



themelios

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DESCRIPTION

Themelios is an international, evangelical, peer-reviewed theological journal that expounds and defends the historic Christian faith. Its primary audience is theological students and pastors, though scholars read it as well. *Themelios* began in 1975 and was operated by RTSF/UCCF in the UK, and it became a digital journal operated by The Gospel Coalition in 2008. The editorial team draws participants from across the globe as editors, essayists, and reviewers. *Themelios* is published three times a year online at The Gospel Coalition website in PDF and HTML, and may be purchased in digital format with Logos Bible Software and in print with Wipf and Stock. *Themelios* is copyrighted by The Gospel Coalition. Readers are free to use it and circulate it in digital form without further permission, but they must acknowledge the source and may not change the content..

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REVIEWS

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EDITORIAL

When Did the Church Begin?

— D. A. Carson —

D. A. Carson is research professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, and general editor of Themelios.

When Did the Church Begin? This question is not uncommon, especially among theological students. Sometimes people ask it because they have been exposed to dispensational teaching. In that case, the answer one gives becomes a kind of litmus test to a nest of other questions that dispensationalists pose. People from a dispensational heritage emphasize discontinuity between the covenants, and therefore commonly argue that the church begins at Pentecost; people from a covenant-theology heritage emphasize the continuity of the covenant of grace, think in terms of fulfillment of what was promised, and therefore argue that the “assembly” of the people of God is one, and that therefore it is a mistake to argue that the church begins at Pentecost. Others ask the question in our title because for them the answer is a way of distinguishing between Reformed Presbyterians and Reformed Baptists. Still others ask the question without a theological agenda, but for no other reason than that it deserves to be asked precisely because the answer seems ambiguous in the biblical texts.

It may be helpful to organize the relevant material in several steps.

(1) As for the terminology, although “church” is commonly a NT expression, both the word and the idea surface in the OT too. For example, a not atypical passage pictures God instructing Moses, “Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children” (Deut 4:10): the verb is קהל in Hebrew and ἐκκλησιάζειν (cognate with ἐκκλησία, “church” or “assembly”) in the Septuagint. Not less important is the fact that NT writers can refer to the OT people of God as the “church”: Stephen speaks of the gathered Israelites in the wilderness as “the assembly [ἐκκλησία] in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38). The writer to the Hebrews uses OT language to depict Jesus saying that he will sing praise to God: “in the assembly [ἐκκλησία] I will sing your praise” (2:12, citing Ps 22:22). When Christians gather together, the language the writer to the Hebrews uses to describe their assembly bursts with fulfilled typological references to the OT: the writer tells them, “[Y]ou have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church [ἐκκλησία] of the firstborn ... to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel” (12:22–24). The reference to Abel inevitably reminds the reader that Christians are “surrounded by ... a great cloud of witnesses” (12:1)—namely, the faithful heroes from Abel through Enoch, Abraham, Sarah, Gideon, David, and all the rest of the OT figures (ch. 11). One cannot help but see some kind of profound continuity in the people of God.

(2) The issue is broader than merely terminological. When Jesus declares, in a thoroughly Jewish context, that he will build his church (ἐκκλησία, Matt 16:18), what he has in mind, according to this

Gospel, includes Gentiles too (28:18–20). His instructions on how to exercise church [ἐκκλησία] discipline (18:15–20) show how he is willing to blur distinctions we tend to make: the local church (which must be in view in ch. 18) is the outcropping of the entire church (ch. 16), and clearly includes both Jews and Gentiles. They constitute Messiah’s assembly, Messiah’s church. Nowhere is the oneness of Messiah’s people, Messiah’s church, more powerfully worked out than in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. Jewish believers and Gentile believers have been made “one” by Jesus, who is our peace (Eph 2:14). At one time the Gentiles were alienated from God, “excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise” (2:12), but now the two groups constitute “one new humanity” (2:15). Gentiles are “no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household” (2:19). This is the church (ἐκκλησία) that Christ loved and for which he died (5:25). One recalls that in the olive tree metaphor (Romans 11), there is but one vine, with branches being broken off from that vine or grafted onto it.

(3) So what do the two camps—those who think the church began at Pentecost, and those who think the church stretches back in time and ultimately includes all of God’s elect—make of such exegetical phenomena? Transparently, different interpretive choices are tied up with each position. The former will observe uses of ἐκκλησία in the LXX, or in the NT referring to the OT people of God, and insist that these are not technical uses of the term: these are references to various “assemblies” but not to the NT “church.” Those NT passages that speak of the oneness of God’s people (e.g., Ephesians) surely establish the difference between that people and the OT assembly, precisely because the OT assembly/church was made up only of Israelites. And thus this first group maintains its position. The latter group will observe the same data and insist that it cannot be wrong to think of the OT assembly of the people of God as the ἐκκλησία when the biblical writers are happy to use that language. To maintain a distinction between “assembly” and “church” when the Greek uses just one word for both is surely no ground for maintaining that the church began at Pentecost, for the church of God is the assembly of God, and it began in OT times. The bringing together of Jews and Gentiles in one olive tree (Romans 11), in one new humanity (Ephesians), does not mean that the post-Pentecost church is a new body, but that it is the same but expanded body.

(4) I have simplified the arguments, of course. The former group has a diversity of stances within its basic position, but is sometimes in danger of dividing what God has put together, not adequately perceiving the oneness, the wholeness, of God’s redemptive purposes. The latter group also has a diversity of stances within its basic position, but is sometimes in danger of overlooking the “new” things associated with the ἐκκλησία from Pentecost on: new creation, new work of the Holy Spirit, new birth, new age, new covenant, and so on.

(5) It begins to appear, then, that both sides of this debate focus attention on slightly different things. If the focus is on the oneness and continuity of the redeemed people of God, all of them secured by the Lord Jesus, surely Scripture demands that we affirm pretty strongly the side of the covenant theologian. The assembly (church) of the firstborn in Hebrews 12 seems to include saints from both covenants, including those alive now, who are “gathered” around the throne of the living God. Add the kind of linguistic evidence I have just briefly surveyed, and the case is pretty strong. Nevertheless, some versions of the Reformed construction may be in danger of flattening out the Bible’s storyline in such a way there is nothing new in the new covenant except increased information. Under this reading, for example, new birth controls conversion in the days of Abraham as much as in the days of John or Paul, the work of the Holy Spirit is entirely the same under the Mosaic covenant as under the new covenant

(even though it is very difficult to read John 14–16 in that way), and many NT writers affirm that with the coming, death, resurrection, ascension and ascension of the Son of God we have entered a new age. All sides acknowledge, of course, that it is rather difficult to nail down precisely what the “newness” consists in, but it is surely a mistake to argue that there is nothing new that is connected with the new covenant—or (as I’ve indicated) to argue that the only thing that is new is more information now that we live this side of the cross and resurrection of Jesus, but certainly not new experience. At the very least one must say there is a kind of ratcheting up of various expressions and experiences. For example, expressions such as “I will be their God and they will be my people” are tied under the Mosaic covenant to God’s self-disclosure in the tabernacle, are tied under the new covenant to the mediating work of Christ, and are tied under the final vision of Scripture to the perfections of the new heaven and the new earth.

In short, if one is focusing on God’s one redemptive plan, his one ultimate, saving sacrifice, his one assembly before the throne, his one covenant of grace (though there are some problems with that expression), and his one final purpose for the redeemed, the Reformed heritage, in my view, has it right. The church begins when the first human sinner is redeemed and joined with another redeemed human sinner—indeed, in the mind of God the church begins as far back as the death of the Lamb “who was slain from the creation of the world” (Rev 13:8). If one is focusing on the “new” (ratcheted up?) things connected with the people of God under the new covenant, I can understand why one looks for a term that applies to them and does not apply to OT saints. The problem, of course, is that a claim like “The church begins at Pentecost” might be uttered within the framework of the kind of nuances I’ve just outlined, but it might be heard to be saying far more things that rightly scandalize Reformed believers; conversely, a claim like “The church is the sum of God’s people under both the old covenant and the new” is perfectly defensible along the lines I’ve outlined here, but it might be heard to be claiming a flattening out of covenantal distinctions that ought to be preserved somehow.

(6) Another element to the debate needs to be acknowledged. Presbyterians have an additional reason for preserving the terminology, in this respect, of covenant theology: they hold that, under both the Mosaic covenant and under the new covenant, the locus of the covenant community, the church, is not to be tightly identified with the locus of the elect. (The folk in Moscow, Idaho, prove to be the exception: they would like to do more to obliterate the distinction!) In other words, the structure of their ecclesiology (ἐκκλησία-ology) provides some pressure to emphasize continuity. By contrast, Reformed Baptists think that under the terms of the new covenant, the locus of the covenant community, the church, is ideally to be identified with the locus of the elect—and this is different from the way things work under the old covenant. This difference of opinion is of course tied to their respective understandings of circumcision/baptism. Presbyterians argue that both circumcision and baptism mark entrance into the covenant community, without saying anything decisive about entrance into the empirical community of the redeemed/elect. Reformed Baptists claim that both circumcision and baptism mark entrance into the covenant community, but that under the terms of the new covenant entrance into the new covenant community also marks entrance into the empirical community of the elect/redeemed: the new covenant is in this respect different from the Mosaic covenant, and that is part, at least, of what makes it “new.” This tying together of the redeemed and the covenant community is admittedly different from the way things work under the old covenant. So at this juncture their ecclesiology exercises a subtle pressure toward a measure of discontinuity.

(7) In any case, some parallels can be drawn between two formally similar questions, viz., “When did the church begin?” and “When did the messianic kingdom dawn?” This is not the place to tease out the answers to the latter question in any detail. Yet students of Scripture often point out that in one sense the kingdom dawned when he ascended to his Father’s right hand where he must reign until he has vanquished the last enemy. Yet the passion narratives make much of Jesus reigning from the cross (esp. Matthew and John). Still earlier, the kingdom is dawning in Jesus’s public ministry, even his work through his disciples, so much so that he sees Satan fall from heaven (Luke 10). In fact, Jesus is born king of the Jews (Matthew 2). Even though there are more texts that tie Jesus’s kingly reign to his resurrection and ascension, the range of options as to when the messianic kingdom dawned is actually a good thing, an evocative thing, laced with imagination-stirring complexity. Similarly, the question as to when the church began can be answered with some pretty straightforward exegeses of particular texts—but then, when one has taken a deep breath and looked around again, one finds layers of God-given and imagination-stirring subtlety that demands slightly different answers in different contexts.

Dane Ortlund has faithfully served as the Ethics and Pastoralia Book Review Editor for *Themelios* since 2011, in addition to his work as executive vice president of Bible publishing and Bible publisher at Crossway. We thank God for Dane’s outstanding contribution to the journal and wish him well in his transition. Succeeding Dane is Jeremy Kimble, Assistant Professor of Theology at Cedarville. Jeremy completed his PhD in 2013 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is author of *That His Spirit May Be Saved: Church Discipline as a Means to Repentance and Perseverance* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013) and has contributed one article and various book reviews to *Themelios*. Jeremy can be contacted at jeremy.kimble@thegospelcoalition.org.

OFF THE RECORD

The Art of Imperious Ignorance

— Michael J. Ovey —

Mike Ovey is principal of Oak Hill College in London and consulting editor of Themelios.

Earlier this year I found myself lured from the secure theological fastnesses of north London to a consultation on one of the hot topics of our day. One delegate listened to the contributions about what relevant biblical passages meant and then commented that s/he still did not know what the passages meant and the explanations offered just didn't do it for him/her. The passages were unclear. I was surprised in one way, because I thought the explanations had been nothing if not clear. Unwelcome very possibly, but not unclear. The response, though, was not a disagreement in the sense of offering an alternative explanation which should be preferred for better reasons. This was not direct disagreement but something much more oblique. It was a disagreement that took the form of declaring that the passages were not clear.

Of course, in another way this is no longer a surprising response to attempts to explain passages from the Bible or synthesise them—over the years one has heard it in regard to God's knowledge of the future, predestination, God changing his mind, same-sex marriage, the role of women, etc. The Bible is unclear, it is said, and so we must be content not to know. We must be ignorant. In that sense I think we are observing an argumentative move that is perhaps increasingly common.

In this article I want to argue that the claim to be ignorant on the grounds that something is unclear is actually quite ambitious. More than that, it can be an imperious claim that exercises power over others without, at times, the inconvenience of reasoned argument. No wonder it is so popular.

Please note, I am not suggesting this is always the case and that every claim of unclarity is manipulative and power-driven, but it is worth thinking through how such claims can be.

By way of illustration, take the pro-Arian Creed announced at Sirmium in 357, which marked a new phase in the Arian controversy as Arian opposition to Nicene trinitarian theology became more overt. For our purposes the relevant part of the Creed comes just after it outlines a prohibition on using the terms *homoousios* (one and the same substance) or *homoiousios* (of a similar substance). The Creed states:

Nor ought any exposition to be made of them [sc. the terms *homoousios* and *homoiousios*] for the reason and consideration that they are not contained in the divine Scriptures, and that they are above man's understanding, nor can any man declare the birth of the Son, of whom it is written, *Who shall declare His generation?* For it is plain that only the Father knows how He begot the Son, and the Son how He was begotten of the Father.¹

¹Hilary of Poitiers, *De Synodis* 11 (NPNF² 9:148).

Does this not sound very pious and indeed very evangelical to avoid using terms that are not in the Bible and remember that the generation of the Son is too wonderful to declare (*enarrare*) so no-one should declare (*enarrare*) it? In other words, it is not clear and we do not know, so we should not speak of the generation of the Son. How would you have reacted to this if I had not already primed you that Sirmium 357 was ‘pro-Arian’? I suspect that many of us would be struck by what could be a humble, pious caution in speaking of God.

Yet Hilary of Poitiers, Athanasius of Alexandria, and other supporters of the view that the Son is truly a son hit the roof over Sirmium 357. Hilary describes it as *Blasphemia*, blasphemy. Why does a profession of ignorance generate such an extreme reaction? Amongst other reasons, in Hilary’s case, precisely because of the claim of ignorance.

Hilary decodes the claims of Sirmium 357 for us. First, there was the element of compulsion. For him this was an *ignorantiae decretum*—a law of ignorance, aptly translated ‘Compulsory Ignorance Act.’² The language repays attention: *decretum* implies serious binding decision, that is to say, not just a confession of one’s own lack of knowledge but a decision that others do not know either. The term has legislative connotations. To that extent the framers of Sirmium 357 were not just saying they did not know about the Son’s generation, they were saying no other human being could either. What initially sounds like a pious caution emerges as coercive.

Secondly, Hilary notes an absurdity in the idea that one tries to compel people not to know something. He comments scathingly of the *decretum*: ‘just as if it could be commanded or decreed that a man should know what in future he is to be ignorant of, or be ignorant of what he already knows.’³

The absurdity here is in attempting to legislate the internal knowledge of others. It is one thing to demand silence, but quite another to demand ignorance.

Thirdly, Hilary sees that the law of ignorance actually stops a particular proposition being made. Because we are bound to be ignorant about the Son’s generation, we cannot declare that the Son is ‘of God,’⁴ and if we cannot speak at all of the Son’s generation, then how do we say the Son really and truly is a son, since generation is inherent to the relation of fathers and sons. At root, by preventing us speaking of the Son’s generation, the framers of Sirmium are preventing us from speaking of the Son as truly son. Coercive ignorance masks a positive theological position—that one does not have to say the Son is truly a son. This, of course, opens the door to admitting Arianism with its view that the Second Person is a creature rather than truly Son as being just as orthodox as Nicene theology which insists the Son is truly son. A little ignorance can go a long way.

Two things emerge quite painfully from Hilary’s observations on the Compulsory Ignorance Act of Sirmium 357. First, the coercive nature of the claims to ignorance or unclarity. There is something strongly unilateral about the claims of Sirmium 357: why should something that is, allegedly, subjectively unclear to me be judged by me as unclear for you too? Secondly, there is the way those coercive claims were far from value-neutral but actually carried strong agendas of their own.

However, there are other elements in play in the declaration of ignorance or unclarity that make it an extraordinarily attractive move in today’s debates. Naturally it plays well with a postmodern mood that tends to value scepticism, but more than that it can offer the attraction of not needing to have a

² *De Synodis* 10 (NPNF² 9:147).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *De Synodis* 10.

reason for my position. At its worst, I can declare something unclear and then pursue my own line without needing to provide reasons for it—after all the issue is unclear. Declaring something unclear can maximise my freedom of action because it tends to remove an issue from the field of common debate. In its way, it is strongly individualist.

More than that, some of the claims about unclarity or ignorance leave unspecified what counts as being clear enough for actions to proceed or decisions to be made. It is sometimes quite revealing to ask ‘how clear do things need to be?’ or ‘What would make things clearer for you?’ But without knowing what counts as ‘clear enough’ or what considerations would clarify, the task of discussing something with someone claiming ignorance or lack of clarity becomes remarkably thankless. Again, the tendency here is to remove an issue from discussion.

Yet most attractive of all is that the claim of lack of clarity or ignorance allows one to pursue one’s own position quite dogmatically while appearing to be very undogmatic. After all, the claim of ignorance looks as though it advances no position, but vitally it tacitly asserts that one’s opponent’s position cannot be decisively asserted—it is forever only a possibility, not a certainty on which one could base action or decision. There is something very rewarding in being a closet dogmatist while appearing to be the reverse.

This in turn raises two questions, one more philosophical, the other more theological. Philosophically, how do I move from my observation about my own understanding that I find something unclear (fundamentally subjective) to the proposition that something is unclear for everyone else too (something universal)? After all, I frequently have the experience that a text from my children is subjectively unclear to me, but laughably clear to others versed in the texting *argot* of today’s youth. Of course it can be a mark of genuine epistemic humility to recognise one does not know something or that something is unclear to one. But it can be an important mark of epistemic humility too to concede that others may have understood something that I have not, rather than insist that if I do not see something no-one else has or even could either.

Theologically, however, even more is at stake. Thus the claim of John 1:18 is that God has been made known by the incarnate Son and Word. This looks very like a claim that God has actually made himself known and at least at the objective level revealed himself. Given this, what should I make of the claim that knowledge of God is unclear and uncertain? After all, for the uncertainty claim to work here, I have to tread very close to the proposition that God did not successfully reveal himself. Do I think God tried to reveal himself and failed? Or do I think God never revealed himself? Here again the claims of ignorance seem extraordinarily imperious—after all the kind of knowledge I would need to support the claim that God has failed to reveal himself or that God never revealed himself seems to be that I have an independent non-revealed knowledge of God and therefore can weigh the claims of revelation. This, of course, was one reason why Hilary and Athanasius thought the Arian claims of ‘ignorance’ they encountered were in fact simply arrogant. Perhaps I should be more ready to adapt another of Hilary’s thoughts, that when faced with God’s revelation in the Bible, I should point less to a defect in the text (lack of clarity) but more to a defect in my understanding (subjective limits). Perhaps we should be less certain that parts of Scripture are ‘uncertain.’

Conversion in C. S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength*

— Gavin Ortlund —

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and a PhD candidate in historical theology at Fuller Theological Seminary*

Abstract: C. S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* is often regarded as one of his most bizarre and unwieldy books. There are very few studies of it, and those that do exist tend to focus on its central social critique, leaving its ancillary theological and philosophical themes largely unexplored. This article examines the motif of conversion in *That Hideous Strength*. It traces out the contrasting conversion narratives of Mark and Jane Studdock, situates them in relation to the larger social message of the novel, and then draws two applications for what we can learn about evangelism today from this book.

Christians who want to share their faith skillfully and winsomely in a post-Christian setting may benefit much from C. S. Lewis's portrayal of conversion. Conversion is a theme throughout Lewis's writings—one thinks of Eustace Scrubb in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, for instance, or Queen Orual in *Till We Have Faces*, or Lewis's own conversion story in *Surprised by Joy*. But one of the most insightful portrayals of conversion in the Lewisian corpus—and simultaneously perhaps the least known—comes in *That Hideous Strength*, the third of his *Space Trilogy* adult novels.¹

That Hideous Strength is fundamentally a work of social criticism—its preface states that it has the same point as *The Abolition of Man*, and the bulk of the plot concerns the threat of the technocratic National Institute of Coordinated Experiments (N.I.C.E.) and their aims to free humanity from nature. But the book also provides a unique window into Lewis's thought on a range of topics as diverse as gender, criminal justice, the Arthurian legend, and the nature of animal consciousness. The book's most visible motif, arguably, is conversion, and it is the conversion stories of Mark and Jane Studdock that organize the two central plotlines of the book, the one at the N.I.C.E. and the other at the manor at St.

¹ By "least known" I am referring both to the general preference among popular readers of books like *Mere Christianity* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* over *The Space Trilogy*, as well as the relative dearth of secondary literature on *The Space Trilogy* (also called *The Ransom Trilogy*). T. A. Shippey, "The Ransom Trilogy," in *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis*, eds. Robert MacSwain and Michael Ward (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), notes that only three book-level studies of *The Space Trilogy* have been conducted: David C. Downing, *Planets in Peril: A Critical Study of C. S. Lewis' Ransom Trilogy* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992); Jarod Lobdell, *The Scientific Novels of C. S. Lewis: Space and Time in the Ransom Stories* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004); and Sanford Schwartz, *C. S. Lewis on the Final Frontier: Science and the Supernatural in the Space Trilogy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Anne's.² In fact, those features of *That Hideous Strength* that have garnered the heaviest criticism—the strongly dystopian mood,³ the relatively slow, inactive plot,⁴ and the overt supernaturalism that seems to break in disruptively against both mood and plot⁵—seem to serve precisely to accentuate the internal, spiritual development of these two characters. In other words, the blending together of the mundane and the miraculous that characterizes Lewis's story, however much it may have perplexed and displeased some readers, starts to make more sense in light of the book's message, particularly its depiction of conversion.⁶

²Interpreters of *That Hideous Strength*, in focusing on the larger drama at Belbury and St. Anne's, often neglect the internal developments within Mark and Jane. A helpful exception is provided by Wesley A. Kort, *Reading C. S. Lewis: A Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 133–149, who detects two threads to the novel, the “large story” of Belbury's struggle to control society and the “personal story” of Mark and Jane struggling to adjust to marriage. For Kort, these two threads in the story are closely related to one another, and between the two the more prosaic struggles of Mark and Jane are more important, since they frame the narrative (134).

³Schwartz, *C. S. Lewis on the Final Frontier*, 93–94, draws attention to the striking similarities between *That Hideous Strength* and 18th century Gothic romances, particularly their blending of “the Probable and the Marvelous.” Schwartz attributes this similarity to the influence of Lewis's friend (and fellow inkling) Charles Williams, who drew from this genre for his “spiritual shockers,” which Lewis imitated so exactly in *That Hideous Strength* that the book is frequently called “a Charles Williams novel by C. S. Lewis” (see Schwartz, *C. S. Lewis on the Final Frontier*, 92). The Charles Williams/Gothic influence goes a long way in explaining the darker tone of *That Hideous Strength*.

⁴Lewis's writing is typically compact and compressed. By comparison, *That Hideous Strength* is somewhat sprawling (more than twice the length of the first two books in the trilogy put together). This, combined with its abundance of characters, has not gone unnoticed by critics. See, for instance, Shippey, “The Ransom Trilogy,” 244.

⁵George Orwell's early review, for instance, expressed what would become a common criticism: “One could recommend this book unreservedly if Mr. Lewis had succeeded in keeping it all on a single level. Unfortunately, the supernatural keeps breaking in, and it does so in rather confusing, undisciplined ways.” He then goes on to draw particular attention to the Merlin narrative, Ransom's perpetual youth, Jane's dreams, and the presence of “various superhuman visitors from outer space, some of them with rather tiresome names.” He particularly faults the story's abrupt conclusion, claiming that “the book ends in a way that is so preposterous that it does not even succeed in being horrible in spite of much bloodshed.” George Orwell, “The Scientists Take Over: Review of *That Hideous Strength*,” *Manchester Evening News*, 16 August, 1945, <http://www.lewisiana.nl/orwell>. More recently, Rowan Williams has described the destruction of the evil characters at the end of the story with the following words: “over the top, I think, is the only expression one can use for this. I think it's when the elephant breaks loose and comes into the dining room and begins trampling people to death that I feel something has snapped in the authorial psyche” (“*That Hideous Strength*: A Reassessment,” in *C. S. Lewis and His Circle: Essays and Memoirs from the Oxford C. S. Lewis Society*, ed. Roger White, Judith Wolfe, and Brendan N. Wolfe [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015], 99).

⁶That the novel's apparently haphazard mixture of the mundane and the supernatural was an intentional decision on Lewis's part, if not already apparent from the book's subtitle, is evident from a 1945 letter to Dorothy Sayers, where, on the heels of several negative reviews, he wrote, “apparently reviewers *will not* tolerate a mixture of the realistic and the supernatural. Which is a pity, because (a) it's just the mixture I like, and (b) we have to put up with it in real life.” Quoted in *C. S. Lewis: A Companion & Guide*, ed. Walter Hooper (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 231, italics his. Though many reviewers were critical of the seeming polarities brought together in *That Hideous Strength*, others praised this aspect of the book. H. P. Edens, for instance, wrote in *The Punch* (August 1945): “it is Mr Lewis's triumph to have shown, with shattering credibility, how the pitiful little souls of Jane and Mark Studdock become the apocalyptic battlefield of Heaven and Hell.” Quoted in *C. S. Lewis: A Companion & Guide*, 240.

Conversion in *That Hideous Strength*, like the structure and tone of the book as a whole, is marked by a sense of juxtaposition. Lewis's story highlights both the struggle and freedom involved in conversion, both the agony and beauty, both the otherworldly glory and this-world ordinarieness, both its death-to-life decisiveness as well as its moment-by-moment complexity. A consideration of each character's conversion, followed by a comparison between the two in light of the larger social criticism in which they are encased, will result in several worthwhile insights that may enrich our understanding of conversion today.

1. Jane's Conversion

The defining characteristic of Jane's pre-conversion life is a fierce independence, an aversion to any sort of submission or deference or yielding. Early on she has a nightmare and runs to Mark for comfort, only to resent herself the next morning "for the collapse that had betrayed her last night, into being what she most detested—the fluttering, tearful, 'little woman' of sentimental fiction running for comfort to male arms."⁷ A bit later Lewis writes:

To avoid entanglements and interferences had long been one of her first principles. Even when she had discovered that she was going to marry Mark if he asked her, the thought, "But I must still keep up my own life," had arisen at once and had never for more than a few minutes at a stretch been absent from her mind. Some resentment against love itself, and therefore against Mark, for thus invading her life, remained.⁸

As Jane increasingly experiences clairvoyant dreams throughout the novel, she resents them as invasions into her established privacy. Initially she resists sharing them with those at St. Anne's because she doesn't want to join a group, to choose sides. Lewis narrates, with possible allusion to his own pre-conversion state, "she didn't want to get drawn in. It wasn't fair. It wasn't as if she had asked much of life. *All she wanted was to be left alone.*"⁹

Jane's desire to be left alone manifests itself in a caution and guardedness when she first gets involved with the company at St. Anne's. Early on she finds that, for instance, although she likes the Dennistons, "her habitual inner prompter was whispering, '[T]ake care. Don't get drawn in. Don't commit yourself to anything. You've got your own life to live.'"¹⁰ Later, when Jane is about to meet the Director, she once again warns herself, "[B]e careful. Don't get let in for anything. All these long passages and low voices will make a fool of you, if you don't look out. You'll become another of this man's female adorers."¹¹ This is Jane's great fear: getting "taking in."

As the plot develops and Jane interacts with the characters at St. Anne's, it becomes apparent that Jane's individualism is particularly cast along the lines of gender. She is not simply opposed to needing others, but especially opposed to needing *men*. In the earlier conversation with Dennistons, for instance, what provokes her is not Arthur Denniston's comparison of joining their Company to leaping

⁷ Lewis, *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups* (1945; reprint, New York: Scribner, 2003), 44.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 70–71.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 81–82, italics added.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

in the dark, or getting married, or joining the Navy, or becoming a monk, or trying a new food. While these images awake “complicated resentments and resistances” in Jane,¹² it is only when he suggests that she needs her husband’s approval to join the Company that Jane becomes really *angry*.¹³

Jane’s posture of isolationism, her settled defiance of need and mutuality and commitment, is the primary impediment to her conversion to Christianity. Interestingly, Lewis drew attention to this same characteristic as the primary impediment to his own conversion. As he put it, “I had always wanted, above all things, not to be ‘interfered with.’ I had wanted (mad wish) ‘to call my soul my own.’”¹⁴ In *Surprised by Joy* Lewis describes his own conversion story as the slow, step-by-step unraveling of this independence, comparing it to the long, piece-by-piece loss of a chess match.

Jane’s conversion is structured very similarly, with several key experiences functioning as triggers in a long, slow defeat. The first significant experience (perhaps comparable to Lewis’s reading of George MacDonald) is her meeting with “the Director” (i.e., Ransom), the head of the Manor at St. Anne’s. Upon first sight, Lewis narrates, “she looked, and instantly her world was unmade.”¹⁵ What strikes her so much about him (very much related to her conception of gender) is his kingliness. Unable to determine whether he is young or old, Jane is reminded of Arthur and Solomon, and finds that “for the first time in all those years she tasted the word King itself with all linked associations of battle, marriage, priesthood, mercy, and power.”¹⁶ In encountering the Director, Jane forgets her grudge against Mark and her independence is loosened up enough that she does not bristle when he confronts her egalitarian view of marriage or emphasis on obedience as necessary for love.¹⁷

Towards the end of this conversation, Lewis writes that Jane was

thinking simply of hugeness. Or rather, she was not thinking of it. She was, in some strange fashion, experiencing it. Something intolerably big, something from Brobdingnag, was pressing on her, was approaching, was almost in the room. She felt herself shrinking, suffocated, emptied of all power and virtue.¹⁸

On her way home, Lewis depicts “four Janes” all squabbling with each other, trying to respond to this encounter. One part of her is simply receptive of the Director’s words; another part of her is disgusted by this receptiveness as degrading and vulgar; a third part of her introduces moral categories to the experience which produce guilt for not loving her husband; and a fourth part of her, the greatest, is overwhelmed with sheer joy. This fourth state of joy rises above the rest, and yet, significantly, this experience does not result in Jane’s conversion. It is a sort of “pre-conversion”—an initial experience, knocking her isolationism and pride off balance a bit, and opening up her trust to the people with whom

¹² *Ibid.*, 113.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 114–15.

¹⁴ C. S. Lewis, *Surprised By Joy*, in *The Inspirational Writings of C. S. Lewis* (New York: Inspirational Press, 1987), 125. See the helpful discussion in Downing, *Planets in Peril*, 28–29.

¹⁵ Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, 139.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁷ Some have suggested that this conversation is patterned after that between Percival and the fisher-king in grail legend. See the discussion in Downing, *Planets in Peril*, 77–78.

¹⁸ Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, 147. Already on her way to the Manor, we note that Jane is struck by “the size of the world” that is opening up to her, anticipating what she experiences during her time there (p. 44).

her conversion is associated. Using Lewis's chess metaphor, you could compare this experience to the loss of one's first bishop or knight.

