapestry of engaging insights tempered with sensitivity to the social repercussions for the lives of the laity. One might have hoped for more coverage of the chronic debates on Christology, the Trinity, and eschatology, each of which also plagued church history and resurfaced especially among radicals in the Reformation. To trace these theological strands would have made this large book even larger but every author has to make hard choices.



As a reformation scholar, I was delighted with Evans's approach to the Reformation. Instead of treating it in isolation from its historical context, she rightly portrays the Reformation as "an episode in a much longer story." She argues that the theological controversies that stirred up the sixteenth-century Reformation were in fact the continuation of a nearly 1500-year debate. In this historiographical approach, she is in the good company of the late Heiko Oberman, who famously asserted, "Without a grasp of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the medieval history of Christian thought is not only left incomplete but, perhaps worse, Reformation and Counter-Reformation seem to appear 'out of the blue,' or rather out of the black night of an unknown and, therefore, unbeloved period."

The real strengths of the book lie in the patristic and medieval periods. This is after all where Evans has spent her academic career. She has a good overall grasp of the Reformation period, and yet some of the specific historical details continue to elude her. Luther did not spend his student days at the University of Erfurt in a haze of "drinking and sex" (p. 263). Young Luther actually lived in a *bursa* (student housing) at the Amplonian College at the University of Erfurt that was more like a monastery with strict oversight. Even if he had wanted to sow a few wild oats, he would have found it virtually impossible to do so. Evans is correct to note that Zwingli, like Luther, confronted an indulgence salesman (the Franciscan Bernhardi Samson), but the encounter was in Einsiedeln not Zurich (p. 308).

Like too many historians before her, Evans grants Calvin an exaggerated role in the case of Michael Servetus. It was not Calvin who spotted Servetus in the Cathedral of St. Pierre—it was a congregant who recognized the notorious Spaniard and then reported it to Calvin. Neither was Calvin the "chief prosecutor" (p. 318) at Servetus's trial. Claude Rigot was the city prosecutor who took the case to trial. Calvin's role was indeed significant, but it was as accuser and expert witness. Clearly, there was no love lost between Calvin and Servetus, and one may even raise legitimate criticisms of Calvin during the trial of Servetus; but it is inaccurate to suggest that he functioned as a kind of District Attorney. These and other historical infelicities do not undermine the genuine accomplishment of Evans, but it is irritating to Reformation scholars; more importantly, it can contribute to historical distortion.

In his quest for Truth, Piers Plowman has a series of dream-visions in which he encounters three allegorical characters: Dowel ("Do-Well"), Dobet ("Do-Better"), and Dobest ("Do-Best"). With those characters in mind, one might say that Evans has done well, but she could have done better. Perhaps the best is yet to come.

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Keith S. Grant. *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*. Studies in Baptist History and Thought 36. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2013. xx + 157 pp. £24.99.

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Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) was arguably the key theologian among British Calvinistic Baptists during the so-called Long Eighteenth Century. He was also an evangelical who, like Baptists in general, was shaped by the later years of the Evangelical Revival in the British Isles. Though several monographs have been published on Fuller in the past decade, Keith Grant's *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology*, based upon his ThM thesis at Regent College, is unique in that it situates Fuller in the broader context of British evangelicalism.

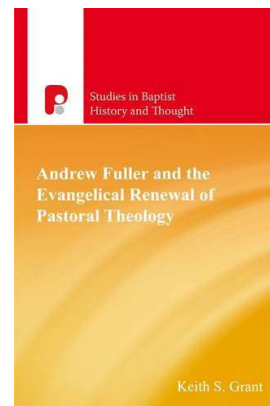
Beginning with David Bebbington's groundbreaking *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (1989), many historians have argued that the Evangelical Revival birthed the modern evangelical movement in the English-speaking world. Evangelicalism was a transdenominational movement that gave rise to numerous voluntary societies and inspired significant religious activism, especially foreign missions. Grant's study provides some needed nuance to this narrative, which has often overemphasized the Church of England, where the revivals often spread through networks of likeminded evangelicals and the societies they formed rather than awakening entire parish churches. This pattern mirrored the renewal movements inspired by Continental Pietists, to whom the Wesleys looked for inspiration.

For Grant, Fuller serves as a case study for the type of local renewal of pastoral theology that took place during the Evangelical Revival within Dissenting congregations. Grant believes that Fuller's influential pastoral ministry in a congregationalist tradition provides a useful prism for exploring how evangelicalism affected individual pastors and their churches. He argues,

Andrew Fuller's pastoral theology, which was characterized by evangelicalism's emphasis on conversion and affectionate pastoral ministry *as well as* congregationalism's concern for orderly ministry and discipline, demonstrates that there was also an important evangelical renewal of pastoral theology and practice in the local church. (p. 2, emphasis in original)

Grant further argues, "evangelical renewal did not only take place *alongside* the local church, but especially in congregational ecclesiology, there was a transformation *within* the existing pastoral office" (p. 3, emphasis in original). For Fuller, revival was evidenced in and fueled by a healthy congregationalism as much as it was evangelical voluntary societies and the missions movement. This is an important point because Fuller founded the Particular Baptist Missionary Society and was the leading promoter of the foreign missions movement among the Baptists. But he was an evangelical *pastor* first.

According to Grant, Fuller's transition from High Calvinism to evangelical Calvinism was a result of his coming to grips with the negative pastoral implications of the former. High Calvinism had been spiritually deadening, while evangelical Calvinism seemed more spiritually vibrant. This scenario was true not only in Fuller's own spiritual journey, but it also applied to others. As a pastor, Fuller came to believe that evangelicalism, with its emphasis on conversion, assurance of salvation, and the freedom of gospel proclamation, offered more spiritual nourishment to his congregation than High Calvinism. Jonathan Edwards emerged as Fuller's key mentor in this transition, with the Edwardsean concept of "affections" proving crucial to Fuller's own evangelical theology.





Congregationalist ecclesiology provided the ecclesial context for Fuller's pastoral theology to develop and spread. In a congregationalist church, where every member takes ownership of the church's ministry, evangelical pastoral theology cultivates an evangelical flock. This results in a more orderly, vibrant congregation that works together to spread evangelical emphases beyond the particular local church. He also believed preaching to be the primary means the Lord uses to inspire evangelical affections within the church. Fuller not only cultivated congregationalist evangelicalism in his church in Kettering, but he also commended it to younger pastors in the many ordination sermons he preached. Fuller was at the forefront of a version of the Evangelical Revival among Particular Baptists that took root in local churches, which in turn gave birth to denominational voluntary societies sponsored by those revived churches.

Grant emphasizes that Fuller was no generic evangelical (if such a thing existed during his lifetime). He was, rather, a congregationalist evangelical in the Particular Baptist tradition. Fuller's ecclesiological convictions helped mediate his experience of the revival and became the primary means through which he promoted evangelical renewal. His ministry is one example of an experience common to numerous dissenting pastors who don't fit the dominant Methodist paradigm for interpreting the revival. In the appendices, Grant includes sermons and correspondence that further illustrate Fuller's evangelical and Baptist pastoral theology.

*Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology* makes several important contributions. As previously mentioned, it situates Fuller in his broader evangelical context, challenging the tendency among Baptist historians to focus their attention almost entirely upon Fuller's denominational identity. Yet in focusing on Fuller's evangelicalism, Grant provides a helpful corrective to the tendency among historians of evangelicalism to focus on either the Methodist/Anglican side of the Evangelical Revival or to downplay denominational commitments entirely. Like Fuller, in the days before non-denominational evangelicalism, pastors like Fuller were evangelicals *and* Baptists. Finally, Grant shows how evangelical (particularly Edwardsean) thought not only influenced Fuller's soteriology, but also shaped his understanding of pastoral theology. He was a second generation Edwardsean pastor-theologian; both words in that compound phrase were equally true. Other scholars might find it profitable to build upon Grant's insights by examining how other aspects of Fuller's Baptist identity besides his congregational polity were related to his evangelical convictions.

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Mark Hutchinson and John Wolffe. *A Short History of Global Evangelicalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 281 pp. \$34.99.

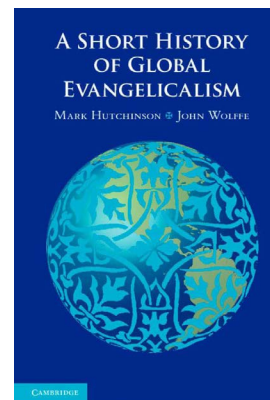
When two Christian historians collaborate to write a history of the global evangelical movement, does the vantage point from which they observe this global movement influence their portrayal? The answer is definitely “yes.” Hutchinson, of the University of West Sydney, Australia, and Wolffe, of the Open University, UK, both stand within the global evangelical movement that they describe. They analyze developments in evangelicalism from the vantage point provided by the United Kingdom (as a former colonial power) and the Antipodes (where the UK’s once imperial influence has given way to the ties of the Commonwealth).

This perspective carries with it certain limitations. Yet initially, it should be recognized that given that global evangelicalism advanced in a kind of uneasy relationship with European and Western expansion since the age of Columbus, the state of the global evangelical movement of today could hardly be investigated without reference to it. The United Kingdom and Australia certainly represent “players” in that story (though in very different ways). Further, this project is certainly the stronger by reason of its being coauthored. Though it is not always evident where the UK-based author leaves off and the Australia-based author takes up, it is clear that this is a better account by reason of their collaboration.

In an initial chapter, Hutchinson and Wolffe overview evangelical commonalities and divergences since the eighteenth century. There have always been core beliefs at the heart of this movement, and they are able to provide examples from Thomas Haweis’s attempts in 1757 to David Bebbington’s attempts in 1988 to detail what these are. They also show that in settings as varied as Europe’s state churches, America’s separation of church and state, and regions of the former USSR a striking range of social differences—dictated by place and time—have been found compatible with evangelicalism.

A second chapter grapples with the question of the chronological origin of the evangelical movement. Is it defensible to go on claiming (as it has been since 1988) that evangelicalism “began” in the 1730s because that is when cross-denominational evangelical collaboration arose in connection with the era of religious awakening? Hutchinson and Wolffe acknowledge a substantial pre-history of eighteenth-century evangelicalism extending back into the preceding century’s English Puritan, Scottish Presbyterian, Anglican High Church, and Continental Pietist movements. By doing so, they bring us abreast of the best scholarship of the last forty years. It can also be noted that they leave unexplored the question of whether evangelicalism extends back to the Reformation era and beyond. This claim has been a favorite of apologists for the evangelical tradition going back at least two hundred years.

In a third chapter, the authors tell an underappreciated story: it was the early nineteenth century that was the era of great “traction” for evangelicalism. For example: “In the early nineteenth century . . . Methodism was the most dramatically expansionist religious force on both sides of the Atlantic” (p. 62). That particular example of expansion was but a part of something much larger. In this period, evangelicalism ceased to be merely the growing but still minority position within existing denominational structures and spawned denominational and mission structures that reflected explicitly evangelical priorities. To this era are traceable the Bible and Tract societies, early mission societies and Sunday School movements that are still in existence. Yet this era of burgeoning growth also brought with



it friction and division over millennialism, over new understandings of revival, and over international mission strategy.

A fourth chapter depicts evangelicalism—a movement still associated with Western Europe, North America and the Antipodes—grappling with social and intellectual changes that became ever more obvious after 1840. By reason of its proclivity towards activism (evangelical causes and projects), this international movement was not of one mind as it considered the plight of the laboring classes in the newly industrialized cities, the push for popular democracy, or the questions Charles Darwin posed for Christianity. The authors depict evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic as too inclined to treat revivalism (along lines Charles Finney popularized) as the panacea for the problems of the age and, in consequence, engaged too little with the social, scientific, and political movements that were all the while shaping modern societies.

Though these deficits were carried forward into the period following 1870 (ch. 5), this era was also one in which it was possible to speak of international evangelicalism in an enhanced sense. Transoceanic telegraph and rapid steamship travel meant that critical news spread rapidly and that key personnel became household names on three continents. The authors tellingly establish the idea that American leadership of global evangelicalism began to be established in this period through the transatlantic labors of D. L. Moody and his successor R. A. Torrey, who having exercised effective guest ministry in Britain (the then-industrial and financial center of the world) were thereby commended to the larger world. Of special note, however, are the international tensions that this subtle shift brought with it. Late nineteenth-century American evangelical ascendancy brought with it both a missionary urgency fueled by premillennial expectation of Christ's return and the recruitment of missionary personnel by new agencies (such as the Student Volunteer Movement) that were effectively outside denominational control. The Keswick Conference in England's Lake District recruited missionaries; so did the fledgling Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. German evangelicals had not liked the already existing British leadership of global evangelicalism; they liked the American ascendancy less. Yet it was the surge in missionary recruitment in this period before the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 that helped to make global evangelicalism the phenomenon it has become.

Before the early twentieth century (ch. 6) faced the Great War, it witnessed a chain of awakening movements in Wales and Korea, India and Australia, Ontario and California (the latter being "Azusa Street"). The movements were essentially one; only geography separated these proto-Pentecostal movements. War, when it came in August 1914, was warmly endorsed by evangelical leaders as a righteous cause. Yet in Europe, North America, and the Antipodes, the Christian embrace of war would unwittingly contribute to a widespread disillusionment with the Christian faith in the years following. Non-Western colonies, pressed to send troops to assist the Europeans at war, now had a further reason to think poorly of "Christian Europe."

To add to this trouble, the decade following the war witnessed the outbreak of a theological conflict that had simmered since the pre-war years. Hutchinson and Wolffe do better than some earlier interpreters in showing that this modernist-fundamentalist conflict was fought out on British and Australian (as well as North American) soil. They suggestively highlight the linkage between the movements through the career of the Ulsterman W. P. Nicholson (1876–1959), connected with the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (1918–1920) before returning to ministry in his homeland, and in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. The early Inter-Varsity movement, traceable to 1910 but formally organized in 1923, also played an important role in ensuring that there would be an ongoing conservative evangelicalism.

In the very same post-war decade, however, in the regions of the world into which a previous generation of Western missionary recruits had gone, indigenous experimental forms of evangelical Christianity were springing up; these were “movement-critiques of European Christianity and entirely indigenous” (p. 167). Indigenization was advanced also by the growing hostility towards Western missionaries in 1930s China and the forced withdrawal of many Western missionaries from Southeast Asia during the hostilities of a second World War.

It is refreshing to observe that in documenting global evangelical developments since the 1930s (ch. 7), attention is drawn to the far-reaching effects of the East Africa Revival (Balakole), which crossed numerous African political boundaries and still pervades much East African Christian life. This, in addition to the evangelistic ministry of Billy Graham (who, like D. L. Moody before him, established his international credentials in Britain), the 1951 resurgence of the World Evangelical Alliance (renamed World Evangelical Fellowship), and the steady advance of global Pentecostalism into the evangelical mainstream served to make the evangelical movement expansionary in what was otherwise an increasingly secular century. In the matter of the post-WWII resurgence of evangelical biblical scholarship, Hutchinson and Wolffe are keen to make the point that the resurgence was led by a troika: F. F. Bruce, Leon Morris, and I. Howard Marshall, scholars who did their work in research university settings. Today evangelical theological education in the Western world is increasingly at the service of the evangelicalism of the developing world.

If we wish to talk about numbers (ch. 8), impressive global evangelical growth is—as we have heard from other sources—concentrated in the “Global South” (a reference not simply to the sub-equatorial but to the developing world) and associated especially with regions characterized by above-average population growth (p. 221): Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Yet close-up analysis of these regions shows considerable variation from country to country. The parallel story is of the surge of missionary “sending” from regions that we in the West might still consider to be needy. Hutchinson and Wolffe speak of 10,000 Latin American missionaries now working cross-culturally.

The volume concludes with a survey of evangelicalism’s prospects, which in Europe and North America are less sanguine than those in the Global South. Showing a highly impressive grasp of literature reflecting the western evangelical world’s current ferment in face of the challenges of cultural and religious pluralism, the authors see the evangelical future as entailing a simpler articulation of Christian dogma and a lesser emphasis on traditional ecclesiastical structures.

One cannot but be impressed at the range of history, geography, and literature covered by the coauthors. Their blending of insights as Anglophiles drawn from northern and southern latitudes has certainly been a strength. Yet we too often observe traces of disdain for some excesses of American evangelicalism; the volume also periodically singles out Reformed evangelicalism for its perceived intransigence. Lacunae in this admirable survey include central and eastern Europe and (more surprisingly) the post-Mao Chinese church.

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George Kalantzis and Andrew Tooley, eds. *Evangelicalism and the Early Church: Recovery, Reform, Renewal*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012. 288 pp. \$32.00.

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It is commonplace today that evangelical Protestantism is pulsing with interest in early Christianity. Forty years ago, fascination with the early Christian movement spurred young North Americans to wear sandals, sport beards, and experiment with communal living. Today's curiosity drives them to read the Church Fathers and to ask leading questions about why such early authorities have been relatively neglected in our churches. Thoughtful answers are warranted by such questions.

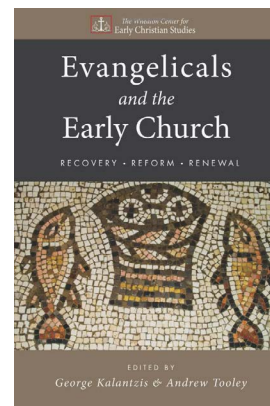
2009 marked the inauguration of the Wheaton College Center for Early Christian Studies. Within that program's first year, its imprint was laid down by its hosting a notable conference, and this volume reproduces the papers. Any center for Early Christian Studies launched by gathering together such notables in this field as Robert Wilken, Everett Ferguson, Christopher Hall, and Gerald Bray (among others) has made an auspicious beginning.

The stance of the conference papers is, above all, constructive. One observes no evident purpose of challenging evangelical Protestantism's legitimacy in light of what may be observed in early Christianity. Rather, the practical focus is on the importance of the study of early Christianity and the necessary appropriation of it by today's churches. Each of the major papers presented was followed by a prepared rejoinder. Two main areas were explored: (1) investigation of the extent of the neglect of early Christianity by evangelicals and (2) investigation of the resources available to evangelicals by greater appropriation from the early church. This review can only highlight a portion of the entirety on offer in the volume.

As for the reasons behind the considerable neglect of early Christianity by evangelicals, Christopher Hall names several; the best of these is "inattentiveness" on the part of evangelical Christians. It can fairly be said that we have not been led to expect that studying early Christian teaching will pay dividends. Further, Hall opines that too much North American evangelicalism has done theology on the assumption that doctrinal conviction can be built up and articulated adequately by solitary appeal to the Bible alone—without any consciousness of the "jury" that is located in the history of biblical interpretation. North American evangelicalism has also shown itself to be impatient, preferring rapid rewards and resolutions.

In what I consider to be one of the most illuminating essays in the collection, Jeffrey Barbeau explores the extent to which John Wesley's theological and pastoral stance in the era of eighteenth-century evangelical awakening was informed by his drawing on early church resources. Barbeau's answer is that Wesley's debt to early Christian thought and practice was very considerable—both through his own research and through his use of various handbooks available in his time aimed at conveying early church teaching. The distillation of Wesley's readings in the early church was shared with the Methodist movement through the multi-volume *Christian Library*, which Wesley prepared to guide young preachers in his movement. Significantly, Barbeau also shows that Wesley's strong differences of doctrinal opinion with George Whitefield were fueled by this reflection on early Christian (especially Eastern) teaching.

Exploring recent efforts made at curing evangelical inattentiveness to the early Church, younger scholar Elesha Coffman takes up the question of how significant was the career of the late Robert Webber



(1933–2007) and the “Chicago Call” of 1977. The latter gained great publicity, calling as it did for fresh attention to early Christian teaching and worship practices. In a refreshingly candid manner, Coffman proposes that the significance of this development within evangelicalism has been overrated, given its very slender numbers, its “elitism,” and non-ecclesiastical character. Who could have known that, even as he urged the launch of this movement, Webber was involved in an independent house church? In sum, the origins of the renaissance of evangelical interest in the early Christian church cannot be easily located in Webber and the Chicago Call. Having said this, the rejoinder by *Christianity Today’s* David Neff must not be missed!