The second crucial development for Jane comes when she is confronted with the possibility of death while hunting for Merlin with some of the other characters from *St. Anne's*. Whereas before she had never taken the idea of God seriously, now the possibility of death (combined with her earlier encounter with "kingliness" and "hugeness") makes it impossible to think of anything else. Her perception of life has already been so upturned through her experiences at *St. Anne's* that she feels that "almost anything might be true" and for the first time seriously considers the possibility of heaven and hell.¹⁹ But at this point in her development, the possibility of a supernatural world does not repeat her experience of joy, but still fills her with only dread.

"Check mate" comes during Jane's second significant conversation with the Director towards the end of the book, during which her egalitarian view of spiritual reality is finally and irreparably dismantled. As the Director speaks to her about becoming a Christian, Jane realizes that her prior conception of a world beyond nature was of a "neutral, or democratic vacuum" in which equality was the greatest thing. As she listens to the Director, for the first time she considers that "there might be differences and contrasts all the way up, richer, sharper, even fiercer, at every rung of the ascent."²⁰

From this insight Jane realizes that the "invasion" into her independence by marriage is only one small instantiation at the biological level of a deeper reality at the spiritual level. What has clogged up her relationship with Mark is of one piece (though on a much smaller scale) with what now clogs up her relationship with God. Jane's fundamental opposition to submission and deference needs to be dismantled, and it is the knowledge of this need that leads to her conversion. As the Director puts it to her,

your trouble has been what old poets called *Daungier*. We call it pride. You are offended by the masculine itself: the loud, irruptive, possessive thing—the gold lion, the bearded bull.... The male you could have escaped, for it exists only on the biological level. But the masculine none of us can escape. What is above and beyond all things is so masculine that we are all feminine in relation to it.²¹

Lewis's depiction of Jane's conversion has earned him strong criticism from egalitarian and feminist scholars, and even among his admirers one can discern some embarrassment in defending him from charges of sexism.²² Nonetheless, if Lewis were half so condescending toward Jane as some read him, it is curious to find him describing his own conversion experience in such similar terms in *Surprised*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 231.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 312.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 312–13.

²² Among the most overblown and misleading critical accounts of Lewis on gender is A. N. Wilson's *C. S. Lewis: A Biography* (New York: Norton, 2002), perhaps only surpassed by Philip Pullman's tirade against Lewis for the Narnia books, which he describes as "grotesque," "disgusting," "ugly," "poisonous," and "nauseating" (Michael Ward, "C. S. Lewis and Philip Pullman," *The Mars Hill Review* 21 [2003], http://www.planetnarnia.com/assets/documents/74/Lewis_and_Pullman.pdf). Alan Jacobs, a leading interpreter of Lewis who is more balanced and appreciative of his thought, also seems a bit uncomfortable in discussing what Jane Studdock reveals about Lewis's thought on gender (see his *The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C. S. Lewis* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005], 258–59). Interestingly, Monika B. Hilder (*Surprised by the Feminine: A Rereading of C. S. Lewis and Gender*, *Studies in Twentieth-Century British Literature* 12 [New York: Peter Lang, 2013]) argues that Lewis's

By Joy. Lewis's point is that the path to life only comes through submission and surrender to God, and since Jane's pride is directed toward both her husband and God simultaneously, her submission to God can only transform her orientation toward her husband as well. As Woodruff Tait rightly observes, even while disagreeing with Lewis at points and making plain her own egalitarian convictions, "what Lewis pictures in Jane's submission is, in the end, a model, not just for *female* Christians, but for all Christians."²³ In other words, Jane's ultimate problem is not an egalitarian view of gender, but an egalitarian view of the universe: her great problem is not a lack of submission to Mark, but a lack of submission to anything.

Thus what Jane discovers is ultimately what all Christians discover: that relating to ultimate spiritual reality turns out to be less about being affirmed in one's self-chosen identity, and more about submission, surrender, obedience, and change. Heaven proves in the end less like a democracy and more like a monarchy: and conversion turns out to be less like a triumph and more like a defeat.

Jane walks into a Garden after this conversation with the Director to think. She worries, "supposing one were a thing after all—a thing designed and invented by Someone Else and valued for qualities quite different from what one had decided to regard as one's true self?"²⁴ For a while she is still offended by the thought that even God would never understand her, never take her seriously—that she would be eternally misunderstood. Finally, at a particular point in her walk in the garden, she becomes aware of being in the presence of some new world or Person, and in that presence she realizes that

this demand which now pressed upon her was not, even by analogy, like any other demand. It was the origin of all right demands and contained them. In its light you could understand them: but from them you could know nothing of it.... In this height and depth and breadth the little idea of herself which she had hitherto called *me* dropped down and vanished, unflattering, into bottomless distance, like a bird in space without air.²⁵

This second experience changes Jane as much as her first encounter with the Director, but in a different way: in the first conversation Jane experiences hugeness, in the second one she sees herself in *relation* to hugeness. In the awareness of God's presence and glory, her lifelong independence is finally undone. She realizes that heaven may be a monarchy, but it is unlike any human monarchy; God may be King and Sovereign, but never has anyone been more unlike a common human tyrant; and conversion may be total defeat and loss, but it is a blessed defeat into joy and life.

highly nuanced view of gender, grounded in a theological framework that ultimately validates and affirms femininity, is misunderstood today precisely because it subverts Western chauvinistic assumptions.

²³ Jennifer L. Woodruff Tait, "You Will Have No More Dreams; Have Children Instead: Or, What's a Nice Egalitarian Girl Like You Doing in a Book Like This?" *Inklings Forever* 6 (2008), 10, italics original, www.taylor.edu/cslewis. Woodruff Tait also points out, interestingly, that for all the Director's strictures regarding equality as "not the deepest thing," in actual practice the manor at St. Anne's is far more democratic than the N.I.C.E., as well as most communal arrangements—there are no servants, but all (men and women alike) take turns with the house and garden work.

²⁴ Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, 315.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

2. Mark's Conversion

Mark's conversion is in some respects the exact opposite movement from Jane's. Whereas Jane's deepest fear is being taken in; Mark's is being shut out. She fears intrusion; he fears exclusion. She is always fortifying defensive walls; he is perpetually climbing and then discarding ladders. Mark personifies the phenomenon of Lewis's thought called the "Inner Ring."²⁶ One gets a glance at his driving psychology at one point when, trying to justify his role in media propaganda he comforts himself with the thought of "nobody ever again having the right to consider him a nonentity or cipher."²⁷ That is the great fear animating his life. When Mark's career is threatened at the N.I.C.E., for instance, his conscience is overcome by his "other and stronger self, the self that was anxious at all costs not be placed among the outsiders."²⁸

Lewis's own conversion is materially more similar to Jane's than Mark's. But one might also see in Mark's inner-circlism something of Lewis's experience as a teen at Malvern and again as an adult at Oxford. In an early letter to his brother, Lewis spoke of "the real Oxford" as "a close corporation of jolly, untidy, lazy, good-for-nothing, humorous old men, who have been electing their own successors ever since the world began and who intend to go on with it."²⁹ And one cannot help but wonder what experiences in Lewis's own life informed the book's many scenes depicting the inner life and politics of Bracton college (the opening story of the Bracton College meeting, for instance, breathes with such ease and familiarity that it almost feels autobiographical).³⁰

Like Jane, and like Lewis himself, Mark goes through a series of pre-conversion experiences. First, the possibility of death during his imprisonment by the N.I.C.E. disillusioned him from his ambitions and compels him for the first time to honestly consider his life. Looking back at each stage of his life, he recognizes a recurrent pattern in which his need to belong has always squeezed out all real joy and driven away his closest friends. As Lewis describes it, "he looked back on his life not with shame, but with a kind of disgust at its dreariness.... He was aware, without even having to think of it, that it was he himself—nothing else in the whole universe—that had chosen the dust and broken bottles, the heap of old tin cans, the dry and choking places."³¹

During a period of solitary confinement that follows this experience, Mark sustains some kind of spiritual attack and cries out for help. During this experience, he realizes that the philosophy of his captors is the logical consequence of principles he has believed all his life, and he loses confidence in the freedom of his own thinking and willing.³²

He is then exposed to bizarre forms of psychological torture, such as being placed in rooms of odd proportions and grotesque pictures, and being made to do seemingly random, meaningless tasks. These experiences are designed to produce in Mark what one of his captors (a man named Frost) calls

²⁶ See the helpful discussion in Jacobs, *The Narnian*, 180–83. Cf. C. S. Lewis, "The Inner Ring," <http://www.lewissociety.org/innerring.php>.

²⁷ Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, 132.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

²⁹ Quoted in Downing, *Planets in Peril*, 119.

³⁰ These elements are what lead Downing to call *That Hideous Strength* a "satire on modern academia" (*Planets in Peril*, 6).

³¹ Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, 243–44.

³² *Ibid.*, 264–67.

“objectivity” (the notion that all thoughts are mere chemical reactions and the self is an illusion). But it has the opposite effect:

As the desert first teaches men to love water, or as absence reveals affection, there rose up against this background of the sour and the crooked some kind of vision of the sweet and the straight. Something else—something he vaguely called the “Normal”—apparently existed. He had never thought about it before. But there it was—solid, massive, with a shape of its own, almost like something you could touch, or eat, or fall in love with.³³

Mark gradually takes sides with the “Normal” and the “Straight” over and against the naturalistic philosophy of his captors, and when Frost finally orders him to trample on a crucifix, he refuses, reasoning that even if Christianity is a fable and the universe is a cheat, “why not go down with the ship?”³⁴ In the end, Mark is released, and as he returns to Jane in the final pages of the book, he reviews his life and his marriage from a completely new, humbled standpoint. But even at this point it is not yet clear whether and when Mark has fully converted: all these developments seem to be preparatory, pre-conversion experiences.

3. Conversion in Light of the Social Message of *That Hideous Strength*

Many interpreters of Lewis have noticed the structural symmetries of Mark and Jane’s conversions, with similar sequencing but often diametrically opposite results.³⁵ Both become swept up in a supernatural community (one angelic, one demonic). Both meet the respective “Head” of their order, and the meeting produces a profound result (joy for Jane, horror and revulsion for Mark). Both face the prospect of death, and have a resulting religious and existential crisis (openness to the excitement of life for Jane, awareness of the boredom and insipidity of his life for Mark). Both have climactic experiences

³³ Ibid., 296–97.

³⁴ Ibid., 333–34.

³⁵ Richard J. Purtill argues that “the intricate pattern made by the movement of the two Studdocks” is “too orderly to be accidental,” then providing an impressive summary of the opposite sequence of their movements (“*That Hideous Strength: A Double Story*,” in *Longing for a Form: Essays on the Fiction of C. S. Lewis*, ed. Peter J. Schackel [Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1977], 97). For instance, Jane’s encounter with Hardcastle, a member of Mark’s community, is contrasted with Mark’s conversation with Denniston, a member of Jane’s community. Schwartz also has a helpful discussion in *C. S. Lewis on the Final Frontier*, 111. Purtill also draws attention to the opposition of Ransom and Whither, the respective “directors” of their community, for whom language serves opposite ends: clarity for the former (a philologist), and obfuscation for the latter (“*That Hideous Strength: A Double Story*,” 100). Downing, *Planets in Peril*, 58, provides some further perceptive parallels: “Jane begins with a malaise and lack of commitment, either to her marriage or to her scholarship; Mark begins with a reckless commitment, a headlong plunge to fulfill his ambitions by the shortest route possible. Jane dreams realities and thinks they are illusions; Mark is deluded about the actual workings of Bracton and N.I.C.E., just when he thinks he knows what is really going on. Jane takes a slow train to join St. Anne’s, while Mark rushes to Belbury in a big, flashy car driven by the reckless Feverstone. Jane is invited to join St. Anne’s, while Mark is coerced into joining N.I.C.E. The fresh garden at St. Anne’s fills Jane with images of paradise, while the garden at N.I.C.E. is artificial and sterile, like “a municipal cemetery” (p. 101). Jane is filled with ineffable joy when she first meets the head of St. Anne’s—the regal and mystical Ransom, returned from Perelandra. Mark is filled with unspeakable horror and revulsion when he meets the “head” of N.I.C.E.—a decapitated head supposedly kept alive by the scientific apparatus but actually animated by dark eldils.”

that produce multiple selves, all squabbling with each other (Jane's with the Director in chapter 7, Mark's in chapter 8 with Dimble).

The contrast between these two conversion movements, however, comes into even clearer focus when they are interpreted, not merely in relation to each other, but against the broader social message of *That Hideous Strength*. The book is typically interpreted as a critique of modernity, and one can indeed detect a steady medievalism/modernism contrast throughout the book, culminated in the translation of Merlin from the latter to the former. Mark and Jane are, for their own part, quintessentially *modern* characters—their very names, unlike other names in the book, are prosaic and dull, and their conversions are frequently depicted in terms of movements away from modernist ideas and assumptions. What makes Mark's discovery of "the Normal" a necessary pre-conversion step, for instance, is his "modern" education, which has made him what Lewis calls a "man of straw."³⁶

Seen in this light, the book's contrapuntal oscillation between its two narratives, those of Jane and Mark, is simply one piece of a larger dialectic running throughout the book serving to contrast good vs. evil, Belbury vs. St. Anne's, beauty vs. utility, Britain vs. Logres, and above all, a medieval vs. a modern view of the universe and our place within it. Within this contrast, the manor at St. Anne's represents the older, romantic world where love and obedience are seen as the ultimate aim of humanity, while the N.I.C.E. represents the newer, mechanistic world where ruthless progress and evolution are seen as the ultimate. Just as the N.I.C.E. seeks to divorce the mental and the material, best represented in Whither's flights from reality (cutting mind from body) and Frost's "objectivity" (cutting will from mind), so the Company at St. Anne's represents the "affirmation of our organic, embodied, and finite condition" (hence ending the book with sex).³⁷

It is not insignificant that Lewis wrote *That Hideous Strength* at the same time as he was researching for his *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*.³⁸ Lewis's popular and academic works often exhibit cross-pollination: *Perelandra*, for instance, written at the same time as Lewis's *Preface to Paradise Lost*, portrays many of the themes of Milton's great work.³⁹ In his *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, Lewis opens the work by arguing against the commonplace view that modernity brought about emancipation from medieval magic and superstition. Rather, for Lewis, the Renaissance brought about an age in which science simply replaced the role that magic had played in previous cultures, namely, twisting nature to serve humanity's ends rather than bending humanity to fit within nature. Of course, this is exactly the threat represented by the N.I.C.E., Lewis's modern analogue to the wickedness of the Tower of Babel.

The presence of the Arthurian legend in the book, a source of perplexity for some critics, becomes less strange when viewed in relation to this larger historical contrast. But it also may help explain one of the other strange features in *That Hideous Strength*, such as why it is not, like the first two novels, interplanetary. Lewis originally began *The Space Trilogy* in an agreement with his friend J. R. R. Tolkien to write the kinds of books that they wanted to write, but no one else was writing. Lewis was assigned to write a space-travel story (which became *Out of the Silent Planet*), and Tolkien was assigned to write

³⁶ Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, 182, "in Mark's mind hardly one rag of noble thought, either Christian or Pagan, had a secure lodging. His education had been neither scientific nor classical—merely 'Modern.'"

³⁷ Schwartz, *C. S. Lewis on the Final Frontier*, 139.

³⁸ C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*, Oxford History of English Literature 3 (1954; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

³⁹ Shippey even calls *Perelandra* a "reprise of books 4 and 9–10 of *Paradise Lost*" ("The Ransom Trilogy," 242).

a time-travel story (which only resulted in the aborted *The Lost Road*). If Lewis crafted *That Hideous Strength* to make up for his friend's failure to complete his end of the bargain, replacing space-travel with time-travel, then the sort of time-travel Lewis used (involving Merlin and medievalism) would certainly have been materially relevant to the criticism of modernity he sought to make. In other words, if Lewis's goal in the first two books in *The Space Trilogy* was to invert a modern cosmology with a medieval one in which "space" is not cold and empty but full of life, then his goal in the final installment of the trilogy was to invert a modern view of history with a medieval one in which modernity is not mere progress beyond pre-modernity but rather a kind of fall or declension from it—ultimately a second Babel.⁴⁰

As sharp as Lewis's contrast between medievalism and modernity is, it is not without a subtle irony, for (as Schwartz demonstrates) halfway through the novel it is revealed that the leaders of the N.I.C.E. are searching for the grave of Merlin the Magician, under the influence of demonic forces.⁴¹ Thus the difference for Lewis between medievalism and modernity is not that one invokes the supernatural, while the other invokes progress—as though Lewis were affirming a kind of cultural stasis or mere return to the past. Rather, for Lewis modernity has its own kind of magic and mysticism, while Christianity, for its part, is not opposed to a kind of development and "evolution."⁴² That is just why the conversions of Mark and Jane (as long, slow, developments out of barrenness and into joy) play such an important role within the overall thrust of the book.

In fact, keeping Lewis's larger social message in view may go some distance in answering the criticism that Lewis has sloppily thrown together the mundane and the miraculous in *That Hideous Strength*. If part of Lewis's purpose is to undermine the common misconception of modernity as the age of reason and moderation replacing the superstition and mysticism of the medieval world, one can more readily appreciate the role of Mark and Jane within the novel. Their day-to-day struggles (marriage boredom for Jane, academic ambition for Mark) contrast so wildly with the fantastical realities of the book (global catastrophe, demonic invasion, the return of Merlin) that without both it is hard to make heads or tails of Lewis's subtitle: "A Modern Fairy Tale for Grown-ups." Apparently juxtaposing the "modern"/"Grown-up" with the "Fairy Tale" was part of Lewis's intentional design, part of his strategy for undercutting the myth of modernity as emancipation from magic. What better way to make this social critique than by contrasting the diabolical and magical (the N.I.C.E.) with the organic and the natural (St. Anne's), and slowing narrating the transposition of a typically "modern" married couple from the former to the latter?

4. Lessons for Today

Two aspects of Lewis's portrait of conversion may be particularly worth reflecting on with a view to our understanding of conversion today, particularly in our efforts at evangelism in post-Christian settings. First, both Mark and Jane's conversions occur in a complicated, sequential process. For each character, there is a dramatic turning point, and yet most the real drama occurs in the process that

⁴⁰ The title *That Hideous Strength* comes from a reference to the tower of Babel story in a 16th century David Lyndsay poem. The couplet in question reads: "the shadow of that hyddeous strength, sax myle and more it is of length."

⁴¹ Schwartz, *C. S. Lewis on the Final Frontier*, 95.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 3–18. See especially his discussion of Lewis's portrayal of good as dynamic and developmental, and an "evolving Eden," on pp. 14–15.

leads up to that moment. The conversions are total and all-encompassing, but not simple or punctual. They fall out, like Lewis's conversion, kind of like a slow chess match. Second, the "pre-conversion" experiences of each character differ according to the particular shape their lives have taken without God. Jane's isolationism is dismantled by the experience of glory ("Hugeness"); Mark's inner-circlism is dismantled by the experience of morality ("the Normal").

These "pre-conversion" experiences are as unique to each person as they are necessary for the change to occur. In fact, they are not only different from each other, but nearly opposite each other. Mark's pre-conversion experiences are largely moral/ethical, and occur through relationships with evil people; Jane's pre-conversion experiences are largely transcendent/aesthetic, and occur through relationships with good people. Mark enters a company headed by devils and looks inward; Jane enters a company headed by angels and looks outward. Mark must suffer to torture and defeat to stand up with a conscience; Jane must taste enrapturing joy before bowing down in submission.

The slowness and specificity of each character's conversion does not take away from their supernatural character. Both Mark and Jane come to see that their lives are not merely incomplete without God, but plunging headstrong into ruin and misery. One feels in both accounts the intensity of the struggle, the power and beauty of the total reversal that is finally accomplished in each character. In Lewis's imagination, one can well see why Christ would call conversion a *rebirth* in his conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:3). But looking at Lewis's depiction of conversion, one can *also* see why Christ rarely makes the same kind of appeal to two different people: right after he speaks to Nicodemus about rebirth, for instance (John 3), he will speak to a more "worldly" sinner about living water (John 4).

Lewis's insights into the nature of conversion remind us of the need for sensitive exegesis of the hearts and lives of our non-Christian friends and neighbors. It would likely do little good to hand Mark Studdock a gospel tract before his encounter with "the Normal." Similarly, any call to repentance in Jane Studdock's life would probably only generate offense prior to her encounter with joy. And yet, how many Mark or Jane Studdocks live and work around us each day? For most of our non-Christian friends and neighbors, converting to Christianity must simultaneously or previously involve converting *out of* the anti-objective, anti-idealistic, anti-Platonic, anti-transcendent worldview that is increasingly common in post-Christian Western culture.

In other words, conversion involves both disconnection and reattachment, both death and resurrection: and sometimes the *death/disconnection* part can be a long, messy process. This is certainly Lewis's own experience, and that of countless others throughout church history as well.⁴³ And because

⁴³ St. Augustine makes for a good case study in this regard. Augustine experienced a dramatic conversion in 386, but only after a long, complex, process involving a back-and-forth interplay between Christianity and various other non-Christian or sub-Christian religions and philosophies. He was a Manichee for almost ten years before his conversion to catholic Christianity, and it was not orthodox, catholic Christianity *per se* that led him out of Manichaeism, but a sort of loose conversion to neo-Platonism, which exposed to his mind the errors of the Manichaean view of good and evil. Some historians have merged Platonism and Christianity together as one movement in Augustine's development, but Peter Brown demonstrates that Platonism was an autonomous (brief) phase just before his conversion (*Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, revised ed. (Los Angeles: U.C.L.A. Press, 2000], 140). Augustine's absorption of Plotinus in the 380s was as a kind of preparatory stage, an intellectual incubating period, making him ripe for that crucial moment in the garden in 386. Nor, interestingly, did Augustine decisively discard neo-Platonism when he embraced Christianity, but rather it continued to develop in his thought alongside Christianity, interwoven with it. Only gradually over the next decade does neo-Platonism recede into the background as Augustine drifts away from an intellectualized Christianity, from the Platonic ideal of the "Philosopher" pursuing wisdom, and becomes, by the time of *The Confessions* in 397, more distinctively and more

this process is different for different people, gospel *proclamation* generally requires gospel *application*. Francis Schaeffer used to say that if he had only an hour to spend sharing Christ with someone, he would spend the first 55 minutes listening, and the last 5 minutes presenting Christ. Listening is a necessary part of evangelism because conversion is a step out of sin, and sin entangles different people in different kinds of idols.

To be sure, the ultimate need of the human soul does not change. Every human being most basically needs God, and therefore every fallen human being needs the removal of that which separates us from God, sin/guilt/death. And yet, different people will often *experience* gospel need and gospel fulfillment in different ways in different settings. Not everyone has a Lutheran crisis of conscience and guilt; some have an Augustinian crisis of soul and desire, or a Kierkegaardian crisis of selfhood and angst; and of course many have no felt crisis at all.

Perhaps, therefore, the greatest need for the evangelization of postmoderns is simply a *sense* of God. In a post-Christian culture, you cannot assume *God* as a metaphysical or ethical framework. Saying “Christ died for your sins” will mean very little to Mark Studdock until he has taken sides with “the Normal” in his N.I.C.E. jail cell; it will mean very little to Jane Studdock until she experiences the “hugeness” and joy that upsets her individualism; and it will likely mean very little to postmodern people who are unsure whether there are such things as objective goodness, truth, beauty, meaning, or souls.

5. Conclusion

In closing, it is worth reflecting on the value of Lewis making these points in a novel, instead of a more abstract kind of writing. In a post-Christian setting, the arts may play a particularly useful role for communicating spiritual truths, particularly those that may function to induce “pre-conversion” experiences. One thinks, for instance, of how many postmodern people have gained a sense of transcendence from reading Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, and how often this has played a significant role in conversions to Christianity, even though the book contains no Christian allegory.⁴⁴

The arts are powerful because they can provide a sense of glory (think “hugeness”) and goodness (think “the Normal”)—those very qualities for which postmodern, transcendence-starved people so desperately ache. The person who lives next to you or works across from your cubicle may scoff at the notion of miracles or heaven, and they may bristle at the idea of sin or judgment. But they may also sense a beauty and charm in middle-Earth or in Narnia or at St. Anne’s that cannot be accounted for within the limits of their worldview.⁴⁵

simply, a Christian. Moreover, more clearly than with Manichaeism, neo-Platonism leaves a lingering influence on his thought and expression, palpable for example in his admiring attitude towards pagan philosophy in *The City of God* (written between 413–426). One could perhaps say that his neo-Platonism gets absorbed into and transformed by his Christianity, rather than simply replaced by it. But even this is a process, and (again) takes a decade.

⁴⁴ Responding to suggestions that the One Ring represented the atomic bomb, Tolkien protested, “I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so.... I much prefer history, true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers.” J. R. R. Tolkien, foreword to *The Lord of the Rings* (1966; reprint, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), xxiv.

⁴⁵ I am grateful to Brian Tabb for his editorial suggestions and for directing me to several recent works on *That Hideous Strength*.

Calling on the Name of the Lord: The Meaning and Significance of ἐπικαλέω in Romans 10:13

— Joel D. Estes —

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Abstract: In Rom 10:13, to “call on the name of the Lord” (ἐπικαλεῖν τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου) involves more than simply invoking the Lord, but expresses a prayer for deliverance with cultic connotations, that is “to worship Jesus as Lord.” Paul’s use of ἐπικαλέω in Rom 10:13 resonates with strong liturgical overtones, draws on a long OT tradition of employing such language in cultic settings, parallels closely other NT texts that are cultic in orientation, and coheres with our earliest evidence about the worship practices of the early church. These observations, in turn, suggest a tighter thematic relationship between Rom 10 and Paul’s description of humanity’s fundamental predicament as false worship in ch. 1, his exhortation for renewed spiritual worship in ch. 12, and his vision for unified Jew/Gentile worship in ch. 15.

Romans 10:13 is one of the most familiar verses in all the Bible: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Featured in countless sermons, and the capstone of many a gospel tract, this verse has, however, rarely been the subject of sustained scholarly inquiry and in the commentaries often receives surprisingly short shrift. One notable exception is an insightful essay by C. Kavin Rowe, which explores the meaning of the “name of the Lord” in the second half of 10:13 and demonstrates convincingly that Paul’s application of OT language for God to the person of Jesus serves to identify the one with the other.¹ However, even this article spends little time plumbing the signifi-

¹C. Kavin Rowe, “Romans 10:13: What is the Name of the Lord?” *HBT* 22 (2000): 135–73. Rowe’s precise description of the relationship between the identity of YHWH and the human person Jesus is carefully nuanced: “The unitive relationship is dialectical and hinges in fact on unreserved identification of one with the other as well as on clear differentiation” (ibid., 136–37). Four other studies that devote some space to Rom 10:13 (i.e., about 2, 4, and 5 pp. respectively) are: Carl J. Davis, *The Name and Way of the Lord: Old Testament Themes, New Testament Christology*, JSNTSup 129 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 129–31; Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 255–59; and David B. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul’s Christology*, WUNT 2/47 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 116–21. All three of these works, however, (like Rowe’s article) fo-

cance of the first half of 10:13 and the question that it begs: What does it mean to *call on* (ἐπικαλέω) the name of the Lord?²

The immediate context of Romans 10:13 reveals that this question is not inconsequential. In Romans 10:12–14, Paul uses the verb ἐπικαλέω three times to articulate the proper human response to God/Jesus. In 10:12, Paul argues that the same Lord who is over both Jews and Greeks richly blesses all who call upon him (ἐπικαλέω). To support this claim he quotes Joel 3:5 LXX (2:32 ET): “All who call upon (ἐπικαλέω) the name of the Lord will be saved.” The same verb then serves as a linguistic springboard in v. 14a to introduce the chain–like sequence (*sorites*)³ in vv. 14–15 that leads to one calling upon the Lord. The three–fold repetition of ἐπικαλέω in vv. 12–14, and its location at the head (or the end result) of the chain in vv. 14–15 (preceding even πιστεύω) indicates its prime importance for Paul. It is vital, therefore, to consider carefully what this term conveys.

That is precisely the goal of this paper, and here is its central claim: In Rom 10:13, to “call on the name of the Lord” (ἐπικαλεῖν τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου) means more than to invoke the Lord, but expresses a prayer for deliverance with cultic connotations, that is, “to worship Jesus as Lord.”⁴ In particular, Paul’s usage of ἐπικαλέω in this passage resonates with strong liturgical overtones, it draws on a long OT tradition of employing such language in cultic settings, it parallels closely other NT texts that are cultic in orientation, and it coheres with our earliest evidence about the worship practices of the early church. Finally, the observation that ἐπικαλέω carries the nuance of worship is significant, since it suggests a tighter thematic relationship between this chapter and Paul’s description of humanity’s fundamental predicament as false worship in chapter 1, his exhortation for renewed spiritual worship in chapter 12, and his vision for unified Jew/Gentile worship in chapter 15.

These interrelated claims forecast the four stages of my argument. In section one I examine Rom 10:13 within its immediate context. In section two I consider the linguistic background of ἐπικαλέω in Greek literature and trace its usage in the LXX. In section three I explore the relationship between the cultic language of Rom 10 and other NT passages. Finally, in section four I show how listening for the liturgical overtones in Rom 10:13 can tune our ears to hear more clearly the theme of worship that

cus largely on the issue of Jesus’s identity rather than the import of ἐπικαλέω within the larger context of Romans. A slightly fuller treatment of this verse and its cultic resonance appears in Tony Costa, *Worship and the Risen Jesus in the Pauline Letters* (New York: Peter Lang, 2013), 156–66.

²The meaning of ἐπικαλέω is the focus of a single suggestive paragraph on the top of p. 151, but Rowe’s attention is directed primarily toward the startling and significant observation that the title κύριος, which refers to YHWH in Joel 2:32 (3:5 LXX), is now applied to Jesus (ibid.). As Rowe himself states, in his discussion of the participial form of ἐπικαλέω in 10:12c, “Paul’s soteriology is here decidedly christological (continuing 10:9ff.) and for that reason the *significant* use of ἐπικαλουμένους (“calling upon”) deserves *brief* mention” (ibid., 150–51, italics added to indicate the importance of the term for Rowe, which, however, belies his short treatment of it).

³Cf. 5:3–4; 8:29–30 for other examples of this rhetorical device in Romans.

⁴So Ernst Käsemann, in commenting on this passage, correctly observes: “By ‘calling upon’ Paul is not merely thinking of prayer but also of acclamation and the proclamation of divine intercession, so that besides the preaching of v. 8 and the homology of vv. 9f. the event of worship now moves into the foreground” (“The Spirit and the Letter,” in *Perspectives on Paul* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971], 164). For the term “worship,” Larry W. Hurtado provides a helpful definition: “Worship comprises those actions by which people express and reaffirm their devotional stance toward, and relationship to, a deity” (“Worship, NT Christian,” *NIDB* 5: 910). More specifically, for Paul, Christian worship involves total life devotion to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ, expressed in the loving use of spiritual gifts and in unified praise (cf. Rom 12; 15:6–7).

reverberates throughout the letter and that constitutes one of its central (yet oft-neglected) theological motifs.