As for the actual resources that early Christian teaching offers, laurels are in order for the honored evangelical Patristic scholar, Everett Ferguson, for his “Why Study Early Christian History and Literature?” In an essay that could wisely be made required reading for all theological students, Ferguson explains that a study of these early centuries can provide confirmation and elucidation of the NT and can show the path of change away from the authoritative NT teaching. These centuries also yield examples of noble lives to be emulated and examples of ecclesiastical problem-solving of recurring issues (e.g., the relation of Christianity to culture).

Scott McKnight’s incisive essay advocates that evangelical churches, many of which have hitherto looked on the early ecumenical creeds as a kind of a “no go zone,” now take these up for use in worship. One finds it hard to disagree with his insistence that by so doing, our churches would receive important reminders of the core themes of the gospel and grow in the consciousness that the one Christian faith is stable as to its content.

Gerald Bray, always weighty in his judgments, provides a stimulating (though utterly undocumented) essay in which he contends that historic evangelical Christianity has as much claim to the legacy of the early Christian centuries as the usual claimants: Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. Evangelical Christianity affirms everything truly biblical affirmed by those communions and stresses (where they do not) the key element of personal appropriation of Christ’s gospel and personal godliness. The effect of this essay, appearing late in the volume (and perhaps in the conference) is bracing. It has the effect of reminding us that there is also appropriating from the Christian past needing to be pursued *outside* evangelicalism.

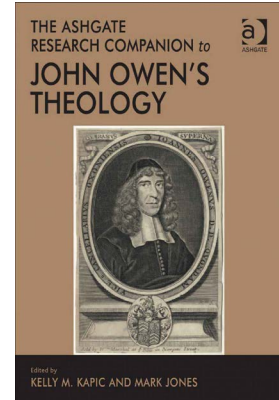
In sum, we owe a great debt to the Wheaton Center and editors, Kalantzis and Tooley, for making the resources of this conference available to the wider church.

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Kelly M. Kopic and Mark Jones, eds. *The Ashgate Research Companion to John Owen's Theology*. Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012. xv + 334 pp. \$149.95.

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John Owen represents one of Puritan theology's great pinnacles. Owen was steeped in the tradition but showed a creativity befitting a great theologian. He had a spiritual and pastoral inclination that permeates his work, culminating, perhaps, in his great work of spiritual theology *Communion with God*. Throughout his life he engaged in polemics over the doctrine of the Trinity, justification by faith, and the nature and task of the church. He also found time to write the most expansive commentary on Hebrews in church history (an incredible work of theology in its own right). Throughout this last work as well as his more systematic accounts, Owen embodies the Puritan ability to move from text to systematics to spiritual formation effortlessly, never ceasing to show the spiritual realities of the theologian's work.



With a theologian of such stature, it is not surprising that there is a growing interest in recovering his work. Nevertheless, the secondary literature on Owen's theology remains relatively sparse. To address this lacuna, Kopic and Jones began with essays from a 2008 conference on Owen held at Cambridge University. The present volume grew out of those essays and evolved into a much-developed and expanded work on Owen's theology and life.

The chapters are divided into three sections: (1) Method; (2) Theology; and (3) Practice. The overall tenor of the volume follows Ashgate's focus in its "Research Companions" series, following the direction of similar lines by other publishers (e.g., The Cambridge Companion series). The goal is to provide scholars and graduate students a comprehensive and "state-of-the-art" review of the most current research in a specific area. Each author focuses, some more specifically than others, on one side of the historical or theological line. While each essay seeks to do justice to both history and theology (for the most part), each clearly leans to one side or the other. Since it would be too cumbersome to survey the volume in its entirety, I will focus my attention on two of the essays that touched on theological/philosophical and pastoral/spiritual themes.

Of the several high-quality essays focusing on Owen's theology, I note two here: Sebastian Rehnmen's "John Owen on Faith and Reason" and Suzanne McDonald's "Beholding the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ: John Owen and the 'Reforming' of the Beatific Vision." Both essays explore key historical issues and assess Owen's constructive theology for its possible use today. Rehnmen's essay is particularly interesting in light of the recent work by analytic theologians. In walking through key issues of faith and reason, Rehnmen provides touch-points, particularly in the footnotes, on key contemporary philosophical literature. This is particularly important in the discussion of whether or not faith requires reason for epistemic justification. In working through the relevant moments in Owen's corpus, Rehnmen shows Owen to be an astute philosophical theologian often misunderstood by commentators because of their failure to assess how careful he actually is. In the end, Rehnmen shows that Owen's epistemology does not fit neatly into contemporary categorizations, nor do his views fit obviously within Protestant orthodoxy. In other words, here is a place where we see Owen's ability to creatively engage a long-standing issue and bring original thought to a problem.

In a similar way, Suzanne McDonald unveils Owen's creative mind at work, engaging a long-standing theological issue. While it won't surprise many that Owen focused on the issue of faith and

reason, it might surprise some that he had so much to say about the beatific vision—the focus of McDonald’s essay. But this assumption would be misguided and would evidence an undue prejudice against Puritan theology. In fact, in this era of Reformed theology, the beatific vision appeared in at least two, if not three, distinct locations in a systematic theology. First, it was treated in the prolegomena, which would highlight that knowledge of God changed depending upon one’s placement in redemption history (developed under “ectypal theology”). Here and now, prior to our glorification, we know by faith. But the knowledge believers have in glorification is beatific knowledge. Therefore the beatific form of knowledge, in some way, orients knowledge by faith. The doctrine of God is the second place where the beatific vision was discussed. God is the God of beatific (“happifying”) self-knowing. This idea is eventually picked up by Jonathan Edwards, another great pinnacle of Puritan theology. Third, the doctrine of the beatific vision would appear in sections addressing the knowledge of God in glory (where we most often expect it). Therefore, in the Christian tradition, this era is probably the most theologically vibrant period for thinking about the beatific vision.

McDonald’s essay focuses on Owen’s creative reworking of the beatific vision. In doing so, she compares his work with the great Francis Turretin’s position on the topic in his *Elenctic Theology*, keeping Aquinas’ development always in the background. Owen, she argues, is able to pull off what Turretin cannot: a christological recasting of the beatific vision. This recasting leans heavily on Christ’s claim, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” While McDonald appreciates and affirms this christological refocusing of the beatific vision, she is left to wonder why Owen fails to bring in his normally robust pneumatology. This is even more curious considering Owen developed a Spirit-Christology that certainly could have been utilized in a christologically focused doctrine of the beatific vision. Furthermore, she questions why Owen did not follow through on hints toward more corporate and ethical dimensions of the doctrine.

Both essays serve as good examples of the breadth and depth of this volume. In my mind, this is one of the most important places to start when studying John Owen, and it should be read alongside some of the great introductions to Owen’s theology, such as Carl Trueman’s volume in the Great Theologians Series, *John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man* (2007) also by Ashgate, Kelly Kopic’s *Communion with God: The Divine and the Human in the Theology of John Owen* (Baker, 2007), and Sebastian Rehnmen’s *Divine Discourse: The Theological Methodology of John Owen* in Baker Academic’s Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post Reformation Thought series. Alongside the books noted above, this will serve those interested in Owen well, providing needed access to a wide-ranging set of issues.

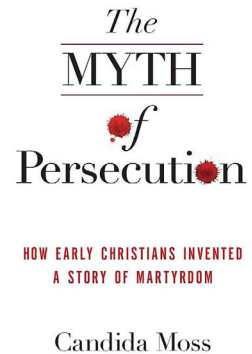
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Candida Moss. *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom*. New York: HarperOne, 2013. 320 pp. \$25.99.

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Candida Moss's *The Myth of Persecution* brings to mind John Lennon's song *Imagine*: "Nothing to kill or die for / And no religion too / Imagine all the people living life in peace." In her book, Moss imagines a world without Christian martyrdom, and she imagines that this new world might be free of right-wing politics as well. Moss believes that she can bring about a more peaceful political discourse in America by imagining that Christianity's martyrdom phenomenon never happened. Christianity's history of persecution makes it impossible for Christians to cooperate with their political enemies, so she attempts to erase the persecution of Christians from history. Once Christians have learned that they never really suffered, then they will be ready to live peaceably with the political left.



In order for Moss's agenda to have any hope of success, she has to construct a straw man. Throughout the book she derides "the Sunday-school story" in which the church has been ceaselessly persecuted for the last two thousand years. Anyone even passingly familiar with Christian history knows that the church did not suffer continuous persecution since the crucifixion of Christ, yet Moss pretends that persecution without ceasing is the metanarrative of the American church. I expected to meet a straw man in the pages of this book, but I did not expect him to be so flimsily constructed. As it turns out, however, Moss must construct him so flimsily because her evidence is embarrassingly weak.

She questions the historicity of Christian persecution by attempting to rob Christianity of martyrdom. She argues that the martyrdom phenomenon was not uniquely Christian and that all religious traditions have had martyrs. To make her case, Moss must explain away the fact that Christians coined the term "martyr." Even though earlier peoples did not use the term, they still exemplified the concept. She provides examples from the Greek, Roman, and Jewish traditions, claiming that the Christians are not doing anything new; they are merely emulating earlier models.

Moss's examples, however, exhibit various degrees of tendentiousness. She presents Achilles, Iphigenia, Lucretia, Socrates, and the Maccabees as martyrs. She can do this because she defines martyrdom as "dying for something greater than oneself." She makes this definition her standard, saying, "Just because the Greek term *martys* was not used to describe these individuals does not mean that they do not meet our modern definition of a martyr" (p. 52). Here we see the first of many problems with the book; for a book that purports to tell you the true history of persecution, it is astonishingly ahistorical.

Why does Moss apply a modern definition of martyrdom to ancient peoples? Because she would not be able to knock down even the flimsiest straw man if she used historical categories. Did the Greeks and Romans think of Achilles as a martyr? Of course not. I am somewhat sympathetic, however, to Moss's difficulty because pinning down the historical meaning of martyrdom is not easy. The Greek word *martys* originally meant "witness," and it continued to carry overtones of its original meaning throughout the later history of the church. When martyrs died, they bore witness or testimony to their hope in Christ's resurrection. In some places at some times, Christians attached the idea of sacrifice to martyrdom. Martyrdom proves to be a moving target with, depending on time and place, even more shades of meaning creeping in. But instead of investigating a historical question, she throws out some

anachronistic musings on death in the ancient world without bothering to ask about how people at the time interpreted these deaths.

After defining her terms to fit her agenda, she attempts to show that Christians who wrote martyr tales depended on the literary examples from their Greco-Roman context. It should not come as a surprise that writers from antiquity sound like writers from antiquity, but Moss relates this information as if she has uncovered some gnosis that will shake the foundations of the Christian worldview. Greek and Roman Christians wrote like Greeks and Romans.

After attempting to rob martyrdom of any distinctiveness through equivocation, Moss tries to rob Christianity of its earliest martyrs. She claims that since the earliest martyr stories betray evidence of editing, we cannot know what the martyrs actually thought about their own deaths. Since we cannot know if they thought of themselves as martyrs, we cannot be sure that they were martyrs. This argument works only because Moss holds the ancient texts to an unreasonable standard. She demands first-person or eyewitness accounts that exhibit no evidence of personal bias or later editing. She wants a court transcript, and anything less than that leaves us in doubt as to whether the earliest martyrs really were martyrs.

Conveniently she does not hold other sources to this same impossible standard. She never questions whether Socrates's death happened exactly as Plato described, even though Plato has numerous personal reasons to revise Socrates's death as a condemned criminal into a noble sacrifice. Let me once more note that Moss considers Achilles and Iphigenia to be martyrs; they did not even exist. She freely uses double standards to make her point.

She also leaves out important information that would hurt her thesis. One of the most egregious omissions has to do with the *Acts of Justin and Companions*. She must admit that this early martyr tale almost attains the impossible standard of veracity that she has set. But she dismisses this text because most people read the middle recension instead of the earliest version of the text. The later version exhibits an editorial hand. However, she does not tell the reader that the earliest version contains the very confession of Christ that she claims we do not find in early martyr texts. She cannot admit it to the reader because she wants to erase the historicity of the earliest martyrs. This omission is no mere oversight. She knows the contents of these texts. She compares them at length in an earlier book in which she suggests that the earlier version of Justin's martyrdom should be viewed as an accurate record.

As the book wears on, her arguments do not get much better. She claims that Nero could not have persecuted Christians in 64 because Christians did not exist in 64. Never mind that Tacitus calls them Christians; Tacitus was wrong. Even so, it is funny that Socrates could be a "martyr" before the term "martyrdom" was invented, but Christians could not exist in 64 because the term had not been coined yet. Not only does Moss ignore or dismiss important evidence, but also her logic exhibits contradictions. She questions a martyr text's veracity when it suits her, but then she uses the same text uncritically when talking about suicide because it suits her. She claims that the church historian Eusebius gave Christianity its worldview of constant persecution, when actually Eusebius's books reveal Christian triumphalism. She tries to bust the myth of persecution with a combination of unwarranted speculation and "new" findings that every student of church history knows, but then she perpetuates simplistic myths about the crusades even though her endnotes indicate that she has read real scholarship on the crusades. I did learn, however, that martyrs are the source of modern-day domestic abuse.

The book reflects Candida Moss's disapproval of Republican politicians who inject religious language into their political discourse. She criticizes Rick Perry, Rick Santorum, and Newt Gingrich,

claiming that their rhetoric is founded upon the martyrs, but one could probably make a better case that their speeches resemble the ranting of Cicero in his *First Catilinarian Oration*. Moss desperately attempts to make her field relevant to contemporary culture, but instead she ends up damaging her own credibility with her tendentious arguments.

The entire book is an extended example of the post-hoc-ergo-propter-hoc fallacy. Moss notes some similarities of language between Greeks, Romans, and early Christians. She sees similar rhetorical flourishes in our American political discourse. One obviously caused the other. Don't worry about those intervening fifteen hundred years because there is nothing to see there. The Roman Catholic Church's role in medieval Europe? Ignore it. The Protestant Reformation's critique of the cult of saints? Unimportant. The Enlightenment's critique of everything? What does the Enlightenment have to do with modern political discourse? Rise of American Fundamentalism? Irrelevant. Even if Moss's erasure of the church's persecution were based on historical evidence, which it is not, too much has happened in the world to justify Moss's simplistic thesis. Moss has studied the early martyr texts, but she did not convince me that she understands the larger history of the church and its relationship to the West.

Moss is actually guilty of the very thing that she hates. She hates the sensationalized religious rhetoric in America's political discourse. This book is nothing more than a sensationalized political agenda masquerading as religious history. During the Middle Ages in times of plague, Christians sometimes spread rumors claiming that Jews caused the disease by poisoning the wells. Moss writes, "The myth of Christian martyrdom and persecution needs to be corrected, because it has left us with a dangerous legacy that poisons the well of public discourse" (p. 256). Both of these rumors are baseless, and if I used Moss's logic, I would be forced to argue that medieval rumormongering caused her to write this bad book.

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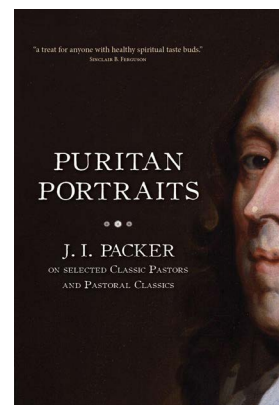
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J. I. Packer. *Puritan Portraits: J. I. Packer on Selected Classic Pastors and Pastoral Classics*. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2012. 188 pp. \$14.99.

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J. I. Packer has long been considered one of the leading interpreters of the Puritans. His latest book on this topic, *Puritan Portraits*, is a brief collection of introductory essays on notable Puritan pastors and their works. Packer's purpose is to present a clear portrait of the Puritan clergy and their message (p. 11). Far from merely a biographical study, however, Packer aims to show how the Puritans, when at their best, are the necessary remedy to a current generation of Western Christianity that seems to be treading toward extinction (p. 181). He argues that many of the Western Church's current shortcomings could be easily cured by reading and appropriating Puritanism.

The book is divided into three parts: Puritan Pastors at Work, Puritan Pastors in Profile, and Two Puritan Paragons. Part I first historically surveys the English Puritans of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He illustrates the seriousness of the Puritan pastor, the desire for church purity that dominated the movement, and its overwhelming



commitment to Scripture and the church's knowledge and application thereof. Part II consists of introductory essays that Packer wrote for the Christian Heritage series of paperbacks on the Puritans, also published by Christian Focus. Each chapter highlights a particular Puritan and a selected work from that person. From well-known figures like John Owen, John Bunyan, and Matthew Henry to less familiar Puritans like Stephen Charnock and Henry Scougal, these chapters briefly present the selected Puritan's life and ministry worth exemplifying and then demonstrate how the selected work of that author carries as much importance and weight today as it did when published.

Part III focuses in greater depth on two Puritans whom Packer argues exemplify the era and the theology of English Puritanism: William Perkins and Richard Baxter. Packer provides a brief biography of Perkins's life and overview of his theology. Of particular focus for Packer in this chapter, however, is Perkins's influence in fundamentally shaping English Puritanism as well as Perkins's lasting influence, despite being largely forgotten among modern evangelicals. Concerning Baxter, Packer seeks to demonstrate how this Puritan represented his era in the diversity of ways in which he ministered. The prototypical Puritan, Baxter produced a massive written corpus, enjoyed a successful preaching ministry, and cultivated a deep, biblically centered counseling ministry to troubled souls. Like Perkins, Baxter left a great legacy to the church. Packer briefly concludes his book by, as he does in his introduction, highlighting the areas of modern Western Christianity that have drifted away from the biblical church and suggesting how reappropriating the Puritans could guide the church back on course.

Packer's work succeeds in its purpose by demonstrating the biblical traits of ministry and the Christian life in the lives and works of the Puritans. His writing is accessible and engaging as his own passion and enjoyment of the subject matter bleeds throughout the pages of this book. Moreover, in a brief number of pages he thoroughly and soundly introduces a rich and deep era of church history. The work is further commendable in its recognition of the many criticisms that have been leveled at the Puritans over the centuries. Packer addresses both the more general social insults levied toward the era, as well as particular critiques that have been put forth in more academic settings, such as in the work of R. T. Kendall. The book is a quintessential demonstration of both Packer's scholarly expertise in the subject matter as well as his pastoral instincts and concern for the health and vitality of the church.

The book is not without a few shortcomings, however. First, due to the admitted fact that most of the book has been compiled from various other previously published works, the book lacks coherence and fluidity at times. Moreover, the work often repeats itself in places where the repetition is distracting rather than edifying. Second, the book at times seems to approach hagiography, as Packer offers an almost wholly positive reading of the Puritans. The only critiques he makes concern Perkins's supralapsarianism and Baxter's soteriology. While it is the purpose of his book to illustrate how the virtues of the Puritans would be of benefit today, an acknowledgement of Puritan shortcomings would not only provide greater balance to the book but could also serve as a beneficial guide and warning for the twenty-first century church.

Overall, *Puritan Portraits* is highly recommended for anyone interested in an overview of English Puritanism. Whereas Packer's *A Quest for Godliness* would be more appropriately suited for those who already possess a general background in the field, even the most learned Puritan scholar can still find considerable enjoyment and edification in this present work.

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William M. Schweitzer. *God Is a Communicative Being: Divine Communicativeness and Harmony in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*. T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology. London: T&T Clark, 2012. viii + 198 pp. \$110.00.

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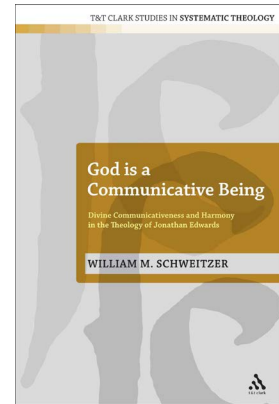
Over the past quarter century, numerous scholars have attempted to identify the center of Jonathan Edwards's theology. These attempts have engendered lively debates among Edwardsean scholars. Presbyterian pastor William Schweitzer offers his own proposal in his book *God Is a Communicative Being: Divine Communicativeness and Harmony in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*. Schweitzer's monograph revises his dissertation at the University of Edinburgh. It is an important work that merits a close reading by scholars and others interested in Edwards's theology.

Many scholars have emphasized the importance of divine communication (God's sharing of himself) in Edwards's thought, particularly those influenced by the work of Princeton Theological Seminary theologian Sang Hyun Lee. Schweitzer goes a step further, arguing that the Triune God's communication of himself is central to Edwards's thought and that it is closely tied to the harmony of all reality, which reflects the inter-Trinitarian harmony of God. According to Schweitzer, for Edwards "all of reality is the harmonious communication of the Triune divine mind" (p. 6).

Schweitzer divides his book into six chapters. The first chapter outlines Edwards's understanding of theology proper. For Edwards, communicativeness is the core attribute of God and the reason for his works of creation and redemption. As Edwards writes in Miscellany 332, referenced throughout Schweitzer's study, "God is a communicative being." God's communication of himself reflects and arises from the inter-Trinitarian communication among the Father, Son, and Spirit. Chapters two and three examine Edwards's understanding of God's self-communication through general and special revelation. In these chapters, Schweitzer focuses upon Edwards's well-known emphasis upon typology, even in nature, and shows how Edwards's views were in part an apologetic against Enlightenment (specifically Deistic) accounts of divine revelation.

Chapter four builds upon chapter three in sketching out Edwards's view of Scripture. For Edwards, and contra Deists and skeptics, the Bible is harmonious and authoritative because it is communicated by the Triune God who is himself characterized by these attributes. Chapter five discusses Edwards's understanding of history as the staging ground for God's harmonious communication of himself in creation and redemption. Scripture provides the lens through which Christians can understand God's work in history. The final chapter discusses how Edwards's pastoral work, promotion of revival, autobiographical "Personal Narrative," and even unfinished writing projects served to advance his understanding of divine communication and harmony. As a pastor, revivalist, and theologian, Edwards was playing a secondary role in God's great work of divine communication as he brings about his sovereign purposes in the church and, ultimately, all creation.

Schweitzer makes a compelling case for the centrality of divine communication and harmony in Edwards's theology. Though Schweitzer has been influenced by more philosophical accounts of Edwards's theology, Schweitzer also understands Edwards to be an heir to and re-framer of the Reformed Orthodoxy he inherited from the Continental theologians whose writings he devoured. Even more important, Schweitzer combines these (oft-competing) interpretations of Edwards as constructive



Enlightenment thinker and Edwards as apologist for Calvinism and situates them in Edwards's actual vocation: Edwards as pastor-theologian. The result is a balanced portrait that avoids the pitfalls of anachronistic or simplistic portraits so common among both scholars and popular authors alike.

Despite the weighty material being considered, Schweitzer's account is clear (though at times repetitive) and demonstrates the thesis in every chapter. While some scholars will no doubt disagree that divine communication and harmony is at the very center of Edwards's theology, most will have to concede it is near the center and was a chief concern of Edwards. Though the volume is priced out of range for most pastors, those who do read *God Is a Communicative Being* will appreciate how Edwards thoughtfully applied his views in his own pastoral ministry. Highly recommended.

Nathan A. Finn

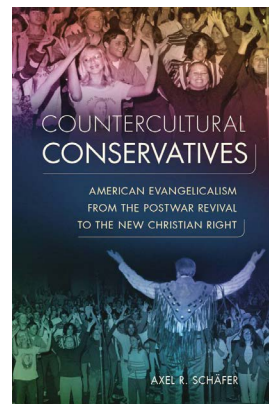
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Axel R. Schäfer. *Countercultural Conservatives: American Evangelicalism from the Postwar Revival to the New Christian Right*. Studies in American Thought and Culture. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011. 225 pp. \$29.95.

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Over the past thirty years, evangelical Protestants have provided the Republican Party with an increasingly reliable voting bloc. Even Mitt Romney's strong Mormon commitments did not deter evangelical voters on Election Day in 2012. Instead, as a recent Pew Forum poll demonstrates, evangelicals voted for Romney at the same levels they had George W. Bush in 2004. Such data appears to support the widely held belief that American evangelicalism easily coalesces with political, social, and economic conservatism. In *Countercultural Conservatives*, Axel R. Schäfer, the Director of the David Bruce Centre for American Studies at Keele University, UK, challenges that perspective, arguing that the rightward "political swing of evangelicals was not a foregone conclusion" (p. 111). Instead, he contends that the alliance between conservative political ideology and evangelical Protestantism in America emerged through a contested process over several decades as those who became the New Christian Right eventually triumphed over their internal opponents and came to dominate evangelical public presence.



Rejecting the "backlash" theory, Schäfer employs social movement theory to argue that the success of the New Christian Right hinged on the movement's ability to reconcile conflicting aspects of modernity, not a reactionary appeal to traditional morals and theological commitments. It successfully joined specific elements of the counterculture with bourgeois American values in a strange dialectical merger that affirmed both libertarian self-expression and consumer market forces. As a result, 1960s and 1970s activists who joined the ranks of the New Christian Right were de-radicalized as it integrated "the anti-establishment impulses of the insurgencies into the mainstream of American society while effectively sidelining their radical socio-economic content." This, in Schäfer's estimation "became evangelicalism's central ideological contribution to the broader conservative resurgence" (p. 6).

*Countercultural Conservatives* follows a chronological pattern as Schäfer fleshes out his thesis through four short chapters. Chapter 1 situates the work within the existing scholarship and establishes

the interpretive parameters for the following chapters, summarizing five competing explanations for the resurgence of American evangelicalism as a cultural force in the latter half of the twentieth century. In so doing, he provides an invaluable service for those—like graduate students studying for exams—needing to get up to speed on the scholarship. In Schäfer’s reading, each of these competing interpretations support his contention that postwar evangelicalism was both more politically diverse and less about traditional moral issues than the standard narrative of the Religious Right portrays. In the next chapter, Schäfer recounts the familiar story of the postwar evangelical renaissance. Represented publicly by Billy Graham’s evangelistic crusades, intellectually by Fuller Seminary and *Christianity Today*, and institutionally by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), neo-evangelicalism distinguished itself from both liberalism and a recrudescing fundamentalism by the end of the 1950s.

Schäfer’s argument pivots on the third chapter. He recounts the irony that neo-evangelicalism’s success threatened its unity. Early leaders such as Harold Ockenga, Carl Henry, and E. J. Carnell promoted “education, intellectual stature, theological leadership, and cultural engagement” (p. 77). A younger generation embraced this vision in the 1960s and 1970s, focusing grassroots efforts on urban settings, challenging “unfettered” capitalism, advocating for the poor, and engaging in social service (pp. 77–79). Their efforts resonated with many in the counterculture, many of whom were converted as they were evangelized by these “young evangelicals.” At the same time, their accomplishments revealed the fractures latent in the postwar evangelical coalition when these left-leaning evangelicals such as John Alexander, Lucille Sider Dayton, and Jim Wallis aligned themselves with political progressives and radicals in the 1960s. When progressive theology followed progressive political alignments, it provoked an “internal backlash” from establishment evangelicals such as Robert Dugan of the NAE and Harold Lindsell of *Christianity Today*.

The story of the triumph of these “neo-fundamentalists” over the progressive wing of evangelicalism takes center stage in chapter 4, “The Rise of the Religious Right.” From this scuffle, the New Christian Right emerged, establishing ties with non-evangelical religious conservatives and the larger conservative movement, becoming a potent political force in the latter half of the twentieth century. In Schäfer’s final analysis, the New Christian Right appealed to a large number of Americans because it clothed its conservative message in countercultural garb. Its grassroots localism resonated with the counterculture’s preferences for community and outsider status; its activism connected with the counterculture’s insistence on “social action”; and its softer, “therapeutic conversionism” (pp. 9, 54) incorporated, in part, the individualized, experiential epistemology that dominated the 1960s. By embracing these aspects of modernity (or postmodernity, depending on one’s perspective), it created a religious movement that seemed countercultural while bolstering the consensus values of American Cold War Liberalism: conventional morality, the Protestant work ethic, free market economics, and consumerism.

Schäfer is not the first writer to argue that accommodation to modernity provided a great deal of the appeal of 1980s evangelicalism, nor is he the first to point out that evangelicalism had an historical propensity to express itself via progressive political movements, not just conservative ones. *Countercultural Conservatives* is not even the best history of leftwing evangelicalism in the 1960s and beyond. That honor belongs to David Swartz’s *Moral Minority: The Evangelical Left in an Age of Conservatism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012). The great contribution Schäfer’s work makes is in his smartly argued thesis that ties these developments together in a Hegelian dialectical process. As internal conflict between conservative evangelical impulses (thesis) and the evangelical left (antithesis)

emerged, it resulted in a synthesis that incorporated elements of both evangelicalism and counterculture. The new thesis resonated with—and became a part of—the *zeitgeist* of the 1980s.

However, the strength of *Countercultural Conservatives* is also its weakness. Driven by his thesis, Schäfer sometimes misses the trees for the forest, making some significant interpretive and historical errors. First, he lumps things together that ought to be split. For instance, he comfortably cites the actions of the Southern Baptist Convention in order to support his argument, neglecting regional differences—something that should never occur in postwar religious histories. Although aggressively pursued, the Southern Baptist Convention never joined the NAE, something Schäfer himself notes (p. 56). Instead, it intentionally distanced itself from the NAE-type evangelicalism about which Schäfer writes—at least until the 1980s. Here it seems that Schäfer falls victim to what he cautioned against: viewing the decades prior to 1980 through the lens of the New Christian Right.

Second, some errors of fact pepper *Countercultural Conservatives*. One of the more significant is the description of neo-evangelicalism as “Augustinian orthodoxy with a positive social program” (p. 45). Since neo-evangelical organizations such as the NAE intentionally included Wesleyan, Holiness, and Pentecostal groups, this gives readers the wrong impression regarding the movement’s theological commitments and boundaries. Typographical errors also show up, turning Richard Cizik into Robert and Baptism into a denomination analogous to Methodism. Taken together, these errors raise a red flag for those for whom attention to detail is the foremost historical virtue.

Finally, throughout *Countercultural Conservatives*, Schäfer argues that the New Christian Right garnered its organizational ideas and social impulses from its leftwing cousins. And while I think Schäfer has hit on something important, I am not convinced he provides a body of primary-source evidence sufficient to prove that dependence. Without it, we must either return to the backlash-thesis or search for the roots of conservative evangelical political action in an earlier era. In spite of that—or perhaps because of it—this is an important book that deserves attention from anyone interested in the history of twentieth-century American religion, politics, or social movements.

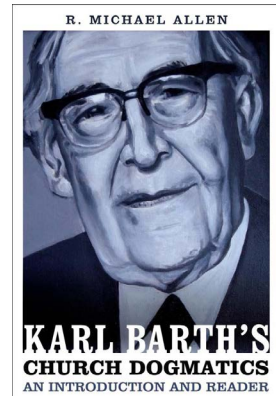
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— SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND BIOETHICS —

R. Michael Allen. *Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics: An Introduction and Reader*. New York: T&T Clark, 2012. x + 241 pp. £19.99/\$29.50.

Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics* (henceforth *CD*) is intimidating. The *CD* is massive. Even the method Barth scholars use to refer to its sub-volumes is challenging to the uninitiated. Beginners cannot simply be wished good luck and told to wade into *CD* I.1—not if they're going to 'get' what Barth is about at least. As a result the study of Barth's *CD* has in North America mostly been limited to professionals or students taking advanced theology degrees. R. Michael Allen, it seems, saw an opportunity—an opportunity driven by the very practical challenge of how teachers could get students reading Barth's work without having to choose one part-volume of the shelf-filling work to assign. The limited focus of the latter option is fine for advanced students, but insufficient for introducing the full scope of Barth's thought. Allen fills the gap with *Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics*.



Allen's book is mostly what the title suggests: an "introduction and reader." The emphasis is on "reader." Allen's "introduction" is limited to one thirteen-page chapter, the brief contextualization of extracts, and footnotes scattered throughout the rest of the book. But that is all for the good; the point, after all, is to get students reading Barth's work firsthand.

After Allen's introductory chapter the following fourteen are made up of carefully chosen extracts from the *CD*. Each is introduced in a couple of paragraphs and clarified in footnotes. The location of each extract within the larger work is clearly indicated with volume references and page numbers, making it fairly easy for keen students to read more widely on any given topic. Allen also provides numerous on-ramps to Barth scholarship in English—Torrance, Hunsinger, McCormack, and the rest—through bibliographic citations at the beginning of each chapter and commentary in the notes. At just under 250 pages, the book covers a lot of territory in what is by Barthian standards a slim volume.

The advantage of the volume's brevity is that it works well as one course text used alongside others. To initiate students to the world of Barth's thought, a companion volume such as those written by Joseph Mangina, John Webster, or John Franke would be appropriate, as would some of Barth's essays. It is to his credit that Allen doesn't try to duplicate the work of those who have written whole introductory texts on Barth. However, trying to grasp the sprawling breadth and interconnected style of the *CD* with only Allen's reader as a guide would not be prudent.

Those who have read Barth in depth will quibble with Allen's choices, why this or that extract is cut short or why some of Barth's excursions are included and others excised. Some will even be annoyed that what is printed in small type in the *CD* is presented in regular font in this reader. Others will point to some key piece of Barth scholarship that is not mentioned at all. These sorts of responses are inevitable. What is finally the case though is that Allen's book fills a void. It is useful in the classroom and will rightly be at the center of many revised courses on the Swiss titan of twentieth-century theology. Along with that basic provision, Allen has served those interested in Barth's work by highlighting key elements of the secondary literature in English. He also does an admirable job setting the *CD* in the context of Reformed dogmatics. For Barth's many readers from other traditions, particularly those disinclined to

plow into Reformed scholasticism, this element of Allen's work is enlightening. Allen's interspersed commentary is less focused on elucidating ecumenical links, a gap which can perpetuate the stereotype among Reformed students that Christian theology begins and ends with that tradition. In any event, *Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* makes it less likely that straw-man opposition to Barth will continue to characterize the reception of his work among evangelicals.

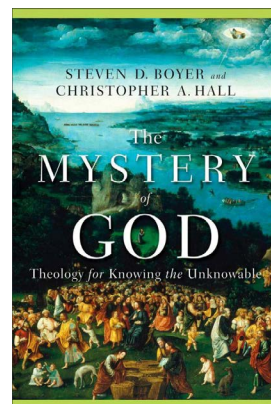
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Stephen D. Boyer and Christopher A. Hall. *The Mystery of God*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. xix + 235 pp. £12.99/\$19.99.

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Some ideas seem to enter evangelical thought as assumptions more than through systematic thought. Until recently, theological mystery or paradox was a prime example. There was shockingly little reflective, self-critical analysis of mystery prior to James Anderson's excellent monograph on paradox and apologetics. *The Mystery of God* by Stephen D. Boyer and Christopher A. Hall is another helpful contribution to the discussion, though it is also disappointing in certain respects. Christopher Hall is an Episcopalian paleo-orthodox scholar and serves as the chancellor of Eastern University. Together with Thomas Oden, he is responsible for the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Steven Boyer teaches theology at Eastern University.



One of the key metaphors the authors use for mystery is the sun. The glory of God in mystery is too dazzling for our direct gaze, but we can recognize mystery because it illumines our understanding. In part 1 (“the sun”) they distinguish mere puzzles from revealed mystery (the Pauline *mysterion*). Mystery might stem from limited information or arise from non-analytical information about God, but the sense of mystery most relevant to this work is “dimensional”—transcending logic in the same way that a person who has only known two dimensions cannot comprehend three.

Chapter 2 surveys the biblical necessity of mystery, grounding it in God's radical transcendence over every created thing. Chapter 3 is an excellent historical survey, tracing paradox in the church fathers, the medieval period, and the Reformation and contemporary thought with special attention to Gregory of Nyssa, Aquinas, Luther, and postmodernism. Part 1 concludes with the epistemological question of how knowledge of God is possible at all, given his transcendence. We can know God because of the image of God in man and because God is graciously restoring humanity from the effects of the fall.

Part 2 (“the landscape”) explores mystery in five specific areas. After comparing heretical “solutions” for the Trinity with biblical information, the authors conclude that the Trinity is ultimately inexplicable. Still, we can find real analogies for the Trinity in human relationships because we are God's image-bearers. Similarly, chapter 6 points out the necessity of the incarnation for human salvation, placing the mystery of the incarnation in the context of the broader biblical metanarrative. The discussion on prayer (ch. 8) explores God's immutability and impassability, concluding that prayer compels us to enter into God's intentions for shalom—the well-being of his restored creation.

Chapter 7 discusses mystery and salvation by pitting two different approaches to the problem. Calvinists start with biblical premises and follow rigorous logic until they run up against God's love and justice. At this point, the authors assert, Calvinists make an arbitrary appeal to mystery. Arminians, on the other hand, start with a commitment to libertarian freedom and find themselves contradicting biblical information. The book argues that mystery should stand between these extremes: freedom mysteriously begins in God, and it is then mirrored in his image bearers.

The final chapter is troubling, as Boyer and Hall discuss mystery and world religions. Arguing from general revelation and the fact that no one holds a monopoly on truth, chapter 9 suggests that believers should learn from the assertions of non-Christian religions. In fact, even explicitly counter-biblical assertions such as God's impersonality (Hinduism) might become theological insights for the discerning theologian.

There are many things to appreciate about this book—particularly the analysis of mystery itself and the historical survey in part 1. Nor are the more specific discussions in part 2 without benefit. Boyer and Hall typically answer questions by placing them in their broader theological context within the metanarrative of Scripture. In the process, they make some helpful connections. Unfortunately, one is often left wondering how much these discussions truly relate to mystery. On the Trinity, the incarnation, and prayer, the reader finishes with less regard for the tensions as they stand. Ironically, the authors' explanations seem to dull the sense of tension in the biblical text. In its place, mystery begins to feel more like an open door for mystical imagination than an opportunity for exegetical precision and humble submission to the confines of Scripture.

The book's discussion of mystery in salvation is disappointing. Why frame the tension between two theological systems rather than identifying the asymmetries in the text? And is it really fair to criticize Calvinism for adhering to biblical propositions, seeking logical consistency while working outward, and then accepting mystery where logic can go no further? Given a high view of Scripture, what other legitimate approaches could there be?

But the chapter on world religions is easily the most problematic. While general revelation is an established theological category, Scripture everywhere points to the suppression that results, not the fresh insights of sinners with open ears and willing hearts. The clarity and breadth of inscripturated revelation dwarfs the truth about God found in nature. To use Calvin's metaphor, Scripture is always the lens through which we see general revelation clearly, not the other way around. Where does Scripture speak of false religions positively or encourage us to learn from them? We hearken to anti-biblical religions only at our own peril, and mystery is not a powerful enough concept to rationalize that fact. It is unfortunate that a book so helpful in some respects and so necessary in evangelical discussion should conclude with such misleading and faulty suppositions.

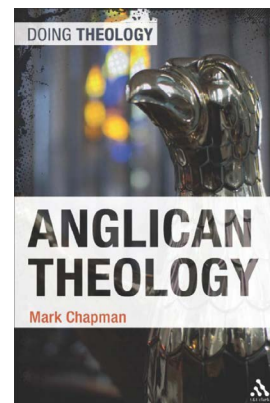
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Mark D. Chapman. *Anglican Theology*. New York: T&T Clark, 2012. v + 269 pp. £14.99/\$29.95.