1. Immediate Context

Within the larger structure of chapters 9–11, Rom 9:30–10:21 forms a discrete rhetorical unit whose center and climax is 10:13. The letter of Romans has been compared to a symphony, with thematic motifs that swell and fade, appearing for a moment then receding only to reemerge again.⁵ This analogy is especially apt in chapters 9–11, which address the complex relationship between God, God’s people Israel, and the Gentiles in light of God’s salvific action in Jesus Christ. As elsewhere in the letter, Paul signals key movements through his characteristic use of leading questions, the force of which are perhaps best summarized in the two-fold query of 9:14: “What then shall we say? Is God unjust?” The emphatic *μη γένοιτο* that abruptly follows proffers the response that the rest of these chapters unpack.

Along the way, however, more specific questions prod the argument toward its theological and doxological conclusion (11:26, 32, 33–36). One of these occurs at 9:30, where Paul likens the present situation of the Gentiles vis-à-vis Israel to a footrace and wonders how it could be that the Gentiles have attained a righteousness they did not pursue, while Israel, for all its effort, has stumbled and fallen short. This launches Paul into a reflection on Israel’s disobedience that extends from 9:30 until the next question in 11:1—“Has God abandoned his people?”—which receives again Paul’s rapid retort: *μη γένοιτο*. The questions in 9:30 and 11:1, then, frame 9:30–10:21 and warrant treating it as a discernible section. Moreover, as Rowe observes, “the central section of 9:30–10:21 is itself knitted tightly together with threads linguistic (e.g., *πίστις*, *δικαιοσύνη*, *Χριστός*, *κύριος*, *πᾶς*), logical (e.g., how can they call upon one of whom they have not heard?), and theological (e.g., use of OT for christological theology and defense of Gentile inclusion in connection with Israel’s disobedience).”⁶

Smaller subdivisions in 9:30–10:21 further reveal the flow of Paul’s argument and clarify the relationship of 10:13 to Paul’s central claims. 9:30–33 serves as a kind of preface to ch. 10, introducing the citation from Isa 28:16, a text to which Paul returns in 10:11 with a decidedly christological twist. In 10:1, the direct address *ἀδελφοί*, Paul’s introduction of the key term *σωτηρία* (appearing for the first time since 1:16),⁷ and his shift to a more personal tone marks a minor transition, even while language of Israel seeking (*ζητέω*) but failing to submit to God’s righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*, twice in v. 3 and again in v. 4) binds it to the preceding paragraph (9:30–33). Verse 4 marks a pause in the argument, but not a full stop.⁸ Instead, Paul’s logic pushes forward,⁹ springing off *πιστεύω* to describe in vv. 5–6 the difference

⁵ See N. T. Wright, “Romans,” *NIB* 10:396.

⁶ Rowe, “What is the Name of the Lord?” 139.

⁷ Significantly, it occurs again in 10:10; cf. *σῶζω* in 10:9. Altogether the noun occurs only five times in Romans: 1:16; 10:1, 10; 11:11; 13:11.

⁸ Due to its enigmatic nature, this verse has been the subject of an enormous amount of scholarly attention and is often treated in isolation. However, the rhetorical flow of the passage does not stop here, but drives forward to its climax in v. 13. Cf. Rowe, “What is the Name of the Lord?” 140, who cites as an exception Steven Richard Bechtler, “Christ the *Τέλος* of the Law: The Goal of Romans 10:4,” *CBQ* 56 (1994): 288–308; Bechtler rightly sees 10:11–13 as the climax of this section of the argument.

⁹ Note the connective *γὰρ* in v. 5, which links 5–13 with the preceding material in vv. 1–4; cf. Rowe, “What is the Name of the Lord?” 140.

between the righteousness that is by the law and the righteousness that is by faith. Indeed, the latter receives a voice and speaks scripture alongside Moses (quoting Lev 18:5; Deut 9:4; 30:12; Ps 117:26; and Deut 30:14). Paul’s contemporizing exegesis surfaces clearly in v. 8, where he equates the “word” that “is in your mouth and in your heart” from Deut 30:14 with “the word of faith that we (i.e., Paul and his co-workers) are proclaiming.” He then explicates the content of that “word” in v. 9, by riffing on the terms “mouth” and “heart” from Deut 30 and returning to the main theme introduced in v. 1: “salvation” (σωτηρία).

From this point forward a series of sentences starting with γάρ drives the passage to its climax in 10:13. This rhetorical crescendo may be illustrated as follows:¹⁰

for (γάρ) in the heart it is believed... (10:10)

for (γάρ) the Scripture says... (10:11)

for (γάρ) there is no distinction... (10:12a)

for (γάρ) the same Lord is Lord of all... (10:12b)

for (γάρ) all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. (10:13)

As Rowe observes, “The use of γάρ five times within 10:10–13 not only connects the phrases to each other, but also gives the reader a sense of being pulled or drawn to some expected end.”¹¹ Furthermore, “this progression (i) recalls Paul’s initial entreaty in 10:1, (ii) picks up the four uses of γάρ (10:2, 3, 4, 5) preceding Paul’s [christological] rereading of Deuteronomy, and (iii) deepens the ‘you will be saved’ (σωθήση) of 10:9 (cf. σωτηρίαν in 10:10) even as it (iv) presses forward with rhetorical force toward the climactic quotation of Joel 3:5 in 10:13.”¹²

Another minor transition occurs in 10:14, signaled by οὖν and the shift from declarative statements to a catena of questions. Directly following this chain of interrogatives, Paul’s citation of Isa 53:7 in v. 15 provides a verbal pivot (εὐαγγελίζω) from which to reintroduce the word “gospel” (εὐαγγέλιον, v. 16), a term that is prevalent in ch. 1 (Rom 1:1, 9, 16) but that has been curiously absent from the letter since 2:16. A second citation from Isaiah in 10:16b steers the discussion toward the subject of one’s response to the gospel, circling back to the terms “faith” (πίστις, cf. 9:30, 32; 10:6, 8) and “word” (ῥῆμα, cf. 10:8).¹³ The remainder of the chapter, closing with a characteristic cluster of scriptural quotations,¹⁴ describes further the disobedience and culpability of Israel, who, having heard the message of the gospel, has nevertheless rejected it.

All of these structural observations substantiate seeing 10:13 as the theological heart and rhetorical hinge of 9:30–10:21. In what way, however, does 10:13 ring with liturgical overtones? Answering this question depends, in the first place, on our reading of its relationship with 10:9–12 and 14–15a.

¹⁰ This chart is drawn from Rowe, “What is the Name of the Lord?” 141.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ This term only occurs three times in Romans, all in this chapter: 10:8, 17, 18.

¹⁴ While OT citations are sprinkled throughout chs. 9–11, each major movement of this section concludes with a concentration of OT citations (see 9:25–29; 10:18–21; 11:34–35).

At least one commentator claims that “calling on the name of the Lord is another way of saying ‘believe.’”¹⁵ If this is the case, it makes little sense for Paul to separate the two concepts by asking how people who do not believe in the Lord can call on him (v. 14). Rather than entirely equating these ideas, it is better to interpret “call upon” and “believe” in this chapter as both distinguishable and inseparable. Already in 10:9–10 (despite the absence of ἐπικαλέω), Paul has borrowed language from Deut 30:14 to lay out the dual salvific significance of confessing with one’s mouth and believing in one’s heart, thus anticipating the argument that follows. As I have shown, the grammatical structure of vv. 10–12 invites the reader to link 10:9 with 10:13, with its five–fold repetition of γάρ that propels the argument toward its climactic conclusion. Indeed, the connection between the phrase “confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord” (ὁμολογήσης ἐν τῷ στόματί σου κύριον Ἰησοῦν, v. 9) and “call upon [the name of the Lord]” (ἐπικαλέσεται [τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου], vv. 12–14) suggests that the two expressions mutually inform one another.¹⁶

Rom 10:9	Rom 10:13
ἐὰν ὁμολογήσης ἐν τῷ στόματί σου <u>κύριον Ἰησοῦν</u> καὶ πιστεύσης ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου ὅτι ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, <u>σωθήσῃ</u>	πᾶς γὰρ ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσεται <u>τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου</u> <u>σωθήσεται.</u>

Taken together, these two phrases carry strong liturgical overtones. To “confess with your mouth” finds scriptural parallels in 1 Cor 12:3, in a context clearly concerned with liturgical matters, and also in Phil 2:11 as part of a passage that is commonly considered an early Christian hymn.¹⁷ Moreover, the invocation of Jesus as Lord (κύριος) frequently occurs in liturgical settings, such as baptism (Acts 9:14, 21; 22:16) and church discipline (1 Cor 5:1–5).¹⁸

Such evidence suggests that “the confession ‘Jesus is Lord’ (κύριον Ἰησοῦν) ... was rather well-fixed within early Christianity” and that “it arose not in light of persecution but most likely to meet the liturgical needs in the church.”¹⁹ For the church at Rome, these needs included Paul’s ardent desire for

¹⁵ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 662.

¹⁶ Moreover, as J. Ross Wagner explains, “Using one’s mouth to ‘call’ on the Lord corresponds to ‘confessing’ with one’s mouth in Rom 10:10; both actions leading to salvation” (*Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in “Concert” in the Letter to the Romans* [Leiden: Brill, 2002], 169).

¹⁷ Larry W. Hurtado, *At the Origins of Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 78–79. For two recent analyses of this passage, see Benjamin Edsall and Jennifer R. Strawbridge, “The Songs We Used to Sing? Hymn ‘Traditions’ and Reception in Pauline Letters,” *JSNT* 37 (2015): 290–311 (which questions whether Phil 2:6–11 preserves an early “hymn”), and Michael Wade Martin and Bryan A. Nash, “Philippians 2:6–11 as Subversive *Hymnos*: A Study in the Light of Ancient Rhetorical Theory,” *JTS* 66 (2015): 90–138 (which argues that Phil 2:6–11 does, in fact, exhibit key rhetorical features common to ancient hymns).

¹⁸ Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 108–113. Hurtado also notes that the untranslated Aramaic phrase *maranatha* in 1 Cor 16:22 (most likely meaning “Our [O] Lord, come!”; cf. Rev 22:20) preserves an example of early Christian worship directed toward Jesus as Lord (*ibid.*, 106).

¹⁹ David B. Capes, *Yahweh Texts in Paul’s Letters*, WUNT 2/47 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1992), 117.

Jews and Gentiles together to worship Jesus as Lord (cf. 15:5–6).²⁰ That a liturgical need for unity lies behind this passage is underscored by Paul’s deliberate addition²¹ of πᾶς to his citation of Isa 28:16 in 10:11, a word that Paul features again in vv. 12 and 13 and that highlights the universal horizon of his mission (v. 8, 13). J. Ross Wagner puts it well: “Employing the wording of Rom 3:22 verbatim, ‘there is no distinction’ (οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν διαστολή), Paul substitutes for his earlier indictment that *all* humans are under sin the good news that *all* humans have the same Lord (cf. 3:29–30), who deals generously with *all* who call on him (10:12).”²²

Significantly, Paul appropriates an OT text whose original referent was YHWH and applies it to Jesus, thereby identifying Jesus closely with the God of Israel.²³ Rowe asserts, “It would be hard to overestimate the theological potency of this use of Joel 3:5a,” and he argues that “we are to hear the echoes of this sentence in its original context, but now with a christological transformation that has the profoundest implications for Paul’s ‘doctrine’ of God and, as such, for the salvation of Israel.”²⁴ As Rowe demonstrates, the statement in Joel 3:5a originally appears at the climax of an apocalyptic vision concerning the restoration of all Israel, which is grounded in the theological singularity of YHWH (Joel 2:27 LXX).²⁵ Paul modulates this vision in two crucial ways. First, whereas the πᾶς of Joel refers to all Israel (excluding the Gentiles; cf. Joel 2:27b LXX), Paul expands the meaning of πᾶς in Rom 10:13 to embrace both Jews and Gentiles (10:12). Second, while the κύριος in Joel is YHWH, in 10:13, the κύριος is clearly Jesus, as indicated by (a) the confession κύριος Ἰησοῦς (10:9), (b) the identification of ἐπ’ αὐτῷ (10:11), ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος (10:12), and αὐτόν (10:12) with Jesus, and (c) the evidence of 10:14, where the κύριος must refer to Jesus and not YHWH, since Paul’s concern is that his fellow Israelites call on one in whom they have *not* yet believed.²⁶ Thus, Paul now reimagines the restoration envisioned by Joel for God’s people to include not only Israel but all humanity, and to be enacted by the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the level of intertextual echo, this restoration not only entails eschatological deliverance but also worship.²⁷ The bond Paul has forged between Isaiah 28:16 and Joel 3:5 through the addition of πᾶς in 10:11 invites the reader to recall how the “shame” language in Isa 28:16 (οὐ μὴ κατασχυθῆ) echoes the two-fold repetition of identical wording in Joel 2:26–27, in which God’s deliverance prompts his people

²⁰ For a discussion of 15:5–6 and its connection with this passage, see section four below.

²¹ According to Wagner, this is a “crystal-clear example of a deliberate modification of a text by Paul” (*Heralds of the Good News*, 169). He notes, “The only support for πᾶς in the LXX text tradition is provided by the ninth-century MS 407. The contextual factors motivating Paul’s modification of Isaiah 28:16 in Romans 10:11 are so great as to all but rule out his use of a variant text as the source of πᾶς” (ibid.). For more on the interpretive issues involved in Paul’s use of scripture, see the accessible treatment in J. Ross Wagner, “Paul and Scripture,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*, ed. Stephen Westerholm (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), 154–71.

²² Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 169.

²³ In line with Hurtado, Rowe expresses this relationship thusly: “Through the correlation of the unity of the one κύριος [the identification of the identity between YHWH and Jesus] and through the retained distinction between Jesus and God, the dynamism of the one God’s life necessitates binitarian formulation” (“What is the Name of the Lord?,” 171).

²⁴ Ibid., 152.

²⁵ Ibid., 152–53.

²⁶ Ibid., 157. Cf. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, WBC 38B (Dallas: Word, 1988), 617: “This hope and promise held out in Joel with reference to the God of Israel, Paul refers without any apparent qualm to the exalted Christ.”

²⁷ For further discussion of the echoes between Rom 10 and Joel, see Rowe, “What is the Name of the Lord?,” 152–56.

to “praise the name of the Lord [their] God” (αἰνέσετε τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ, Joel 2:26 LXX).²⁸ The link between 2:26 and 3:5 consists also in the fact that these are the *only* two passages in LXX Joel that employ the phrase “name of the Lord” (τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου). These linguistic connections, then, summon us to read these texts together and to allow them to interpret one another.

Joel 2:26	αἰνέσετε	τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου	τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῶν
Joel 3:5	πᾶς ὃς ἂν	ἐπικαλέσῃται	τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου
			σωθήσεται

The recurrence of the “name of the Lord” in these verses suggests a possible link between the verbs αἰνέω and ἐπικαλέω, so that, for Joel, “to call on the name of the Lord” is associated with the notion, “to praise the name of the Lord.” The multivalence of the expression in Joel 3:5 also extends to Romans, so that Paul’s citation in Rom 10:13 not only articulates a prayer for deliverance but at the same time expresses an act of worship.

In summary, Romans 10:13 not only stands as the climax of Romans 9:30–10:21, but its immediate context also evinces strong liturgical overtones. Confessional language permeates the passage, including the specific invocation of Jesus as Lord, which serves to identify Jesus with the God of Israel. That this radically christocentric rereading of Joel 3:5 takes place within the thoroughly theocentric framework of Romans 9–11, forces us “to reckon with a very early inclusion of Jesus in the identity of the Lord YHWH that integrated Jesus also into the worship of YHWH.”²⁹ This identification, in turn, serves the liturgical purpose in Romans of uniting Jews and Gentiles in worship of the *same* Lord (Rom 10:12; 15:6–7), whose salvation extends to all who call on him.

2. Linguistic Background

Not only does the immediate context of Rom 10:13 ring with liturgical overtones, but the expression “to call upon the name of the Lord” draws from a deep OT tradition of employing such language in cultic settings.

The verb ἐπικαλέω has a long history. It occurs in Greek literature as early as the time of Homer, and appears frequently in Greek authors, inscriptions, the papyri, and the LXX.³⁰ Moreover, it is well attested in Jewish and Christian literature roughly contemporaneous with the NT, including Josephus

²⁸ Cf. Richard Bauckham, “Paul’s Christology of Divine Identity,” in *Jesus and the God of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 196.

²⁹ Richard Bauckham, “The Worship of Jesus in Early Christianity,” in *Jesus and the God of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 130. See also Wesley Hill, *Paul and the Trinity: Persons, Relations, and the Pauline Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), who argues convincingly that “God and Jesus are *identified* with one another at the level of the shared divine name κύριος and yet they are also irreducibly distinguished from one another.... There is, thus, an *identity* between God and Christ *and* an irreducible distinction” (133–34, italics original). Hill speaks of this relationship as “asymmetrical mutuality” (134), and goes on to show that a full description of the identities of God and Jesus and their relation to one another must also necessarily include reference to the Spirit (135–66).

³⁰ See the examples cited in BDAG, *LSJ*, *HRCS*, s.v. ἐπικαλέω; K. L. Schmidt, “ἐπικαλέω,” *TDNT* 3:496–500; and “καλέω,” *NIDNTE* 2:601–7, Cf. N. Kiuchi, “אקא,” *NIDOTTE* 3:972 (paragraph 6a).

and 1 Clement.³¹ According to BDAG, the term's usage across this wide range of sources reveals four basic nuances: (1) to call upon a deity for any purpose, i.e., to invoke; (2) to address or characterize someone by a special term, i.e., to name; (3) to request a higher judicial authority to review a decision in the lower court, i.e., to appeal; and (4) to invoke in an oath, i.e., to call someone as a witness.

Within the LXX, *ἐπικαλέω* occurs 184 times, where it most often translates the Hebrew *קָרָא*.³² It conveys all four of the meanings outlined in BDAG, but most notable for our purposes are the frequent and distinctive occurrences of the phrase *ἐπικαλέω τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου*, including (of course) the OT text Paul cites in Romans 10:13 (Joel 2:32 [3:5 LXX]). The texts in the LXX that most closely follow the formulation “call on the name of the Lord” (Hb: *קרא בשם יהוה*) appear in *Figure 1*.³³

<i>Figure 1</i>	LXX	Translation
Gen 4:26	οὗτος ἤλπισεν <u>ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου</u> τοῦ θεοῦ	He hoped (MT: began) to call on the name of the Lord God
Gen 12:8	καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν ἐκεῖ θυσιαστήριον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ <u>ἐπεκαλέσατο ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου</u>	And he built there an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord
Gen 13:4	εἰς τὸν τόπον τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, οὗ ἐποίησεν ἐκεῖ τὴν ἀρχὴν· καὶ <u>ἐπεκαλέσατο</u> ἐκεῖ Ἀβραμ <u>τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου</u>	(He journeyed) to the place of the altar, that he made there at first, and there Abram called on the name of the Lord
Gen 21:33	καὶ ἐφύτευσεν Ἀβρααμ ἄρουραν ἐπὶ τῷ φρέατι τοῦ ὄρκου καὶ <u>ἐπεκαλέσατο</u> ἐκεῖ <u>τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου</u> Θεὸς αἰώνιος	And Abram planted an <i>aroura</i> (NETS: ploughed field; MT: tamarisk tree) by the well of the oath (i.e., Beer-sheba) and there he called on the name of the Lord, God eternal
Gen 26:25	καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν ἐκεῖ θυσιαστήριον καὶ <u>ἐπεκαλέσατο τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου</u>	And he built there an altar and called on the name of the Lord
1 Kgs 18:24 (3 Kgdms 18:24 LXX)	καὶ βοᾶτε ἐν ὀνόματι θεῶν ὑμῶν, καὶ <u>ἐγὼ ἐπικαλέσομαι ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου</u> τοῦ θεοῦ μου	And shout in the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord my God
1 Chr 16:8	Ἐξομολογεῖσθε τῷ κυρίῳ, <u>ἐπικαλεῖσθε αὐτὸν ἐν ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ</u>	Give thanks ³⁴ to the Lord, call on him by his name

³¹ See, e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 4.222; *J.W.* 2.394; 1 Clem. 52:3; 57:5; 60:4.

³² HRCS 521–22.

³³ All of the examples listed in *Figure 1* translate some variation of the Hebrew: *קרא בשם יהוה*.

Ps 105:1 (104:1 LXX)	Αλληλουια. Ἐξομολογεῖσθε τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ <u>ἐπικαλεῖσθε τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ</u>	Hallelujah! Acknowledge the Lord and call on his name
Ps 116:4 (114:4 LXX)	καὶ <u>τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου ἐπεκαλεσάμην</u> ἽΩ κύριε, ρῦσαι τὴν ψυχὴν μου.	And on the name of the Lord I called, O Lord, rescue my soul
Ps 116:13 (115:4 LXX)	ποτήριον σωτηρίου λήμψομαι καὶ <u>τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου ἐπικαλέσομαι</u>	A cup of salvation I will receive And I will call on the name of the Lord
Lam 3:55	<u>Ἐπεκαλεσάμην τὸ ὄνομά σου, κύριε, ἐκ</u> λάκκου κατωτάτου	I called on your name, O Lord, from the deepest pit
Joel 2:32 (3:5 LXX)	καὶ ἔσται πᾶς, ὃς ἂν <u>ἐπικαλέσῃται τὸ</u> <u>ὄνομα κυρίου</u> , σωθήσεται	And it will be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved
Zeph 3:9	ὅτι τότε μεταστρέψω ἐπὶ λαοὺς γλῶσσαν εἰς γενεὰν αὐτῆς <u>τοῦ ἐπικαλεῖσθαι</u> <u>πάντας τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου τοῦ δουλεύειν</u> <u>αὐτῷ ὑπὸ ζυγὸν ἓνα</u>	Because then I will change the tongue for peoples in its generation that all might call on the name of the Lord and serve him under one yoke

Strikingly, in almost all of these passages the expression “call upon the name of the Lord” occurs in a cultic setting. Abraham, for example, “calls on the name of the Lord” in the context of building an altar (Gen 12:8; 13:4) and planting a tamarisk tree (Gen 21:33; probably associated with a cultic shrine at Beersheba). In Genesis 26:25 Isaac follows suit; after a theophanic reassertion of the divine promise to Abraham he builds an altar at Beersheba and then “calls on the name of the Lord.” The phrase appears again in the story of Elijah’s confrontation with the priests of Baal. Challenging them to “call on the name of [their] god” Elijah proceeds to “call on the name of the Lord [his] God,” and the Lord responds in dramatic fashion by engulfing Elijah’s altar with flames that consume not only the drenched sacrifice but also the wood, stones, dust and water that fills the surrounding trench (1 Kgs 18:20–40).

The Psalter is replete with references to ἐπικαλέω,³⁵ but the full expression “call on the name of the Lord” appears only three times. Psalm 105 (104 LXX) is especially interesting, since (in addition to the language that parallels Rom 10:13) its opening verses include many of the same key terms as Rom 10, such as καρδία (v. 3), στόμα (v. 5), and ἐξομολογέω (v. 1; cf. ὁμολογέω, Rom 10:9–10).³⁶ In verse 1, ἐπικαλέω parallels ἐξομολογέω, a verb which intimates allegiance, devotion, or praise offered

³⁴ Cf. LSJ, s.v. ἐξομολογέω: “confess in full; make full acknowledgment, give thanks;” LEH 217: “to confess, to acknowledge, to make grateful acknowledgements, to give thanks, to sing praises (semit., stereotypical rendition [as it is here in 1 Chr 16:8 MT] of יהיה – יהי).”

³⁵ Pss 4:2; 13:4; 17:4, 7; 19:10; 30:18; 41:8; 48:12; 49:15; 52:5; 55:10; 74:2; 78:6; 79:19; 80:8; 85:5; 88:27; 90:15; 98:6; 101:3; 104:1; 114:2, 4; 115:4; 117:5; 137:3; 144:18; 146:9 LXX.

³⁶ Another faint resonance with the larger context of 10:13 (namely 9:30–10:21) might be detected in the repetition of ζητέω in v. 4 (cf., Rom 10:3 and the footrace imagery in 9:30–33).

to someone (cf. Rom 15:9),³⁷ and the rest of the opening stanza characterizes this confession as a verbal act of worship: “Sing to him, sing praises to him, tell of all his wonderful works, glory in his holy name,” vv. 2–3a). Moreover, the plural verbs reveal that the psalmist envisions “calling on the name of the Lord” not only as a *verbal* proclamation of devotion, but as a *communal* act of worship. Support for this interpretation comes from the fact that large portions of Psalm 105 (104 LXX) are quoted, almost verbatim, in 1 Chronicles 16, within the context of a communal worship celebration. After bringing to Jerusalem the ark of Lord (“which is called by [his] name,” 1 Chr 13:6), David offers sacrifices, blesses the people “in the name of the Lord” (ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου), and appoints Levites to worship the Lord before the ark, singing, “Give thanks to the Lord, call on him by his name” (Ἐξομολογεῖσθε τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἐπικαλεῖσθε τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, 16:8). The hymn that follows both exhorts the people to worship the true God instead of false idols (e.g., 16:25–26) and models for them what this looks like. The expression “call on the name of the Lord” appears two other times in the Psalter, both in Psalm 116 (114, 115 LXX). In v. 4 the term designates a cry for deliverance (v. 4 = 114:4 LXX) whereas in v. 13 (v. 13 = 115:4 LXX) it describes a proclamation of God’s salvation, which is then accompanied by libation and sacrifices.³⁸ Thus, again the term draws together two nuances: prayer for deliverance and cultic worship.

However, only the first of these meanings is apparent in Lamentations 3:55, which recalls in first person the desperate plight of the speaker: “I called on your name, Lord, from the deepest pit (Ἐπεκαλεσάμην τὸ ὄνομά σου, κύριε, ἐκ λάκκου κατωτάτου)—a plea to which the Lord graciously responds (vv. 56–58). Similarly, in Joel 2:32 (3:5 LXX) connotations of deliverance come to fore, where “calling on the name of the Lord” describes the salvation of a divinely-called remnant that survives the great and terrible day of the Lord (vv. 30–32). However, as we have seen, liturgical language is not far afield, for those whom God blesses “will praise the name of the Lord [their] God” (2:26 LXX: αἰνέσετε τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῶν). Finally, Zephaniah 3:9 envisions a day when God will gather the nations in judgment and then, in a surprising turn, “will change the tongue (γλῶσσα) for peoples in its generation that all might call on the name of the Lord and serve him (δουλεύω) with one accord (lit. under one yoke).” The text continues to describe how God’s scattered ones “shall bring my offering” (θυσία, 3:10). To “call upon the name of the Lord” then, in this passage, is associated with reformed speech, renewed service, and right sacrifice—all images that ring with cultic overtones.³⁹

The LXX usage of ἐπικαλέω τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου (or slight variations) demonstrates that well before the period of the early church this phrase had become a fixed expression for prayer and worship offered to YHWH. Carl Davis rightly observes, “The Old Testament and intertestamental background of Joel 2.32 [3.5] is one which suggests ‘calling on the name of the LORD’ was a cultic activity directed toward Israel’s

³⁷ See note 34 above.

³⁸ Cf. Ps 116:17 MT: לִּי-אֲזַכֵּר זְבַח תּוֹדָה וּבְשֵׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא; note, though, that the latter half of this verse is missing from the corresponding text in the LXX, Ps 115:8, which replicates only the first half of 116:17 MT: σοὶ θύσω θυσίαν αἰνέσεως, while dropping the second clause: “and I will call on the name of the Lord.” Interestingly, in the MT, then, “to call on the name of the Lord” clearly parallels the act of offering a thanksgiving sacrifice to God in the Jerusalem Temple (cf. Ps 116:19 MT).

³⁹ In addition to these thirteen passages, several other texts present slight variations of the phrase ἐπικαλέω τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου, often in the setting of worship. The following are significant: 1 Sam 12:17–18; 2 Sam 22:7; Pss 78:6; 79:18; 99:6; Isa 64:6; Jer 10:25; and Zech 13:9. Interestingly, the phrase ἐπικαλέω τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου is much less common in the (so-called) apocryphal books, with slight variations appearing only at Bar 3:7, Jdt 16:1, and 1 Esd 6:33. However, in each of these cases “to call on the name of the Lord” is tantamount to worship.

God.”⁴⁰ It was laden with liturgical connotations, which the NT writers clearly recognized and harnessed in their appropriation of the expression within the context of the fledgling Christian community.⁴¹

3. Wider NT Context and Early Christian Practice

The usage of ἐπικαλέω τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου in the NT confirms its function as a technical expression for worship. At no point is the phrase used among pre-Christian Jewish writers to refer to any figures (angels, divine mediators, etc.) other than YHWH, the God of Israel.⁴² However, in the NT this situation is reversed. In a startling reappropriation, “calling on the name of the Lord” is never applied to God, but only to Jesus. This phenomenon stands as a singular innovation in early Christian worship.⁴³

With slight variation, the expression ἐπικαλεῖν τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου occurs six times in the NT: Acts 2:21; 9:14, 21; 22:16; Romans 10:13; and 1 Corinthians 1:2. Of these, only Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13 are direct citations of Joel 3:5 LXX. Figure 2 below lays out these passages, with brief contextual notes.⁴⁴

Figure 2	NT	Notes and Translation
Acts 2:21	καὶ ἔσται πᾶς ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσῃται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου σωθήσεται.	(Citation of Joel 2:32[3:5 LXX] in Peter’s speech at Pentecost) And it will be (that) everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.
Acts 9:14	καὶ ὧδε ἔχει ἐξουσίαν παρὰ τῶν ἀρχιερέων δῆσαι πάντας τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους τὸ ὄνομά σου.	(Ananias, in conversation with the “Lord Jesus” [v. 17] about Saul) ...and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind up all who call on your name.

⁴⁰ Carl J. Davis, *The Name and Way of the Lord: Old Testament Themes, New Testament Christology*, JSNTSup 129 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 139.

⁴¹ One other pattern in the LXX that may have some relevance for the usage of ἐπικαλέω in the NT is the convention of using this term to designate the people of God as those who are called by God’s name (see, e.g., Deut 28:10; Amos 9:12; Jer 14:9, 15:6; cf. Isa 63:19). This usage may provide some background for the NT pattern of referring to believers as “those whom the Lord our God calls to him (i.e., to Jesus; Acts 2:39; cf. the NT use of κλητός [which shares the same root as ἐπικαλέω] to refer to believers in Matt 22:14; Rom 1:1, 6–7; 8:28; 1 Cor 1:1–2, 24; Jude 1:1; Rev 17:14). Certainly in Romans the interplay of these two senses of “call” is important, as the human ability to “call on the name of the Lord” is only enabled by the one who “calls.” Cf. Oscar Cullman, “All Who Call on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ,” *JES* 1.1 (1964): 1–21, esp. 7–11, 15, 21.

⁴² Davis, *The Name and Way of the Lord*, 118.

⁴³ Hurtado notes that because “the OT expression seems to refer to a cultic action such as sacrifice to *Yahweh*...Christian adaptation of the expression as a way of describing cultic invocation of Christ is all the more clearly an innovation in Jewish devotion” (*One God, One Lord*, 165n54).

⁴⁴ For a useful chart comparing these NT texts with their MT, LXX, and Qumran antecedents/parallels, see Davis, *The Name and Way of the Lord*, 118–22.