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Mark Chapman (author of *Anglicanism: A Very Short Introduction* [Oxford, 2006]) offers a fuller portrait of Anglican theology focused mainly on the Church of England. Special attention is given to the sixteenth-century English Reformation and the nineteenth-century Victorian-era movements as indicative of varying streams of Anglican thought (though one also encounters much history in between). Chapman doubts that there is anything specifically “Anglican” about Anglican theology since the church’s Protestant doctrine, worked out in the sixteenth century and expressed in the 39 Articles, was very similar to the Continental Lutheran and Reformed doctrinal expressions. At the same time, Chapman does not think it is possible to articulate a systematic theology for Anglicanism in the same way that one might for the Lutheran or Reformed traditions. Therefore, his book is a work of historical theology rather than systematic theology. One will learn a lot about the history of Anglicanism—such as key people, ideas, and conflicts—but one will not necessarily come away from this book with a good sense of what Anglicans believe. In fact, Chapman regards it as a type “neo-Puritanism” that seeks to find and define a minimum theological commitment for the worldwide Anglican Communion. For Chapman, the history and theology of Anglicanism is so complex and highly contested it is difficult to make solid statements about what Anglicanism really is. I think this is overstated and that one can certainly identify common features in Anglicanism that gives it a distinct identity as a unique church of the Reformation.



This complex history is revealed in the unique way that England joined the Reforming movement (King Henry VIII) and in how the Church of England began to adapt to a changing world in the nineteenth century. This latter period saw the entrance of both Roman Catholics and Non-conformists into public office. This would naturally impact a state-sponsored national Church of England. Therefore, as Chapman argues, different contingencies within the church began to re-narrate the history and theology of the church. Anglicanism’s identity would be reshaped once again, much like in the sixteenth century, with divergent voices seeking normative authority.

This seems to be the typical “Anglican way”: many voices searching for authority and many things contested from within. The book provides a very honest account of this history. At certain points a reader might need greater familiarity with British history to understand the points being made. An introductory knowledge of Anglican polity will also serve the reader well. Chapman takes some of these things for granted. He does, however, provide an insightful and scholarly analysis of the material, with repeated reference to the critical primary sources. This contributes to the overall value of the book as an important resource for studying the Anglican tradition.

Some of the important figures and movements that Chapman takes account of include King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, Queen Elizabeth I, the English Reformers (such as Thomas Cranmer), John Jewel, The Parker Society, Peter Martyr, John Whitgift, Richard Hooker, King James I, William Laud, Richard Montagu, the Interregnum and Restoration, John Henry Newman, and the Oxford Movement. The amount of historical information in this book can be overwhelming and difficult to keep clear, as profitable as it is.

“Anglicanism” as a denomination among others, even if remaining the established Church in England, became an emerging reality during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. The church’s

identity as a worldwide Anglican Communion was also affected by British imperial expansion and later independence movements. Chapman states, “It was the 1888 Lambeth Conference that was to shape the identity of the Anglican Community decisively.” And “Anglicanism had ceased to be explicitly English by 1888” (p. 185). The global identity was diverse, aiming at comprehensiveness and, as so often before, focused more on “decency and good order and social stability” (p. 186) than the particulars of doctrine. It was at this Lambeth Conference that the Chicago Quadrilateral of 1886 was accepted and began to function as an article “*constitutive* of Anglicanism” (p. 193). The Chicago statement was based upon the four recommendations in William Reed Huntington’s work, *The Church Idea*, which he wrote in hopes of uniting an American national church. A modified statement, accepted at Chicago, and adapted at Lambeth came to define the distinguishing marks of Anglicanism. Four statements call for affirmation (p. 192):

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God.
2. The Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith.
3. The two Sacraments—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with the unfailing use of Christ’s words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.
4. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church.

Chapman comments, “This meant for the first time an international definition of what constituted Anglicanism was given, but with the perhaps surprising absence of anything distinctively English including the Prayer Book or any doctrinal formulary” (p. 193). This emerging consensus for the global Anglican Communion is notable in part because it “is quite different from the competing models of Anglican theology developed in the Church of England” (p. 191). This would seem to be correct except that it aims at a comprehensiveness and unity that are apparent in some of the earlier English models. The Quadrilateral does, however, leave out any call to affirm the 39 Articles or the Prayer Book, which at other times were imposed, and which many even today regard as the very heart of Anglican theology.

Chapman concludes his work with some explanation of current events and issues. He summarizes recent controversies surrounding homosexuality and the movement toward an Anglican Covenant that would more clearly define the nature of Anglicanism and provide a process for conflict resolution.

This learned overview of Anglican history, theology, and polity is an important work for understanding what Anglicanism is and is not. It is also helpful reading for the Anglican movement that one can see in the United States where an increase in Anglican interest can be seen in the formation of new Anglican churches—such as the Anglican Church in North America. I highly recommend the work for those who desire a trustworthy account of the Anglican tradition.

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Vern Sheridan Poythress. *Logic: A God-Centered Approach to the Foundation of Western Thought*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2013. 733 pp. £28.99/\$45.00.

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In recent years Westminster New Testament scholar Vern Poythress has proven to be something of a philosophical polymath publishing whole books on topics as varied as philosophy of science and philosophy of language. His seemingly unabated flow of output continues with a new and very large book on logic (the largest book I know of on the subject).

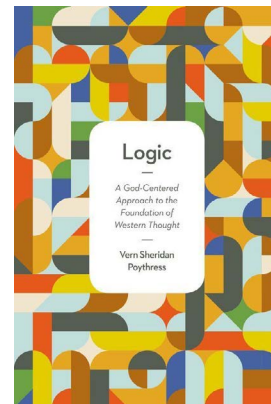
Poythress' new work is so comprehensive that at first its table of contents may strike one as something of an eclectic hodge-podge. But though grand in scope, Poythress' *Logic* has a very clear layout of three broad sections. §1 focuses upon explaining the elementary ideas and concepts of logic. This section is also the heart of the book in that Poythress emphasizes throughout various theological issues as they bear on the subject of logic. §§2 and 3 will probably be of less interest to readers of this journal since they focus upon later developments in the history of logic and provide more detailed discussions on various approaches to logic. Since §1 is clearly Poythress' main concern, I'll summarize these sections in reverse.

The latter two sections of the book are for those individuals who find the subject of formal logic interesting in itself and wish to pursue more in-depth studies. These sections are very informative. Poythress surprised me (though a philosopher of logic myself) by introducing some ideas that I was unfamiliar with (particularly lattice theory). As with §1, Poythress continually touches upon the theological issues and problems that relate to these various approaches. Most of his theological comments in these sections are repetitions of what he says in more detail in §1. There are also several appendices that address some deeper and more philosophical issues for those so inclined.

§1 though will probably be more of interest to pastors and theological students. One could read this section alone, without loss, if the latter sections hold little interest. §1 of the book is obviously Poythress' main concern as the title of the book claims. Here he seeks to show how Christians *should* think about logic and provides biblical argumentation for its theological foundations. This is where Poythress is at his best showing not only how logic is introduced and used in the Bible but also how it glorifies God. Throughout Poythress shows how modern understandings of logic contrast and contradict this biblical understanding of logic.

Since to my knowledge there are very few books that treat the subject of logic from an explicitly biblical perspective, Poythress' text is a refreshing gift. I heartily recommend this book (and primarily its first section) to those who wish to think more biblically about the intellectual and theological fabric of rational thought. One should not be intimidated with all of the charts and mathematical formulas that a cursory search of the pages will show. Poythress does an exceptional job at explaining complex logical notions very slowly, and in clear ways. This book is very much aimed at those who are new to the formal study of logic. And again, most of the more complex formalizations appear in the latter two sections of the book.

However, Poythress' book is not without shortcomings, especially from a more scholarly viewpoint. For example, though Poythress' knowledge of the subject is well-informed, it's clear that he is not very familiar with recent research and literature on logic. He gives far too much space to older formal systems, like Russell and Whitehead's, even though natural deduction systems are clearly the more dominant



means of teaching and disseminating logic today. Also, though Poythress explores (and is surprisingly somewhat sympathetic towards) intuitionistic and fuzzy logics, he gives no hint that other non-classical logics such as relevance logic exist.

Another narrowness here is that Poythress' footnotes overwhelmingly cite mainly two individuals: John Frame and the late Cornelius Van Til. Both of these are respectable Reformed scholars whom I hold in admiration. Nevertheless, it's somewhat troubling that Poythress' scholarly well seems to be primarily filled mainly with these two scholars' ideas. Though scholars should have heroes like anyone else, there's a lurking fear here that a scholar's output can be overly dependent or parroting of those he primarily focuses upon. Many times our critics (not our heroes) can be our best scholarly help.

However, the biggest shortcoming I had with Poythress' *Logic* was his discussion of analogy—the idea that our words, and especially our predicates, apply to God only analogously (as opposed to univocally or equivocally). Poythress rightly notes that formal logic claims that valid argument forms assume that terms are used univocally throughout the form. But, again as Poythress rightly points out, we cannot use terms univocally in an argument that applies to God. However, Poythress correctly maintains that we must not fall into either a non-Christian view of transcendence (i.e., logic doesn't apply to God) or a non-Christian view of immanence (i.e., we can capture God with logic). Thus, we must maintain that our reasoning does apply to God without becoming gods and making God *subject* to our reasoning. Though I completely agree with this conclusion, as far as I could see, Poythress never explains how we can use logic correctly concerning God. More detail would have been greatly helpful here.

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— ETHICS AND PASTORALIA —

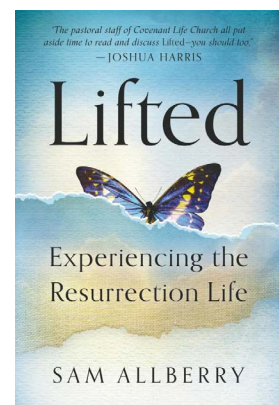
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Sam Allberry. *Lifted: Experiencing the Resurrection Life*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2012. 144 pp. £7.99/\$9.99.

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Christians know that the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is integral to our faith. For many of us, however, the question of its relevance to our everyday lives may be difficult to understand or explain. Sam Allberry's *Lifted* is a brief and accessible remedy to this problem, providing an insightful chapter on each of four relevant implications of the resurrection: it guarantees our forgiveness (Assurance); empowers us to change (Transformation); gives us hope for the future (Hope); and gives us an urgent mission (Mission).

Chapter one (Assurance) explains that the resurrection of Jesus assures us of our salvation by confirming two things. First, Allberry points to several passages that explain how the resurrection vindicates the identity of Jesus as the Son of God, the Christ, the Savior, and the Author of life (pp. 25–30). Second, the resurrection confirms that Jesus has, in fact, paid the penalty for sin and conquered its consequence, death itself (pp. 34–43). By raising Jesus from the dead, God has given his “signature” of acceptance;



the payment for sin has been received (p. 20). Therefore, we can be confident of our salvation. “The resurrection shows us that there is nothing we need to add to the death of Jesus to find acceptance with God” (p. 43).

In chapter two (Transformation) we learn that because of our union with Jesus (pp. 47, 54, 58), Christians are experiencing something of the resurrection themselves in the form of spiritual new life (pp. 47–57). This new resurrected life should give us a new perspective on who we are (pp. 59–61) and what we do (pp. 61–67). It means we have a new power for holiness, the power of God’s Spirit living inside us (pp. 67–73). It means we have a new ambition to know and obey Christ (pp. 73–75). In short, the resurrection enables Christians to change (p. 47).

Chapter three (Hope) demonstrates that the resurrection of Jesus gives us a hope that is independent of our circumstances. Following Paul’s logic in 1 Cor 15, Allberry shows how a denial of a future bodily resurrection for believers implies a denial of Christ’s resurrection, which would, in turn, imply the death of Christianity (pp. 86–89). However, since Christ has been raised from the dead, Christians can be sure of a future bodily resurrection as well (pp. 91–93). After describing the nature of our resurrected bodies (pp. 93–101), Allberry closes the chapter with the Bible’s promise of a future resurrection hope for the entire creation as well (pp. 101–11).

The final chapter (Mission) builds off Acts 17:31, where Paul teaches the Athenians that the resurrection is the proof that God has made Jesus judge of the world (pp. 113–17). He explains that the resurrection of Jesus exalts him to the status of Lord (pp. 117–20) and judge (pp. 121–30), which means that he is worthy of worship (p. 119), that he is not indifferent to the world, and that at some point he will come again (pp. 124–29). The book concludes by explaining the necessity of pursuing the Great Commission, pointing out that it is the thematic climax of Matthew’s Gospel (pp. 130–35) and driven by God’s jealous desire for his name (pp. 135–42).

One of the great strengths of *Lifted* is that Allberry has spotted a genuine problem (i.e., many are not quite sure what to do with the resurrection) and provided help that can be widely digested. Not only does each chapter compellingly show that the resurrection really does have practical implications for our everyday lives, but Allberry has an impressive ability to handle complex biblical and theological issues in a way that is not technical or inaccessible. The book is exegetically responsible (the section on 1 Cor 15 is very good on pp. 85–101, even if some may question his handling of verse 58 [pp. 109–12]). Allberry also hits on numerous biblical- and systematic-theological issues, such as union (p. 54) and new life (pp. 48–53), and though his insights are meaty, he is never overly complex or intense. His writing style is personable and contains interesting and useful illustrations, dashes of humor, and accessible language that is pastoral and encouraging.

The overall structure of the book is reasonably easy to follow, though at a few points it suffers from a disjointed flow of thought. For example, the main point of chapter one is that the resurrection assures us of our salvation by providing a two-fold verification of both the identity and the sin-conquering work of Jesus (pp. 20–43). While Allberry makes a strong biblical case for each of these sub-points, it is unclear how the *first* point contributes to the argument. He helps us clearly see that the resurrection speaks powerfully of the identity of Jesus as the Son of God, the Christ, the Savior, and the Author of life (pp. 25–30), but he does not clearly tell us *how* this four-fold identity assures us that our salvation is secure. I do not doubt that it does, but what exactly does Allberry hope for us to see? The pieces are all on the table, but it seems that the reader must draw the connections for himself.



Sam Allberry has nevertheless done well what he set out to do by showing why Christians should not be putting the resurrection back in the pantry the day after Easter. *Lifted* is a perceptive and informed resource that will be helpful for pastors and churches who want to grow in their appreciation of this often overlooked pillar of our faith.

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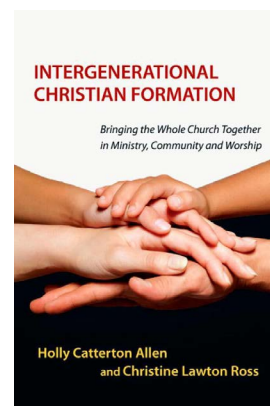
Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross. *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012. 330 pp. \$22.00.

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Although most churches are “multi-generational” in that they have members of various ages, many churches are not “intergenerational” since congregants rarely interact with people outside of their age or life-stage. Holly Allen of John Brown University and Christine Ross of Concordia University-Irvine seek to counter this reality by offering abundant reasons for churches to prioritize intergenerational interactions and by providing numerous ideas for cultivating an ethos of intergenerationality. This text utilizes their research on aspects related to intergenerationality as well as their experiences in intergenerational congregations.

The book consists of four parts. Part 1 (“Generational Realities”) examines factors causing age-segregation to become common in churches. Allen and Ross note the general benefits of intergenerationality and the unique benefits intergenerationality provides for people at various ages and stages of life. Parts 2 and 3 build a multi-disciplinary case for intergenerationality in churches. Part 2 (“Biblical, Theological, and Theoretical Support”) first shows that Scripture calls for and reflects intergenerational communities and then demonstrates how such a call coheres with ideas found in developmental theory, social learning theory, ecological system theory, and situative-sociocultural theory. The focus of Part 3 (“Support from the Social Sciences”) is how research in the social sciences corroborates the need for and benefits of intergenerational communities. The work moves from theory to practice in Part 4 (“Intergenerational Christian Formation Practices”), discussing how to build an intergenerational church culture through its worship, education classes, service projects, and small groups. This section also features chapters specifically devoted to intergenerationality in multicultural churches and megachurches. More practical help appears in three appendices that contain forty ideas for intergenerational activity, a list of resources on intergenerationality, and a compilation of biblical texts supporting this outlook.

This book serves as a helpful primer on the subject of intergenerational community and will prove to be a useful resource for church leaders. Allen and Ross demonstrate awareness of previous works addressing the topic and relevant research from a variety of fields, presenting helpful summaries of these studies. The work is also filled with anecdotal insights from the authors’ experiences in intergenerational community that display tangible ways a church can practice integrating the generations. Overall, the authors present a compelling case for the value intergenerationality possesses for Christians of all



ages. While sounding a strong call for churches to be more intentional in facilitating intergenerational interaction, the authors do so realistically rather than idealistically. For example, they recognize that developing an ethos of intergenerationality takes time and requires the support of a church's leaders. In addition, they do not offer a "one size fits all" approach, stating that intergenerational activities will vary between churches in light of the unique elements of each ministry setting. Moreover, Allen and Ross do not call for abolishing all aspects of church life structured according to age and stage. They acknowledge a place for such activities. At the same time, they note how various structures often segregated by age and stage can be intergenerational. The discussion of intergenerational small groups is "the most comprehensive recommendation" the authors make (p. 239).

Although the work is laudable, there are a number of ways that the authors could strengthen their discussion. The inclusion of biblical and theological arguments alongside ideas from various other disciplines in one section (Part 2) and the allocation of a whole section to the findings of social sciences (Part 3) may seem to marginalize the primacy of Scripture in the practice of ministry and overemphasize the findings of other disciplines. A longer discussion of the biblical and theological rationale for intergenerationality and/or its placement as a separate section may prevent criticisms that the authors depend more on contemporary research than scriptural methods. In addition, some readers may get bogged down by the extensive use of the social sciences and various theories, particularly if they are unfamiliar with these areas or find a theory difficult to understand. An issue I do not feel is adequately addressed is how to engage in intergenerational evangelism and outreach, and it may be wise for the authors to discuss in more detail the challenges or opportunities intergenerationality presents as the church tries to reach a culture that is increasingly divided by age and stage. Finally, it could be interesting to consider the issue of intergenerationality in Christians of other cultures and times.

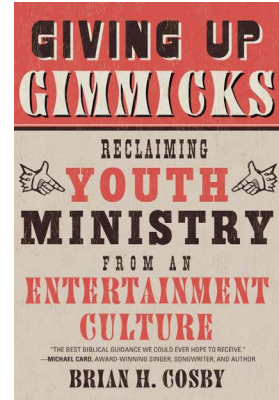
These criticisms should not detract from the achievement of Allen and Ross in producing a book that has value for the classroom and the church. In line with the authors' contention that intergenerationality is a culture, not a program, and that it will emerge only through the support of church leaders, this book should be read not only by those who specialize in ministries to various groups (e.g., children, youth, singles, families, seniors, etc.) but also by pastors, lay leaders, and future leaders such as seminary students and interns.

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Brian H. Cosby. *Giving Up Gimmicks: Reclaiming Youth Ministry from an Entertainment Culture*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2012. 160 pp. \$12.99.

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To keep students coming, many youth ministries use entertainment tactics to draw kids through the door. Brian Cosby argues for a completely different approach to youth ministry in *Giving Up Gimmicks: Reclaiming Youth Ministry from an Entertainment Culture*. He states, “I maintain that the ‘how to’ of being faithful in youth ministry—indeed, in all ministry—is demonstrated through the means of grace: particularly, teaching the Bible, administering the sacraments, prayer, service, and community” (p. 20).



Cosby’s thesis overflows from his Presbyterian and Reformed tradition. However, in a day and age when youth pastors use liturgical practices to “deepen” their students’ worship experience, Cosby’s is no faux-traditionalism. Far from *going to* tradition as a reaction against entertainment-driven youth ministry, Crosby’s critique of entertainment-driven youth ministry *arises from* the biblical commitments he has inherited from his theological tradition.

As Cosby works out his thesis, he reveals three underlying assumptions about youth ministry that part ways with popular alternative models. First, he implies that the building blocks for a faithful youth ministry have been provided in Scripture, namely, the means of grace. It is not the youth pastor’s job to invent a model for youth ministry because the Bible provides it. Second, when Cosby adds the qualifier, “indeed, in all ministry,” he diverges from philosophies of youth ministry that use the unique experience and culture of teenagers as their starting point. What students need is no different than what anyone else needs: the grace of God, found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Third, by framing his approach to youth ministry with the means of grace, Cosby distinguishes his methodology as one that relies on God for fruitfulness, over against other approaches that expect success to come from the methodology itself.