Calling on the Name of the Lord

Acts 9:21	οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ πορθήσας εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ <u>τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους τὸ ὄνομα τοῦτο;</u>	<i>(Response of the crowds to Saul proclaiming “Jesus” [v. 20] in Damascus)</i> Is not this the man who in Jerusalem was destroying those who call on this name?
Acts 22:16	ἀναστὰς βάπτισαι καὶ ἀπόλουσαι τὰς ἀμαρτίας σου <u>ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.</u>	<i>(Paul, recounting Ananias’ exhortation to him after his conversion)</i> Arise, be baptized and have your sins washed away, calling on his name.
Rom 10:13	πᾶς γὰρ ὃς ἂν <u>ἐπικαλέσῃται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου</u> σωθήσεται.	<i>(Citation of Joel 2:32[3:5 LXX])</i> For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.
1 Cor 1:2	τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ, ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις, σὺν πᾶσιν <u>τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν.</u>	<i>(Paul’s greeting to the church at Corinth)</i> To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, with all the ones who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, both their (Lord) and ours.

1 Corinthians is the earliest of these writings. In 1:2, Paul opens his letter with a greeting to the church in Corinth, who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, along with “all those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place.”⁴⁵ Three points stand out.

First, it is remarkable that Paul, probably writing in the mid-50s, can say that all Christians everywhere, presumably including both Jews and Gentiles, “call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” That Paul commences his letter in such a way, without further elaboration, assumes an early and widespread convention of describing believers as “those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Similarly, 2 Timothy 2:22 characterizes Christians as those “who call on the Lord from a pure heart.” A second, and related, point is that “calling on the name of the Lord” must have been both a distinctive enough and common enough practice for it to have so quickly become serviceable as shorthand for the Christian community. Some clue as to what this practice entailed comes from 1 Corinthians 12:1–3, where Paul contrasts the Corinthians’ former idolatry with the spoken confession now enabled only by the Holy Spirit, “Jesus is Lord” (Κύριος Ἰησοῦς). Here, just after his instructions about the Lord’s supper (11:17–34) and before his discussion of spiritual gifts (chs. 12–14), Paul clearly situates the

⁴⁵ The prepositional phrase most likely depends on κλητοῖς ἁγίοις. That is, God calls the Corinthians to be holy just as he calls Christians everywhere to be holy. Cf. Davis, *The Name and Way of the Lord*, 132 for a helpful treatment of the interpretive options.

confession Κύριος Ἰησοῦς within the communal context of worship. This leads to a third point about the expression “call on the name of the Lord” as it appears in 1:2: Paul unambiguously designates the κύριος as “Jesus Christ” and seems completely comfortable identifying the “church of God” (ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ) in distinctly christological terms. Indeed, as elsewhere in Paul’s letters, the greeting ends in v. 3 with a dyadic benediction from “God our father” and “the Lord Jesus Christ” (cf. Rom 1:7; 2 Cor 1:2, etc.). The binitarian⁴⁶ shape of worship is perhaps most apparent back in ch. 12, where, in the course of his description of corporate worship, Paul modulates freely between references to “the same Spirit,” “the same Lord,” and “the same God” (τὸ αὐτὸς πνεῦμα/ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος/ὁ αὐτὸς θεός, vv. 4–6). To “call on the name of the Lord,” then, effectively means, “to worship Jesus as Lord,” alongside and in close identification with God.

A similar pattern emerges in Acts, where the expression appears four times: 2:21; 9:14, 21; 22:16. By placing a citation of Joel 3:5 LXX on the lips of Peter during his sermon at Pentecost, Luke locates the phrase in the earliest stratum of Christian preaching. After a lengthy quotation from the prophet, Peter proceeds to endow it with a christological interpretation, associating the “wonders and signs” (τέρασι καὶ σημείοις) that God did through Jesus (v. 22) with the “wonders” (τέρατα) and “signs” (σημεῖα) depicted in (Peter’s version of) Joel 3:3 LXX.⁴⁷ Although the κύριος of Joel 3:5 is not directly linked with Jesus in Acts 2:21, the rest of the chapter implies as much, when converts are baptized “into the name of Jesus Christ” (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ).⁴⁸ A few chapters later, Luke strengthens the connection between Jesus and the κύριος of Joel 3:5 when Ananias, in conversation with “the Lord” (ὁ κύριος, whom he explicitly calls Ἰησοῦς in v. 17), claims that Saul has authority from the chief priests to bind up “all who call on your name” (πάντας τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους τὸ ὄνομά σου), clearly echoing Joel 3:5 LXX. After Saul encounters Jesus and begins proclaiming him in Damascus, the crowds respond in disbelief, “Is not this the man who in Jerusalem was destroying those who call on this name (τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους τὸ ὄνομα τοῦτο)?” (9:21). The usage here confirms the connection between τὸ ὄνομα τοῦτο and Jesus and provides additional evidence for the usage of the expression as a whole to designate Christians. Furthermore, in his defense before an angry mob in 22:16, Paul recounts Ananias’s exhortation to him after his conversion, “Arise, be baptized and have your sins washed away, calling on his (i.e., Jesus’s) name” (ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ), thereby further linking the expression with the liturgical act of baptism. Moreover, the fact that Stephen, at his stoning, prays to the “Lord Jesus” (κύριε Ἰησοῦ, Acts 7:59) may indicate that “calling on the name of the Lord” was not confined to a one-time occurrence at conversion or baptism, but also formed a regular part of Christian devotion.

This brief survey shows that the NT consistently uses the expression “call on the name of the Lord” to denote the worship of Jesus. As Hurtado points out, “This ritual use of Jesus’ name reflects an explicit identification of Jesus as an appropriate recipient of such cultic devotion...it represents the inclusion

⁴⁶ This term borrows from Larry W. Hurtado and expresses a view advanced most forcefully in *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988). In his more recent writing, Hurtado has shifted to describing early Christian worship as “dyadic.” I would add that this passage gestures in a trinitarian direction. Cf. Hill, *Paul and the Trinity* (esp. 163–66).

⁴⁷ The citation of Joel 3:3 LXX in Acts 2:19 adds a few words, including σημεῖα, which serves to strengthen the connection with Jesus’s “signs” in 1:22.

⁴⁸ The next verse may also echo Joel 3:5 LXX: ὅσους ἂν προσκαλέσεται κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν. Cf. Davis, *The Name and Way of the Lord*, 123.

of Jesus with God as recipient of public, corporate cultic reverence.⁴⁹ Furthermore, this practice was so early and widespread that by the mid-50's Paul could describe Christians as "those who call on the name of the Lord" without further elaboration. In other words, calling on the name of Jesus in worship was the defining characteristic of early Christian communities (cf. 1 Cor 12:3; Phil 2:11).⁵⁰ Hurtado explains, "The appeal to Jesus that we see in the NT is an open, corporate, and apparently quite regular component in Christian worship."⁵¹ More specifically, several passages (e.g., 1 Cor 12:3; Phil 2:11) indicate that "NT worship involved a ritual (collective) 'confession' of Jesus as Lord" within a liturgical setting.⁵² For early believers, to be a Christian is to "call on the name of the Lord," and in Rom 10:13 (as elsewhere) to "call on the name of the Lord" is "to worship Jesus as Lord."

4. Relationship to the Rest of Romans

In Rom 10:13, the expression ἐπικαλεῖν τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου resonates with liturgical overtones, which, when appreciated fully, allows us to hear more clearly the theme of worship that pervades the letter and that constitutes one of its central theological motifs. More specifically, appreciating the cultic nuance of ἐπικαλέω is significant because it strengthens the conceptual web of links between this passage and Paul's description of humanity's fundamental predicament as false worship in chapter 1, his exhortation for renewed spiritual worship in chapter 12, and his vision of unified Jew/Gentile worship in chapter 15.

In Romans 10 "calling on the name of the Lord" in worship represents the pinnacle of Paul's vision for eschatological salvation (vv. 13–14). Framing God's deliverance in liturgical language harmonizes well with what he has already described in chapter 1 as humanity's underlying predicament: idolatry. According to Paul, "Although humans knew God, they neither glorified God nor gave God thanks" (1:21). Instead, "they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles" (1:23). As a result of their idolatry, God gave them over to the catalogue of sins enumerated in vv. 24–32. Paul locates the root cause of humanity's sinful predicament, then, not in the vices themselves but in humanity's more fundamental failure to worship God. 1:25 makes this relationship crystal clear; God "gave them over" (παρέδωκεν) because "they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator." To put it simply: the solution in 10:13 matches the problem in chapter 1, and both concern the issue of worship.

In the very same verse (1:25) Paul emulates the positive response of worship that he later enjoins, by adding almost parenthetically the doxology: "[God], who is blessed forever! Amen (ἀμήν)." (1:25b). Indeed, earlier in ch. 1 Paul employs liturgical language autobiographically, when he speaks of God "whom I serve (λατρεύω) in my spirit" (1:9; cf. λατρεύω in 1:25) and mentions his pattern of continual prayer (προσευχή, 1:10) and thanksgiving (εὐχαριστέω, 1:8). Moreover, the repetition of "Amen" (ἀμήν), within several doxologies that punctuate this letter, functions as an appeal to worship and confirms that

⁴⁹ Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 198–99.

⁵⁰ For additional texts (both within the NT and without) that illustrate the prevalence and centrality of the worship of Jesus amongst early Christians, see Bauckham, "The Worship of Jesus in Early Christianity," 127–51.

⁵¹ Hurtado, "Worship," 918.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Paul expects his hearers to follow his example.⁵³ Indeed, the presence of ἀμήν in ch. 1, twice in chs. 9–11, and again in ch. 15 subtly binds together sections of the book that are often treated in isolation and casts the entire letter as a call to worship.

The thematic connection between chapters 1 and 10 around the issue of worship invites us to look more closely for linguistic parallels that might further illuminate the relationship between these chapters. Doing so reveals numerous semantic ties. Key terms play a role in both chapters, including “heart” (καρδία; 1:21, 24 and 10:1, 6, 8–10),⁵⁴ “all” (πᾶς; 1:5, 7–8, 16, 18, 29 and 10:4, 11–13, 16, 18),⁵⁵ “gospel” (εὐαγγέλιον; 1:1, 9, 16 and 10:16), and “preach the gospel” (εὐαγγελίζω; 1:15; 10:15).⁵⁶ Moreover, both chapters include related “honor” and “shame” terminology (ἐπαισχύνομαι, 1:16; ἀτιμάζω, 1:4; ἀσχημοσύνη, 1:27 and καταισχύνω, 10:11). Admittedly, most of these terms occur frequently throughout Romans, so we should not make too much of their repetition in chapters 1 and 10. However, it is worth noting that chapter 10 marks the first reappearance of εὐαγγέλιον since 2:16 and the first time εὐαγγελίζω has occurred since 1:15. Additionally, aside from 3:20, chapters 1 and 10 are the only two places where the word ἐπίγνωσις appears in Romans (1:28; 10:2) and the γνο-root features prominently in both (1:13, 19, 21, 28, 32 and 10:2–3, 19).⁵⁷ Also, only these two chapters share the term ἄσύνετος (“ignorant” 1:21, 31; 10:19). These linguistic threads, thus, provide some warrant for listening to chs. 1 and 10 in stereo, and doing so only amplifies their mutual cultic resonances.

If worship is a dominant theme in the letter it makes sense that Paul would mark his major transition from exposition to exhortation by closing chapter 11 with a doxology (11:33–36) and opening chapter 12 with a call to worship (12:1–3). In what follows, Paul provides a fuller picture of what it means to “call on the name of the Lord” by describing specific ways that the Christian community can “present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual act of worship” (12:1). The overtly liturgical language at this critical juncture echoes the theme Paul has sounded throughout the letter. Just as chapters 1 and 10 relate worship to knowledge, so also 12:2 connects worship with “the renewal of the mind.” Also, just as chapter 10 addresses a liturgical need for unity, so also chapter 12 describes the ministry of the church as a community with different gifts and many members, but only one body (12:4–8).

This emphasis on unified worship reaches its zenith in chapter 15. In vv. 5–6 Paul exhorts the community to live in harmony “so that together with one voice [they] may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 6). The word στόμα, translated here as “voice,” is typically rendered “mouth” elsewhere in Romans and marks an important progression in Paul’s argument: mouths that used to

⁵³ See 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; [16:27]. This function of ἀμήν within Paul’s letters is put forward by J. Louis Martyn, who, commenting on Gal 1:3–5, suggests that ἀμήν has the liturgical effect of inviting the hearers to participate in the word Paul proclaims: “Paul brings the Galatians climactically into God’s presence by inviting them to utter the word, ‘Amen!’ It is a signal of his conviction that his own words can and will become the active word of God, because God will be present as the letter is read to the Galatians in their services of worship” (*Galatians*, AB 33A [New York: Doubleday, 1997], 106).

⁵⁴ In Romans, also at 2:5, 15, 29; 5:5; 6:17; 8:27; 9:2; 16:18.

⁵⁵ In Romans, also at 2:1, 9–10; 3:2, 4, 9, 12, 19–20, 22–23; 4:11, 16; 5:12, 18; 7:8; 8:22, 28, 32, 37; 9:5–7, 17; 11:10, 26, 32, 36; 12:3–4, 17–18; 13:1, 7; 14:2, 5, 10–11, 20, 23; 15:11, 13–14, 33; 16:4, 15–16, 19, 26.

⁵⁶ In Romans, εὐαγγέλιον occurs also at 2:16; 11:28; 15:16, 19; 16:25 and εὐαγγελίζω at 15:20.

⁵⁷ This root occurs also in Romans at 2:4, 18, 20; 3:17, 20; 6:3, 6; 7:1, 7, 15; 8:29; 9:22–23. Cf. related language for “mind/know” in 1:14, 20, 28.

spew out distorted doxology, “full of cursing and bitterness” (3:14), are now called to confess Jesus as Lord (10:8–10), and to issue forth unified praise (15:6).⁵⁸ Verses 7–13 are replete with liturgical language and the citation of Ps 17:50 LXX (cf. 2 Sam 22:50) in v. 9 recalls Rom 10: “I will confess you among the Gentiles and sing praises to your name (ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι ἐν ἔθνεσιν καὶ τῷ ὀνόματί σου ψαλῶ).⁵⁹

Earlier we noticed that throughout the LXX the expression ἐπικαλέω τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου often draws together two nuances: prayer for deliverance and cultic worship. In Romans 10:13, as in many of the psalms, the cry for deliverance *is* an act of worship. Paul stresses that, apart from Jesus, humans stand completely helpless beneath the tyranny of sin and death,⁶⁰ which is why humanity’s only hope is “to call on the name of the Lord.” Idolatry unleashed the destructive powers of sin and death; only God can deliver humanity from their grasp.

But, deliverance entails its positive counterpart: praise. In Romans 10:13 these twin themes are struck together like notes in a chord. The cultic dimension of this text rings out like a harmonic over the cry for deliverance, reminding us that humans are not just delivered *from* something but also rescued *for* something: a communal life of ongoing worship (chs. 12, 15). The score of Romans sweeps from false worship to true worship, and the deliverance of God, enacted through Jesus Christ, is the hinge upon which everything swings. That pivot is nowhere better expressed than Romans 10:13, in which the cry for salvation is caught up in its corollary of worshipping Jesus as Lord.

5. Conclusion

In current scholarship on Romans, there is no shortage of proposals about the central theme(s) of the letter.⁶¹ Some see the gospel as the letter’s dominant melody, others the relationship of Jews and Gentiles, still others the righteousness of God.⁶² Of course, these proposals are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Nor do I think that any single theme unlocks this letter like a master hermeneutical key. Instead, multiple themes—some more prominent and others more subtle—play off each other like

⁵⁸ For more on this theme, see Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “From Toxic Speech to the Redemption of Doxology in Romans,” in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kavin Rowe, and A. Katherine Grieb (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 405.

⁵⁹ Interestingly, however, in this verse it is *Christ* who prays the psalms and sings praises to God. See Richard Hays, “Christ Prays the Psalms: Israel’s Psalter as Matrix of Early Christianity,” in *The Conversion of the Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 101–18, who observes that Christ here is depicted as “the true and ultimate speaker of Israel’s laments and praises” (109), whose example is employed hermeneutically by Paul “in service of an ecclesially focused exhortation” (116).

⁶⁰ Cf. Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “The Cosmic Power of Sin in Romans: Toward a Widescreen Edition,” *Int* 58 (2004): 229–40.

⁶¹ For a survey of past few decades in the interpretation of Romans and various proposals concerning the theme(s) and purpose(s) of the letter, see Karl P. Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991); A. J. M. Wedderburn, “‘Like an Ever Rolling Stream’: Some Recent Commentaries on Romans,” *SJT* 44 (1991): 367–80; James C. Miller, “The Romans Debate: 1991–2001,” *CurBS* 9 (2001): 306–49; James Arne Nestingen, “Major Shifts in the Interpretation of Romans,” *WW* 6 (1986): 373–81; and Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 79–103.

⁶² These are, of course, just some of the many themes scholars have proposed for Romans. It should also be noted that scholars often (appropriately) distinguish between the issue of the letter’s theme(s) and its purpose(s), though both issues are related and vigorously debated. See the literature cited in n61.

musical motifs. Debates about how these themes interweave, intersect, and interplay will likely continue unabated for the foreseeable future. The theme of worship, however, deserves greater attention.⁶³

When examined within its context, against the linguistic background of the LXX, and in relationship to the wider context of the NT, the expression “call on the name of the Lord” (ἐπικαλεῖν τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου) in Rom 10:13 speaks directly to this theme. It means more than to invoke the Lord, but expresses a prayer for deliverance with cultic connotations, that is, “to worship Jesus as Lord.” The importance of this phrase for Paul’s theology is verified by its centrality within the structure in Rom 10 and its location at the climax of the chain-like sequence he traces in 10:14–15. For Paul, the corporate worship of Jesus as Lord entails a resolution to human idolatry (ch. 1) and is the substance of salvation (ch. 12), comprising both its beginning (10:13) and its proper end (10:14; 15:6). Attending to the liturgical overtones of Romans 10:13 alerts us to the ways the motif of worship pulses throughout the letter, and shapes us to hear its message afresh.

⁶³ As an example of one relatively recent scholarly attempt to draw attention to this oft-neglected theme, see Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “For the Glory of God’: Theology and Experience in Paul’s Letter to the Romans,” in *Between Experience and Interpretation: Engaging the Writings of the New Testament*, ed. Mary S. Foskett and O. Wesley Allen, Jr. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008), 53–65.

The Scribe Who Has Become a Disciple: Identifying and Becoming the Ideal Reader of the Biblical Canon

— Ched Spellman —

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Abstract: The literary notion of “implied reader” invokes a series of hermeneutically significant questions: What is it? Who produces it? and How can it be identified? These questions naturally lead to a further query: What is the relationship between this *implied* reader of a text and an *actual* reader of a text? This type of study is often associated primarily with reader-response theory and purely literary approaches. However, the concept can help uncover an often-neglected aspect of biblical interpretation, namely, the role of the reader. If biblical authors envision certain types of readers, then identifying the nature of this “implied audience” is an important part of the interpretive task. Further, because Christians read the biblical writings within the context of a canonical collection, this concept can be pursued in light of the Christian canon as a whole. Through this literary and theological study, I seek to demonstrate that strategic biblical texts envision an “ideal reader,” namely, an actual reader who seeks to identify *with* the implied reader.

The demand that I make of my reader is that he should devote his whole life to reading
my works.¹

We expect a great man to be a good reader.²

Read in order to live.³

¹James Joyce from an interview with Max Eastman in “Poets Talking to Themselves,” *Harper’s Magazine* (October 1931), reprinted in *James Joyce: Volume 2, 1928–41*, ed. Robert H. Deming (London: Routledge, 1970), 417.

²Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Quotation and Originality,” in *Letters and Social Aims* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1886), 170.

³Gustave Flaubert, “Letter to Mademoiselle Leroyer de Chantepie,” in *Letters* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 115.

Blessed is the one who reads.⁴

“What should I expect of this text?” is a common question a typical reader might ask when encountering a work of literature. The corollary of this query is just as important but often neglected, namely, “What does this text expect of me?”

The question of the “original” or intended audience is a perennial issue in the interpretation of any ancient text. In biblical studies, the historical-critical pursuit of the original audience of a biblical text is standard fare. One alternative to this historical-critical task is to attempt a description of the intended audience that is implied by the text itself. This type of investigation asks whether the author envisions only a certain group of readers (an “original audience”) or also a certain type of reader (an “implied audience”). Determining the original audience of a text is often primarily a *historical* task, whereas identifying the implied audience of a text involves a *literary* task. A textual approach is not necessarily incompatible with a historical approach; however, the aims and resources used to attain the objective are different.

In the following analysis, I briefly consider the observations of literary studies on the role of the reader and ask whether the fruit of these studies can yield any insight into interpreting the texts in the biblical canon. Further, I examine whether these insights can function alongside a communication model of meaning that focuses on an author’s textual intention rather than just a reader’s response. This interdisciplinary dialogue is helpful because the questions and issues addressed by literary scholars regarding language, texts, and the act of reading are central to the task of textual interpretation in general and biblical interpretation in particular. A high view of Scripture entails at least a minimal commitment to consider carefully the role of authors, texts, and readers. As a people of the book, evangelicals should always be ready to ask and answer the question, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

The notion of “implied reader” invokes a series of hermeneutically significant questions: What is it? Who produces it? and How can it be identified? These questions naturally lead to a further query: What is the relationship between this *implied* reader of a text and an *actual* reader of a text? More to the point, what implications does this line of inquiry have for readers of biblical writings and the Christian canon as a whole? Through this literary and theological study, I seek to demonstrate that strategic biblical texts envision an “ideal reader,” namely, an actual reader who seeks to identify *with* the implied reader.⁵

1. Identifying the Implied Reader of a Literary Text

There are a number of ways to express the notion of an intended readership of a particular text. In his study of the function of the novel genre form, Wolfgang Iser utilizes the category of the “implied reader.”⁶ Iser is concerned with the “literary effects and responses” that attend to the reading of novels.

⁴Revelation 1:3.

⁵Portions of this article are adapted from chapter five of my book, *Toward a Canon-Conscious Reading of the Bible: Exploring the History and Hermeneutics of the Canon*, NTM 34 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014). Used with permission.

⁶See Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974). Iser works out a theoretical framework for the notion of “implied reader” in *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980). For a recent critical interaction with Iser, see Zoltán Schwáb, “Mind the Gap: The Impact of Wolfgang

Iser observes that the novel is a unique genre “in which reader involvement coincides with meaning production.”⁷ Because novels subtly critique social and historical norms by projecting narrative worlds that require conceptual interaction, “readers of the novel, are then forced to take an active part in the composition of the novel’s meaning.”⁸ For Iser, “this active participation is fundamental to the novel.”⁹

Iser uses the term “implied reader” to describe the nature of this active participation. He understands the term to incorporate “both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text” and also “the reader’s actualization of this potential through the reading process.”¹⁰ Texts do not overtly expound on every detail of every object presented in a story or a discourse. There are gaps in every verbal presentation that are “filled in” by the reader.¹¹ The implied reader goes through a process of meaningful discovery that is guided but not overtly dictated by the author. “In order for this complex process to be put into operation,” Iser contends, the author uses “a variety of cunning stratagems to nudge the reader unknowingly into making the ‘right’ discoveries.”¹² For Iser, then, the category of “implied reader” is a helpful window into “the fascinating process of reading and reacting.”¹³

Literary theorist Umberto Eco has also examined this important role of the reader.¹⁴ Eco asserts that readers are active participants in the production of meaning, and in fact, are a constitutive element in the meaning-making process.¹⁵ Eco characterizes the notion of the implied reader as the “model reader.” For Eco, all authors have at least a minimal mental construct of the type of individual that they

Iser’s Reader-Response Criticism on Biblical Studies—A Critical Assessment,” *Literature and Theology* 17 (2003): 170–81.

⁷ Iser, *Implied Reader*, xi.

⁸ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁹ *Ibid.*, xii. Cf. Wolfgang Iser, “Indeterminacy and the Reader’s Response in Prose Fiction,” in *Aspects of Narrative: Selected Papers from the English Institute*, ed. J. Hillis Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 1–45.

¹⁰ Iser, *Implied Reader*, xii.

¹¹ See Iser, *Act of Reading*, 20–52, 107–34. Anthony Thiselton observes that “the text often does not specify whether an object has certain properties (for example whether a table is wooden or plastic, or has three or four legs) but we regularly ‘fill in’ what we *presuppose* and *construe*. The notion of the reader’s activity in ‘filling in blanks’ in the text becomes a central theme in Iser’s theory” (*New Horizons in Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992], 517).

¹² Iser, *Implied Reader*, xiv. Cf. Iser, *Act of Reading*, 33: “The intended reader, then, marks certain positions and attitudes in the text, but these are not yet identical to the reader’s role, for many of these positions are conceived ironically . . . so that the reader is not expected to accept the attitude offered him, but rather to react to it.”

¹³ Iser, *Implied Reader*, xiv.

¹⁴ See especially Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979); and *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984). On the relationship between Eco’s model reader and Iser’s implied reader, see Umberto Eco, *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 15–16.

¹⁵ For instance, Eco begins his study on the role of the reader with the heading, “How to produce texts by reading them” (*Role*, 3). Though Eco is clearly interested in the pervasive “role of the reader,” he is also convinced that the “model reader” is wrapped up in the “sinews” of the text and its “genetic imprinting” (*Six Walks*, 16).

envison reading or encountering their work. In order to communicate, an author has “to assume that the ensemble of codes he relies upon is the same as that shared by his possible reader.”¹⁶

These shareable “codes” could be complex elements that the author assumes, or they could simply be the particular language being used to construct the text.¹⁷ To communicate successfully, the author must “foresee a model of the possible reader ... supposedly able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them.”¹⁸ Through these basic choices, all authors generate at least an implicit “model reader.” By reading the text and noting the nature of its network of expectations, a reader can discern the minimal makeup of the model reader of that text. If an author uses technical jargon without explanation or makes literary allusions to certain texts, then one can assume that the author’s “model reader” is one that understands or at least knows how to process that information. In other words, the model reader is the type of reader the author has in mind.

Though there are some unhelpful aspects of Iser’s understanding of the “implied reader” and Eco’s articulation of the “model reader,” the basic insight that all texts project certain expectations of their intended audience is instructive.¹⁹ A circumscribed notion of these concepts can maintain the central insights from this area of literary study. Especially if an interpreter recognizes that the meaning of a text is directly connected to the author’s textual intention, the concept of an implied reader can help recover an important but often neglected element of biblical interpretation.

For example, New Testament scholar Jeannine Brown utilizes the notion of an implied reader to elucidate the function of narrative texts and to examine the way they organically invite a reader’s participation. Brown defines the implied reader as “the textually constructed reader presupposed by the narrative text.”²⁰ She explains that the implied reader “reflects the intended response the author envisions for the text.”²¹ In this way, the implied reader “functions as the embodiment of the right

¹⁶Eco, *Role*, 7. Thiselton summarizes Eco, stating that “every text envisages, or ‘selects’ by its nature, a ‘model reader.’ This is the construct-reader who shares the ensemble of codes presupposed by the author” (*New Horizons*, 526).

¹⁷Eco, *Role*, 7, explains that “to organize a text, its author has to rely upon a series of codes that assign given contents to the expressions he uses.”

¹⁸Ibid., 7. In *Six Walks*, Eco describes the model reader as “a sort of ideal type whom the text not only foresees as a collaborator but also tries to create. If a text begins with ‘Once upon a time,’ it sends out a signal that immediately enables it to select its own model reader, who must be a child, or at least somebody willing to accept something that goes beyond the commonsensical and reasonable” (9).

¹⁹Some aspects of Eco’s and Iser’s approach that I find problematic include the way they tend to locate meaning in a reader’s response rather than an author’s textual intention, their thoroughgoing semiotic understanding of language, and their related commitment to an unlimited view of textuality. For a more pointed engagement with and critique of these positions, see Spellman, *Toward a Canon-Conscious Reading*, 184–94.

²⁰Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 40. For R. Alan Culpepper, the implied reader “embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect” (*Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983], 209).

²¹Brown, *Scripture as Communication*, 40. She also adds that “while actual readers may respond in all sorts of ways to a text, the implied reader responds only as the author intends.” Cf. Richard Briggs’s definition: “The implied reader is a literary-critical category relating to the notion of how a text ‘expects’ to be read” (*The Virtuous Reader: Old Testament Narrative and Interpretive Virtue* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010], 36). Briggs’s stripped down definition of an implied reader as a “reader appropriate to a text” is also helpful (37–38).

response at every turn to the author's communicative intention."²² This reader "does exactly what the author wants the reader to do" and is thus "an approximation of the fulfillment" of the author's intended effect.²³ One of the reasons Brown's articulation of this literary phenomenon is particularly instructive is because it is set within a communication model of meaning. In this approach, the implied reader is not merely a part of the reader's response but rather an important feature of the author's textual intent and compositional strategy.

Brown's study of the disciples in the Gospel of Matthew examines the narrative with a focus on the function of the implied reader. The first task for Brown is to trace Matthew's portrayal of the disciples in his narrative.²⁴ She concludes that in Matthew, "the disciples are consistently portrayed as misunderstanding Jesus' mission and message, as exhibiting inadequate faith, and as falling short of the significant role intended for them as Jesus' disciples."²⁵ The disciples sometimes demonstrate positive signs of belief, but they also exhibit a consistent pattern of "little faith." This characterization of the disciples continues throughout Matthew's account, as the disciples are "consistently portrayed as prone to misunderstand and as wavering in their faith."²⁶

Brown then asks about the effect that this narrative presentation of the disciples has on the implied readers of the Gospel. One of her primary points is that "the way Matthew's implied author characterizes the disciples directly impacts the creation of a reader who fulfills the goals of the text."²⁷ In other words, "understanding the impact of the disciples upon the implied reader is one step toward illuminating the goals of the implied author."²⁸ Initially, for readers of Matthew's Gospel, "the disciples' positive response to Jesus engenders identification because the reader has been predisposed by the preceding narrative to respond positively to Jesus."²⁹ At points in the narrative when the disciples are portrayed positively, the reader is encouraged to identify with them. However, Matthew's presentation also invokes a contrasting response. As Brown notes, "the reader is soon confronted with a number of negative characterizations of the disciples (e.g., their 'little faith')."³⁰ In this sense, the negative portrayal "works as a foil in the narrative, challenging the reader to follow Jesus more faithfully than the disciples do."³¹

²² Brown, *Scripture as Communication*, 40. For Brown, the concept of implied reader "can help us flesh out what active reception of a text is meant to look like." Cf. her definitional discussion in *The Disciples in Narrative Perspective: The Portrayal and Function of the Matthean Disciples*, SBLAB 9 (Atlanta: SBL, 2002), 123–28.

²³ Brown, *Scripture as Communication*, 129. Brown notes also that Wayne Booth uses the complementary phrase "postulated reader" in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 177. Cf. Eco, *Role*, 10: "It will be only the text itself—such as it is made—that tells us which kind of reader it postulates."

²⁴ See Brown, *Disciples*, 39–58. Brown uses Matthew 16:21–20:28 as a paradigm for how Matthew portrays the disciples in the Gospel as a whole.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 119. Brown notes also that this conclusion about the function of the disciples in Matthew contrasts with the typical results of redaction and historical-critical approaches.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 120. Brown comments that "the disciples do not progress [in] their understanding (or move toward greater faith) as the narrative comes to a conclusion" (119–20).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 128.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

Ultimately, Brown utilizes the concept of the implied reader to describe the effect of Matthew's narrative (in this case the narrative portrayal of the disciples) on potential readers. The way that Matthew has compositionally shaped his narrative has a meaningful effect on the way its readers understand his message regarding the nature and content of discipleship.³² In some scenarios in the narrative, readers are endeared to the disciples, and in others they are repelled. This cycle of identification with and distancing from the disciples is part of the effect of Matthew's narrative. Brown's work highlights the exegetical payoff of taking the literary category of "implied reader" into account when attempting to read a narrative closely and carefully with an eye toward the textual intention of the author.

The notion of an implied reader can also help connect the literary and theological horizons of biblical texts. In a programmatic work, Markus Bockmuehl takes up the notion of the implied reader in order to "derive from this a range of criteria for appropriate spiritual and theological engagement with the text."³³ His understanding of the implied reader draws initially on literary studies (e.g., Iser and Eco), but he moves quickly to the theological and historical implications that this type of hermeneutical construct can have for an interpreter of the New Testament.

Bockmuehl's sketch of the implied reader highlights five basic theological commitments that the New Testament authors seem to expect of their readers. These convictions form a composite core theological profile of the projected reader of biblical texts. First, the implied reader of the New Testament "has a personal stake in the truth reference of what it asserts."³⁴ This reader understands the New Testament documents as a witness to the revelation and saving work of God in Christ.³⁵ Second, the implied reader has "undergone a religious, moral, and intellectual *conversion* to the gospel of which the documents speak."³⁶ The New Testament authors "assume that the readers share a stance of Christian faith, that they look to the Christian gospel as both formative and normative in their lives."³⁷

Third, the implied reader also views the New Testament documents as authoritative. On this point, Bockmuehl argues that "the stance of the texts themselves already presupposes a kind of canonical momentum."³⁸ Because implied readers come to the texts as part of a canonical whole, they see unity in the diversity and hold these closely aligned texts to be authoritative in (perhaps in spite of) that

³² See *ibid.*, 133. Cf. also Jeannine K. Brown, "Direct Engagement of the Reader in Matthew's Discourses: Rhetorical Techniques and Scholarly Consensus," *NTS* 51 (2005), 19–35. In this article, Brown traces the way "Matthew's five great discourses move from addressing the story's audience to direct engagement with the reader" (p. 19).

³³ Markus Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study*, Studies in Theological Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 68.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 69.

³⁵ Bockmuehl cites Luke 1:4 and 1 Peter 1:8 to illustrate the concern for believing "the certainty of the things" about Jesus even though these readers are those who "have not seen him." He writes, "it matters that these things are true—and at least to that (admittedly limited) extent it matters that they are true to history" (*ibid.*, 69).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.* For this concept of "canonical momentum," Bockmuehl draws on Thomas Söding, "Inmitten der Theologie des Neuen Testaments: Zu den Voraussetzungen Und Zielen Neutestamentlicher Exegese," *NTS* 42 (1996): 161–84, esp. 165. He mentions the concept of canonical momentum again in a later section, also with reference to Söding (see 112).

interrelationship.³⁹ Fourth, the implied readers are “ecclesially situated.” Rather than isolated individuals, the implied readers are “assumed to be related to the (or a) body of Christian believers, either as full members or at least as sympathizers and hangers-on.”⁴⁰ Finally, the implied reader is “evidently assumed to be ‘inspired,’ in the sense of Spirit filled.”⁴¹ For Bockmuehl, “the documents appear to take for granted that their envisaged reader will in the act of reading be empowered to receive the saving divine reality of which the text speaks.”⁴² The “present-tense perspective of the texts themselves” confirms this important trait expected of the reader.⁴³

2. Identifying with the Implied Readers of the Biblical Text

After discussing the notion of an “implied reader” and also sketching a few examples of the expectations that biblical authors have for their projected readers, the issue of the relationship between the implied reader and the actual (or, “real”) reader comes to the forefront.⁴⁴ As Briggs memorably states, “No blood flows in the veins of implied readers.”⁴⁵ By its nature, the “implied reader” of a text is a compositional construct and remains distinct from the individual actually reading that text. However, there is an inevitable and mutually informing interconnection between the horizon of the implied reader and that of the real reader. To understand a work that has an embedded expectation for its readers, the individual reading that work must necessarily perceive at least elements of the hermeneutical profile expected of him or her. When a reader perceives the expectations generated by the reading of a text, that reader has a significant decision to make: *To be or not to be* the implied reader. While reading a text, “the real reader needs to judge the desirability of occupying the space of the implied reader.”⁴⁶ In this manner, readers might “aspire to imitate the implied reader, but the two categories remain distinct.”⁴⁷

If readers are reading seeking understanding, they will be invariably confronted with the implied reader. For biblical texts, recognizing the character and content of the implied reader is not a neutral experience. Because of the communicative nature of the biblical text as a medium of encounter, the

³⁹ Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word*, 70–71.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.* To illustrate this concept, Bockmuehl cites Revelation 2:7, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, and Matthew 28:20. He argues that “in these three cases and many others, the implied reader is drawn into an act of reading that involves an active part on stage rather than the discreet view from the upper balcony” (72).

⁴⁴ In studies of the implied readers, the individuals who tangibly access the work are variously called “actual” readers, “real” readers, or “empirical” readers. In *Role*, Eco prefers to contrast the model reader with the empirical reader (e.g., 4–11). For a brief delineation of these terms from the perspective of narrative criticism, see Mark A. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 27–31.

⁴⁵ Briggs, *Virtuous Reader*, 206.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 206. Briggs notes that real readers “can say that while they understand the ‘offer’ of the text (assuming that some exercise of interpretive empathy has allowed them to see it for what it is), they are not themselves interested in aspiring to be the kind of person such an implied reader models” (207–8).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

real reader is forced to either accept or reject the intended effect of transformation.⁴⁸ In order for a real reader to become the implied reader (and the texts overwhelmingly encourage a reader to do so), then he or she must submit to the restraints of the implied reader. This interpretive tension is part of the “drama of reading Scripture.”⁴⁹ As Bockmuehl articulates, “There may well be a sense in which one cannot long pursue the question of how the text’s implied reader relates to its truth before one stumbles over the more delicate issue of how the modern interpreter for his or her part relates to it.”⁵⁰ He adds that the act of “bracketing this issue temporarily may well be an illuminating exercise,” but that “sidestepping it over the long term requires increasingly taxing and implausible amounts of fancy footwork.”⁵¹ In the terms developed above, the ideal reader of the biblical writings is an actual reader who seeks to identify *with* the implied reader generated by the biblical writings.

By way of summary, the primary characteristics of the implied reader of the Christian canon can be grouped under two main headings, one theological and the other hermeneutical. At a strategic moment in Matthew’s Gospel, these two strands are woven into an integrally related whole. In Matthew’s Gospel, there is an interplay between blocks of discourse and blocks of narrative. At the end of one of these discourse sections, Jesus asks his disciples, “Have you understood all these things?” (Matt 13:51). In the preceding chapters, Matthew recounts Jesus’s teaching on the kingdom (often in parables) and on the nature of discipleship. After the disciples answer in the affirmative to Jesus’s query, Jesus makes an important comment. He says, “Therefore, every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old” (Matt 13:52). Jesus’s words here are a fitting representation of two of the expectations that the biblical authors have for their readers. First, the implied reader of the Christian canon is a believing disciple, a “disciple of the kingdom.” As Bockmuehl argues, “Both Testaments of Scripture clearly presuppose such an interpreter. The implied interpreter of the Christian Scripture is a *disciple*, just as that disciple’s implied reading of the text is its witness to Christ.”⁵²

In addition to this theological characteristic, there is also a complementary hermeneutical one. The implied reader of the biblical text is one whose eye has been trained to recognize the contours of those very texts. Jesus tells his followers that a *scribe* (one trained in the interpretation of texts) who has become a disciple (one trained to know God) can produce great things for the kingdom of heaven. At this place in Matthew’s narrative, the issue of interpretation is prominent. In fact, the immediately

⁴⁸ Gerhard Maier describes the Bible as a “medium of encounter” in *Biblical Hermeneutics*, trans. Robert W. Yarbrough (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994), 25. For Maier, this revelatory and theological feature of the Bible is a central motivation and justification for a “special hermeneutic” (a *hermeneutica sacra*). Similarly, Brown encourages “a more interpersonal model of reading and interpreting, one that lives up to the implicitly relational idea of the biblical text as communication—and therefore one that does justice to the dialogical nature of interpretation and contextualization” (*Scripture as Communication*, 15). Vanhoozer characterizes the “macrogenre of Scripture” as “divine address” (*The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005], 224).

⁴⁹ See Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 19: “The drama of reading Scripture ultimately involves the fate of text and reader alike: Will the text succeed in establishing its worldview? Will the reader be decisively shaped through the process? There is potential for dramatic conflict not merely within the story but in the very process of reading in which the reader struggles, sometimes spiritually, with the text.”

⁵⁰ Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word*, 74.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 92.

preceding section of discourse focuses on the presentation and right interpretation of Jesus's words (e.g., his sayings and parables).⁵³ Accordingly, Jesus's query to his disciples encompasses the broader discourse context and is loaded with hermeneutical freight: "Have you *understood* all these things?" (Matt 13:51, Συνήκατε ταῦτα πάντα).⁵⁴ Further, Jesus now highlights the importance of the personal involvement of his followers in the "kingdom of heaven," a concept that he has been filling with meaning.⁵⁵ Jesus here envisions a certain type of "scribe" (πᾶς γραμματεὺς), in other words, a certain type of reader/interpreter.⁵⁶ The scribal figure that Jesus envisions ("implies") is one who "has been disciplined in the ways of the kingdom" (μαθητευθεὶς τῇ βασιλείᾳ. 13:52) through grappling with Jesus's own words and the Hebrew Scriptures that are so often invoked by those words.

Jesus likens this individual to a "head of a household" who "brings out of his treasure things new and old" (13:52). The word picture that Jesus paints here suggests that the task of "bringing out" things from the treasure or storehouse is not a simplistic one but rather involves a strategic selection. As a complex entity, the content of the "treasure" must be gathered and stored together in some sort of structure. The head of the household then brings out of that storehouse what is needed at the appropriate or "fitting" time. There is also an implicit hermeneutical task involved in the process. The presentation of goods involves selecting elements from a diverse store. Both new and old things must be ordered and presented. What is more, they are presented in a dialectic, mutually defining relationship.⁵⁷ In striking fashion, Jesus's words resonate with the burning issue of the relationship of the authority of the Scriptures (the Law and the Prophets) and the authority of Jesus himself (the Lord and the apostles). This is both a theological and a literary question, as the authority of both the old covenant and the new covenant is quickly bound up with sacred texts that share that authority. By stressing the new and the old, Jesus simultaneously affirms both the unity/interrelatedness and the diversity/distinctiveness of the two elements involved (i.e., the man "brings out" both new *and* old).

⁵³ Matthew 13 presents Jesus's words/teaching in the form of parabolic discourse. Matthew recounts that Jesus "spoke many things to them in parables" (13:2). In the middle of this discourse section, Matthew recounts, "All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable" (13:34). The presentation and interpretation of the parabolic words of Jesus, then, serve as the thematic content and structural markers of the discourse recounted in Matthew 13.

⁵⁴ The verb συνήημι conveys the sense of having "an intelligent grasp of something that challenges one's thinking or practice" (BDAG, s.v. "συνήημι"). In the immediate context of Matthew 13, the issue of "understanding" or "comprehending" what Jesus is saying is paramount.

⁵⁵ The string of parables that precedes Jesus's comment about the "scribe who has become a disciple" emphasizes the identity of the kingdom of heaven (i.e., "the kingdom of heaven is like . . ."). In this verse there is a shift to the identity of a citizen of that kingdom (i.e., "every scribe . . . is like"). In light of the repeated refrains of the preceding parables, this shift makes Jesus's point about this scribal kingdom activity emphatic.

⁵⁶ The word translated "scribe" (γραμματεὺς) generally refers to someone "who has special functions in connection with documents" (see BDAG, s.v. "γραμματεὺς"). The typical sense of γραμματεὺς in the New Testament relates to an individual who had expertise "in matters relating to divine revelation," and more specifically to "experts" or "scholars versed in the law." Scribes are often mentioned in association with the Jewish leaders (e.g., Matt 2:4; 16:21; 20:18; 21:15; and 27:41). The usage in Matthew 13:52 is likely an extension of this sense, applied to the interpretation of the words of Jesus.

⁵⁷ In other words, the elements are defined in relationship to one another (καινὰ καὶ μαλαιά). The oldness of the "old" (μαλαιά) is perceived because of the presence of the new, and the newness of the "new" (καινὰ) is seen in relation to the old.

In this regard, Jesus's description of the scribe who has become a disciple can serve as an analogy to readers seeking to read individual parts of Scripture in light of the whole canonical context.⁵⁸ Just as Jesus exhorts his original followers to view his own words in light of the Scriptures, *Matthew's readers* are likewise encouraged to view the import of this passage (i.e., the part) within the broader context of the surrounding discourse—the book of Matthew, the Gospel-corpus, the New Testament, and the Two-Testament Christian canon (i.e., the whole). Part of Matthew's compositional strategy is to present a carefully crafted selection of Jesus's words so that readers (both ancient and contemporary) can still hear his voice. In this sense, as author of a Gospel narrative, Mathew himself represents a scribe who has become a disciple.⁵⁹ Through Matthew's compositional work, he has enabled subsequent generations to see, hear, and understand the words of Jesus. This textual feature enables a careful and sympathetic reader of Matthew's Gospel to answer Jesus's query, "Yes, I do understand these things." Moreover, the canonical context (OT and NT) within which readers encounter Matthew's narrative includes the texts that are most germane to the interpretation of Jesus's words.

In other words, the implied reader of the Christian Scriptures is one that has a robust canon-consciousness. The canonical context has a number of hermeneutically significant features. The implied reader of the biblical collection skillfully takes note of this multifaceted matrix of canonical features. Taking the shape of the biblical material into account allows biblical readers to identify and voluntarily associate with the expectations generated by a closed authoritative canon. The canon as a whole guides its readers through the biblical material by limiting and generating meaning. In turn, the ideal reader of the canon is one who accepts this guidance. This type of real reader, in effect, exemplifies "the wisdom of the implied exegete."⁶⁰ Accordingly, the implied reader affirms the *authority* of the canonical documents (the theological dimension of canon) and also accepts the *guidance* of the canonical framework (the literary dimension of canon). The *believing* community is also to be a *reading* community. In this sense, the implied audience is the community that notes, *this* is the framework provided by the canonical collection, and *we know* that its testimony is true.

Accordingly, one way to move toward being transformed into the implied reader projected by the biblical authors is to move toward a canon-conscious reading of Scripture.⁶¹ In this sense, the ideal reader is a Christian, but more specifically he or she is one who reads particular Christian *texts* in a particular way. These texts have a shape that has contributed to the formation of that reader's understanding of what it means to be the ideal reader of those texts. Thus, the notion of the ideal reader can form a crucial

⁵⁸ The notion of scribe implies the literary realm and so the image of the householder bringing out new and old things from his treasure already bears an analogous connection to textual activity.

⁵⁹ Cf. Ezra's characterization as a "scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given" (Ezra 7:6) and as one who "had set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice it, and to teach his statutes and ordinances" (7:10). This strategic training and devotion in turn allowed Ezra to lead the people in reading, understanding, and responding to the "book of the Law of Moses." See Nehemiah 8:1–12.

⁶⁰ Bockmeuhl, *Seeing the Word*, 99, makes this comment with reference to an artistic portrayal of Thomas Aquinas in the role of scriptural interpreter.

⁶¹ At this juncture, the discerning reader might rightly ask, "Which canon?" For the point being made here (and in the context of Matthew 13), we can broadly conceive of the "Christian canon" to be the two-Testament collection that includes the Old Testament (sometimes called the Hebrew Bible) and the New Testament writings. In other words, a "canon-conscious" reading strategy would be one that reads and understands a given writing within the context of these two collections. For a discussion of the question of canonical ordering and its impact on reading, see Spellman, *Toward a Canon-Conscious Reading*, 101–41.

part of the foundation for a confessional view of the doctrine of Scripture, and it can also function as an integrated element of one's hermeneutical approach to reading those authoritative texts. The ideal reader of the Christian canon, then, is a *disciple* (one who follows Jesus) who is also a *scribe* (one who skillfully reads texts). In this vision of discipleship, the ones who can pick up these texts and follow the author's intention are the same ones who have picked up their own cross and followed Jesus.

3. Identifying and Becoming the Ideal Readers of the Biblical Canon

In light of the discussion above, we might finally ask, "Does the canon as a whole *reveal* the expectations it has for its readers?" A sometimes neglected feature of the book of Revelation is its relevance to this particular question. Indeed, the book as a whole equips readers both to *identify* and *become* the ideal reader of the biblical canon. To this end, a central element of John's compositional strategy is to focus deliberately on the activity of reading and writing, to encourage his readers to view his work as a "book," and to exhort them to become certain types of readers. The overall framework of the book of Revelation contains textual clues that help guide readers in their understanding of its literary meaning, its theological message, and its expectation for those reading this "book."

A running theme throughout John's Apocalypse is the compositional emphasis on *writing* a *book*. At the beginning of John's vision, he hears behind him "a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet" (1:10). From the context, the voice belongs to the risen Christ, the living one who was dead but is "alive forevermore" (1:18). His first words to his bondservant John come in the form of a compositional mandate. Jesus commands John to write what he sees in a book (ὁ βλέπεις γράψον εἰς βιβλίον) and to send it to the seven churches (1:11). After describing the appearance of Jesus, John recounts that he "fell at his feet like a dead man" (1:17). After Jesus tells him not to be afraid and comforts him with the truth that he is the "first and the last" and has dominion even over death and Hades (1:18), Jesus gives a further command to write. He tells John, "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things" (1:19).⁶² These commands to write affirm the literary context of the book as a whole and provide a framework for the narrative and discourse that follows. The next two chapters echo these verses, as Jesus tells John to compose prophetic messages for each of the seven churches.⁶³ Thus, the compositional command to "write" is a consistent refrain in the first few chapters of the book.⁶⁴ What John sees, he is to write down.⁶⁵

⁶² See BDAG, s.v. "γράφω". Forms of γράφω occur frequently throughout the New Testament, but the imperative is found almost exclusively in Revelation.

⁶³ For example, to the first church, Jesus commands, Τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον (2:1). The same phrasing is used in Jesus's comments to Smyrna (2:8), Pergamum (2:12), Thyatira (2:18), Sardis (3:1), Philadelphia (3:7), and Laodicea (2:14).

⁶⁴ Of the twelve instances of the imperative γράψον in the book, nine of them occur in chaps. 1–3 (1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, and 14). The other instances are in Rev 14:13, 19:9, and 21:5. This imperative is only found elsewhere in the New Testament in Luke 16:6–7, where it is used in a legal context.

⁶⁵ The compositional mandate itself is an echo of a well-established pattern in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament (e.g., Isa 8:1; 30:8; Jer 30:2; 36:2; Hab 2:2).

More specifically, John is to write these things down εἰς βιβλίον, “in a book” (ESV) or “on a scroll” (NIV). The word βιβλίον here has the sense of a complex, intentional composition.⁶⁶ Thus, the command from Jesus is not a generic directive. John is to behold divinely inspired visions and recount them in a specific book that he is carefully to compose. He is tasked with the active role of author as well as the relatively passive role of viewer. Here the fact that the general verb to write is connected to the concept of a written composition is significant. The prophecy that will be handed down consists of “the things which are written” (1:3, τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα). Those who read “the Apocalypse of John” are encountering the fruit of his obedience to this command to write what he sees in a book.⁶⁷ After occurring once in the first chapter, the word “book” (βιβλίον) does not occur again in the same sense until the final chapters.⁶⁸ After the books and the “Lamb’s book of life” are mentioned as part of the eschatological vision (20:11–15), there is a significant concentration of occurrences in 22:6–21. In this section, βιβλίον occurs seven times. Four of these uses occur in the important phrase, “the words of the prophecy of this book” (τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου).⁶⁹ From beginning to end, then, John’s Apocalypse presents itself as a specific type of communicative entity, a “book.”

Parallel to these commands regarding the *writing* of this book, there are also complementary guidelines given regarding the *reading* of this book. In the introduction, before the epistolary greeting, a blessing is pronounced for those who read and hear these words: “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it” (Rev 1:3). This striking statement ends the prologue and builds a high expectation for the content that follows. This strong comment is matched by an almost verbatim expression at the end of the book. In 22:7, the words of Jesus appear for the first time since the end of chap. 3, the end of the last prophetic message to the churches. Jesus urgently and emphatically states, “Behold, I am coming quickly.”⁷⁰ He then pronounces a blessing that echoes the introduction: “Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book” (Rev 22:7). In this form, the recipient of the blessing is specified as one who “heeds” the words of the prophecy of this book. These two statements are important in demonstrating the compositional shape of the book of Revelation. In 22:7, the reader discovers that the strong word of commendation to the readers of this book ultimately derives from the risen Christ himself. The introductory statement expands on Jesus’s concluding words by emphasizing the three actions of reading, hearing, and heeding. Jesus himself is the one who blesses the reading and heeding of the revelation that centers on him.

After this promise of *blessing* to the reader, there follows a promise of *curses* to any individual who alters the words of this book. Jesus again issues a stern warning to “everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book” (22:18a). For the one who adds to these words, “God will add to him the

⁶⁶ See BDAG, s.v. “βιβλίον”. The word can mean either a “brief written message” in general (e.g., a certificate of divorce in Matt 19:7) or a “long written composition.”

⁶⁷ Drawn from the words of Revelation 1:1, “The Apocalypse of John” is the title this book bears in most of the Greek manuscripts. See David Trobisch, *The First Edition of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 40–41.

⁶⁸ The word βιβλίον is used nine times to signify a “scroll” that can be “opened” and “rolled up” (5:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 6:14, and 10:8). In the latter parts of John’s vision, βιβλίον is used to indicate the Lamb’s “book of life” that records the names of God’s people (13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 21:27).

⁶⁹ This phrase occurs in 22:7, 10; 22:18, and, 19. The other three uses refer to things written in “this book” (22:9, 18, and 19).

⁷⁰ All three elements of this statement (ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ταχύ) heighten the immediacy of Jesus’s assertion.

plagues which are written in this book” (22:18b). Conversely, for the one who takes away words from this book, “God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book” (22:19).⁷¹ One who adds or takes away from these words is in essence doing the exact opposite of heeding and guarding them. This type of reader reverses and distorts the intended purpose of the prophetic book. Rather than guard these words, this reader *disregards* them and seeks to construct his own meaning. The result of this reading strategy is not illumination of the text but rather *indictment* of the interpreter.

These strong words allude to the “canonical formula” of Old Testament prophetic literature that goes all the way back to the Pentateuch. Toward the beginning and end of the book of Deuteronomy, Moses gives a warning concerning the people’s reception of the Law of the Lord. He commands, “You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you” (Deut 4:2). Toward the end of Deuteronomy, Moses gives a similar set of warnings (Deut 29:21; 30:10). Thus, in Deuteronomy, there is a close connection between “adding” and “taking away” from the words of the book of covenant and failing to heed and obey those words.⁷² Revelation 22:18–19 envisions a similar relationship between the people of God and the “book” that claims to convey his word to them.

This passage puts an authoritative stamp on the content of Revelation and effectively seals the book and the message it contains from further addition or subtraction. The closing formula also emphasizes the divine authority and origin of the book. The “words of the prophecy of this book” of Revelation are to be treated with as much respect and submission as was attributed to the Law. By his use of intertextual allusions to the book of Deuteronomy, John makes the bold claim that the authority of the book of Revelation parallels and exceeds that of the Torah. Within the textual world of the Hebrew Scriptures, there is no higher claim. Because it contains the “revelation of Jesus Christ” and accords with the Scriptures, the book should be guarded as a treasured word from the highest authority.

Along with the blessing to the reader in 22:7, the warning of 22:18–19 functions as a fitting conclusion to the book and helps solidify its overall structure. Rather than a disordered array of divergent symbols, images, and fragmentary pericopes, the abovementioned features suggest that the book of Revelation is a carefully constructed composition that generates a complex but coherent narrative and interpretation of the end of days.⁷³ Moreover, through the way he composes his text, John encourages readers to take note of the book’s structural framework and to read and locate it within a broader canonical horizon. The “ideal reader” of the book, in turn, is the reader who takes note of these expectations and seeks to embody them (i.e., he or she not only *reads*, but also *heeds*).

⁷¹ In this short passage, there is an emphasis by verbal repetition of the things that are “written in this book” (γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ).

⁷² For a helpful analysis of the use of Deuteronomy in this passage, see G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 1150–54. Beale observes that these verses “summarize the Apocalypse” and view it as “a new law code for a new Israel, modeled on the old law code directed to the nation of Israel” (1150). Beale relates the warning of Rev 22:18–19 back to the prophetic messages to the churches in Revelation 2–3 and also to the broader exhortation context of Deuteronomy. Both books provide strong warnings to God’s people about idolatry and false teaching. Further, these strongly worded exhortations regarding the authority of written revelation are directly vouchsafed by God. As Beale concludes, “Uppermost in John’s mind is that the book [of Revelation] represents the words of Christ himself” (1154).

⁷³ Cf. David L. Barr, “The Apocalypse as a Symbolic Transformation of the World: A Literary Analysis,” *Int* 38 (1984): 43: “Whereas our concern is to divide the book, John’s concern was to bind it together.”

The final narrative sequence of the book in Revelation 22:8–9 is particularly significant in this regard. John confesses that he is the one “who heard and saw these things” and then he describes what his reaction to this staggering vision entailed. He recounts, “When I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things” (22:8).⁷⁴ The angel acts quickly and decisively to rectify this inappropriate action, commanding John, “Do not do that.” The angel then provides the reason why John’s act of deference was inappropriate, saying, “I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book” (22:9).

In his statement to John, the angel makes a series of associations. First, the angel associates himself with John. By identifying with John, the angel makes clear that he does not share divine status. As the readers know, the angel is only the messenger of this vision (cf. Rev 1:1–3) and is not worthy of John’s worship. Second, the angel associates both of them with “your brethren the prophets.” These associations come as no surprise to those familiar with the biblical storyline. The prophets and apostles are grouped together and serve a function similar to the angels, who are God’s messengers. The phrase “prophets and apostles” is also sometimes used in relation to God’s revelation through Scripture. For instance, in 2 Peter 3:2, Peter tells his readers that they “should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.” Similarly, Paul describes believers as part of a household that has been “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone” (Eph 2:20). In Hebrews 1:14, the angels are described as “ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation.” These descriptions complement the associations made in Revelation 22:9. These figures are fellow bondservants who serve a common Lord, Christ himself.

What is stunning about the angel’s words is who comes next in this list, namely, *biblical readers*. The angel asserts that “those who heed the words of this book” are “fellow servants” (σύνδουλος) along with angels, prophets, and apostles. The noun σύνδουλος identifies “one who, along with others, is in a relationship of total obedience to one master.”⁷⁵ None of the types of individuals in this list deserve this type of service and worship. Only one merits that honor, as the angel commands with his next words, “Worship God” (22:9).

The implied corollary of this sequence is that one of the ways an individual might worship God is by heeding these words. In Revelation 1:3, there is a similar blessing promised for the one who “heeds” or “keeps” what is written in this book. This task involves preserving the text but also treasuring and submitting to its contents. The book of Revelation presents the culmination of the biblical metanarrative. The blessing is for one who accepts and preserves the book that generates this comprehensive worldview. *Following Jesus now also means reading his book and heeding its message.* Seen within the context of the Christian canon, Revelation 22 serves an exceedingly fitting role in providing closure to the grand storyline of the Bible and also the canonical collection in which that story is told. In this sense, the hermeneutically loaded exhortation to the reader of the book of Revelation in Rev 22:18–19 can serve both a local and a global function.

⁷⁴ Compare with Rev 19:10, where an analogous exchange between John and the angel occurs. Cf. also the similar scenes in Acts involving Peter (10:25–26) and Paul (14:14–15).

⁷⁵ BDAG, s.v. “σύνδουλος.” The editors of BDAG comment regarding the use of σύνδουλος in relation to God that “since it is a truism that one can be a slave to only one master, such self-identification, far from being a declaration of mean servility, served notice that ultimate allegiance was owed to God or Christ alone.”

The emphasis on the reading of this book parallels the shared sentiment at work in strategic texts of the Old Testament. As in Joshua 1:7–8, Psalm 1:1–3, and Malachi 4:4, readers are overtly encouraged to meditate day and night on the “Law of the Lord.”⁷⁶ These texts function as “macrocompositional seams” and connect “the quest for wisdom and understanding to an individual daily reading and meditation on Scripture.”⁷⁷ These texts are “strategic” because they appear at the major divisions of the Hebrew Bible. An implication of the claim made in Revelation is that this book of Moses should now be read within the context of the entire Christian canon. In Psalm 1, the “blessed” man is the one whose “delight is in the law of the Lord,” on which he “meditates day and night” (1:2). Just as those who meditate on the first book of the Bible (the Law) are blessed, so too are the readers of the last book of the Bible (μακάριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων, “blessed is the one who reads”). The ideal readers of the Christian canon are the ones who devote themselves to diligent reading and re-reading of these biblical “books.” In this sense, the ideal reader of the canon as a whole is one who consistently engages its contents.

The ending of the historical phase of the composition of biblical writings, then, does not mean that God no longer speaks or that the Spirit was chased into a book. Rather, the biblical writings imply that he now speaks in *just this book*, in *just these words*. The book of Revelation is an example of the way God “continues to confront the church through the pages of Scripture.”⁷⁸ The conclusion of the canon points its readers forward and demands of them a posture of anticipation. John’s Apocalypse assumes that God’s written revelation is completed and sufficient, *until he comes* (Rev 22:20). As the final book of the Christian canon, Revelation contains the last words of the Risen Lord to the churches. Jesus himself is the one who testifies to these things, and he says, “Yes, I am coming quickly” (22:20). The ideal readers of the book of Revelation and thus the entire Christian canon are identified as the ones who reply to these words, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (22:20).

Let the reader understand!

⁷⁶ Cf. Michael B. Shepherd, *The Textual World of the Bible*, StBL 156 (New York: Peter Lang, 2013), 90: “At every major juncture in the composition of the Hebrew Bible (Moses-Prophets, Prophets-Pss, Dan-Chr) the message is the same: read Scripture to find revelation of the future work of God in Christ.”

⁷⁷ John H. Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 574. Stephen Chapman, “What Are We Reading? Canonicity and the Old Testament,” *WW* 29 (2009): 343, calls them “editorial framing notices.” See also Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon: A Contribution to the Study of Jewish Origins* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 120–23.

⁷⁸ Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 100.