Cosby begins his book arguing that attractional youth ministries provide only a temporary and superficial antidote to students’ spiritual longings. A ministry that will truly *minister* to youth must therefore be modeled around the five means of grace. In the middle of his book, Cosby takes five chapters to demonstrate how the five means of grace shape youth ministry. His argument may be summarized as follows:

- Since only the Spirit of God effectually changes the sinner’s heart, the Spirit-inspired Word—preached, studied, and memorized—is central.
- Prayer is more than something we should do when tragedy hits; it is a practice by which God empowers, comforts, strengthens, and sanctifies.
- The sacraments regularly remind students of God’s gracious promise to be faithful, and his covenant love is demonstrated through the sacrificial, atoning death of Jesus Christ.
- Self-sacrificing, gospel-motivated service is more satisfying than entertainment.
- Participation in the community of believers “is a means of grace whereby God confronts our sin, feeds our faith, transforms our minds, and grows our love” (p. 96).

The author ends his book with a chapter about how to recruit and shepherd volunteer youth leaders, along with appendices on evaluating one’s youth ministry and shepherding families with youth.

Among the many strengths of Cosby’s book, two stand out. First, the five components of Cosby’s philosophy provide a simple framework to organize a student ministry around what benefits teens

spiritually. A faithful youth ministry is a simple youth ministry. This should encourage pastors of smaller youth groups, showing them they can build a ministry that feeds students spiritually, even if attendance fluctuates and their budget is small. Second, Cosby's book is a step toward spreading a gospel-centered philosophy of youth ministry. Those who (along with the author) have rejected entertainment-driven youth ministry have been left very few books on youth ministry to guide them. This book helps to plug that gap.

There are two ways *Giving Up Gimmicks* could have been stronger. First, it is not apparent why Cosby extends the traditional three means of grace to five. The author anticipates that readers familiar with the Reformed tradition might be surprised by this move when he states, "While the Westminster Assembly highlighted these historical three, the divines pointed out that Christ communicates to his church the benefits of his mediation in *all* his ordinances" (his italics; p. 25). But this leaves the reader wondering why one would include *only* service and community in a "means of grace" model of youth ministry? Why choose these two as opposed to, or in addition to, other options? Cosby supports stretching the "means of grace" category to service and community by working through a few Scripture passages, but not all readers will find his exegesis convincing.

Second, Cosby devotes little attention to deconstructing entertainment-oriented youth ministry, something that the title of his book promises. Because he fails to interact with books espousing entertainment or programmatic strategies to reach youth, his criticisms of these approaches come off as straw-man arguments. Unfortunately, this will result in converting few entertainment-driven youth pastors to a more biblical, gospel-centered philosophy.

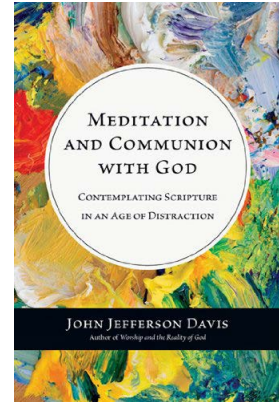
Despite these two weaknesses, *Giving Up Gimmicks* is a helpful book that should pave the way for further conversation on gospel-centered youth ministry. Whether or not the reader embraces Cosby's overarching "means of grace" category, youth pastors will do well to focus on the five components of his approach. Cosby's book will be a great encouragement to youth pastors who are fed up with the superficiality of gimmicky student ministries, as well as those who have shunned the gimmicks, perhaps even to the detriment of their youth group's attendance.

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John Jefferson Davis. *Meditation and Communion with God: Contemplating Scripture in an Age of Distraction*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012. 168 pp. \$20.00.

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In the past several years I have read a myriad of books on biblical meditation, praying Scripture, and *lectio divina*. This book by John Jefferson Davis stands out as utterly unique. It is unique in terms of its depth of theological reflection and for the inclusion of scientific research related to meditation. The book falls into two unequal halves. The first half, much longer and more technical, sets forth his theologically grounded theory of meditation and the second half gives advice on the practicalities of meditation.



The intended audience of the book is not clear. The technical language and level of theological argument require a persevering reader with some theological literacy. After a discussion of “logopneumatic epistemology,” the author asserts, “this is a book on meditation, not a treatise on epistemology directed to academic philosophers” (p. 94), but one wonders at times about the real emphasis of the book. While the focus of the book is meditation, it is treated in such a highly technical way that it significantly restricts its audience. The author chooses to use a number of metaphors from computing (e.g., Skyped in, broadband connection) that may work well for some readers today, but will likely seem quirky and dated very quickly.

The argument that receives the bulk of the pages in the book is that we should approach biblical meditation on the basis of three guiding perspectives: Trinitarian theology, inaugurated eschatology, and union with Christ. It is in this portion that he provides some of his unique and most helpful insights into the phenomena of biblical reading and meditation. He states, “Because we are united to Christ in our conversion by the Holy spirit, God is *really present* to us in the prayerful, meditative reading of Scripture: this is the central claim concerning union with Christ in relation to biblical meditation” (p. 41). He uses the reality of our union with Christ and the presence of the Triune God to pull meditators away from the idea of meditation as an individual self-improvement project, for it is nothing less than “being ‘invited into the circle’ of love, joy, and peace that the Father, Son and Spirit have enjoyed among themselves from all eternity” (p. 54).

Davis has provided a theological rationale, based on his theological exegesis and Reformed-oriented sources, for conceiving of reading as a deeply spiritual experience and a way of having fellowship with God. Such a vantage point is fairly common in texts on meditation and *lectio divina*, but Davis has taken the time to carefully argue his point, not just assert it. He makes the case for skeptics who might be off-put by popular understanding of what a more fulsome reading entails. The argument for the genuine presence of the Triune God in our reading of Scripture will find widespread support among the book’s audience, but other correlates that he derives from this will probably find a less welcome hearing. For example, he calls for “a recovery of the fourfold sense of Scripture in the ancient church as a legitimate way of faithfully meditating on Scriptures” (p. 107). He makes an adequate case for understanding Scripture to have multiple levels of meaning, but does not really establish why a fourfold meaning is the most adequate way of conceptualizing this.

Chapter seven addresses the practicalities of meditation. He provides practical guidance but of a very limited nature considering that entire books are devoted to this subject. He briefly presents three levels of meditation: biblical meditation (getting started), whole-brain meditation (the next step), and

worldview meditation (the five practices of right comprehension). This is the chapter that might have led many readers to pick up the book, and the advice given is solid but perhaps more sparse than readers anticipate. He treats a number of contemplative approaches to prayer (e.g., centering prayer) and shows a good grasp of these practices, but his dismissal of the Jesus Prayer and cautions on Centering Prayer seem more of a personal preference than grounded in theological reflection.

For the reader in search of a well-reasoned rationale for the spiritual nature of meditating on Scripture, this is a good book to consult. It provides a rich bibliography and argues from well-established sources. The book is somewhat disjointed, and one can imagine that it is built on course material drawn together for this project; so there is an unevenness in depth of treatment. Yet while it is not a book for the faint of heart, a careful reading will be rewarded richly with the insights and a doxological experience.

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Bruce Demarest, ed. *Four Views on Christian Spirituality*. Counterpoints. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 229 pp. \$18.99.

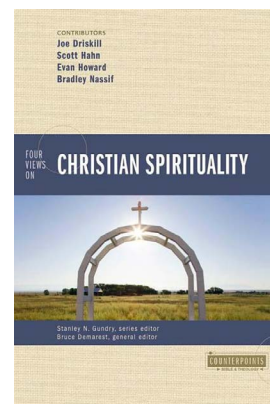
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America's religious landscape is changing. An increasing number of people, known as "the nones," claim to have no religious affiliation. Despite this massive cultural shift Americans, and people worldwide, are increasingly identifying themselves as deeply spiritual. As Bruce Demarest notes, "A defining characteristic of our restless times, then, is that Spirituality is back with a vengeance, as fully two-thirds of America's adults consider themselves as deeply spiritual" (p. 11). This data indicates that spirituality, specifically Christian spirituality, is a worthy topic of consideration.

In *Four Views on Christian Spirituality*, series editor Stanley Gundry and general editor Bruce Demarest have added another important work to the Counterpoints series. This book puts four important theologians from various Christian traditions into a conversation about the nature of Christian spirituality.

Bradley Nassif, professor of biblical and theological studies at North Park University, represents the Orthodox tradition. Scott Hahn, founder of the Saint Paul Center for Biblical Theology, discusses Christian spirituality from a Catholic perspective. Joseph Driskill, professor emeritus at Pacific School of Religion, enters the conversation as a mainline Protestant. The final contributor, representing evangelical spirituality, is Evan Howard, lecturer in philosophy and religion at Mesa State College and director of the Spiritual Shoppe in Grand Junction, Colorado.

The first perspective represented is Nassif's description of Orthodox spirituality. Nassif summarizes his argument by claiming, "Orthodox spirituality is above all else a gospel spirituality that is centered on Jesus Christ in his Trinitarian relations." He goes on to discuss the role that liturgy, sacraments, and Scripture play in a distinctly Orthodox spirituality. He claims that their function is to lead individuals in the community into a closer relationship with the triune God and with each other. Of course, for Nassif, this means that the destiny of the Christian is to be deified, the ultimate communion with God (p. 53). Evan Howard's response to Nassif provides an appropriate criticism by commenting on his lack



of definitions and inability to clearly distinguish Orthodox spirituality from other Christian spiritual traditions.

Second, Scott Hahn provides a robust version of Catholic spirituality. His tone and emphasis is strikingly similar to Nassif's presentation of Orthodox spirituality. Hahn underscores the importance of sonship in Catholic thought. For Hahn, Christian spirituality begins and ends with relationship to the Godhead and can be summarized with the beckoning phrase, "Come to the Father." Howard responds by noting the absence of what many would consider hallmarks of Catholic spirituality—adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, devotion to the saints, Masses on behalf of the dead, and other similar practices. This absence likely indicates Hahn's desire to distance Catholic spirituality from medieval devotional practices. But as Howard demonstrates, Catholic spirituality still reflects much of its medieval development (p. 112).

Third, Joseph Driskill supplies a mainline Protestant perspective on Christian spirituality. He emphasizes three marks of mainline spirituality—ecumenical cooperation, scholarly inquiry of the Bible, and a real sense of relationship with God. For Driskill the goal of spirituality is the love of God and neighbor, which for him are best demonstrated in ministries of social justice and compassion. While no one can disagree with his emphasis on the love of God and neighbor (cf. Mark 12:30–31), Driskill's contribution is the most precarious for several reasons. First, as Hahn notes, the spirituality described by Driskill is nothing other than American civil religion (p. 149). There is very little that is distinctly Christian about his presentation. Certainly his presentation uses Christian language, yet from a metaphysical perspective there is little that is distinctly Christian. This is evidenced in his suggestion that the faith of progressive spirituality does not rest first and foremost in the historicity of the resurrection but in its symbolic power. At many points, second, it seems that his presentation of mainline spirituality is taking its cues from cultural forces rather than time-tested truths. There is little interaction with how the Bible presents spirituality or how the church has historically understood spiritual practices.

Fourth, Evan Howard presents his understanding of evangelical spirituality. Following David Bebbington, Howard lists Scripture, the cross, conversion, and active ministry as the core distinctives of evangelicalism. He further comments that the main practices of evangelical spirituality are reading, studying, and meditating on Scripture; hearing it preached corporately; and family worship, song, and intercessory prayer. Howard places evangelicalism well within the broader Protestant forms of spirituality by interacting with the Nicene Creed, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley. He demonstrates how evangelicals have benefited in the past from other Christian traditions, while at the same time making a strong case for evangelical spirituality.

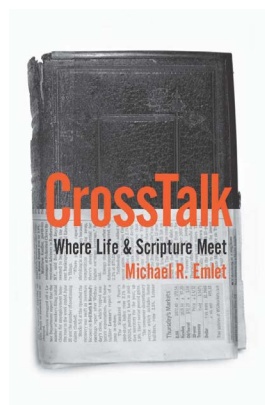
This book's greatest strength is its unique conversation partners. I was struck by the collegiality that existed between the contributors as they often sought to find common ground with one another. Hopefully, this is an indication of how future conversations between these important traditions will proceed. At the same time, none of the contributors withheld their differences. At several points there is sharp, yet charitable critique. It would have been very easy for any of the contributors to lock horns regarding doctrinal differences. While dogma has significant influence on the practice of spirituality, the authors were able to maintain their focus on the goal of the book—a conversation of Christian

spirituality. In light of the emerging spiritual generations this conversation, and this book in particular, is a constructive contribution.

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Michael R. Emlet. *Cross Talk: Where Life and Scripture Meet*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2009. 225 pp. \$15.99.

Disintegration is one of the constant dangers of ever-increasing biblical and theological specialization. As disciplines are broken down into subdisciplines, fields of study meant to work in concert can quickly become isolated entities. If we are not vigilant, an unnatural and treacherous chasm can quickly grow between theory and practice, knowledge and wisdom. *Cross Talk* by Michael Emlet, a counselor and faculty member at the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation (CCEF), is the kind of interdisciplinary work the church needs in order to guard against such atomization. Emlet notes that while there are multiple books about biblical interpretation, few help readers with the “spiritual task of connecting Scripture with life” (p. 2). He aims (and, in my opinion, succeeds) to help readers become better interpreters of both the Bible and of people.



In the first chapter, Emlet describes what he calls the Ditch vs. Canyon Phenomenon. In some instances, the distance between our lives and a biblical text is relatively short; it's like stepping over a ditch because the connections are readily apparent. But that's not so with much of the Bible. Other passages seem so culturally and historically removed from our everyday experience that they are more like canyons. “Our tendency,” says Emlet, “is to gravitate toward the ‘ditch’ passages because they seem easier to apply; it's easier to make a connection between then and now. Ditch passages resonate more quickly with our experiences. They have a greater immediacy, so we hang out in these tried-and-true passages and we skim—or avoid altogether—those pesky canyon passages” (p. 7). The result is that while we confess the whole Bible's inspiration and profitability for all of life (2 Tim 3:16), functionally “we end up ministering with an embarrassingly thinner but supposedly more relevant Bible” (p. 16). Emlet helps Christians reclaim the Bible's thickness. “What I'm trying to do is to push you a bit, to encourage you to get out of familiar ruts. I want you to see that more difficult (canyon) passages still apply to our lives . . . . I want your Bible to ‘grow’ in its applicability” (p. 87).

After claiming that our conceptions about what the Bible essentially is determine how we interpret and apply it (p. 23), Emlet lists several popular notions (a book of ethical commands and prohibitions, a book of timeless principles for life's problems, a casebook of characters whose examples are to be imitated or avoided, a system of doctrines) and explains why they fail as accurate descriptions of what the Bible is primarily about. In contrast to these, Emlet contends that the Bible is primarily a narrative of God's revelatory words and works in which Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of all of God's promises and the solution to human sin and suffering. “In the day-to-day ordinariness of our lives, and perhaps particularly in the face of struggle, it is difficult to grasp that we are part of a larger story in which we



play a vital part. A kingdom-centered or Christ-centered view of Scripture keeps our royal identity and purpose always before us” (p. 44).

As the book’s subtitle indicates, the author’s aim is to help Christians become better able to minister to each other by wisely and compassionately bringing the christocentric narrative of the Bible into meaningful contact with the narratives of each other’s lives. Emlet notes, “Reading the Bible without reading the person is a recipe for irrelevance in ministry. Reading the person without reading the Bible is a recipe for ministry lacking the life-changing power of the Spirit working through his Word” (p. 90)

In an attempt to make sense of our lives, each of us relies on a complex of largely unconscious beliefs and assumptions about ourselves (e.g., our identity and purpose) and the world. “Ministry,” says Emlet, “is about helping others see the storylines by which they are living” (p. 71). Failure to recognize the dominant story that is shaping and directing the course of one’s life leads to a solution-focused approach that looks “a lot like putting out multiple brushfires” and that will likely neglect what most needs to be addressed (p. 79).

An insight that I found particularly helpful has to do with the importance of simultaneously thinking of believers in terms of three categories: saint, sinner, and sufferer. The Christian’s fundamental identity is that of a regenerated, forgiven, and accepted child of God. Though sin’s power has been broken, sin’s presence remains, influencing our motives, thoughts, and actions. To varying degrees and in different ways, we are likewise sufferers by virtue of the fact that we have been sinned against, and we live in a fallen world. We tend to focus on one or perhaps two of these fronts when we seek to help fellow believers but doing so results in a truncated understanding of the person we’re trying to help as well as a failure to bring necessary truths to bear on a person’s life. “We use the Bible in multifaceted ways: (1) The Bible *confirms* the identity of the saint; (2) The Bible *comforts* the sufferer; and (3) The Bible *confronts* the sinner. Confirmation, comfort, and confrontation—all have a place in personal ministry, and the Scriptures function in all three modes” (p. 101).

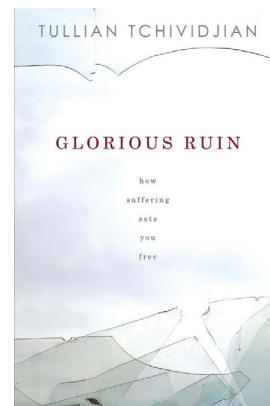
A chapter called “Connecting the Stories,” offers a number of helpful guidelines for using Scripture in personal ministry and illustrates how application consists of bringing a passage’s meaning derived from its original and expanded (i.e., redemptive-historical) contexts into contact with a person’s particular situation. This is followed by three chapters in which Emlet illustrates what his redemptive-historical approach to counseling looks like with two case studies, using NT and OT “ditch” passages.

Years ago, a student graduating with a seminary degree in counseling lamented that she had learned a lot but was disappointed because she wasn’t taught how to actually use the Scriptures in the course of her ministry. *Cross Talk* is a valuable resource for such instruction. Who should read *Cross Talk*? Pastors who feel comfortable with biblical interpretation and sermonic delivery but less confident about their ability to map biblical truths onto the specifics of a person’s life in a one-on-one encounter will surely benefit as will Christian counselors desirous of being intentionally biblical in their theory and practice. However, it would, in my opinion, be a grievous error to think of *Cross Talk* as a volume reserved primarily for those serving in these vocations. The ministry of applying the gospel to each other’s lives is one to which every believer is called. Michael Emlet has made a rich and substantive contribution to equipping Christians toward that end.

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Tullian Tchividjian. *Glorious Ruin: How Suffering Sets You Free*. Colorado Springs: Cook, 2012. 208 pp. \$17.99.

Our inclination as believers is to think that pain must be explained. Believers need to grasp the specific reason and particular purpose of their pain, right? Do you have to understand the “why” of your suffering in order to be a faithful Christian? In *Glorious Ruin*, Tullian Tchividjian marshals a variety of theological resources to equip his readers to answer this query with a resounding *no*. Pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Florida, Tchividjian writes with a pastor’s heart and from a pastoral context. He explains that the book began as a series of sermons on the book of Job in the wake of a season of personal pain (p. 13). Beginning with the premise that “suffering is suffering, and it is universal,” Tchividjian aims “to explore how the reality of human suffering, in all its forms, might relate to the truth of God’s liberating grace in a way that is both honest and comforting” (p. 15).



Tchividjian engages the issue of suffering in three parts. He first reflects on the reality of suffering. Tchividjian demonstrates that suffering is inevitable, serious, and something believers should be able to encounter honestly. Tchividjian next examines two typical responses to this harsh reality. When facing hardship, we tend to either moralize or minimize suffering. To *moralize* suffering involves thinking that painful situations are the consequences of some negative action or disobedience. This perspective asserts, “If you are suffering, you have done something to merit it. Pain is proof” (p. 100). Tchividjian illustrates this approach by examining and critiquing the prosperity gospel (which says suffering is due to a lack of faith) and the “gospel of self-transformation” (which says suffering is simply an opportunity for self-improvement). To *minimize* suffering involves “any attempt to downplay or reduce the extent and nature of pain” (p. 120). This approach always looks for the it’s-not-so-bad silver lining in every painful situation. The assumption beneath this way of thinking is that “if the Holy Spirit is working, the sufferer would feel better” (p. 122). To minimize pain is to believe that “if I just do the right thing or just obey enough, God will be pleased, and I will hurt less” (p. 130).