Paul and the Gift: A Review Article

— Thomas R. Schreiner —

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Abstract: John Barclay has written a stimulating and ground-breaking book on Paul's theology of gift. He situates the meaning of gift in antiquity, noting that a return for a gift was part and parcel of what it meant to receive a gift in the ancient world. Barclay profiles the different conceptions of what it means to receive a gift in antiquity and explores the notion of a gift further in some Second Temple Jewish writings. He also provides a useful history of interpretation, concentrating on key figures. Finally, he explores Paul's theology of gift, especially in Galatians and Romans. What marks out Paul's understanding of the gift, according to Barclay, is its incongruity. Barclay's work is a significant step forward, showing that there wasn't a consensus in Second Temple Judaism as to what it meant to receive a gift. Different notions of grace and a gift were current. Nevertheless, some questions are raised in the review. Against Barclay, Paul's theology of gift provides a platform by which other Second Temple notions of the gift can be criticized. Furthermore, evidence for a polemic against some form of works-righteousness is present in Galatians and Romans.

John Barclay has written one of the most important books in recent years on Paul, and it is the first of a proposed two volume work.¹ In the second volume Barclay will continue to explore the Pauline letters. In a brief review I cannot rehearse everything and so will focus on what I found most interesting. The book is divided into four parts: 1) the multiple meanings of gift, 2) the divine gift in Second Temple Judaism, 3) gift and worth in Galatians, and 4) God's creative gift in Romans.

1. Gifts in Antiquity and Today

In Part One Barclay sets forth the various meanings of gift and grace. As readers, says Barclay, we are prone to misunderstand grace and gift since we often define a gift to rule out a reciprocal response or a return of some kind. Those who are the heirs of Immanuel Kant think that gifts should be given without any hope of a return benefit. But in the Greco-Roman world it was expected that one would respond to a gift with some return, and such a return did not mean that the gift was not a true gift. Disinterested altruism did not characterize gifts in the Greco-Roman world. Jacques Derrida, following the train of

¹John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

Kant, maintains that any kind of return nullifies a gift. He thinks a pure gift is impossible since a response is always involved. But Barclay notes that Derrida's definition of gift does not accord with how a gift was conceived in the Greco-Roman world. Gifts and reciprocity were not antithetical but complementary, for one was obligated to respond appropriately to a gift. Social bonds were strengthened and formed through both the gift and the response to the gift. Responses to a gift could be expressed in a variety of ways, but one way to respond is with gratitude. In fact, gifts were often given to those who were deemed to be worthy or fitting since to grant gifts to those who were not worthy to receive them was considered to be foolish. It was common to think that one should be discriminating and discerning in giving a gift so that the gift was not wasted on the unworthy. Even Jewish giving to the poor, Barclay argues, fits the paradigm of a return since Jews expected a benefit from God for their generosity.

2. Definitions of Gift

Chapter two provides a taxonomy of the meaning of the word gift. Barclay thinks that gift can be "perfected" (i.e., defined most clearly) six ways: 1) superabundance (the extravagance and scale of the gift), 2) singularity (the giver is always and only benevolent—there is no punishment for evil), 3) priority (the gift is given before there is any initiative on the part of the recipient), 4) incongruity (the gift is given regardless of the worth of the recipient), 5) efficacy (the gift empowers the one to whom it is given), and 6) non-circularity (there is no expected return for the gift). The notion that gifts are non-circular, as Barclay argues in chapter one, is a Western notion and was not present in antiquity. We must be careful, Barclay maintains, in using the word gift or grace since the notion is polyvalent, and one does not necessarily have all six ideas of gift in mind when using the term. Perhaps I should mention here that I found these two chapters fascinating and enlightening, and they alone constitute a major contribution.

3. History of Interpretation

Chapter three considers some notable interpreters of Paul in church history, including Marcion, Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Karl Barth, and others. I will not comment on everyone Barclay discusses here. Marcion's reading of Paul tilts toward *singularity*—God is benevolent so that he loves and saves and delivers instead of judging his creatures. Augustine's understanding of grace is incongruous in that it is given to sinners before they were worthy, but it is also congruous since the grace given to the ungodly transforms them. As Augustine's thought develops he emphasizes that grace is prior, efficacious, and incongruous.

Luther, on the other hand, questions the Augustinian understanding of the efficacy of grace as a substance granted to the soul. Like Augustine he features the incongruity of grace—grace is given to those who are ungodly. In fact, Luther's theology stands out since grace remains incongruous for the entirety of one's life. I would dissent from Barclay, however, in his apparent endorsement of the Finnish view of Luther (p. 107). I think the sources point in another direction as I have argued briefly in my recent book *Faith Alone*.² In any case, Luther teaches the superabundance of grace and its priority, but what stands out in his thought is the incongruity of grace. Barclay also thinks grace in Luther is non-circular since grace is not granted so that we will return it in some fashion. I wonder if Barclay is right here, but he thinks that grace is non-circular in Luther since the response of gratitude does not benefit God. The word "benefit" is ambiguous. Luther may have meant that we do not add in any way to God's

²Thomas R. Schreiner, *Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 49–52.

being and greatness since God is self-sufficient. However, in another sense, gratitude brings God glory. It would be interesting to see Luther scholars weigh in on this matter. Barclay also says works in Luther are not “integral to faith or to justification” (p. 114). The notion is disputed, however, for as Barclay says (p. 114n87) works may have functioned as necessary evidence of faith. In that sense, then, they can be considered as integral to faith and justification in Luther.

In Calvin’s theology, according to Barclay, the grace of God is not singular since God also predestines the wicked to damnation. On the other hand, the priority of God’s grace in the life of believers is emphasized repeatedly. God’s grace, as is the case with Luther, is understood to be incongruous, though Calvin also teaches emphatically that good works follow as a result of God’s grace. In Calvin’s system believers are transformed and made holy by the grace of God, and hence grace in Calvin is circular in the sense that there is a return. What is most striking in Barth, and here he is quite like Luther, is the incongruity of grace. Rudolf Bultmann’s view is more complex. He trumpets the incongruity of grace and its priority but does not follow Augustinian and Calvinist views of predestination, and hence he has a different notion of the priority and efficacy of grace. He is also distinguished from Luther in emphasizing the obedience of faith, and so he rejects the idea that grace is non-circular.

E. P. Sanders’s covenant nomism focuses on the priority of grace in Second Temple Judaism so that obedience was a response to God’s covenant love. Barclay rightly notes, however, a crucial mistake in Sanders’s work, for Sanders understands the priority of grace as if it also entails the incongruity of grace. But, says Barclay, it is clear that the Rabbis believed grace was given to those who were worthy (in accord with the view of gift in antiquity). Sanders operates as if the Augustinian view of grace is shared by the Rabbis. Since he fails to define carefully what grace means, he lumps together priority with incongruity. Sanders rightly dismantled a caricature of Second Temple Judaism, as if grace was non-existent. At the same time, his insistence on the uniformity of grace was overly simplistic, blinding some scholars to the diversity of ways in which grace was understood in the ancient world.

Barclay takes scholars such as D. A. Carson, Simon Gathercole, and Timo Laato, to task for criticizing the notion of grace in Second Temple Judaism. Such criticisms fail since various understandings of grace circulated in Second Temple Judaism. Carson, for example, operates as if incongruous grace is the only way to define grace, but other conceptions of grace were present among Jews. Douglas Campbell is also indicted since he assumes that genuine grace precludes the necessity of any human response. Campbell heralds the singularity of grace by saying that God’s grace is benevolent, while rejecting the notion of God’s judgment. Campbell stands out, says Barclay, because he sees all six notions of grace in Paul. In this respect, he is closest to Marcion. At the other extreme stands Chris VanLandingham who makes the mistake of thinking that grace is only incongruous. VanLandingham observes that Paul requires obedience for eternal life and concludes that grace is lacking in Paul’s theology. But this is not necessarily so, warns Barclay, since the notion that grace has no return was not the view of most in the Greco-Roman world. One major conclusion Barclay draws (and it is one of the signal benefits of this work) is that interpreters often disagree because they do not realize that they are operating with different conceptions of grace. Hence, when it comes to Paul and Second Temple Judaism, we are not faced with a stark alternative says Barclay. They both proclaimed grace. It is not as if Paul believed in grace and Second Temple Judaism denied it. Different Jewish writers mapped out and profiled grace in various ways.

4. The Gift in Second Temple Judaism

Part Two of the book considers the divine gift in Second Temple Judaism. Barclay examines The Wisdom of Solomon, Philo of Alexandria, the Qumran Hodayot, Pseudo-Philo's *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, and 4 Ezra. Here I will sum up briefly the conclusions drawn from each author investigated. In Wisdom the superabundance of the gift and God's benevolence come to the forefront. Grace for Wisdom is *congruous* instead of incongruous since the latter would call into question God's wisdom and discernment. Granting gifts to those who waste them is not a mark of goodness for the author of Wisdom. Turning to Philo, we find that in his expositions God's gifts are superabundant and lavish. Philo tends toward singularity in emphasizing God's love and benevolence instead of his justice. God's grace is given to those who are worthy and fitting, but their worth and virtue are not a *cause* for God's grace but only a *condition*. God's grace is prior in the sense that God elects beforehand those who are especially worthy and excellent, for to do otherwise would suggest that God is arbitrary and whimsical. In Philo grace is congruous with the worth of the recipient, but, Barclay notes, such a view did not mean in antiquity that Philo did not believe in grace. As he has already demonstrated, gifts and the worthiness of the recipient were a common theme in the ancient world.

The Qumran Hodayot proclaim the abundance and lavishness of God's grace, but what is most striking is the incongruity of grace since the writer often confesses his worthlessness and shame. In this respect, he is quite similar to Paul. The efficacy of God's grace also is a hallmark of the hymns. Barclay observes that both Philo and Wisdom would have rejected the incongruity of grace proclaimed in the Hodayot. We see plainly that grace was not parsed in the same way by every Second Temple Jew. Barclay adds that we should not say one form of grace is purer or higher; instead, we should recognize that grace is defined and understood differently by various Jewish writers. Sanders's attempt to lump virtually all of Second Temple Jews under the rubric of covenant nomism does not do justice to the complexity of the evidence, and to the various conceptions of grace which were circulating.

Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, like the Hodayot, reflects an emphasis on the incongruity of grace. In fact, no book in Second Temple Judaism emphasizes God's mercy as much as this one, for God will keep his covenant promises to his people, even after they sin and experience divine judgment. God's grace is incongruous toward Israel because they are his elect people. Fourth Ezra moves in another direction. God's mercy is reserved for the righteous who keep God's commands. Barclay says we should not label such as works-righteousness since in doing so we reflect Protestant and Augustinian views that true grace is incongruous.

Barclay remarks that all of these Second Temple works emphasize the superabundance of God's grace. At the same time, none of them define grace in terms of non-circularity—some return for grace is expected, even if that return is thanksgiving (this makes me wonder as noted above why Barclay thinks Luther's notion of thanksgiving does not reflect circularity). Only Philo tends toward the singularity of grace. Some writers stress the priority and efficacy of God's grace, but the major difference emerges on the incongruity of grace, which is celebrated by Pseudo-Philo and Hodayot and denied by Wisdom of Solomon, Philo, and 4 Ezra. Many in antiquity believed that God's gifts should be given to the fitting, to those who are worthy. Hence, says Barclay, we should not say that those who hold to congruous grace deny grace; they just espoused a different notion of grace. Barclay rightly adjusts Sanders's work, showing that there is more to say about grace than its priority. Sanders was on target in saying that grace was prior but failed to see that there were other dimensions of grace, and hence it is not sufficient to lump all Second Temple Jews together as if they held to the same theology of grace. What stands out is

that some Second Temple Jewish writers think grace is congruous, while others think it is incongruous. Once we see the diversity of grace in Jewish thought says Barclay, “it becomes senseless to ask whether Paul represents ‘real’ grace, as opposed to its ‘diluted’ forms in Judaism” (p. 320). He also says about Paul, “It would make little sense to say that he emphasizes grace *more* than other Jews of his time, but it is also clear that his views are not identical to those of the others surveyed, just as they disagree among themselves” (p. 328). Scholars indebted to the Reformation criticized Sanders when they detected congruous grace, thinking they had shown that grace was not present where it was conditioned. But says Barclay, such a notion misfires if we recognize that grace was understood in multiple ways.

5. Some Reflections on Barclay’s Contribution in Part One and Two

Barclay’s work represents a significant advance in qualifying and correcting Sanders’s monolithic reading of Second Temple Judaism, though others have gone before him. We can think of a number of works here: the first volume of *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, Simon Gathercole’s *Where is Boasting?*, Mark Elliott’s *The Survivors of Israel*, Andrew Das’s *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant*, and Friedrich Avemarie’s *Tora und Leben*.³ Barclay also distinguishes himself from other scholars in saying that we cannot say that there is purer or higher or better grace in Paul. The incongruous grace of Paul is not superior to the congruous conception of grace in Wisdom of Solomon. Grace is still grace; it is just a different kind of grace. Barclay helpfully delineates that the dispute between Paul and other Jews of his day was due, at least in part, to different conceptions of grace.

Barclay approaches the matter descriptively and historically and thus concludes that each writer’s depiction of gift and grace should be appreciated for what it is. Fair enough. His historical work is invaluable and helps us demarcate more carefully how Paul stands over against other contemporaries. We get a much sharper profile from Barclay than we did from Sanders. At the same time, Barclay brackets out in advance another standpoint—one that is at least implicitly at work in Carson and others. Let me put it straightforwardly. For those who think that Paul’s writings are the inspired word of God, the Pauline conception of grace is superior to construals of grace that depart from his understanding. Obviously, there is not space to defend here what I am suggesting. Still, it is questionable to think that a strictly historical framework is to be preferred over a theological stance that accepts Paul’s theology as the word of God. Most recognize that there is not any neutral place to stand in doing history or exegesis. Of course, that does not mean that our philosophical starting point is arbitrary. If Paul and Wisdom disagree on the nature of grace, we follow Paul (as Protestants) instead Wisdom. Wisdom propounds a particular theology of grace, but Paul rejects Wisdom’s construal of grace, and as believers we confess and believe that Paul’s theology of grace is superior to what we find in Wisdom or Philo.

If we consider history, the matter being disputed here is hardly new. No knowledgeable Protestant denies, for instance, that Roman Catholics believe in grace. The problem is that the Roman Catholic definition of grace, according to Protestants, does not conform to the biblical witness, and hence the Roman Catholic conception of grace is judged to be substandard. I am grateful for Barclay’s clear

³D.A. Carson, Peter O’Brien, and Mark Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism, Vol. 1: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001); Simon J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul’s Response in Romans 1–5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Mark A. Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); Andrew A. Das, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001); Friedrich Avemarie, *Tora und Leben*, TSAJ 55 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996).

delineation of the various conceptions of grace and for his recognition of various strands in Second Temple sources. The typology he uses represents a helpful advance and clarification. On the other hand, his work does not change the landscape dramatically. Others recognized, even if they did not use the same terminology, that there were different conceptions of grace in Second Temple sources. Barclay helps us see that all players in Second Temple Judaism believed in grace, even if they understood it differently. But it does not follow from this that we should accept all conceptions of grace as equally valid, for that is a theological question that cannot and should not be decided by history.

6. Gift in Galatians

In Parts Three and Four, Barclay studies both Galatians and Romans, and for the sake of this review I will limit myself to a few observations since there is much that he says exegetically and theologically which is of great value, but there is not space to comment upon all of it. Barclay focuses in Galatians on the new communities Paul wants to form with his gospel. Barclay focuses on the incongruity of the gift in Paul. God's grace is granted to the unworthy and the undeserving. What Paul says accords in part with Hoyadot and Pseudo-Philo, but by way of contrast Paul celebrates the grace of God given in Jesus Christ.

Barclay argues in Galatians that works of law refers to the entire Torah, but we should not conclude that the Pauline rejection of works of law signals a defective soteriology on the part of the opponents. If Paul were waging war against works-righteousness, says Barclay, he would not speak negatively of uncircumcision as well (Gal 5:6; 6:15). The problem is not doing, according to Barclay. Instead, the Torah is not normative for believers any longer; the new community is not demarcated by the Torah.

I am not persuaded that there is no polemic against doing in Galatians. Faith is set against doing, even if the doing is circumscribed by Torah (Gal 3:1–9). The contrast is particularly strong in Gal 3:12 where the law, in contrast to faith, is characterized by performance. The reference to uncircumcision does not negate what is said since people can boast in what they do (get circumcised) or what they do not do (uncircumcision). That is why Paul trumpets the cross as his only boast (Gal 6:12) and the new creation is the rule by which all should live (Gal 6:16). Additionally, Barclay does not reflect enough on the difference between promise and law. Law does not avail since it focuses on what human beings do (or more precisely fail to do), while the promise stresses what God in Christ does for believers. Of course, this last point fits with Barclay's emphasis on the incongruity of grace in Galatians, and he rightly features that theme. He also correctly says that we see both the incongruity and congruity of grace in the letter; it is incongruous since it is given to the unworthy, but it is also congruous in that it fits and shapes believers so that they are transformed and become worthy. Barclay does not see much evidence of the efficacy of grace in Galatians, but I wonder if his own work on the transforming power of the Spirit points in the other direction.

7. Gift in Romans

When it comes to Romans, Barclay sees a pronounced emphasis on the superabundance of grace. In Romans, like Galatians, Paul sees God's grace as incongruous so that it is granted to the unworthy, and fitting, in that it changes those who are its recipients. The incongruous grace of God continues to be given in Jesus Christ. At the final judgment there will be evidence that those who have received God's grace have changed. Hence, God's grace is unconditioned (given to the unworthy), but not unconditional

(those who have received such grace are transformed). Barclay helpfully maintains that the discussion of Abraham in Romans 4 engages in a polemic against works *and* emphasizes the inclusion of the Gentiles; there is no reason to opt for an either-or. Paul's inclusion of the Gentiles and his Gentile mission accords with his theology of grace.

On the other hand, he is not convincing when he says that there is no polemic against a Jewish conception of works in Rom 4:4–5. Has not Barclay already shown that some would not agree with Paul's notion of an incongruous gift? In these verses we see a different conception of grace. Some Jews certainly depended on their works for vindication; otherwise, the boasting of the Pharisee in the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector (Luke 18:9–14) does not relate to anyone. Barclay thinks Paul has an exegetical but not a polemical purpose in Rom 4:4–5, but that is a very unlikely splitting of categories. Paul writes about matters present in people's lives. In the same way, it seems as if Barclay strains to deny any sense of trusting in one's own righteousness in Rom 9:30–10:8. In Barclay's reading of Rom 10:3, Paul speaks of confirming or validating one's righteousness instead of establishing or achieving righteousness. He does not think Paul criticizes an attempt to be righteous by works or human achievement. The issue is that some believed that Torah observance made one a fitting recipient of God's kindness. Paul does not criticize works-righteousness "but the criteria by which worth is defined" (p. 541n46). This is a possible reading, but it is a very fine distinction. It seems likely that people would boast about meeting such criteria. Indeed, Paul sets boasting and works over against faith in Rom 3:27–4:5.

Surprisingly (at least to me), Barclay argues that the post-Pauline writers of Ephesians (2:8–10), 2 Timothy (1:9), and Titus (3:5) indict "pride of achievement" where there is "the human tendency to self-congratulation in the *attainment* of worth" (p. 571, italics his). So, according to Barclay, the post-Pauline writers actually subscribe to a view of works and faith which most Protestants have thought was in Romans and Galatians. I think all these later letters are authentic, but let us follow Barclay's argument a bit further. Presumably these post-Pauline writers were interpreting Romans and Galatians for their generation. I would suggest that we should follow their interpretation (if they are post-Pauline) instead of Barclay's. They were closer to Paul in time and culture than Barclay, and they understood Paul to criticize works-righteousness. Of course, if these letters are Pauline (as I think they are), they constitute further evidence for the notion that Paul engaged in a polemic against works-righteousness.

8. Conclusion

I have probably concentrated too much on places where I disagree with Barclay. His study of gift in antiquity is of great value. Barclay demonstrates clearly that grace and gift were conceived of in a diversity of ways in Second Temple Judaism. All Jews in the Second Temple period believed in grace, but they conceived of it in various ways, and thus Barclay's work represents a real advance over Sanders's construal. Barclay also demonstrates that one of the goals of Paul's ministry was the unification of Jews and Gentiles in the church, and Paul's theology of the gift was the basis for this new community. The incongruity of God's gift of grace stands out in Paul, and Paul emphasizes that gift is given in the Christ event. Finally, the book is full of profound and thought-provoking exegetical insights, and hence this book is sure to be discussed for years to come. And a volume two is promised, which is sure to enlighten us all.

Daniel Strange on the Theological Question of the Unevangelized: A Doctrinal Assessment

— Kyle Faircloth —

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Abstract: Although evangelicals agree the church must be fervent in seeking to reach those who have little or no access to the gospel, this missiological consensus has not led to a theological consensus regarding the salvific state of those whom the church never reaches. Yet Daniel Strange seeks to throw fresh light on the discussion by proposing an alternative understanding of “unevangelized” based on a more nuanced explanation of divine revelation. This article will summarize Strange’s theory and then evaluate his approach by using the doctrinal rules instantiated by the *solus Christus*, *sola fide*, and *fides ex auditu* principles. For however one answers this disputed question in theology, Scripture is clear that salvation is through Christ alone by faith alone and that faith comes from hearing. The hope is that this doctrinal typology will facilitate not only this particular review, but also indicate a common theological environment in which evangelical theories on the unevangelized might be formulated and assessed.

Working from a Reformed/Calvinist position, Daniel Strange begins the development of his theology of religions in contrast to inclusivist positions in evangelical theology.¹ In his initial work he asserts that because the question of the unevangelized is a soteriological matter, theories must not neglect relevant doctrinal issues “including the nature and extent of saving faith, the nature of revelation and the doctrines of grace.”² Thus, theologians who hold inclusivist positions “might well revise their stance *if* it were proved that to hold to a certain belief on the unevangelised compro-

¹“Inclusivism” is the standard label in the theology of religions for positions which affirm that salvation is found only in Jesus, yet are open to the idea of implicit faith and, traditionally, the possibility that other religions contain salvific elements. See, Paul F. Knitter, *Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 4–12; or Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Uniqueness of Jesus* (London: Monarch, 2001), 37–85.

²Daniel Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised: An Analysis of Inclusivism in Recent Evangelical Theology*, Paternoster Theological Monographs (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 26.

mised, for example, the *solus Christus*.³ In this case, Strange has in mind the inclusivist model of Clark Pinnock.⁴

As regards the question of the unevangelized, Pinnock argues that those who respond to the Spirit's offer of grace through general revelation and conscience can in this way receive Christ's salvation.⁵ Yet Strange argues that if the Spirit is working among the unevangelized to help them "implicitly" receive salvific grace, "the question remains how the salvation of the unevangelised believer is related directly to the work of Christ and not merely to the work of the Spirit in creation."⁶ He concludes that Pinnock's view is untenable as an evangelical position, because it neither holds to the core precepts of the evangelical tradition nor represents an orthodox understanding of the Trinity.⁷ So how might one determine a legitimate evangelical position? Strange goes on to develop what Timothy George calls an "extra bonus" by providing "the most definitive typology to date of evangelical responses to the fate of the unevangelized."⁸

Drawing from systematic theology, Strange makes the doctrine of atonement the cornerstone of his typology and, in the first instance, divides theories between particular and universal views of God's salvific will.⁹ Based on these two groups, he then identifies six distinct particular atonement positions and three universal atonement positions.¹⁰ As for his own stance on the issue, he claims the problem is not with the unevangelized *per se*, but with the question itself:

The problem with the question of the unevangelised is that it is wrongly construed as being about "those who have never heard *through no fault of their own*," or those who are "invincibly *ignorant*." However the biblical worldview tells us that no-one is spiritually guiltless and that while there are degrees of light and of responsibility, everyone has spurned the light they have, whether this be the light of general revelation or special revelation.¹¹

Hence he claims that because "the 'Reformed' evangelical paradigm" precludes universal atonement, "there is no 'problem' of the unevangelised."¹² Yet if there are those who have only received general revelation, what then is this "light" and "responsibility" outside of special revelation?

³ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴ Clark Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992).

⁵ Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised*, 219–24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 263–64.

⁸ Timothy George, review of *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised*, by Daniel Strange, *Them* 31 (2006): 110.

⁹ Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised*, 36–38, 304–6. The belief in universal atonement, that Christ died for all, is different from the belief in universalism, that all will be saved.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 307–31.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 282.

¹² *Ibid.*, 266.

1. The Purpose of General Revelation

In a chapter contribution entitled “General Revelation: Sufficient or Insufficient?” Strange upholds the existence of general revelation but denies the possibility that salvation might obtain through this mode alone.¹³ Furthermore, “general revelation is insufficient to save but sufficient to condemn and ‘render without excuse.’”¹⁴ As regards salvation, general revelation needs special revelation before it can be understood and appropriated rightly, and the ordinary means of special revelation is through hearing the proclamation of the gospel.¹⁵ Still, though general and special revelation are distinct Strange also argues they are not meant to be separated. For example, referring to Psalm 19 he states:

Here we witness a wonderful unity to God’s revelation in creation and Torah, but a unity in which there is not only a definite qualitative difference between the two modes of revelation, but also *an inseparability* and “order,” which presupposes that it is only in context of special revelation and salvation that God’s general revelation of himself in creation can be truly understood.¹⁶

Thus, for Strange, because special revelation is necessary for salvation, and because there are people in the world who only receive general revelation, then perhaps these people are “those who have fallen outside of God’s preceptive (but not decrete) will?”¹⁷ In other words, the very fact that special revelation never reaches certain groups of people is tangible evidence that the purpose of general revelation is not God’s salvation, but his judgment of sin. “There is a corporate responsibility here,” says Strange, “the most universal ‘unity’ being our guilt in Adam.”¹⁸ At this point, however, he recognizes the argument is somewhat askew as he attempts to maintain an inseparable relation between the two modes of revelation, while also claiming God deliberately withholds special revelation from certain people thereby causing a separation. Strange nuances his argument by appealing to the tradition of *prisca theologia* (ancient theology)¹⁹ and the writings of twentieth century Reformed missiologist J. H. Bavinck²⁰ to argue for a third understanding of revelation which constitutes a kind of admixture of general and special revelation.²¹

The *prisca theologia* is the notion that the pure knowledge of God has been passed down through the ages and traces of this “original” revelation exist within some or all human knowledge. Yet Strange

¹³ Daniel Strange, “General Revelation: Sufficient or Insufficient?” in *Faith Comes by Hearing: A Response to Inclusivism*, ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 40–77.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 54, 67.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 56, emphasis added.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁹ Strange depends primarily on Gerald McDermott’s study of Jonathan Edwards’s use of *prisca theologia*. See, McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁰ See J. H. Bavinck, “General Revelation and the Non-Christian Religions,” *Free University Quarterly* 4 (1955): 43–55; *idem*, *The J.H. Bavinck Reader*, ed. John Bolt, James D. Bratt, and P. J. Visser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 95–109.

²¹ Strange, “General Revelation,” 72–77.

states, “Because of human suppression and substitution, and without the regenerating work of God, this once true knowledge of God becomes atrophied through a divine providential law of entropy and rather than becoming a means to salvation, it becomes a further basis for judgment.”²² While he is unable to develop his proposal fully at this point, he provides a more robust account in his book *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*.²³ Here Strange seeks to apply an historiographical approach for understanding the origin of religions, foregrounded by the “seemingly retired” anthropological theory called “original monotheism.”²⁴

2. A “Single-Source” Theory for Explaining Revelation

In *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*, Strange attempts to locate the “historical origin of the phenomena of ‘religions’” within a biblical world chronology.²⁵ To this purpose, he establishes his theological anthropology upon a literal “historical” interpretation of Genesis—in opposition to “purely ‘theological’ and ‘literary’ interpretations”²⁶—giving particular attention to the stories of creation, Noah, and the tower of Babel in chs. 1–11.²⁷ Though he is in this case more concerned with the question of other religions than with the question of the unevangelized,²⁸ Strange nonetheless expands his notion of original revelation and its purpose for those who never hear the preaching of the gospel. He argues that just as the physical existence of all human beings traces back to a single couple, divine revelation and human knowledge also flow out from this singular period in time. He states:

Given a monogenetic understanding of human origins, what is being posited here is a “single-source” theory of revelation and knowledge, when the whole of humanity was in proximity of redemptive-historical events and which therefore defies a simplistic categorization as either natural “general” revelation or supernatural “special revelation.” As well as the more usual, “media” and “means” of “general revelation,” a number of Reformed scholars include specific and “supernatural” knowledge preserved as “tradition” and “memory.” I wish to label this revelation as “remnantal.”²⁹

²² Ibid., 74.

²³ Daniel Strange, *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock: An Evangelical Theology of Religions* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2014); published in the USA under the title *Their Rock Is Not Like Our Rock: A Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015). This article refers to the UK edition.

²⁴ Strange, *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*, 98.

²⁵ Ibid., 98.

²⁶ Ibid., 101.

²⁷ Ibid., 53–94, 100–3, 121–54.

²⁸ Ibid., 34–35.

²⁹ Ibid., 104. Strange cites Peter Harrison in reference to the “single-source” theory of revelation, *Religion and the Religions in the English Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 131.

Strange turns again to the *prisca theologia* and also incorporates the anthropological concept of “original monotheism”³⁰ to argue that the source of *prisca theologia* originates with Adam and Eve.³¹ Furthermore, his single-source theory of revelation does not consist only of a pre-fall awareness of the existence of one God who created all things, but includes the *imago Dei* as a kind of transcendent first principle (people are made to worship) and a postlapsarian proclamation of Christ in Genesis 3:15—the *protoevangelium* (first gospel).³² Within this framework he supports the idea that there is no one who has only ever received general revelation (from nature and conscience alone), because all people retain a remnant of the *prisca theologia* and are also influenced by it at times through contact in history. Nonetheless, this “knowledge” is rendered inadequate for salvation because of constant human and demonic suppression and distortion.³³

So according to Strange, general revelation is not only the transcendent reality of the *imago Dei* and the physical presence of creation, but also includes an admixture of corrupted elements of special revelation (the gospel) which flow through human knowledge and tradition with an occasional influx of the *prisca theologia* during moments of historical proximity.³⁴ Hence, an unevangelized person “simultaneously on the one hand *knows* the living God of the Bible (i.e., knows in ‘personal relationship,’ not just ‘knows about’), leaving her responsible and ‘without excuse,’ and yet on the other hand *does not know* God.”³⁵ Salvation occurs, then, only as one receives special revelation “because with it comes the regenerating work of the Spirit in special grace.”³⁶ From this perspective, Strange concludes that the gospel subverts the content of other religions and also fulfills the metaphysical human need to worship God.³⁷

3. A Critical Review of Strange’s Single-Source Theory of Revelation

As noted earlier, Strange attempts to make his case from a Reformed theological perspective, and specifically from “within the tradition represented by the Magisterial Reformers especially John Calvin and his followers.”³⁸ Thus we might anticipate his claim that general revelation alone does not save but is enough to “condemn and ‘render without excuse.’”³⁹ But whereas theologians usually base this assertion on an understanding that general revelation consists of little more than God’s communication

³⁰ Strange, *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*, 98. Original monotheism is a theory that synchronizes world history with the chronology of biblical history to claim that the first religion of all human beings was the monotheistic faith of the Bible. For a contemporary assessment, see Winfried Corduan, *In the Beginning God: A Fresh Look at the Case for Original Monotheism* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013).