Tchividjian seeks to offer an alternative to these responses in the final step in his reflection, which focuses on the cross of Christ. Rather than minimize or moralize suffering, Tchividjian encourages believers to embrace what he calls the “freedom of defeat” (p. 139). Because the gospel centers on a Savior who has already suffered on our behalf, a believer can cling to his promises and mercy in the midst of pain. Rather than holding on to our own ability to handle or even understand suffering, God intends to liberate us from such a mindset and bring us to trust solely in him. “The cross,” Tchividjian asserts, “makes a mockery of our attempts to defend and deliver ourselves” (p. 131). The suffering in this life therefore exposes our fundamental need, the need to rest only in the gospel. The book ends by pointing to our future hope. As Tchividjian says, “Pain and suffering loosen our grip on this temporal life” (p. 177). With this understanding, the more profound the pain, the more profound can be our yielding to God and trusting in him. The Christian has the promise not of “freedom from suffering,” but rather “freedom in and through suffering” (p. 175).

Perhaps the most helpful insight of this book is that believers are not required to understand the anatomy of suffering in order to redeem it. They must simply cling to their redeemer. Christians do not have to minimize or moralize their pain. They have the freedom to fail, and this failure includes the

inability to respond rightly in the midst of inexplicable pain. You do not have to burden yourself with the pressure to explain or even understand why you hurt, or how it will all work out in the end. The gospel allows us to cast away “the idol of explanation” (p. 152). We do not need to understand why we are suffering because no matter what we are enduring we can always look at the cross and see that from an ultimate viewpoint, Christ suffered in our place.

One lingering concern regarding the overall message of the book relates to the matter of perspective. Tchividjian provides a clear demonstration of the reality of suffering and gives an incisive critique of various attempts to minimize and moralize pain. However, when he provides his own response in the third section of his book, there might be room for those same critiques. Some of Tchividjian’s own formulations might be viewed as a subtle form of moralizing or minimizing. For instance, he begins his discussion of the “freedom of defeat” with a story of a man who lost his social and financial standing due to scandal. This situation led to brokenness and a restoration within the family. Tchividjian notes that this story is “a powerful testimony of how suffering can liberate us” (p. 141). In this case, the failure brought freedom. Though “there is zero sense that he viewed his crisis as an avenue for personal growth,” Tchividjian adds, “yet real transformation did happen!” (p. 141). In a personal example, Tchividjian recounts a painful season at his church and also the things he learned through this relational suffering. He clarifies, “This is not to say that every cloud has a silver lining, or some such nonsense. That would be a minimization. It is only to say that if the past five years have taught me anything, it is this: I would never have received any clarity about the beauty of the gospel if I hadn’t first been forced to face the ugliness of my sin and idolatry at the foot of the cross” (p. 153). Throughout this section of the book there are several similar clarifications (e.g., pp. 141, 153, 175). These examples do not easily and intentionally moralize or minimize the pain, but the end result resembles these strategies for understanding suffering, strategies Tchividjian himself rejects. In the first, the painful situation was put into perspective by the outcome of restored relationship, and in the second, the season of suffering was outweighed by the spiritual formation that resulted.

Tchividjian seeks to redeem these objections through their connection to the Redeemer. In all suffering, that is, believers must remember the gospel message that Jesus has both suffered on our behalf and freed us from the need to be able to understand our pain. The Christian response is not that believers will not suffer, but rather that “God [will be] somehow present in it” (p. 112). The hopeful word that a believer can offer is that “God is *right* there, not somewhere else” (p. 123). Jesus was sent not only to suffer in our place “but also to suffer with us” (p. 195). This point is the hinge on which Tchividjian’s entire response to suffering turns. If this element is removed, Tchividjian maintains, then any response will be marred with misguided optimism or hurtful moralizing. The gospel does not require that you suffer like a rock star but rather reminds you that God will never forsake you because Jesus was forsaken on your behalf.

With pastoral sensitivity, Tchividjian reminds us that sadness is not an improper response to the “problem of pain.” This sadness can be redeemed by turning to one who felt that sorrow more deeply than we ever will and who has already accounted for our miserable failure to make sense of suffering. By his “ruin” on the cross, he has redeemed ours.

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Paul David Tripp. *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012. 227 pp. \$22.99.

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Paul Tripp, a former pastor and the president of Paul Tripp Ministries, carries with him “grief and concern about the state of pastoral culture in our generation” (p. 21). His book, *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*, does exactly as the subtitle indicates: it confronts. As Tripp notes from the outset, the primary goal of this book is not necessarily to instruct or encourage, but to diagnose a problem; a diagnosis that is intended “to make you uncomfortable” (pp. 11–12). This book grew out of Tripp’s own pastoral experience and interaction with hundreds of churches and was written because he “could not live with not writing it” (p. 12).

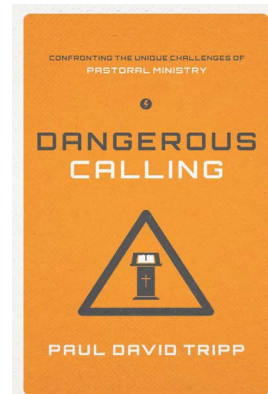
Part 1 diagnoses the problem with pastoral culture. The opening chapter is primarily autobiographical, recounting how Tripp’s early years as a pastor were marked by anger, pride, and a developing “disconnect between the public pastoral persona and the private man” (p. 21). Chapter 2 moves a step forward by noting how his experience is not unique. Many pastors are in significant spiritual trouble and are blind to it. Why is this? We might summarize Tripp’s answer with two unhealthy separations: the separation of the pastor’s head from his heart, and the separation of the pastor from community. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the first of these, demonstrating the neglect of the heart in pastoral training and ministry. We have often “academized Christianity” and equated head-knowledge with spiritual maturity. Chapters 5 and 6 tackle the second separation, demonstrating that pastors have often neglected community, which is “the normal means of personal spiritual health and growth” for Christians (p. 87).

Parts 2 and 3 focus on two dangers every pastor continually faces, the danger of “losing your awe” in God, and the danger of cultivating a prideful sense of “arrival.” There is much overlap between the various chapters in these sections, and they pick up on themes already introduced in the first part. Rather than reviewing each chapter, we can get the sense by noting several themes: (1) seek horizontally from others what you already have vertically in Christ; (2) you can’t give to others what you don’t have yourself; (3) your ministry is always shaped by the condition of your heart; (4) there is a potential disparity between the pastor’s public persona and his private person; and (5) every pastor is in the middle of his sanctification. All these are problems that arise when pastors no longer preach to themselves the same gospel that they preach to others (p. 222).

Several strengths stand out in this excellent book. First, Tripp is successful in what he seeks to accomplish. His goal is to diagnose the problem with pastors and pastoral culture. There are many directions he could have taken, but he seems to have gotten to the heart of the matter, which is a matter of the heart. This book assumes that many pastors’ primary problem is not a lack of preaching skill, theological knowledge, or time management, but a failure to recognize and fight an “inner war” for the affections of our heart.

Second, Tripp wisely and thoroughly explores this central problem. This is a profound, perceptive, and insightful book. Like a good spiritual doctor, Tripp thoroughly explores potential problems in a pastor’s soul and asks heart-level, probing questions for personal reflection.

Third, given the nature of the problem he is addressing, the tone of the book is appropriately serious, even prophetic. Tripp is consistently earnest and often includes statements such as “this might make you



mad” or “what I’m about to say will probably get me in trouble.” And yet such prophetic force is coupled with humble transparency. Many of his examples of sin were from his own life, and he acknowledges that he wrote much of the material with personal conviction and tears. In this way, he actually models the kind of openness and transparency that he’s after. The overall picture is not of Tripp pointing his finger at others, but pointing it at himself and inviting others to practice similar self-diagnosis.

Weaknesses of *Dangerous Calling* lie not in the substance of the material but in aspects of its presentation. It seemed repetitious in two ways. First, the central themes are very thoroughly and insightfully introduced, explained, and illustrated early in the book, but then repeatedly picked up for additional rounds of further explanation and illustration later on. This created the sense of circling around and around the same topics rather than a forward movement in the book. Second, while this book is well-written, some aspects of style could have been minimized. In particular, strings of sentences often begin with the same word or phrase. A string of 22 insightful rhetorical questions, for example, each began with “how many pastors” or “how many of us” (p. 126). Additionally, nearly every chapter has numerous rhetorical, heart-searching questions. These are excellent and important, but it becomes difficult to engage with a dozen of them strung together at so many places throughout the book. It seems counterintuitive, but as the amount of questions increase, their ability to engage the reader might decrease. Such repetition results in the sense that the clarity, thoughtfulness, and force of the book could be maintained in perhaps half the length. Such conciseness would also allow the book to be more accessible to the readership he intends to reach, which is much wider than pastors.

This is an important, serious, personal, and profound book. Although its length and redundancy might hinder its wide circulation and enduring use, no other book speaks this insightfully and directly to the current culture of the pastorate. Minor weaknesses aside, therefore, it should receive wide distribution and discussion. Pastors, seminary professors, and pastors-in-training should read this book. Others should at least become familiar with the central ideas and discuss them with those in ministry. With Tripp, I hope this book fertilizes the conversation regarding the health of our evangelical pastoral culture.

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Kent A. Van Til. *The Moral Disciple: An Introduction to Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. x + 160 pp. \$18.00.

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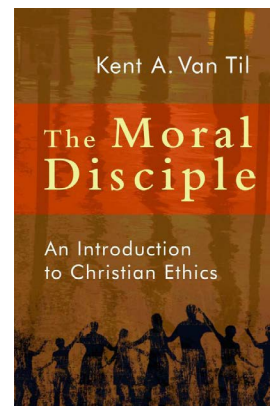
Kent Van Til, a former missionary to Costa Rica, has been a visiting professor of religion at Hope College and has also taught at Catholic Theological Union, Huyper College, Marquette University, and ESEPA Seminary in Costa Rica. He is the author of the widely read 2007 text *Less Than Two Dollars a Day: A Christian View of World Poverty and the Free Market*. A seasoned theologian and professional ethicist, Van Til is well-qualified to write this book.

As its subtitle suggests, this book is a short introduction to the field of Christian ethics. Van Til states in his opening chapter that his purpose in writing is that “by interacting with this text, [the reader] will become more clear about and conscious of . . . moral life” (p. 7). He aims to achieve this broad goal by presenting his material in three main sections that constitute the ten chapters of *The Moral Disciple*. Structurally speaking, after presenting some introductory and foundational material in the first two chapters, Van Til’s three main sections are: Character (chs. 3–5), Norms (chs. 6–8), and Consequences (chs. 9–10). Taken together, these ten chapters cover Van Til’s understanding of the basic elements of a system of Christian ethics.

There is much to commend about *The Moral Disciple*. As readers of his earlier work can testify, Van Til’s writing style is very simple and basic, making the text easy to read. Van Til explains difficult and complex issues in such a way as to make them understandable even by those unfamiliar with the field. This book also includes a number of charts, as well as case studies in the margins that illustrate the concepts and principles Van Til presents. Each chapter also contains study questions and a “For Further Reading” section at its conclusion. Additionally, the publisher included a comprehensive index that is helpful even in a book of such short length.

The above benefits notwithstanding, there are several drawbacks of *The Moral Disciple* of which readers ought to be aware. One such critique is the overly general and moderate style and content of this book. One gets the idea that Van Til is trying not to offend any readers as he writes. While this is a commendable goal, it is possible to be so general in one’s writing that one fails to communicate anything specific. This approach leads Van Til to mention fringe theologies (e.g., liberation theology, feminist theology), alternative religions (e.g., Islam, Hinduism), and clearly extra-biblical ideas (e.g., the distinction between venial and mortal sins) in such a way that leaves the reader wondering if Van Til is for or against such concepts. Moreover, some of Van Til’s teachings are troubling, at least at first glance. For example, “good and evil is quite relative” (p. 10); “the Bible is not always a clear moral map” (p. 18); and “in the Bible, moral norms . . . develop over time” (p. 19). Of course, readers should read these statements in the context of the book itself, yet they are representative of the generalist, moderate, and at times perplexing teachings throughout the book.

One final area of critique is Van Til’s understanding of the three parts of morality. As his three major sections reveal, he identifies the three basic parts of morality to be character, norms, and consequences. A potential issue with this rubric is Van Til’s identification of consequences as a normative part of Christian ethics. While most ethicists would agree with Van Til’s teachings on character and norms, historically Protestants have viewed the third component of a moral equation to be teleological in orientation, not consequential. Van Til’s replacement of teleology (i.e., goals) with consequences (i.e.,



utility) leads him to endorse a Christianized greater good utilitarianism. Despite Van Til's attempt to rescue utilitarianism with nuance, his ideas here seem to fall outside historically orthodox, Protestant ethics.

The above critiques notwithstanding, *The Moral Disciple* is a helpful book. While conservative evangelicals may disagree with aspects of this book—such as the endorsement of the preferential option for the poor, the use of the generic “she,” and a developmental view of conscience, among others—reading this book is time well spent.

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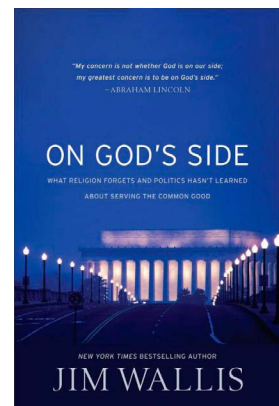
Jim Wallis. *On God's Side: What Religion Forgets and Politics Hasn't Learned about Serving the Common Good*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2013. 320 pp. \$21.99.

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Jim Wallis is president and CEO of Sojourners. In his new book, *On God's Side*, Wallis outlines three foci for his book: (1) expanding the concept of conversion beyond “just the destiny of the soul”; (2) establishing a form of Christianity not associated with either the political right or left; and (3) emphasizing the importance of faith being lived out for the common good (pp. 4–5). Wallis attempts to accomplish this in fourteen chapters, divided into two parts.

In the first part, seven chapters explain and promote the concept of common good. Wallis begins by laying out his version of the gospel in the first chapter, “A Gospel for the Common Good.” The second chapter is based on Wallis's premise that “Who we think Jesus is will determine the kind of Christianity we live” (p. 25). In this chapter, Wallis compares an image of the “conservative” gospel as the “atonement only” gospel, arguing that conservative churches deal only with discipleship in relation to sexuality (p. 29). The third chapter describes Wallis's concept of why Jesus came to earth: mainly to bring about social justice in his own time (p. 45). Chapter four emphasizes the importance of community service (particularly to the poor) as service rendered to God, emphasizing the importance of Matt 25. Wallis uses chapter five to provide an interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Chapter six articulates an argument against nationalism, and chapter seven argues for broad ecumenicalism in pursuit of the common good.

The second part also consists of seven chapters. Here Wallis outlines practical actions to take for the common good. Chapter eight is an argument for civility in public discourse. The ninth chapter lays out Wallis's dislike for voter identification laws as well as monetary influence in politics, as particularly evidenced by the massive spending in the most recent presidential election. Chapter ten outlines Wallis's desire for a morally responsible market, arguing for more governmental regulation, local purchasing, and greater equality in salaries. In chapter eleven, Wallis argues for a servant government that creates new laws to enforce social justice by protecting people from each other and themselves. The last three chapters argue for continued advocacy for social justice in the public square, stronger families, and global advocacy for social justice, respectively. Wallis concludes the book with a brief epilogue that outlines ten application points for readers to implement.



There are two significant strengths to Wallis's *On God's Side*. First, Wallis focuses on many of the important topics that need to be discussed. The significant emphasis on poverty alleviation, restoring the integrity of the American political system, and the church's engagement in living out the implications of the gospel in public are all very important and timely topics. Wallis does a very good job of highlighting some major areas for concern. The second strength of this book is that Wallis is winsome in explaining his positions. The book is a good read, and the concepts that are explained are very lucid and logically organized. Overall this was an artfully written book.

There are also several significant weaknesses in *On God's Side*. First, Wallis conflates the implications of the gospel with the gospel itself. He argues that conversion "means focusing on instead of ignoring our neighbor, letting the poor *move us* instead of *servicing us*, and learning how to understand and even love our enemies instead of just hating and seeking to defeat them" (p. 9). For Wallis, conversion is advocacy for social cause, rather than the redemption from sin. Wallis never seeks to resolve the tension between his view of conversion and that advocated by more traditional evangelicals.

A second weakness of this book is that Wallis assumes the methods for promoting social justice unquestioningly follow his assertions of the importance of justice on each issue. For example, nearly all evangelicals accept the importance of poverty alleviation, yet many conservative evangelicals would argue that centralized government programs are often ineffective and therefore undesirable. Wallis goes so far as to argue that opposition to federal poverty programs is opposition to the gospel (pp. 23–24). This pattern is repeated with Wallis's opposition to voter identification requirements (pp. 185–87), promotion of increased environmental regulations (pp. 212–13), and advocacy for same-sex marriage (p. 268).

A third significant weakness in *On God's Side* is that Wallis fails to engage differing views. Although Wallis calls for "contributions and answers from varying points of view" (p. 158), he cites only anecdotal information relating to conservative positions, and he is not consistently representative of those views. For example, Wallis frequently references a narrow stream of theology related to his upbringing in a particular denomination as normative for all conservative evangelical theology (p. 29). He asserts that "as far as teaching us how to live now or how to be a follower of Jesus on this earth, we don't hear very much from the conservative churches" (p. 29). This statement reflects the general tone of the book regarding conservatives and indicates a lack of awareness to the growing number of conservative evangelicals who are actively promoting justice.

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— MISSION AND CULTURE —

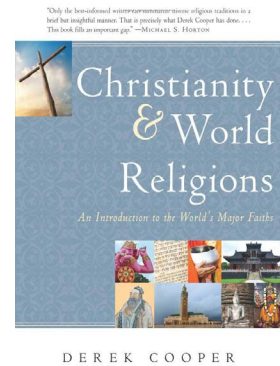
Derek Cooper. *Christianity and World Religions: An Introduction to the World's Major Faiths*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2013. xxi + 215 pp. £14.99/\$19.99.

Picking up this book, my first impressions were that it is far too short compared to its subject matter. As I glanced through the contents page, I felt certain that the book attempts too great a challenge: to outline, in roughly 200 pages, not only “Six Rival Stories of the World” (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Judaism, and Islam), but also a selection of biblical and theological responses to other religions. Surely, I thought, this book is going to be overly simplistic.

Yet I needn't have feared. Cooper's overviews of the other religions are consistently insightful, and his descriptions of different Christian theologies of religions (“Inclusivism,” “Exclusivism,” “Pluralism,” “Universalism,” and “Particularism”), though brief, are very fair, quoting key proponents, including Rahner and Hick, and drawing out crucial distinctions, such as between “special” and “general” revelation.

Perhaps what I appreciate most about Cooper's book is its sense of “balance” manifest in several ways. First, Cooper's summaries of each religion keep in view both the “woods” and the “trees.” In his chapter on Hinduism, Cooper helpfully orients the reader to “perhaps the most diverse of all the major religions” (p. 15) by outlining Hinduism's historical emergence and its nine core beliefs before then explaining how these beliefs find varied expression in the main schools of Hindu worship today. Second, along with illustrating major points in each chapter using the primary texts of the world's main religions—with which he demonstrates an impressive familiarity—Cooper's considerable practical experience interacting with religious adherents in real life also is evident, such that his analyses are informed both by academic and by practical observations. Third, Cooper's *breadth* of knowledge enables him to draw parallels between the different religions; yet his *depth* of knowledge guards against superficiality, as he carefully sets out each religious system on its own terms, rather than measured against a grid of specifically “Christian” criteria. Finally, while sometimes technical, his material is quite fun to read! Cooper dedicates his book to “the countless individuals who have sat attentively in classes and churches as I discussed Christianity and world religions” (p. v). No doubt partly due to those years of classroom experience, the reader now benefits from an accessible reading style supported by attractive charts, diagrams, colour photos, and even an appendix of “Projects, Essays, and Worldview Questions” to facilitate further study.

Descriptively, the book is excellent. My only quibbles are with the chapter on Islam. Cooper's presentation of Islam's origins seems overly sanitised and (apart from a brief footnote) lacking in awareness of the latest critical historical research (e.g., Dan Gibson, *Qur'anic Geography* and at a popular level Tom Holland, *In the Shadow of the Sword*). Also regrettably, Sufism is mentioned only briefly (as a research question in the appendix) and “folk Islam” not at all, perhaps reflecting Cooper's greater interaction with Muslims in the USA instead of those in Islam's traditional heartlands. Other than this, however, Cooper successfully delivers what his title promises: *An Introduction to the World's Major Faiths*.



Prescriptively, the book is weaker. When mentioning Confucian ancestor worship (p. 72) and Hindu yoga (p. 176), Cooper offers no suggestions for how readers might begin to evaluate these controversial practices biblically. One of the book's stated aims is to encourage Christians to visit non-Christian places of worship (p. 197), and to this end he provides "Appendix C: A Guide to Visiting Non-Christian Worship Spaces." However, apart from a reminder to pray beforehand, this appendix reads like a secular tour guide and gives no advice about issues related to spiritual warfare.

The biggest disappointments are the "Point of Contact" sections which conclude the chapters on each religion. Cooper's understanding of religions as whole systems leads him, rightly, to warn against the dangers of potentially syncretistic characterisations of Jesus, whether as, say, the impersonal Dao of Daoism (p. 74), or as just another "yoga" (way) in Hinduism (p. 22). After sounding these warnings, however, Cooper generally has little more to recommend positively. A notable exception comes in his chapter on Buddhism, in which he locates a "Point of Contact," not within the other religion itself, but within our common human nature. He then argues that, where Buddhism here falls short, this innate human desire is truly fulfilled through the gospel. On page 48, he quotes Sadhu Singh:

Some say that desire is the root cause of all pain and sorrow. According to this philosophy, salvation consists in eliminating all desire, including any desire for eternal bliss or communion with God. But when someone is thirsty, do we tell him to kill his thirst instead of giving him water to drink?

Cooper then comments: "Jesus is the true living water. . . . Our desire for water, in other words, does not need to be overcome. Rather, our desire for water needs to be brought to completion . . . ." Analogous to the "subversive-fulfilment" approach advocated by Daniel Strange, this seems like the ideal approach to locating evangelistic "Points of Contact," not only with Buddhists and Hindus, but with followers of all religions and of none.

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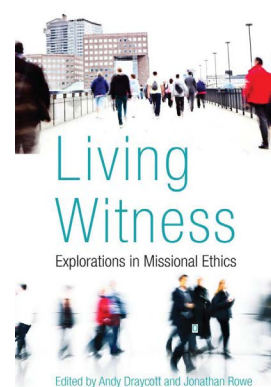
Andy Draycott and Jonathan Rowe, eds. *Living Witness: Explorations in Missional Ethics*. Nottingham, UK: IVP, 2012. 304 pp. £16.99/\$35.00.

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Can "mission" inspire a fresh ethical paradigm that might, in new ways, help the church live faithfully as a people called to proclaim the gospel? *Living Witness: Explorations in Missional Ethics* is a collection of essays geared toward educated church leaders that attempts to provide both foundational and practical guidance in articulating a new model for doing Christian ethics.

What is "missional ethics" and what might such an ethic look like?

The editors identify the heart of missional ethics in the *missio Dei*, the mission of God. This locates the source of the church's moral witness in God's ongoing reconciling work. God goes before his people on mission. A missional ethics is, therefore, God-shaped. But, we are told, it is also story-shaped, community-shaped, and 'other shaped'; all of which are the case because they correspond to aspects of the shape of God's mission. Against a rigid assertion of a new program, the



editors emphasize that the best that can be offered is an outline, an acknowledgement of the priority of God and his mission for Christian ethics. This makes our moral work provisional, at best. “What is missional ethics? . . . it is all the ways in which Christian ethical practice flows out of, supports and advances the wider mission of the church to proclaim the gospel—in other words, the church’s living witness” (p. 31).

Beginning with Christopher J. H. Wright’s somewhat unsatisfactory survey, the volume attempts to orient the collection around broad and sweeping biblical, theological themes. Sometimes such overviews are necessary, but they seldom make for absorbing reading. Brian Brock’s essay, on the other hand, is an engaging and imaginative look at the theme of mission as gardening. Mission is not a “world-remaking project,” he claims, but rather, like the task of the gardener who tends with care, “images God the more it is stripped of its pretensions to control and mastery” (p. 58).

The rest of the essays in the first section (titled “Foundations”) continue to cover broad theological themes: Hope (Grant Macaskill), Church (Matt Jenson), and Preaching (Andy Draycott). Most notably, Jenson’s essay attempts a missional approach to homosexuality. His dismissal of it in a move that equates homosexuality with mere desire (p. 110) may come across to many in the gay community as identity-denying. Jenson’s example of his lesbian friend, rather than reinforcing his argument, simply reinforces how problematic mission is to a people-group whose own self-identification is reckoned sinful by the missionary. These are difficult issues, but one should not, as Jenson does, dismiss the question of homosexuality as settled on deontological grounds and proceed to a missional articulation of the fallout as if that’s really the issue (p. 96). What I would like to know from Jenson is how a missional ethics derived from a biblical-theological framework might inform the very question of sexual morality, especially the question of homosexuality. Toward this end, Jenson’s treatment of homosexuality *is* couched in a helpful discussion of the church as family, putting both hetero- and homosexuals to the test, and that is certainly a welcome contribution to the discussion by all parties who care deeply about these issues.

Sarah Ruble’s essay begins the second section on “Issues.” Her historical look at the way that the ‘evangelism versus service’ controversies were packaged by *Christianity Today* since the 1960s is fascinating and well worth the time. Ruble helps us see how the very conversations we’re having are shaped by unexamined power arrangements. For example, she writes, “Packaging evangelism and service as gender-neutral categories did not preclude the possibility that they were being defined through the lens of male experience—it simply made it more difficult to see that the normative voices on mission were not un-gendered, but male” (p. 154).

The “issues” section follows with essays on “Families” (Joshua Hordern), “Friendship” (Guido de Graaff), and “Politics” (Jonathan Chaplin). In an essay on “Servanthood,” Nathan John Moser looks at the Isaianic servant texts as a way of discovering what the servant motif actually looks like for mission. In dialogue with the Latin American context, Moser asks some hard questions and is unflinching in his analysis of the contrast implied between the servant and the leadership models at work in South America (and elsewhere).

Sean Doherty’s essay on “Money” asks us to see trust in God as the missional act that robs money of its power over us, and proclaims the good news of God’s trustworthiness. Doherty is not trying to make friends in this essay with good, conservative, economics; rather, he challenges precisely those economic assumptions by warning against the sin of hoarding by which we rely on wealth for our security. “Storing up” (Matt 6:19) betrays the trustworthiness of God.

Finally, M. Daniel Carroll R. ends with an essay on “Immigration,” bringing welcome biblical clarity to the debate. God’s own mission has been to create, initially, a migratory and alien people whose homeland is, for much of the story, simply a promise. If this is so, can we be part of God’s mission without a deep love and concern for—and abiding presence with—the immigrant?

*Living Witness* presents a collection of essays that attempt to locate the ethical task in response, not to ethical situations, but rather to the God who is on mission. His act in reconciling the world is primary, and so his continuing mission leads the way. We are invited to follow and engage in living witness. In the best of these essays, we are reminded that God has revealed himself in his mission to those outside, to those in poverty, and to those who suffer. To the extent that Christian ethics thinks and acts in line with this missionary movement of God, it does so in the right direction.

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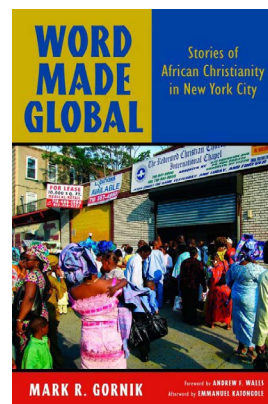
Mark R. Gornik. *Word Made Global: Stories of African Christianity in New York City*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. xii + 348 pp. £19.23/\$30.00.

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Today nearly one out of every four Christians lives in Africa. This changing “center of gravity” of the world Christian movement has prompted Andrew Walls to claim that “anyone who wishes to undertake serious study of Christianity these days needs to know something about Africa” (*International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 24:3 [2000]: 106). While the demographic changes of the global church have become almost yesterday’s news among students of World Christianity, many people still get no further than maps, graphs, and statistics. In *Word Made Global*, Mark Gornik (Director of City Seminary, NYC) takes us beyond demographics in providing a colorful mosaic of Christians in New York City whose customs of praying, ways of reading the Scriptures, and modes of living missionally are all informed by the dynamism of African Christianity.

Though interacting with themes such as globalization and urbanization, the real strength of *Word Made Global* resides in its ethnographic portrayal of the spirituality, theology, and Christian mission embodied and articulated by three NYC diaspora congregations from West Africa: the Presbyterian Church of Ghana in Harlem, the Church of the Lord (Aladura) in the Bronx and the Redeemed Christian Church of God International Chapel, Brooklyn. The congregations represent three of the dominant streams of Protestant Christianity in Africa: historic/mission-founded, Independent/Indigenous (AICs), and Pentecostal/Charismatic.

After a succinct overview of African Christianity and its diaspora churches in New York City as well as an interesting migratory history of the city in chapter one, chapters two (“Pastors at Work”) and three (“Liturgy and Life”) undertake a biographical portrayal of the spiritual leaders of the three churches and the dynamics involved in birthing a church in a global city. Chapters four through six represent the theological center of *Word Made Global* as Gornik engages in a descriptive analysis of three dominant ecclesial practices: prayer, appropriating the Scriptures, and mission. Chapter seven gives an account of “reverse pilgrimages” as depicted in sacred events celebrated in the three church traditions in Africa



which have been reframed in NYC to foster a sense of community and religious belonging across geographical boundaries. For the quintessential snapshot illustrating the rise of global Pentecostalism, one may need to look no further than the Redeemed Christian Church of God—“considered the fastest growing Pentecostal church in Nigeria and Africa” (p. 110)—which celebrated its “Ninth Annual North American Convention” for three days at the most recognizable public venue in New York: Madison Square Garden (pp. 222–23). African Pentecostalism, even across the Atlantic, has indeed come of age. Finally, chapter eight explores the faith of the second generation of Christians and the future of African Christian diaspora churches.

As studies of African Christianity are often dominated by anthropologists and social scientists, *Word Made Global* is refreshing in that Christian practices and theological reflection within the NYC churches are prominently featured. An entire chapter devoted to the spirituality and dynamics of prayer undoubtedly reflects Gornik’s own pastoral experience and involvement in theological education. Gornik writes, “What do I know without ambiguity after my years of worshiping with African Christians? They pray. They pray standing up, they pray moving around, they pray kneeling down, they pray in loud voices, they pray all night” (p. 127). One question which Gornik raises is whether such prayers center upon an attempt to manipulate God in order to produce external pragmatic benefits—the prosperity gospel being the most conspicuous example. Interestingly, despite highlighting the earthiness of the prayers in all three churches, Gornik concludes, “I did not recall hearing a prayer that suggested God would materially reward faith or prayers” (p. 157). Yet Gornik’s reluctance to highlight the prosperity gospel as an identifying feature of the Redeemed Christian Church of God—the General Overseer E. A. Adeboye in Nigeria owns a private jet (Sunday Oguntola, “Private Jets for Jesus,” *Christianity Today*, Dec. 10, 2012)—seems to mitigate against his more “positive” portrayal of the diaspora churches. Moreover, Gornik’s suggestion that the African diaspora churches would do well to promote a more robust and healthy connection between a theology of suffering and the cross with the power of the resurrection in a concluding chapter (pp. 275–76) seems inconsistent with his earlier dismissal (pp. 150–59) of any vestiges of the prosperity gospel in those very same churches.

With respect to missional praxis, Gornik prefers not to utilize the term “reverse mission” which connotes a re-evangelization of the West to characterize the practices of the diaspora churches. Rather, the churches engage in “mission intertwined with migration” (p. 182). Gornik suggests that such “missionaries” raise no financial support, require no language training and do not go home on furlough. These migrant missionaries live as residents in a global city and pursue employment options in their vocations while participating in churches which empower ministry through de-centralized ministry structures (pp. 208–209, 215). The underlying challenge to the traditional Western missionary paradigm, steeped in structured bureaucracy and dependence on Western money, is deeply instructive.

Despite a few qualms, *Word Made Global* represents an outstanding contribution which helps us move beyond the mere demographics of World Christianity. As Walls recognizes in the foreword, “this is not only a book about diasporas” (p. xii) but about the wider contours and trajectories of the rise of the Christian faith in Africa and the themes and theologies currently characterizing African Christianity.

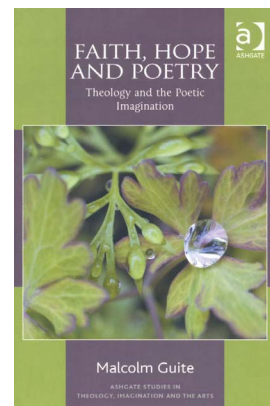
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Malcolm Guite. *Faith, Hope, and Poetry: Theology and the Poetic Imagination*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012. 257 pp. £19.99/\$35.96.

Adding to a growing number of voices charging the Christian faith to see its calling as the manifestation of a distinctly “poetic imagination” is Malcolm Guite’s *Faith, Hope and Poetry: Theology and the Poetic Imagination*. What makes Guite’s work striking is his claim that poetry has the capacity to redress our post-Enlightenment reductivism by offering not merely an illustrative assist, but rather a “transformed vision,” with poetry being a carrier of a type of knowledge in its own right. To support his claim, Guite provides a close reading of some of the richest theological poetry in the English language, from the seventh century Old English verse found in *The Dream of the Rood*, to the contemporary work of Nobel Prize winner Seamus Heaney. Those along for the ride are to be rewarded with an immensely rich and vivid account of poetry as an essential source of Christian truth.



After an introduction that presents the problem (a split between reason and imagination) and his proposed solution (the poetic imagination), the first chapter explores the poetic inculturation of the Christian faith in the Norse dream-poetry of *The Dream of The Rood*. Appealing to the conversion of C. S. Lewis, Guite argues that the same exercise of poetic imagination is necessary for contemporary faith. In the second chapter, Guite takes up the famous dialogue of Theseus and Hippolyta in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and Prospero’s speech in *The Tempest* to evince the critical role imagination plays in accounting for life’s mysteries. Continuing with this discussion, the third chapter offers a close reading of Sir John Davies’s two great poems, *Orchestra* and *Nosce Teipsum*. These poems display the genre’s power to magnify our understanding of the world. Following this, chapter four introduces John Donne and George Herbert as figures who exemplify the “double vision” that the poetic imagination affords. In turn, chapter five traces the yearnings for illumination beyond human blindness in the works of Henry Vaughan and John Milton. This brings the reader to a watershed in Guite’s argument, chapter six, where he elucidates Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s mid-Enlightenment counter-attack on the split between reason and imagination. The seventh chapter offers additional back-door support to Guite’s thesis; even the poems by modern skeptics like Thomas Hardy, Philip Larkin, and Geoffrey Hill can’t help but bear witness to poetry’s transfiguring light. Finally, the last and largest chapter (ch. 8) expounds the poetry of a current exemplar of the poetic imagination: Irish Catholic poet Seamus Heaney.

As is demonstrated above, Guite’s selection of poetry is driven by a desire to unearth what he sees as an ongoing poetic tradition cutting across both historic periods and poetic genres. Yet not all players in this tradition deserve equal weight. Because of Enlightenment and postmodern challenges, Guite holds the work of Coleridge (breaking the Enlightenment paradigm) and the contemporary poetry of Heaney (postmodern exemplar) as particularly vital. Regarding the former, Guite draws attention to Coleridge’s work with the nature and the meaning of symbols to offer a link between the inner world of signs and a sign-filled world. Arguing for an “organic” conception of nature in the face of a cold, mechanistic view, Coleridge linked the poet’s imagination with the (capital “I”) Imagination that formed a (therefore) sign-filled world. In a fascinating twist on the Augustinian doctrine of illumination, Coleridge argued it was not the inner light of reason, but the (divine) gift of imagination by which “natural beauty becomes a revelation of truth” (p. 177). Similarly, Guite draws out Seamus Heaney’s imaginative contemplation of the particularities of surfaces and his ability to connect these to something beyond themselves. Once

again, it is “the redemptive reordering of the human imagination” (p. 224) which can connect the inner realities of the poet with the Source of all imagination. Or to put another way, Heaney sees the poetic act itself as displacing “the despotism of the eye” by which we might glimpse “all things . . . luminous with the light of God” (p. 242).

Although not above critique, Guite’s incisive and enthusiastic readings of these poets further support his argument that the suspiciously critical dissecting characteristic of post-Enlightenment hermeneutics misses out on the richness that is afforded by imagination. What’s more, Guite’s expansive vision calling for a reunion of reason and imagination (as Mary Midgely, Richard Holmes, and others have recently argued) is compelling; science neither can nor should be hermetically sealed from the symbolic and metaphoric elements of language. Possibly most compelling, however, is Guite’s christological/anthropological link via the imagination: “If part of the *Imago Dei* is itself our creative imagination then we should expect the action of the Word, indwelling and redeeming fallen humanity, to begin in and work outward through the human imagination” (p. 14). On this point, those from a wide variety of theological positions—though possibly not ready to follow all the implications of Coleridge’s (and Lewis’s) Neo-platonic doctrine of signs (i.e., going *beyond* creation to truth rather than creation being the nexus of truth)—can recognize that Guite has ascertained something that is not merely native to Romanticism, but rather is essential to Christian theology itself. Indeed, if it can be shown that the poetic imagination can work not only among English-speaking white poets of the Anglican/Catholic tradition *but also* can be transcribed into numerous Christian traditions (cf. Regina Schwartz, *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism*), then Guite’s *Faith, Hope and Poetry: Theology and the Poetic Imagination* should be read as not merely a delightful glimpse into a particular strain of poetry, but also as a clarion call for all Christian theologians to reclaim an essential way of knowing Christian truth.

Robert S. Covolo

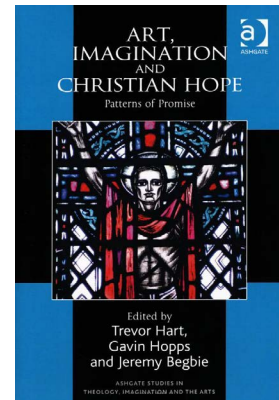
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Trevor Hart, Gavin Hopps, and Jeremy Begbie, eds. *Art, Imagination, and Christian Hope: Patterns of Promise*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012. £55.00/\$99.95.

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This work is a cross disciplinary collection of nine essays that deal with Christian hope in relation to art and literature. Most of the articles originated in the 2006 colloquium on “Imagination, the Arts and Christian Hope” at the University of St. Andrews. The essays impressively cover a wide variety of topics ranging from poetry, literature, visual art, music (classical and pop), architecture, to psychological and historical studies. They also employ wide variety of approaches informed by such disciplines as history, empirical psychology, philosophy, theology, and literary criticism. One note of interest regarding the last is that at least three writers apply, without naming as such, a deconstructive reading to their texts: Bauckham on Woolf, Longenecker on Saramago (in his portrayal of Joseph), and Hopps on Morrissey. This is no surprise as Woolf, Saramago, and Morrissey are no friends of Christianity. Yet our writers, through their



close reading, skillfully bring out the fact that the three “atheists” cannot avoid but present a version of “Christian” hope in their works. The below are brief summaries of each of the nine essays:

Richard Bauckham’s “Time, Eternity and the Arts” analyzes Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* and Claude Monet’s water-lily paintings. Bauckham sees in them the convergence of two notions of time: the evanescent present and the (thought to be) unchanging eternal: Woolf’s and Monet’s “gift to us is the intensive experience of the evanescent moment, the temporary but transformative indwelling of its absolute presentness and its potential eternity” (p. 30).