³¹ See, *Ibid.*, 53–120.

³² *Ibid.*, 53–94.

³³ *Ibid.*, 95–120, 232–36.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 103–4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 222.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 268–73.

³⁸ Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised*, 8.

³⁹ Strange, “General Revelation,” 41; cf. *idem*, *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised*, 282; *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*, 93, 324.

of himself through the natural order,⁴⁰ Strange distinguishes his approach by bringing in a much needed christological dimension to this standard confession.⁴¹ By connecting the Reformed appropriation of the *prisca theologia* to the *protoevangelium* in Genesis 3:15, he provides a framework to support his claim that God does not condemn the unevangelized for merely rejecting him through natural revelation, but for suppressing the proclamation of the gospel as well. Thus he is to be lauded for seeking to emphasize the need for an epistemic connection to the gospel of Christ in the theological discussion of the unevangelized. With this in mind, because Strange makes Genesis 3:15 the epistemic axiom of his understanding of revelation, we will focus on this particular point and seek to evaluate his theory scripturally, historically, and theologically from within his own stated terms of confessional faith.⁴² Our doctrinal typology for this assessment is that salvation is through Christ alone by faith alone, and faith comes from hearing (*solus Christus, sola fide, and fides ex auditu*).

4. Strange's Appropriation of the Protoevangelium

Strange references Genesis 1–3 and highlights the *protoevangelium* (3:15) to argue that “pure” knowledge of God and his plan of redemption in Christ was given at the time of Adam and Eve. Furthermore, from that point in time divine revelation has flowed through human history in two “diametrically opposed” streams.⁴³ One stream contains the *prisca theologia* where common grace and special grace (saving grace) remain intact, and the other stream contains only remnants of the *prisca theologia* and common grace, which, through “a divine providential law of entropy,”⁴⁴ is devoid of the Spirit’s regenerative work.⁴⁵ He asserts, “In the sovereign providence of God, he has preserved and sustained redemptive knowledge of himself within some streams of humanity and not within others.”⁴⁶

First, scripturally speaking, we might question whether Genesis 3:15 is technically the first proclamation of the gospel whereby God announces his messianic intent in such a way that distinguishes *this moment* as the gospel’s epistemic source. For a canonical reading of Scripture shows that when Paul regards the source of human sin, death, and condemnation he points to Adam (Rom 5:12–21),⁴⁷ but when he regards the first proclamation of the gospel and the basic elements for understanding faith in Christ, he points to Abraham (Rom 4:1–25; Gal 3:7–9, 15–29). This is not to say that God waited until the covenant with Abraham to initiate his redemptive work or that Strange has no theological

⁴⁰ For example, see *The Canons of Dordt*, “The First Main Points of Doctrine,” Article 4, and “The Third and Fourth Main Points of Doctrine,” Article 15.

⁴¹ In *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*, Strange develops a multifaceted and multidisciplinary theology of religions which deserves a fuller treatment than this article will provide. The following assessment will only consider his notion of revelation and salvation concerning the question of the unevangelized.

⁴² Strange lists these confessional terms in *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelized*, 8–9; Gavin D’Costa, Paul F Knitter, and Daniel Strange, *Only One Way? Three Christian Responses to the Uniqueness of Christ in a Pluralistic World* (London: SCM, 2011), 92–93; and *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*, 41–42.

⁴³ Strange, *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*, 82.

⁴⁴ Strange, “General Revelation,” 74.

⁴⁵ Strange, *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*, 89–90.

⁴⁶ Strange, “General Revelation,” 71.

⁴⁷ It is interesting, and perhaps relevant, to note that Paul was the first biblical author to make this connection.

basis for interpreting Genesis 3:15 as the *protoevangelium*.⁴⁸ Rather, the point is that the promise given through Abraham is the hermeneutical lens for working out this interpretation. So although he seeks to explain Genesis 3:15 as the time “when the whole of humanity was in proximity of redemptive-historical events,”⁴⁹ Strange nonetheless must rely exegetically upon Genesis 12 to support this argument. For the liminal moment from which *we discern* God’s redemptive intent is historically and textually correlated to its substantiation in Abraham. To be sure, Strange asserts that “Abraham and his descendants are a part of this ‘seed’ theology (cf. Gen. 3:15),”⁵⁰ but it is perhaps more accurate to speak of Abraham and his descendants as the progenitor of this seed theology. For an intratextual reading of Scripture places the epistemic source of the *protoevangelium* within the historical period beginning with Genesis 12, when, as Paul declares, the gospel was preached “beforehand to Abraham” (Gal 3:8 NASB). This is why Christopher Wright asserts that “from the great promise of God to Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3 we know this God to be totally, covenantally and eternally committed to the mission of blessing the nations through the agency of the people of Abraham.”⁵¹ Thus, strictly speaking, the epistemological source of the gospel is Genesis 12:3.

Nevertheless, as indicated above, there remains a viable way to achieve an intratextual interpretation of Genesis 3:15 as the *protoevangelium*. However, it depends on a syntactical issue which Strange does not address sufficiently, and which may weaken his theory in the process. As C. John Collins notes, when considering the meaning of the woman’s offspring in verse 15, “the first thing to decide is whether the text speaks of a specific offspring or of her offspring in general.”⁵² He explains that the Hebrew word itself does not connote either a singular or plural meaning, and scholars disagree as to which translation is correct. And while there may be good reasons for holding a singular interpretation,⁵³ Strange provides no background discussion for why he chooses this reading over a plural one, nor does he explain the ways in which this choice affects the scriptural method for defining the *protoevangelium*.⁵⁴ For example, Collins states, “If we see Genesis 3:15 as referring to a specific offspring, we can speak this way of ‘unfolding,’ and we do not have to appeal to a *sensus plenior*.”⁵⁵ In other words, even if this verse is *meant*

⁴⁸ It is common parlance in Reformed theology to speak of the messianic intent of Genesis 3:15. For example, see, Michael S. Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims On the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 152n3, 972; Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 19–20; and James M. Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 82–91.

⁴⁹ Strange, *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*, 104.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁵¹ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 63.

⁵² C. John Collins, *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, And Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2006), 156.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 178–79; Jack Collins, “A Syntactical Note (Genesis 3:15): Is the Woman’s Seed Singular or Plural?” *TynB* 48 (1997): 139–148; R. A. Martin, “The Earliest Messianic Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” *JBL* 84, (December 1965): 425–27; Jason Derouchie, “The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the Toledot Structure of Genesis,” *JETS* 56 (2013): 219–47.

⁵⁴ He mentions this issue in *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised*, 168–69 and in *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*, 81, but only briefly with no discussion of the particular debate.

⁵⁵ Collins, *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary*, 158. The *sensus plenior* refers to a “fuller” or “deeper” sense of the meaning of a text which goes beyond authorial intent.

to be messianic, it is still the case that neither the reader nor those who were in physical proximity to this event can be expected to discern *this meaning* apart from the occurrence and apprehension of the “unfolding” revelatory events which all together inform this explanation of offspring.⁵⁶

While Strange recognizes a “gradual progression in the specificity of revelation as redemptive history progresses,” he nonetheless collapses God’s “authentic and genuine knowledge of himself and his salvation in his chosen people” into the textual and historical moment of Genesis 3:15.⁵⁷ But if this particular text in Scripture demands further illumination before readers can grasp its redemptive content then, scripturally speaking, there is no reason to assume this particular moment in history comprises the epistemic origin of the gospel apart from further revelation in time. As John Sailhamer points out, “There remains in this verse a puzzling yet important ambiguity: Who is the ‘seed’ of the woman? It seems obvious that the purpose of verse 15 has not been to answer that question, but rather to raise it. The remainder of the book is, in fact, the author’s answer.”⁵⁸ There is therefore no definitive intratextual support for claiming that those who lived in historical proximity to God’s verbal response to human sin in Genesis 3 would have understood these words as an offer of messianic redemption to which they must respond in faith. Hence, one can discern the messianic intent of this verse, if any, historically and textually only after Abraham.

Second, historically speaking, explicit evidence for interpreting Genesis 3:15 as the *protoevangelium* does not appear until Irenaeus in the second century AD (*Haer.* 40.3).⁵⁹ He makes this connection by asserting that the hermeneutical means for discerning Christ in the Old Testament is the incarnation of Christ himself. Irenaeus explains that “the treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ, since He was pointed out by means and types and parables,” and yet it is only after their fulfillment in “the advent of Christ” that Christians are able to perceive this treasure (*Haer.* 4.26.1). Concerning Irenaeus’s hermeneutic, John Behr explains:

With regard to Christ being disseminated in Scripture, and, in reverse, being foreseen by the patriarchs and the prophets, it is particularly important to note that the mechanism turns upon the Cross: it is by the Cross that the types and prophecies are brought to light, given their proper exegesis.... This manner of reading the Scripture was revealed only after the Passion.⁶⁰

Irenaeus teaches that Christ unlocked his self-communication in Scripture for the apostles, and we receive this hermeneutic through the apostolic proclamation of Christ. He claims that it is impossible to see the *protoevangelium* in Genesis 3:15 prior to the life, death, and resurrection of Christ (*Haer.* 4.26.1). Thus, scripturally and historically speaking, Abraham is the epistemic source for discerning the person of Christ (Gal 3:7–9), and Christ is the epistemic source for discerning all that is written of him in the

⁵⁶ Ibid., 158–59; Collins notes Romans 16:20 and Revelation 12:17 as possibly alluding to Genesis 3:15, but also explains how this reading is by no means definitive.

⁵⁷ Strange, *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*, 222–23.

⁵⁸ John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Michigan: Zondervan, 1995), 108.

⁵⁹ Justin Martyr may also allude to this verse in *Dial.* 102. The earliest “messianic” interpretation of Genesis 3:15 may be the Septuagint, according to Collins, “A Syntactical Note,” 139–48.

⁶⁰ John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea, The formation of Christian Theology 1* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), 132.

corpus of Scripture (Luke 24:27, 32, 44). Walter Moberly concludes, “Israel’s scriptures not only prepare the way for Christ, ... there is also a retrospective movement from Jesus back to Israel’s scriptures whereby they are recognized to be what they would not otherwise be recognized to be.”⁶¹ Therefore if one can perceive the gospel in Genesis 3:15 only after Christ, and indeed this potential interpretation did not obtain until the second century AD, then once again there is little reason to assume the original hearers comprehended and responded to a messianic purpose with just these words alone.

Third, considering Strange’s commitment to a “classical” Reformed theology, it is perhaps significant, theologically speaking, that John Calvin chooses the plural translation of “offspring” in Genesis 3:15, and thus appeals to the *sensus plenior* for a christological reading. He makes this connection in several steps. First, he interprets the plain meaning of the text to be “that there should always be the hostile strife between the human race and serpents” and that humanity will remain “superior” to serpents.⁶² Then, in a second step, he makes a “transition” to an anagogical interpretation whereby God “assails Satan under the name of the serpent,” so that people may first “learn to beware of Satan as of the most deadly enemy; then, that they may contend against him with the assured confidence of victory.”⁶³ Thus, as regards the meaning of the verse itself, Calvin interprets “the seed to mean the posterity of the woman generally.”⁶⁴ Yet because it is true that many people do indeed fall under the power of Satan, he connects this verse to Christ in a final step through a Pauline explanation of Abraham, saying, “So Paul, from the seed of Abraham, leads us to Christ.”⁶⁵ In the end, Calvin understands the *seeds* of the woman to signify the church, which will gain victory over Satan through the *seed* of Abraham; who is Christ the Head.⁶⁶ So we find that Calvin also identifies the *protoevangelium* beginning with Abraham and discerned only after Christ.

Though Strange need not agree with Calvin’s interpretation of Genesis 3:15, he would do well to work through Calvin’s position as he seeks to develop his own Reformed view. For if both Paul and Calvin place the *protoevangelium* with Abraham through a post-advent reading of Scripture, then this fact alone must have substantial implications for his single-source theory of revelation.

5. A Doctrinal Conclusion

Again, the strength of Strange’s theory lies in his recognition of the need for an explicit connection with the proclamation of the gospel in the discussion of the unevangelized. And he takes a positive step towards filling this theological gap by highlighting Psalm 19 and asserting that this passage “is a microcosm of the symbiotic relationship between general and special revelation,” and that “God’s purpose in general revelation has never been for it to function independently of his ‘worded’ special

⁶¹ R. W. L. Moberly, *The Bible, Theology, and Faith: A Study of Abraham and Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 70.

⁶² John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of Genesis*, trans. John King, repr. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 1:167–68.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

revelation.”⁶⁷ Yet in light of the doctrinal setting effected by the *solus Christus*, *sola fide*, and *fides ex auditu*, there is a critical weakness in the way he develops this strength.

Strange devotes a large part of his evaluation of Pinnock towards building a case that epistemological awareness of the ontological work of Christ is necessary for saving faith.⁶⁸ And through this process he upholds the *solus Christus* concluding that even an implicit response to the work of the Spirit in the world does not account for how this response occurs *in Christ*. For “surely if one is to ‘die with Christ’ and ‘rise with Christ,’ one must know what he has done, let alone know the fact that he exists?”⁶⁹ But in his later writings, in an effort to connect this christological epistemic element in his own theory, he inadvertently resolves this particular issue for Pinnock as well. Strange argues for the existence of “embryonic revelatory knowledge of the gospel from Genesis 3:15 onwards,” a knowledge which in itself had sufficient epistemic reference for saving faith.⁷⁰ He also claims that humanity possesses a remnant of this knowledge “preserved as ‘tradition’ and ‘memory’” that they “epistemologically suppress.”⁷¹ Thus, Strange’s support for the notion of implicit “false faith” also indirectly supports Pinnock’s theory of implicit saving faith. Further, although Strange claims “that in positing this ‘remnantal’ revelation I am not saying it has any ‘salvific’ potential,” his introduction of the concept nonetheless opens the door wide for speculation on its salvific possibilities.⁷²

For instance, if general and special revelation cannot operate apart from each other, and if general revelation includes a remnant of special revelation for which people are guilty through their implicit suppression, then it is just as possible they can be forgiven through their implicit acceptance of this ubiquitous knowledge. The problem for Strange is that in claiming there is a vestige of special revelation among the unevangelized, the logical structure of his argument requires that he allow for the Spirit’s work of special grace as well; otherwise there remains an internal dissonance in his theory.⁷³ Strange holds that one cannot separate the ontological work of special grace from the epistemological presence of special revelation.⁷⁴ Thus, irrespective of its condition—whether in “embryonic” or “remnantal” form—the presence of this revelation includes the regenerative work of the Spirit.⁷⁵ So the only way he can balance his theory is to either allow the possibility that the unevangelized can have implicit faith in the same way they have implicit false faith—i.e., through the flow of universal knowledge about God and Christ rooted historically in the *protoevangelium* of Genesis 3:15—or explain how the unevangelized can have explicit false faith in the same way the evangelized can have explicit saving faith—i.e., *fides ex auditu*—thus making his notion of remnantal revelation irrelevant. Yet considering his particular Reformed theological framework, the first option cannot support an evangelical understanding of *solus*

⁶⁷ Strange, “General Revelation,” 66.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 139–290.

⁶⁹ Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised*, 221.

⁷⁰ Strange, *For Their Rock Is Not As Our Rock*, 82–87, 194.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 103–4.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 108.

⁷³ Gavin D’Costa also recognizes this issue in Strange’s theory of religions. See, D’Costa, “Gavin D’Costa Responds to Paul Knitter and Daniel Strange,” in D’Costa, Knitter, and Strange, *Only One Way?*, 149–50.

⁷⁴ Strange, *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*, 221–22; *idem*, *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised*, 139–290.

⁷⁵ Strange, *For Their Rock Is Not As Our Rock*, 222.

Christus, sola fide, and *fides ex auditu* (the crux of his criticism of Pinnock), leaving only the second option, which would require substantive changes to his theory.

To this purpose, Strange may want to set aside the scientific notion of a monogenetic view of human origins, the anthropological theory of original monotheism, and the deistic version of *prisca theologia* to make better use of his stated doctrinal and confessional material.⁷⁶ For if the scriptural, historical, and theological resources indicate that the *protoevangelium* was introduced with Abraham so that everyone was not, has not been, and still are not in proximity to redemptive-historical events, then how might one explain false faith without separating the ontological and epistemological elements of faith? For this he may find creedal support from the Baptist confessions listed in his theological material, which state, “Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner except his own voluntary refusal to accept Jesus Christ as teacher, Saviour and Lord.”⁷⁷ Thus he might speculate on how non-elect unevangelized people *will come* to refuse Christ *explicitly*.

Or, if the Reformed doctrines of total depravity and particular atonement imply that there is no “problem” of the unevangelized,⁷⁸ then perhaps he could approach this subject indirectly by addressing related questions within Reformed theology perceived to be genuine problems. As George points out in his review of Strange, “There are a cluster of issues even Reformed theologians need to think through more clearly than has yet been done. What about the salvation of those who die in infancy, or those who remain mentally incompetent?”⁷⁹ For instance, the Westminster Confession states, “Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated, and saved by Christ, through the Spirit, who works when, and where, and how he pleases: so also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word” (10.3). Thus to affirm this confession, he might seek to explain how this particular group of unevangelized people will eventually receive the outward calling of the Word for saving faith—that is, the “fully orbed character of *notitia, fiducia* and *assensus*” ministered *ex auditu*.⁸⁰ And by dealing with this issue he may also discover ways to approach the broader theological question of the unevangelized.

As his theory stands, however, his assertion that all humanity was in proximity to the gospel of faith and salvation in Genesis 3:15, and his subsequent notion of remnantal revelation whereby all people have epistemic guilt through implicit false faith, compromises the doctrinal relation between the *sola fide* and *fides ex auditu* principles. That is to say, if faith obtains through explicit hearing of the word of Christ (Rom 10:17), then the necessary epistemic conditions for belief are the same conditions necessary for unbelief. Which means that just as the notion of remnantal revelation cannot support the possibility of saving faith among the unevangelized, neither can it support the possibility of false faith. Yet if Strange will allow his scriptural and confessional material to have primary influence over

⁷⁶ Ibid., 108–10; see also Steven Studebaker, *Jonathan Edwards’ Social Augustinian Trinitarianism in Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, Gorgias Studies in Philosophy and Theology (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2008), 222–23.

⁷⁷ *1925 Baptist Faith and Message*, 6, emphasis added; see also, *The New Hampshire Confession of Faith*, 6.

⁷⁸ Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised*, 266.

⁷⁹ George, review of “The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised” (by Strange), 110.

⁸⁰ Knowledge, assent, and trust in Christ; see, Strange, *For Their Rock Is Not As Our Rock*, 222n22; also, *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised*, 30.

the speculative nature of his theory,⁸¹ then perhaps he will be in a better position to offer a creative articulation of revelation for addressing the issue of the unevangelized.

⁸¹ Strange, *For Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock*, 35.

This Rock Unmoved: A Rejoinder to Kyle Faircloth

— Daniel Strange —

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Abstract: Kyle Faircloth argues that Daniel Strange’s earlier work on the question of the unevangelised is undermined by his more recent theology of religions, and in particular his theory of a ‘remnantal’ revelation. This rejoinder argues that Faircloth has misunderstood Strange on this point and that his original work on the unevangelised is consistent with later work.

I’m appreciative of *Themelios* for giving me the opportunity to respond to Kyle Faircloth’s article concerning my work on the question of the unevangelized. First, a little contextual background might be helpful. Kyle’s doctoral supervisor is Gavin D’Costa, who was my supervisor twenty years ago (!), and with whom I have collaborated on a number of writing projects in the intervening years.¹ Gavin first made me aware of Kyle’s interest in my work, and Kyle graciously showed me an earlier version of this paper, asking me some questions and allowing me some comment. It is a privilege to have the right of reply again on the finished and now published piece of work.

Although Kyle notes that I have attempted to throw ‘fresh light’ on the question, my original monograph *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised* is over fifteen years old, and so while not ‘stale’, it needed a little dusting down, at least, in my own memory banks.² Such a ‘remembering’ has nothing to do with a desire to now distance myself from my original doctrinal conclusions concerning the fate of the unevangelised in general, and Clark Pinnock’s inclusivism in particular. Indeed apart from my 2008 essay, ‘General Revelation: Sufficient or Insufficient?’,³ my recent writing within the theology

¹ See Gavin D’Costa, Paul Knitter, and Daniel Strange, *Only One Way? Three Christian Responses to the Uniqueness of Christ in a Pluralistic World* (London: SCM, 2011); Daniel Strange, “‘There can be only One’: The Impossibility and Idolatry of ‘Dual Belonging,’” in *Buddhist-Christian Dual Belonging: Affirmations, Objections and Explorations*, ed. Gavin D’Costa and Ross Thompson (London: Ashgate, 2015).

² Daniel Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised: An Analysis of Inclusivism in Recent Evangelical Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001), which was in essence my Bristol University doctoral thesis.

³ Daniel Strange, “General Revelation: Sufficient or Insufficient?,” in *Faith Comes By Hearing: A Response to Inclusivism*, ed. Christopher W Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008),

of religions has not focused explicitly on soteriological issues but more on questions of revelation, truth and teleology *precisely because* I remain at cognitive rest with the earlier work.⁴ As I say in my most recent monograph, while it would be quite ‘un-evangelical’ if questions of eternal destiny are never far from our minds and ministry, the almost exclusive preoccupation with soteriology within evangelical theologies of religions⁵ has over the years stunted the development of the discipline. That is, we are very clear what other religions are not (ways to salvation), but we are not quite sure what they are, from what they are fashioned, and how they serve the sovereign purposes of God. *Their Rock is Not Like Our Rock* is an attempt to ask these questions without compromising the missiological urgency that the soteriological conclusions of my earlier work demanded.

Kyle’s contention, of course, is that there is some internal dissonance between these three pieces of work. Moreover, he claims that in later work doctrinal speculation on ‘remnantal revelation,’ the *prisca theologica*, ‘original monotheism,’ and especially the *protoevangelium* has trumped scriptural and confessional material, with the result that I have compromised the doctrinal relation between an evangelical understanding of *sola fide*, and the *fides ex auditu*. He asks me to offer substantive changes and/or go back to the drawing board to offer a creative articulation for addressing the issue which will include ‘the need for an explicit connection with the proclamation of the gospel in the discussion of the unevangelized.’⁶

In this short response I wish to argue that while some additional clarification and theological double-underlining might be necessary and helpful, I do not believe I need to adjust the theological substance or constructions of my theology of religions, or my answer concerning the fate of the unevangelised. I also contend that the *solus Christus*, *sola fide*, and the *fides ex auditu* remain intact and internally consonant, both scripturally and confessionally. While Kyle has undertaken a helpful service in synthesising my three main statements within the evangelical theology of religions, he has unfortunately ended up putting two and two together and making five.

First, there is perhaps an understandable confusion regarding my category of ‘remnantal revelation’ in terms of its nature and salvific potential. Within Reformed theology we have been used to a fairly clean-cut binary theological classification that, on the one hand, brings into close association concepts such as general revelation, natural revelation, and common grace (*not* special saving and efficacious grace); and on the other hand, special revelation, supernatural revelation, and special grace. The argument I put forward in my essay ‘General Revelation’ and then develop in much greater detail in *Their Rock* (with the support of figures such as Herman Bavinck, Geerhardus Vos, J. H. Bavinck, and Cornelius Van Til), is that historically and phenomenologically the picture is a lot more nuanced and ‘messy’ in terms of trying to disentangle and separate out the species of ‘revelation’ that make up the religious traditions of humankind. There are more combinations and more interchangeability between these six concepts than has often been recognised. The revelatory ‘stuff’ which sinful humanity suppresses and substitutes, and

40–77.

⁴ One recent essay that Kyle does not reference but that returns to the question of the unevangelised concerns my defence of particular redemption in Daniel Strange, “Slain for the World? The ‘Uncomfortability’ of the ‘Unevangelised’ for a Universal Atonement,” in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 585–606.

⁵ My earlier monograph *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised* is an example of this.

⁶ P. 68.

which becomes part of a tradition and memory in idolatrous religion, is an admixture of different types of revelation. It contains not only natural, general revelation but also special revelation in terms of God's words and his redemptive acts in history that have been witnessed *not only* by God's chosen covenant people, but by those outside as well. How one labels such phenomena theologically (do we call this general? or special?) is difficult at this point, but what I am speaking of is the suppressed truth of special revelation which *does not* have the regenerating work of special grace attached to it. Knowledge of and proximity to redemptive revelation is not synonymous with revelation that necessarily redeems (and that must have redemptive content). The point that I stress in various places in the book, which Kyle picks up on, and which I reiterate again here, is that because of the idolatrous impulse, such revelatory material is immediately corrupted and distorted in sin and so is not salvific.⁷ Special regenerating grace remains within the confines of God's covenant people where God's special revelation is preserved.⁸ My argument therefore concerning remnantal revelation is never soteriological in nature but rather theological and phenomenological: 'remnantal revelation gives us a comparative theological explanation of "commonalities" and "continuities" between religious traditions, for example certain events, themes and archetypes.'⁹ I do not agree with Kyle that the establishment of remnantal revelation 'opens the door wide for speculation on its salvific possibilities',¹⁰ because we are dealing with suppressed truth which is counterfeit and not genuine.

Second, Kyle's contention regarding salvific possibility is based around the issue of the *protoevangelium*, the discussion of which forms a major part of Kyle's paper. Concerning this, and while not irrelevant to my concept of remnantal revelation, I think the amount of focus given to the *protoevangelium* by Kyle is disproportionate and indeed overall something of a 'red herring'. In other words, Kyle puts too much stress in his article on what he perceives as a stress in my own work on the *protoevangelium*. He does this because he perceives a strong connection between my understanding of Genesis 3:15, and the *prisca theologia*. Looking back over the relevant sections in my work concerning remnantal revelation, I do not see that Genesis 3:15 features as highly as Kyle believes it does. As already established above, it is one piece of evidence which demonstrates that concepts of salvation, redemption and even sacrifice have been present in the history of mankind and are the revelatory basis for idolatrous religion to twist out of shape. Once again, however, whatever is going on in terms of the propositional content of the *protoevangelium*, it is never salvific when taken up by idolatrous humanity outside of God's covenant line.

Somewhat ironically, this is not to say that the *protoevangelium* is not crucial in the flow of biblical history. In numerous places throughout *Their Rock*, I stress the importance of theological and historical continuity between Genesis 1–11 and 12–50. The holding to a monogenetic understanding of human origins is integrally bound up with this. If I was to set this aside, as Kyle asks me to do, my theology of religions as a whole would become both unstable and impoverished. While admittedly embryonic and 'shadowy', these early chapters and especially the *protoevangelium* contain both seeds (double meaning intended) of curse and blessings, of particularity and universality. I agree with Kyle that there is a more

⁷ As I note in "General Revelation," 74: 'Because of human suppression and substitution, and without the regenerating work of God, this once true knowledge of God becomes atrophied through a divine providential law of entropy and rather than becoming a means to salvation, it becomes a further basis for judgement.'

⁸ Of course recognising the concept of those outside who are ingrafted into the covenant community.

⁹ *Their Rock is not like our Rock*, 254.

¹⁰ P. 68

formal and explicit covenantal revelation to Abraham (that through his offspring all the nations will be blessed), but I would still maintain that this is building on the drama of universal and cosmic redemptive promises already set down in the *protoevangelium*. A lot has been going on before Abraham arrives on the scene. This primeval revelation that contains perennial themes of enmity, antithesis, seed, suffering and eventual victory is still present *even if* one does not take v. 15 to be a specific offspring. Kyle's survey of the history of exegesis concerning this verse is illuminating and it might have been helpful if I had given a little more exegetical detail in the book. However, I don't think my overall argument is invalid even if like Calvin (and Vos, I should add¹¹), one takes a 'plural' translation. The concept of deliverance and victory is still there. As it happens, and for the record, I still tentatively gravitate towards a more singular reading of 'seed' largely based on O. Palmer Robertson's exposition in *Christ of the Covenants*.¹²

Third and finally, we return to soteriology and the question of the unevangelised. I think that Kyle overstates and so misunderstands the connection I make between the *protoevangelium* and the *prisca theologia* because he believes I hold to a prior commitment 'that God does not condemn the unevangelised for merely rejecting him through natural revelation, but for suppressing the proclamation of the gospel as well'.¹³ He believes I can only establish this through holding to a strongly Christocentric and messianic exegesis of Genesis 3:15 which contains salvific potentiality. Kyle believes that seeking to emphasise the need for an epistemic connection to the gospel of Christ in the theological discussion of the unevangelised is laudable, 'much needed',¹⁴ and 'a positive step'.¹⁵ He critiques my own particular construal of how I seek to demonstrate this claim, not the claim itself. Scripturally, historically and theologically he believes there to be a critical weakness in terms of the mechanism of delivery.

My response to this is that in actuality I do not share this prior commitment with Kyle, and indeed never have. To clarify, I maintain that remnantal revelation and its associated concepts (original monotheism, *prisca theologia* and yes, the *protoevangelium*) are not *necessary* to render the unevangelised 'without excuse'. Kyle quotes from *Their Rock is not Like our Rock* that an unevangelised person 'simultaneously on the one hand *knows* the living God of the Bible ... leaving her responsible and "without excuse", and yet on the other hand does not know God'.¹⁶ However, he takes this statement out of context; at this point in the book I am referring to the perpetuity of the *imago Dei* and not the *prisca theologica*. Hence the theological category of a 'pure' general revelation remains theologically important because it can justly condemn but not save.¹⁷ In other words the unevangelised *are* indeed just that, unevangelised—they do not have knowledge of Christ and so lack the necessary knowledge for saving faith. Contrary to Kyle's claim, this does not resolve the problem for Pinnock in terms of a universally accessible salvation, nor does it support his theory of implicit saving faith. The point I make in the conclusion of my essay on 'General Revelation' was that those who have *only* come into contact with general revelation, may be far

¹¹ See Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1975), 41–44.

¹² O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg: NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980), 91–103. Those who have read *Their Rock* will know that I also depart from Calvin in his understanding of the 'sons of God' in Gen 6 and Deut 32.

¹³ P. 64.

¹⁴ P. 64.

¹⁵ P. 68.

¹⁶ *Their Rock is Not Like Our Rock*, 93, cited by Faircloth on p. 5.

¹⁷ This is the crux of my argument in 'General Revelation'.

less than often imagined because of the category of (the then not as yet named) 'remnantal' revelation. Such revelation is never a means of salvation because it has been idolatrously suppressed, but as a phenomenon it needs to be taken account of and explained theologically.¹⁸

Moreover, and as a closing challenge, I would need more evidence to be convinced that the creedal support offered by Kyle in the 1925 *Baptist Faith and Message*, had in mind the category unevangelised as its referent. Given the hints offered by Kyle throughout his paper, and based on my previous survey of the terrain, I await with interest to see how he himself 'might speculate on how non-elect unevangelized people *will come* to refuse Christ *explicitly*'¹⁹ and how this will be demonstrated biblically.²⁰

¹⁸ Here I return to a section from Van Til that I quote both in 'General Revelation' and *Their Rock*. Van Til is quite bold in his assertion that revelation in nature and revelation of the principle of redemption can never be mechanically separated because we always need to take into account both the revelation in nature and mankind's representation in Adam whereby he was in contact with the principle of redemption. He notes:

Hence we should not think of the revelation of God in nature and seek to establish man's responsibility from that alone, as though nothing else were to be taken into consideration. No concrete case exists in which man has no more than the revelation of God in nature. It is no doubt true that many have *practically* nothing else, inasmuch as in their case the tradition of man's original state has not reached them and no echo of the redemptive principle has penetrated to their vicinity. Yet it remains true that the race as a whole has once been in contact with the living God, and that it was created perfect. Man remains responsible for these facts. Back of this arrangement is the Creator, the sovereign God.' *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1974), 1:120.