Paul Fiddes’s “Patterns of Hope and Images of Eternity: Listening to Shakespeare, Blake and T.S. Eliot” portrays five characteristics of eternity: Shakespeare presents it “as an expression of value and beauty” and “as an open future”; Blake “as the wholeness of human life and as a moment of crisis” (p. 46); and Eliot as the time of healing for the broken self. Fiddes believes that eternity is not the timelessness into which we escape but is the time when we experience all these characteristics in a new way.

A. N. Williams’s “Space and Time: Eschatological Dimensions of Christian Architecture” analyzes three liturgical structures (Dura Baptistery in Syria, San Vitale in Ravenna, and Saint-Denis in Paris) to show how each brought out, through the interaction between the structure itself and the movement of both the clergy and the worshippers within it, eschatological realization in the worship: “Worship is . . . a participation in the life heaven in the here and now . . . made real for the embodied in the many houses of worship that are the architecture of the Christian community” (p. 66).

Daniel Chua’s “Echoes of Hope in Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo* and Beethoven’s *Fidelio*” contrasts two different kinds of echoes representing two different types of hope. The first is a negative, Orphic one that Theodore Adorno sees in his analysis of *L’Orfeo* and Beethoven’s “*Les Adieux*.” Chua calls this the apophatic hope: “because echoes always come *afterwards*, hope is always too late . . .” (p. 83). The second echo, which Chua sees in *Fidelio*, brings a providential hope, “not the delayed self-knowledge of fate, but the delayed revelation of hope” (p. 89). This latter echo, Chua contends, provides an answer to the question, “What does hope sound like?”

Kristen Deede Johnson’s “Brave New World? Faith, Hope and the Political Imagination” surveys the history of millennialisms. In particular, she shows how the “reimagining” of present reality in the light of the hope for the future shaped the political involvement of the postmillennialists and the dispensational premillennialists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century United States.

Patricia Bruininks’s “The Unique Psychology of Hope” studies how the term “hope” is used in contrast to such analogous terms as “optimism” and “wish” by a group of college students. She finds that “hope” distinguishes itself from its synonyms in two features: it “goes beyond assessment of future prospects,” and “it involves active engagement with that outcome” (p. 126).

Bruce Longenecker’s “The Challenge of a ‘Hopeless’ God: Negotiating José Saramago’s Novel *The Gospel according to Jesus Christ*” sees that Saramago’s work “qualifies as one of the cornerstones in the edifice of contemporary disavowal of God, offering a depiction of a ‘hopeless’ God” (p. 134). Rather than dismissing it, Longenecker exhorts the church to use it as a means for reflective self-criticism that leads to living out the biblical mandate of care and justice to demonstrate the legitimacy and the attractiveness of the gospel (p. 146).

Gavin Hopps’s “Hoping against Hope: Morrissey and the Light that Never Goes Out” examines the pop singer’s negative and pessimistic lyrics and finds in them “the unsettling pressure of a residual hope, negatively indicated by the will to *unhope*” (p. 152).



Finally, Trevor Hart's "Unexpected Endings: Eucatastrophic Consolations in Literature and Theology" uses J. R. R. Tolkien's neologism "eucatastrophe" (a "good catastrophe") to show that the resurrection of Christ is not an expected happy ending that mitigates the absolute tragedy of the crucifixion that preceded it. The Christian hope is eucatastrophic in that it contradicts and subverts the crucifixion "in the most outrageous and undeserved and unbelievable fashion" (p. 188).

This book is a very thought-provoking collection of essays. Each one in its own way gives an answer to the Nietzschean critique of Christianity as a "Platonism for the masses" by showing how the Christian notion of hope in the reality of eternity does not have to take on the other-worldly form detached from the life "here-and-now."

My main criticism of this collection is its general lack of explicit scriptural connections (with the exception of Hopps's and, to a lesser degree, Longenecker's and Hart's articles). If its aim is to encourage the church to pursue "its own calling to bear faithful witness and give account of the hope which is in it" (p. 3), it would have been desirable if the essays had discussed more extensively how each vision of eternity and hope relates to or goes against the scriptural one. For instance, Bruininks lists and describes four tendencies in a personality trait of hopefulness: a future orientation; a propensity to experience positive emotion; perseverance; and imaginativeness (p. 127). Here, she forgoes a great opportunity to elucidate the Apostle Paul's characterization of hope in Rom 5, for example. Similarly, both Bauckham and Fiddes could have easily discussed (to use the Heideggerian term, as they both draw from his work) the "anticipatory resolute" nature of the Christian hope for the eschaton in 1 John 3:3. The readers, however, are left to draw such connections on their own.

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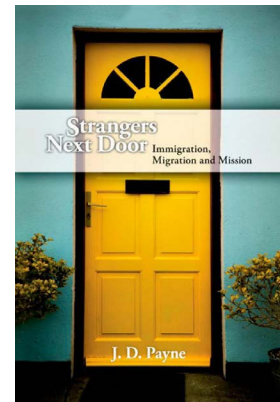
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J. D. Payne. *Strangers Next Door: Immigration, Migration, and Mission*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012. 206 pp. £10.99/\$15.00.

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In the late twentieth century, Diaspora studies as an academic field was established to investigate the global issues of peoples on the move. This new academic field is a multidisciplinary study of the history, culture, social structures, politics, and economics of global migration trends. It addresses traditional Jewish, Greek, and Armenian diaspora and includes the transnational dispersions of African, Asian, European, Latin American, and many other peoples. Hence, the term diaspora now carries the connotation of forced resettlement of refugees due to expulsion, slavery, racism, or war, especially nationalist conflict. It also means a voluntary resettlement, due to economic migration, academic pursuits, professional advancement, or political service. Diaspora missiology, the systematic and academic study of the phenomenon of diaspora in the fulfillment of God's mission, shortly followed.

J. D. Payne makes a significant contribution to the growing academic field of diaspora missiology. He presents a biblical, historical, statistical, and anecdotal glimpse into what God is doing in the world. He desires to educate the Western church on the scope of global migrations that are taking place as



the peoples of the world move to the West in search of a better way of life. He wants to challenge the Western church to reach the least reached people living in their neighborhoods and partner with them to return to their peoples as missionaries (pp. 18–19).

Immigration is a contentiously debated issue among Christians. For some, a pro-immigrant stance is rooted in core biblical principles such as love, mercy, hospitality, and the ethical imperative to help those who are less fortunate. For others, an anti-immigrant posture is rooted in Rom 13 and passages that accentuate divine authority and a person's duty to respect and obey the rule of law. Payne steers away from the volatile debate to focus his attention on the premise "that the Sovereign Lord orchestrates the movement of peoples across the globe in order to advance his kingdom for his glory" (p. 22). He concedes that *Strangers Next Door* is not about the political or ethical issues revolving around immigration and refugees. It does not address the changing demographic and cultural shape of the Christian faith or how a local church should respond to congregational cultural shifts (pp. 20–21). He aptly emphasizes that "something is missiologically malignant when we are willing to send people across the oceans . . . but we are not willing to walk next door and minister to the strangers living there" (p. 33). While we have been commissioned by God to go to the nations, we can't ignore God's intimate involvement in bringing the nations to us.

Payne insightfully describes the scattering and dispersion of Jews in the OT and Christians in the NT. He argues that by saying to Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen 1:28), God initiated global migrations through procreation and the eventual movement of peoples to fill the earth for God's glory. Genesis 3:22–24 records the forced resettlement of Adam and Eve initiated by God because of their sin. Men and women have been on the move ever since. This movement of the peoples is clearly seen in the OT through the migration of Cain, descendants of Noah after the flood, dispersion after Babel, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Joseph sold into slavery, the exodus, the story of Ruth, and Israel's exile to Assyria and to Babylon. In the NT, the setting to the birth of Jesus is marked by movements of various peoples in and out of the land of Palestine. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus were themselves refugees in Egypt (Matt 2:13–14). The great persecution that erupted against the Jerusalem church in Acts 8:1 resulted in the scattering of the disciples throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. The Book of Acts reveals the migration of believers into Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch and chronicles a wide range of Jewish diaspora throughout Paul's missionary journeys. The epistles of James and Peter avow that kingdom citizens are all sojourners in this world.

Payne offers a compelling historical synopsis of migration and the West, 1500–2010: the European Colonialism and African-Slave-Trade Era (1500–1850); the Industrial Era (1850–1945), and the Postindustrial Global Migration Era (1945–present). He gives informative data on the number of international students studying in North America and Western Europe. The discussion of refugees on the move highlights the need for compassion, assistance, and most importantly the good news. The inspiring and convicting stories from the field enhance a current and future hope for reaching the nations. The guidelines for reaching the strangers next door admittedly only scratches the surface of the topic and is intended as a conversation starter not an exhaustive discussion. The suggested strategy for reaching the strangers next door, "R.E.P.S." (Reach, Equip, Partner, and Send), is "designed to be contextualized by churches and missionaries in their areas, among those who have migrated next door" (p. 140). Surely, more stories from the field will be told as churches faithfully engage migrants with the gospel. Payne fittingly concludes with Acts 17:24–27 to affirm how God's redemptive plan begins with

Adam and Eve and ends with heaven being populated from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Rev 5:9; 7:9).

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Robert L. Plummer and John Mark Terry, eds. *Paul's Missionary Methods: In His Time and Ours*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012. \$22.00.

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This collection of fourteen essays about various aspects of Paul's mission was prepared for the centennial of the publication of Roland Allen's *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* Considering the number and quality of recent books related to this subject, this book addresses a question in the mind of many readers today with regard to why does the Apostle Paul's mission paradigm deserve so much attention?

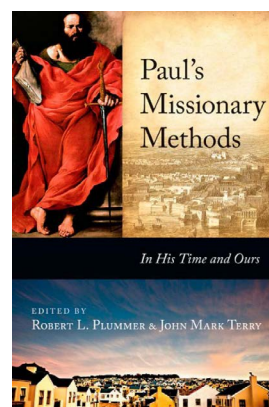
When I first read Roland Allen as a young missionary, I experienced an awakening. Several basic convictions were set in my heart that have only deepened since that day: (1) God's mission must be fulfilled under the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit; (2) the outcome of mission efforts is greatly impacted by the methods we use; and (3) the NT provides an effective model of missions, especially in the ministry of Paul.

As a missionary church planter, field leader, and missionary trainer for thirty years, I saw the most fruitful missionaries making a conscious effort to emulate the Apostle Paul's ministry. I rejoice that sending agencies and models of self-support are multiplying. However, many lack knowledge or interest in this NT model of missions. Any resource that points mission efforts toward Paul's model is of critical importance for impacting the nations.

Each of the fourteen authors is either a NT scholar, missiologist, or both; the group includes some of the most eminent missions thinkers of our day. Each chapter analyzes an aspect of Paul's mission approach, and several use Allen as a starting point. The overall impression is that, although it was written 100 years ago, Allen's *Missionary Methods* is still highly relevant. Yet there is certainly room for bringing in additional missiological insights from this past century to update our understanding of these topics as well as for adding topics that Allen hardly dealt with in his short work.

The book has fourteen chapters:

1. "Paul's Religious and Historical Milieu" by Michael Bird
2. "Paul the Missionary" by Eckhard Schnabel
3. "Paul's Gospel" by Robert Plummer
4. "Paul's Ecclesiology" by Benjamin Merkle
5. "Paul's Mission as the Mission of the Church" by Christoph Stenschke
6. "Paul's Theology of Suffering" by Don Howell
7. "Paul and Spiritual Warfare" by Craig Keener
8. "Paul's Missions Strategy" by David Hesselgrave
9. "Paul's Strategy: Determinative for Today?" by Michael Pocock



10. "Paul and Indigenous Missions" by John Mark Terry
11. "Paul and Church Planting" by Ed Stetzer and Lizette Beard
12. "Paul and Contextualization" by David Sills
13. "Paul and Leadership Development" by Chuck Lawless
14. "Roland Allen's *Missionary Methods* at One Hundred" by J. D. Payne

David Hesselgrave's discussion of the necessity for each generation to reexamine its traditions in light of Scripture and the Spirit is insightful and challenging. Rob Plummer analyzes Paul's gospel, a timely topic when even "missions-minded" people are increasingly unsure about the *nature of* gospel proclamation. Don Howell's description of Paul's view of suffering as a necessary part of his calling is a clear challenge that we (especially North Americans) will have to overcome our culturally-ingrained aversion to risk in order to fulfill the Great Commission. Mark Terry reminds us that indigeneity, although a bit out of vogue these days, should be foundational in our missiology. David Sills provides an excellent summary of contextualization, including its importance, the appropriate process for its outworking, and potential dangers of various forms, practices, and problematic efforts of contextualization.

Michael Bird describes the Jewish, Roman, and Hellenistic context of Paul's ministry. He rightly points out that Allen lacked the sophistication of Harnack in describing Paul's world. However, Bird states, "I want to describe those features of . . . contexts that explain the success of the Pauline mission." On this point, I agree with Allen that the stumbling blocks and stepping stones Paul faced were in no sense "causes" of Paul's success. God works around and sometimes through the most surprising factors. Who could imagine that God would work around and through the Cultural Revolution in China or the rise of Islamic fundamentalism to bring about two extraordinary advances in global mission? Allen was correct to note that the major obstacles for mission are within ourselves.

Ben Merkle's discussion of Paul's ecclesiology is helpful, especially since this is such a critical foundation for church planting. For example, Merkle argues well for a multiplicity of elders as a pattern in the early church. However, he does not discuss how multiple elders functioned in each metro-church that was composed of and functioned primarily as a network of house congregations. For instance, we know that there were five elders in Antioch, but were they leading a common metro-meeting each Sunday morning? Was each elder leading a house church or leading a network of house churches? Merkle gives us a good starting point in his short chapter, but more work on an ecclesiology for pioneer house church settings needs to be done.

Although each contributor provides new insights, the book would be much stronger if it included a chapter or two written by Chinese scholars. Roland Allen had no idea how God would do it, but he was right that the Chinese church had to be freed from western control and live in dependence on the Holy Spirit.

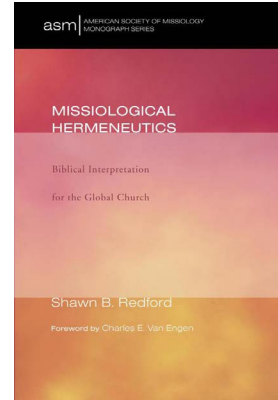
Overall, this is a very helpful book. As I have recommended *Missionary Methods* to hundreds of aspiring missionaries and mission leaders, I will now also recommend *Paul's Missionary Methods* as a companion volume.

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Shawn B. Redford. *Missiological Hermeneutics: Biblical Interpretation for the Global Church*. American Society of Missiology Monograph Series 11. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012. 384 pp. £33.00/\$42.00.

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The demise of modernism has brought the realization that truth and culture are intertwined to a greater extent than previously realized. In this regard, recent decades have witnessed a rapprochement between missiologists and biblical scholars—Richard Bauckham, Chris Wright, Michael Goheen, and others have written on the importance of the symbiosis between missiology and biblical scholarship. Adding to this growing body of literature is the present volume by Shawn Redford, a professor of missiology at Africa International University in Nairobi, Kenya. Redford undertakes to define a “missiological hermeneutic,” namely, an account of the proper relationship between missiology and biblical studies.



Redford’s book is structured as six chapters. After a brief exploration of how others have defined missiological hermeneutics (used interchangeably by Redford with “missional hermeneutics”), chapter 1 concludes with the research question to be addressed in the rest of the book: “How does [*sic*] the Bible and mission inform missiologists and missionaries in our hermeneutical practice today?” (p. 6). Redford proposes that any answer to this question needs first to identify Scripture’s own missiological hermeneutic and then to overcome barriers which modern interpreters face in applying such a hermeneutic.

Chapter 2 explores the missiological hermeneutics found in the Bible itself. Through an analysis of God’s promises to Abraham (Gen 12:1–3) and repetitions of these promises in the OT and NT, Redford argues that “correct interpretations of Scripture are most often surrounded by correct understandings and practices of God’s mission . . . while obscured interpretation occurs precisely when mission is obscured” (p. 8). Biblical figures such as Jacob, Daniel, and the Apostle Paul receive greater understanding of the Abrahamic promises when their own lives participate in God’s mission. This conclusion paves the way for Redford’s argument in subsequent chapters that missionaries and missiologists play an essential role in the hermeneutical enterprise.

Chapter 3 takes a polemical turn by critiquing Western hermeneutics from a missiologist’s perspective. Redford focuses his critique on three hermeneutical schools: (1) liberal scholarship; (2) evangelical scholarship; and (3) Protestant fundamentalism. While Redford’s analyses of liberal scholarship and Protestant fundamentalism are largely accurate, it should be noted that his treatment of evangelical hermeneutics relies on a questionable caricature. Among several examples that could be adduced, Redford claims that evangelical scholars have blindly followed liberals in their use of the historical-critical method. The putative result is that “God is excluded from the hermeneutical process even though evangelical scholars most often profess profound faith in God and inspiration of the Scriptures” (p. 91). Redford later clarifies that he is not denying the importance of the historical-critical method (p. 117), but the outworking of his hermeneutical practice in the book tends to favor the “cultural lenses of the missiologist” (pp. 95–114) as explicitly contrasted with “Western” hermeneutical lenses (pp. 92–94).

Chapter 4 takes the book in a more practical direction by applying a missiological hermeneutic to case studies in African polygamy. This section is particularly notable for demonstrating how Western missionaries imported their cultural presuppositions regarding marriage into their restrictions on

African converts from a polygamous background. Not all will agree with Redford's conclusion that polygamous Christians should be allowed to keep their wives and serve as leaders in the church. Even so, Redford deserves a hearing for showing how a lack of hermeneutical self-awareness on the part of Western missionaries often led them to exchange the lesser sin of polygamy for the greater sin of forcing new Christians to divorce their other wives and thereby destroy traditional family structures.

Chapters 5 and 6 conclude the book by emphasizing the priority of cross-cultural ministry experience in understanding the Bible rightly. On several occasions in these chapters (e.g., pp. 246, 289, 296), Redford goes beyond his earlier argument for balancing missiology and biblical studies by impugning conventional hermeneutics as being devoid of spiritual or missional insight. By implying that only missionaries or multicultural Christians are able to interpret the Bible effectively, Redford undermines his case for partnership among missiologists and biblical scholars by reverting to the same polarization between disciplines that he sought to avoid.

In conclusion, the overarching weakness in Redford's book appears to be the ambiguity over what a "missiological hermeneutic" actually is. Redford frequently uses the terms "missiological" and "missional" interchangeably, yet this tendency to conflate distinct terms while simultaneously using them in a maximalist way (i.e., anything to do with cross-cultural ministry, missiology, the Abrahamic blessing, or a deeper awareness of God's international purposes) fails to bring clarity to the ongoing debate over what is entailed by the terms mission, the *missio Dei*, and missiological/missional/missionary hermeneutics. In this regard, it would have been helpful if Redford had interacted with George Hunsberger's taxonomy of the various ways in which scholars have defined "missional hermeneutics" (presented at the SBL 2008 National Meeting, available on the Internet at [www.gocn.org](http://www.gocn.org), and published in a 2011 issue of the journal *Missiology*). Though it may seem trivial to argue over definitions, the history of mission in the twentieth century has shown that confusion over the scope of the *missio Dei* results in paralyzing disagreements over the *missio ecclesiae* in the world. Redford's proposal to bring a missiological hermeneutic to bear on biblical-theological reflection and missionary praxis deserves a wide audience, but his book will prove insufficient on its own in bridging the gap between missiology and biblical studies.

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