Reflecting on this statement again, there is something a little opaque and cryptic concerning Van Til's penultimate statement. It seems that Van Til is making the theological point concerning Adam's federal headship here, alongside the historical argument.

¹⁹ P. 69, emphasis original.

²⁰ For my typology and survey of evangelical responses to the question of the unevangelised, see *The Possibility of Salvation Among the Unevangelised*, 294–331.

PASTORAL PENSÉES

The Eighth Commandment as the Moral Foundation for Property Rights, Human Flourishing, and Careers in Business

— Wayne Grudem —

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Abstract: The Eighth Commandment, “You shall not steal,” has massive implications for human life on earth. Exodus 20:15 provides the necessary foundation for system of private ownership of property, of stewardship and accountability, and of an expectation of human flourishing. This article also argues that “business as mission” is a legitimate calling and that founding and running a profitable and ethical business glorifies God.

Is it right to send missionaries to start businesses that make a profit in other countries?¹ For centuries, Christians have sent doctors and dentists and nurses as medical missionaries, and have sent teachers as educational missionaries. The medical missionaries don’t just *pretend* to heal people’s bodies—they really do heal people’s bodies. The educational missionaries don’t just *pretend* to teach in schools—they actually do teach people to read and write and pursue advanced subjects. But is it the same for business missionaries? Is “business as mission” a legitimate calling? And should these businesses make money, like a real business, or should they just be charades that are pretending to be a business but are actually a disguise for evangelism?

I’m going to argue in what follows that “business as mission” is a legitimate calling, and that founding a business that actually makes a profit is something that *in itself* glorifies God. Starting a business that earns a profit is a good thing in God’s sight *in addition to* the God-glorifying salvation of people who come to know Christ through the personal witness of the Christians in the business. Just as God is pleased when medical missionaries heal people’s bodies, and God is pleased when educational missionaries heal people’s minds, so God is pleased when business missionaries help to heal a country’s economy.

¹This article revises a sermon preached to Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN on October 17, 2015.

In this regard, I want to focus on just one verse, Exodus 20:15: “You shall not steal.” This verse has massive implications for human life on earth, and for careers in business, and for thinking about business as mission.

Extended reflection on the words of the Bible will often yield deeper insight than what is evident on a first reading. This should not be surprising. If we believe that the Bible is the product of the infinite wisdom of God, we will naturally expect that the Bible contains more wisdom than human minds will ever fully understand.

This is certainly true with regard to the Eighth Commandment,² “You shall not steal” (Exod 20:15). Our first impression is that the commandment is quite simple, consisting of only four words in English and only two in Hebrew: לֹא תִגְנוֹב. It tells us we should not take something that does not belong to us. What part of that do we not understand?

On deeper reflection, however, we will discover that this commandment provides the necessary foundation for all human flourishing on the face of the earth. Governments and cultural traditions violate the Eighth Commandment at their peril, for wherever this commandment is ignored, entire nations remain trapped in poverty forever. When that happens, they tragically fail to achieve many of God’s purposes for them on the earth.

1. Not Stealing Implies Private Property

The command, “You shall not steal,” assumes that *there is something to steal*—something that belongs to someone else and not to me. I should not steal your ox or your donkey—or your car, your cell phone, or your wallet—because it belongs to you and not to me. Therefore, the command, “You shall not steal,” assumes private ownership of property.

Other passages in the Old Testament also show that God was concerned to protect the private ownership of property. Property was to be owned by individuals, not by the government or by society as a whole. For instance, God told the people of Israel that when the Year of Jubilee came, “It shall be a jubilee for you when *each of you shall return to his property* and each of you shall return to his clan (Lev

²The command against stealing is the eighth commandment according to the traditional Protestant system for numbering the Ten Commandments. It is the seventh commandment in Roman Catholic and Lutheran traditions, because they combine the command against other gods and the command against carved images together as the first commandment, and then they separate the command against coveting your neighbor’s wife from the command against coveting your neighbor’s goods, thus making these the ninth and tenth commandments. While no explicit numbering system is present in Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5, the (non-Lutheran) Protestant tradition appears to be preferable to the Roman Catholic and Lutheran system, because it seems artificial to separate the command not to covet your neighbor’s house from the command not to covet your neighbor’s wife. The ideas are closely related and belong together under one commandment that prohibits coveting. In fact, the first sentence of the commandment differs between Exodus and Deuteronomy: “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife,” (Exod. 20:17), but “And you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. And you shall not covet your neighbor’s house” (Deut. 5:21).

In addition, it seems better to separate the commandment against having other gods from the command against making a carved image or worshipping it, and seeing these as two commands. Bruce Waltke rightly observes: “Separating the first two commandments distinguishes between worshipping either Canaanite or foreign deities, who were thought of as powers that rule aspects of nature, and misrepresenting the character of true Deity. According to this second command, God cannot be compared to anything that exists. These are distinct notions” (Bruce Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007], 411).

25:10).” There were many other laws that defined punishments for stealing and appropriate restitution for damage of another person’s farm animals or agricultural fields (see, for example, Exod 21:28–36; 22:1–15; Deut 22:1–4; 23:24–25).

The Old Testament also shows an awareness that governments could wrongly use their immense power to disregard property rights and steal what they should not have. At the urging of wicked Queen Jezebel, King Ahab wrongfully stole Naboth’s vineyard, and had Naboth killed in the process (1 Kings 21). And the prophet Samuel warned the people of Israel of the evils of a king who would “take” and “take” and “take”:

So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking for a king from him. He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will *take* your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will *take* your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will *take* the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will *take* the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will *take* your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will *take* the tenth of your flocks, *and you shall be his slaves*. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day” (1 Sam 8:10–18).

Sometimes people claim that the early church practiced a form of “early communism” because it says in Acts, “All who believed were together and had all things in common” (Acts 2:44). But this situation was far different from communism for two reasons.³ First, the giving was voluntary and not compelled by the government. Second, people didn’t give away everything because they still had personal possessions and owned property—they still met in “their homes” (Acts 2:46), and many other Christians after this time still owned homes. For example, 1 Corinthians 16:19 says, “Aquila and Prisca, together with *the church in their house*, send you hearty greetings in the Lord.”⁴ Peter even told Ananias and Sapphira that they did not have to feel any obligation to sell their property and give away the money (see Acts 5:4).⁵

Now consider how important the Eighth Commandment is. If the Eighth Commandment implies private ownership of property, then its focus is different from the other nine commandments. The Eighth Commandment covers an entire range of human activity that is not the purpose of these other commandments. Commandments 1–4 (Exod 20:3–11) focus primarily on our relationship to God and the duties we owe to God. Commandment 5 protects family (“Honor your father and your mother,” Exod 20:12). Commandment 6 protects life (“You shall not murder,” Exod 20:13). Commandment 7

³ For additional discussion of this remarkable early sharing of possessions in Acts, see Craig L. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 160–67.

⁴ See other examples of Christians owning homes in Acts 12:12; 17:5; 18:7; 20:20; 21:8; 21:16; Rom 16:5; Col 4:15; Philem 2; 2 John 10.

⁵ The previous paragraph was adapted from Wayne Grudem, ed., *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 2085 (note on Acts 2:44).

protects marriage (“You shall not commit adultery,” Exod 20:14). Commandment 9 protects truth (“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor,” Exod 20:16). Commandment 10 requires purity of heart (“You shall not covet,” Exod 20:17).

Therefore, the Eighth Commandment is unique. It protects property and possessions. By implication, we are also right to think it protects another person’s time and talents and opportunities—everything over which people have been given stewardship.

Without the Eighth Commandment, therefore, the Ten Commandments would not cover all the major areas of human life. We would have God’s instructions protecting worship, life, marriage, family and truth. But where would the Ten Commandments tell us what we should *do* with our possessions and our talents and opportunities? Yes, the first four commandments would instruct us in the worship of God, but beyond such worship, would we be expected to achieve anything beyond mere subsistence living? Would we be expected just to act as the animal kingdom does: eat, sleep, bear offspring, and die, with no other achievements to show the excellence of the human race created in the image of God?

But the Eighth Commandment implies that we have property to care for. Therefore, it is the Eighth Commandment that sets us apart from the animal kingdom as property owners and those who have been given stewardship of possessions. In that way the Eighth Commandment relates to most of our work activity for most of our earthly lifetimes.

Now I must say one more thing about the Ten Commandments. I realize that they are part of the Mosaic covenant, and the Mosaic covenant has been terminated with the completion of Christ’s work of redemption and the establishment of the new covenant (see Luke 22:20; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 9:1–10:39). However, the New Testament affirms in several places that the command “you shall not steal” applies to new covenant believers (see Rom 13:9; 1 Cor 6:10; Eph 4:28; Tit 2:10; Jas 5:4; Rev 9:21). So we can safely conclude that the substance of this commandment is still morally binding on us today.

2. Private Property Implies Stewardship

If human beings were all alone in the universe, without any accountability to any God, then people might assume that “society” or government should take the property away and they (the rulers) should decide how to use it. This is the view of Communist societies.

But if *God himself* has commanded, “You shall not steal,” and if in that commandment *God himself* establishes a system of private property, then it immediately follows that we are accountable to him for how we use that property. Scripture views us as stewards who will have to give an account of our stewardship. This is because, ultimately, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and all those who dwell therein” (Ps 24:1).

Once I realize that *God* commands others not to steal my land or my ox or my donkey, or my car or my laptop, then I realize that I have an individual responsibility for how those things are used. I have been *entrusted* with these things by the God who created the universe, and I must act as a faithful “steward” to manage what he has entrusted to me.

This idea of stewardship includes much more than merely physical possessions and land. God has also entrusted us with time, talents and opportunities. We have these things as a stewardship from God as well, and we are accountable for how we use them.

Here we see the dehumanizing evil of Communism. Karl Marx said in the *Communist Manifesto*, “The theory of the Communists may be summed up in a single sentence: Abolition of private property.”⁶ If government takes away the right to own property, then I am no longer free to act as a steward in deciding how that property is to be used, for I can no longer control the use of that property. Governments that prohibit or severely restrict the ownership of private property trapped their nations in poverty forever. We saw this in the Soviet Union until it fell in 1991, and we see it today in Cuba and North Korea. We also saw this in China under decades of communism until economic reforms began in the late 1970s. And we see it in Native American reservations in the United States and in a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa where traditions of tribal ownership of property persist and entire populations remain trapped in desperate poverty.

Christians normally associate “stewardship” with giving to the work of the church and to the needs of the poor. That is a proper instinct, because faithful stewardship before God certainly includes generous giving. But does God want us to give it all away? Or does stewardship also include a realization that God expects us to use some of it with enjoyment and thanksgiving to him? It seems to me that when we *enjoy* some of God’s gifts with thanksgiving, we also glorify him. Let me explain.

3. Stewardship Implies that God Expects Human Flourishing

If God *entrusts* me with something, then he expects me to do something with it, something worthwhile, something that he finds valuable. This is evident from the very beginning when God placed Adam and Eve on the earth. He said:

Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And *let them have dominion* over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and *over all the earth* and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth *and subdue it* and have dominion ... over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen 1:26–28).

The Hebrew word translated “subdue” (כבש) means to make the earth useful for human beings’ benefit and enjoyment—to “develop it” wisely. God was entrusting Adam and Eve, and by implication the entire human race, with stewardship over the earth. And God wanted them to create useful products from the earth, for their benefit and enjoyment. (That’s what “subdue the earth” implies.)

After Adam and Eve sinned, the task became harder, of course, because God placed a curse on the earth so that it would begin to bring forth “thorns and thistles” (Gen 3:18) and in many other ways it would become dangerous and difficult, but the responsibility to subdue the earth and make useful products from it would remain a primary purpose of the human race, a purpose given by God.

This command implies that God wanted Adam and Eve to discover and create and invent products from the earth—at first, perhaps, simple structures in which to live and store food, and later, more

⁶Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, ed. Frederick Engels (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1909), 34.

complex forms of transportation such as carts and wagons, then eventually modern homes and office buildings and factories, as well as cars and airplanes—the entire range of useful products that could be made from the earth.

This is immensely significant. God gave to human beings something he did not impart to the plant kingdom or the animal kingdom—the ability to create value in world that didn't exist before.

Just imagine for a moment that we had a time machine and we could transport Adam and Eve to be here with us today. We would give them appropriate clothing, of course, and then they would begin to look around.

“What's that?” they might say as they pointed to the electric lights in the ceiling. “How do those bright shining things allow you to meet indoors without light from the sun and still see one another? Where did you get those?”

“We made them,” you may respond.

“From what?”

“From things in the earth.”

“Wow! You mean that God put things in the earth that would enable you to make those bright lights, and then gave you the wisdom and skill to discover those things and make the lights?”

“Yes,” you would reply.

“Praise God!” they would say. “What a great and amazing God we have!”

“And where did you get that?” they would say, pointing to the plastic bottle of water here in my hand. “Do you mean you can drink from it without walking half a mile to the nearest stream to bend down and get water?”

“Yes,” you would reply, we also made that clear plastic bottle from things that God put in the earth.

“Praise God!” they would exclaim. “What a great and good and wise God we have!”

So it would go with all the ordinary things of our life. Their hearts would be overflowing with praise and thanksgiving to God for his goodness.

Not far from my home there's a shop that sells small plastic disks. They are clear and slightly concave, and probably contain about five cents' worth of plastic. I'm not sure what one of these disks could be used for, as it is. I suppose it could serve as a small ashtray if I smoked, but I don't smoke, so I'm not sure that I would have any use for it at all. But when I went into the shop a man took one of these plastic disks, put it in a machine, and pushed a button. Soon the disk came out the other end of the machine, and there was a \$100 lens for my glasses. Then he put another disk in and out came another \$100 lens for my other eye.

Every time he put a disk in the machine, he created \$100 worth of new value in the world that never existed before. He added \$100 of value to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the United States. That ability—the amazing, God-like ability to create new value that did not exist before, belongs only

to human beings out of the entire creation that God has made. It is part of being made in the image of God, it reflects God's creativity and wisdom and skill in many other attributes, and it is part of the way in which we glorify God.

The man who makes the glasses is in business to make a profit. Of course he has costs beyond the price of the raw plastic. If his total cost of making the lens is \$80 (the cost of the plastic plus the complex machine, plus paying his employees, plus rent and utilities for his shop), and he sells the lens for \$100, he makes a \$20 profit. When I pay him \$100 for the lens, it shows that I think he has added \$20 worth of value to all the inputs that went into making the lens. *His profit measures the value he has added to his product*, and I think that profit is a morally good thing.

The same thing is true of a woman in a poor country who takes a \$3 piece of cloth and sews it into a shirt that she sells in a market for \$13. She has a profit of \$10, and it shows that she has added \$10 of value to the raw materials that she worked with.

Now stewardship of the earth implies this kind of productivity. Our stewardship of the earth's resources implies God's expectation of *human achievement & human flourishing*. When God entrusts us with something, he expects us to *do something worthwhile* with it. This is reaffirmed famously in the Parable of Talents (Matt 25:14–30).

Therefore, the Eighth Commandment contributes to human flourishing in the following three ways. First, it presents the opportunity for human achievement by entrusting property to us. Second, it expects human achievement by making us accountable stewards. Third, this command expects human beings to enjoy the products made from the earth and respond by thanking God (just as a human father feels joy when his child enjoys the gifts the father has given, and enjoys them with thanksgiving to that human father). God “richly provides us with everything to enjoy” (1 Tim 6:17). I do not believe that God wanted us to create all these things from the earth merely as *temptations* to be avoided, but as products to be *enjoyed!*

I want to make clear that human flourishing includes more than material inventions—it includes art and music and literature, and the complex and wonderful relationships we find in home and church and community. But all of those activities still depend in some measure on products produced from the earth—food to sustain life, construction materials to build houses and buildings with, furnaces and air conditioners to make the buildings comfortable, and cars and airplanes to travel and enjoy fellowship with friends and family, and a computer-driven email network to arrange where and when to meet!

And so God gave human beings an innate desire, a drive to understand and to create from the earth. This drive is amazingly powerful and it is *unlimited*. Rabbits and squirrels, birds and deer, are content to live in the same kinds of homes and eat the same kinds of food for thousands of generations. But human beings have an innate desire to explore, to discover, to understand, to invent, to create, to produce—and then to enjoy the products that can be made from the earth. This innate human drive to subdue the earth has never been satisfied throughout the entire history of mankind. This is because *God created us not merely to survive on the earth but to flourish*.

God has created us with very limited needs (food, clothing, shelter) for our physical survival. If we have food, clothing, and shelter, we could live for decades in a prison camp or on a desert island. But God's goal for us is not merely to survive like animals. Therefore, he created us not only with limited needs but also with *unlimited wants for new and improved products* that we will enjoy.

Consider cell phones, for example. For many centuries, human beings did not know that they wanted cell phones, because such things did not exist. I lived quite happily without a cell phone for

about 40 years of my life, but now I have one. It's very useful—but it's also enjoyable! I think it is included in 1 Timothy 6:17, where Paul says that God “richly provides us with everything to enjoy.” I think the “everything” includes cell phones.

The same is true of electric light bulbs, plastic water bottles, gas furnaces, air conditioners, automobiles, computers and airplane travel. For thousands of years, human beings did not know they wanted these things, because nobody knew they could be made. But human achievement continues to progress, and thereby human beings give more and more evidence of the glory of our creation in the image of God. With such inventions we demonstrate creativity, wisdom, knowledge, skill in use of resources, care for others who are distant (through use of a telephone or by email), and many other God-like qualities. And I think we should enjoy these inventions and give thanks to God for them!

When the airplane took off recently to fly me from Arizona to Minnesota, I didn't think for a second that I should pray, “Forgive me, Lord, for being a sinful materialist and using all these resources from your earth.” Instead, my heart attitude was, “Thank you, Lord, for this amazing invention, this airplane—and thank you for putting petroleum in the earth that could be made into jet fuel to power this airplane—this is amazing, Lord! Thank you, thank you!” And often when an airplane takes off I think, “This is so much fun!” Never for a moment do I think, “Lord, please forgive me for enjoying this too much.”

What is driving this insatiable human desire to invent and create and develop and flourish on the earth? I don't think we should just dismiss this drive as greedy materialism or sin. It can be *distorted* by selfishness and sin, but the drive to create and produce and enjoy useful products ultimately comes from a *morally good, God-given instinct* that he placed within the human race before there was any sin in the world at all, when he commanded us to fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over all of it.

In addition, ownership of property motivates people to create, invent, and produce, because they have hope of keeping and enjoying what they earn. Therefore, the ownership of property which is implied by the Eighth Commandment is *essential for human flourishing*. Where there is no ownership of property, inventors and producers lack the motivation that comes from the hope of enjoying what they produce, and human flourishing shrivels up.

Scottish professor of moral philosophy Adam Smith, in 1776, explained why the hope of enjoying the fruits of one's labor inspires people to be productive and lifts entire nations out of poverty:

That security which the laws in Great Britain give to every man that he shall enjoy the fruits of his own labour, is alone sufficient to make any country flourish....The natural effort of every individual to better his own condition, when suffered to exert itself with freedom and security, is so powerful a principle, that it is alone, and without any assistance ... capable of carrying on the society to wealth and prosperity.⁷

Plants and animals show a measure of God's glory by merely surviving and repeating the same activities for thousands of years, while human beings glorify God by *achieving* much more than mere survival. We glorify God by *understanding and ruling over the creation* and then producing more and more wonderful goods from it, for our enjoyment, and with thanksgiving to God. God is the one who “richly provides us with everything to enjoy” (1 Tim 6:17). It does not say that God provided us with these things so that we could ask forgiveness for enjoying them! No, he intends us to enjoy these things with his blessing!

⁷ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776; repr., New York: Modern Library, 1994), 581.

Now here's the application to business: Businesses make all this human flourishing possible. More than families, churches, governments, schools, hospitals, clubs, or any other organizations, new and better products are invented and produced by businesses. Businesses are the main social structure that bring about human economic flourishing on the earth.

Therefore if you are thinking of going to a foreign country to be a business missionary, then produce a good product and sell it and make a profit. And enjoy some of that profit! Yes, certainly you must *bear witness* for Christ in your words and your conduct. And yes, you should *give* generously from your profit to the work of the church and the work of missions. But also you should make a profit and *enjoy* some of that profit that God has enabled you to earn. "The plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop" (1 Cor 9:10).

Christians involved in a business should remember that they are making, distributing, or selling products that *help other people*. These products may help others to eat and sleep and be healthy, or to learn and communicate, or to enjoy family and friends and the many wonderful resources of God's amazing earth.

In other words, if you work in a business, *your work is doing good for other people*. You are doing "good works," and after we are saved, the Bible tells us that we are to do good works: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *for good works*, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10).

That is why working in business is an honorable, spiritual calling, by which God will give lifelong blessing not only to you but to all those who enjoy the products you produce or help to distribute. That is why working in a business as a Christian is serving God: "Whatever you do, *work heartily, as for the Lord* and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. *You are serving the Lord Christ*" (Col 3:23–24).

Over the centuries, often those who have been most successful in business have been those who saw a human need and invented a way to meet that need, and so by working diligently in the business world they were obedient to Jesus's command, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:39).

4. The Dangers of Materialism and Asceticism

Now I want to mention two mistakes—two dangers—to avoid. In talking about business and material prosperity, we must never forget that the Bible gives warnings against loving material things too much:

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Heb 13:5)

But *those who desire to be rich fall into temptation*, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. (1 Tim 6:9–10)

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. *You cannot serve God and money*. (Matt 6:24)

And so I strongly disagree with the “health and wealth gospel” that teaches if you have enough faith—or if you just give enough money to a certain ministry—then God will make you prosperous. Jesus was poor and Paul was poor and Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you” when he healed the man lame from birth (Acts 3:6). And James said, “has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?” (Jas 2:5). I’m certainly *not* saying that if you are faithful Christian God will make you rich. Often he will not.⁸

There is an opposite danger to materialism, and that is the danger of asceticism. I want to make clear that I am also *not* saying that prosperity is in itself evil. It brings temptations and dangers, but I think it is still basically a good thing, and in itself it is part of what God intended for us as creatures made in his image. In warning about the dangers of prosperity, I don’t want to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Paul warned about the opposite of materialism—a false asceticism, promoted by people who constantly opposed the enjoyment of material things that God has placed in this world:

If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, *why*, as if you were still alive in the world, *do you submit to regulations*—“*Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch*” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting *self-made religion and asceticism* and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. (Col 2:20–23)

I know how to be brought low, *and I know how to abound*. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing *plenty* and hunger, *abundance* and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. (Phil 4:12–13)

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, *who richly provides us with everything to enjoy*. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share. (1 Tim 6:17–18)

And so I think that the command “You shall not steal,” when viewed in the context of the entire Bible’s teachings on stewardship, implies that God created us not merely to *survive* but to *achieve much* and to *flourish* on the earth—and to flourish with enjoyment, abounding in thanksgiving to God.

5. A Christian Worldview Will Enable Poor Nations to Prosper

When I speak about the goodness of producing and enjoying cell phones and cars and airplanes and air conditioning, another question arises: what about the poor nations of the earth, where people do not have the opportunity to enjoy these things?

In the nations of the world where the Bible has been the main influence on people’s moral values, and where people have believed in private property and the rule of law, and in the moral goodness of

⁸ See also Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus, *The Poverty of Nations* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 321–22; Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor—and Yourself* (Chicago: Moody, 2009), 69–70.

developing the resources of the earth, poverty is less common.⁹ In addition, people in these nations have more income, which enables them to be healthier and better educated, take better care of the environment, and have more choices of where they work, where they live, and where they travel.

And this is exactly why “business as mission” is so important: We send Christian books and teachers to train church leaders in poor countries. We send medical missionaries to heal people’s physical bodies. We send educational missionaries to help build schools to educate people’s minds. And we should send business missionaries to heal the economic productivity and economic systems of poor nations, by word and by deed.

6. The Immense Challenge of the Eighth Commandment

Now I close with one broader application: obeying the Eighth Commandment rightly is immensely challenging. Only someone made in the image of God can obey it, and even those redeemed by Christ never obey it perfectly in this age.

Someone might think, “I’m not a shoplifter, or an embezzler or a thief. I don’t cheat on my taxes. I think I have been obeying the commandment, ‘You shall not steal.’” But have we been faithful stewards? Faithful stewardship of what God entrusts to us requires wise use of *all* of our possessions and time and talents and opportunities. Faithful stewardship requires immense wisdom and mature judgment in the complex balancing of multiple factors such as love of neighbor, care for one’s family, wise planning for the future, fear of God, desire to advance God’s kingdom, and a desire to subdue the earth to the glory of God.

Grateful stewardship in obedience to the Eighth Commandment also requires avoiding the temptations and sins connected with possessions, such as gluttony, greed, selfishness, materialism, and waste. It also requires that we avoid laziness, apathy and false asceticism. While *self interest* is acceptable in biblical ethics, selfishness and greed are not acceptable, but are distortions of rightful self interest.

Further, the stewardship requirements implied by the Eighth Commandment are life-long. They begin in childhood, with the responsibility to care for one’s toys and small responsibilities, and they continue until the day of one’s death, when a person must make wise choices regarding the disposition of any goods that are left behind.

Therefore, who among us can say from his heart, “I know that I have always made right stewardship decisions. I know that God is pleased with how I’ve managed my resources. I’ve made judicious allocations of funds between giving to others, investing, saving, and using for my own present enjoyment. I have been a wise steward of all the intellectual, creative, artistic, and managerial opportunities and abilities that God entrusted to me. My talent has made five talents more”? I doubt any living person could honestly say that today, for, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8).

Therefore, the challenge of the Eighth Commandment is immense. The immensity of the challenge should not discourage us, however. It should excite us that God has entrusted such a great challenge to us. It should excite us to know that God fills us with joy and delight as we seek by his power to accomplish these tasks.

⁹For more data supporting this statement, see Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus, *The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 318–25.

The Eighth Commandment as the Moral Foundation

Hidden within the simple words, “You shall not steal,” we discover the infinite wisdom of God. Through these words, God laid the foundation for a system of private ownership of property, of stewardship and accountability, and of an expectation that we would achieve much and flourish as we live on the face of the earth and enjoy its abundant resources.

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Walter Brueggemann. *Chosen? Reading the Bible amid the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015. xvii + 114 pp. £9.99/\$14.00.

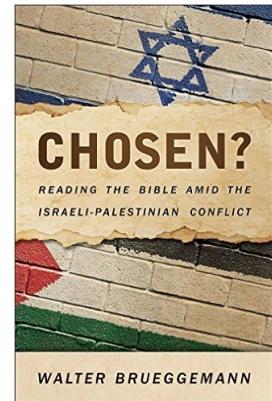
Today we are witnessing a sea change regarding evangelical attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In its cover story for its March 2015 issue, *Sojourners Magazine* illustrated this change with an article that went viral: “Pro-Israeli, Pro-Palestinian, and Pro-Jesus.” The article shows how many conservative North American evangelicals have always listened to and supported the Israeli narrative. But here’s the change: evangelicals are now discovering the Palestinian narrative. This has led them to go back to their Bibles and to rethink many theological first principles.

This change has been quantified by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, which has conducted regular interviews among evangelicals for years (see G. M. Burge, “Are Evangelicals Abandoning Israel?,” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 33.7 [October 2014]: 50–51; D. Brog, “The End of Evangelical Support for Israel,” *Middle East Quarterly* 21.2 [Spring 2014]; S. Bailey, “American Evangelicals’ Support For Israel Is Waning, Reports Say,” *Huffington Post*, April 9, 2014). The Pew Forum’s October 2010 survey conducted at the Third Lausanne Congress of World Evangelization in Cape Town, South Africa, made one thing clear: younger evangelicals who see social justice as an integral part of their discipleship now see the moral ambiguity of this conflict. While once evangelicals gave exclusive support to Israel, today that support is balanced in that younger evangelicals have sympathies with *both sides* in this struggle and are rejecting the unilateral commitments held by an older generation.

A number of authors and books have been contributing to these theological shifts. The esteemed OT scholar Walter Brueggemann has long had an interest in this conflict. His well-known book, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise and Challenge in Biblical Faith*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002) is the premier study of “land” (as in Holy Land) in biblical theology. And it inevitably drew him into the question of modern claims to possess the Holy Land based on theological commitments. Now Brueggemann has supplied a brief and poignant guide for churches that want to discuss further. *Chosen?* is his unrelenting Amos-like appeal to Christians to rethink their theological assumptions when looking at the Middle East. This book joins a host of recent volumes that do the same thing, from popular-level works (e.g., R. Dalrymple, *These Brothers of Mine: A Biblical Theology of Land and Family* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015]) to heftier theological works (e.g., O. Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land*, NSBT 34 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015]), and my own *Jesus and the Land: The New Testament Challenge to “Holy Land” Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010). In a word, evangelicals are revisiting this topic and asking if their views are contributing to or rather undermining the peace process.

Brueggemann’s offering is a short, fifty-page study of theological assumptions followed by a Q&A section. The book concludes with an outline complete with questions showing how the book can be used in a study session. In four chapters, he summarizes in easy-to-read style what he thinks are the four essential problems we face:

1. *Reading the Bible*. Brueggemann challenges how we use the Scriptures and draw simplistic connections between ancient Israel and the modern Israeli state. His specialty is the OT



- Prophets, and at moments throughout the book, the thunder of Jeremiah or Elijah leaps from the page.
2. *Chosenness*. Brueggemann wants us to rethink what election means and how it can be exploited. He warns against any position that produces a theological exceptionalism or privilege due to lineage claims or promises (whose ethical component has been ignored). Above all, he challenges the so-called “unconditional” nature of this status.
 3. *Land*. In a handful of pages, he summarizes his major academic theses: the land is a gift and living in it brings enormous moral duties. Moreover, in the New Testament, the land experiences a transformation of identity and purpose.
 4. *Zionism*. Here he describes what happens when misdirected theological commitments evolve into political ideology. He illustrates how this happened in biblical times and quickly shows how it is happening today.

This is a passionate book. And readers should be warned: it will upend many of the things we’ve heard in churches most of our lives. Some readers will cheer, some will despair, and others will reject his views out of hand. But perhaps that is why this specialist in the Prophets sounds like a prophet himself. *He writes to discomfort the comfortable*. And reactions both negative and positive are inevitable.

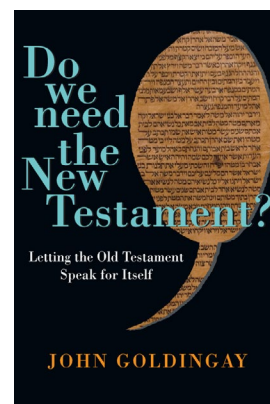
When a major scholar like Brueggemann writes from the heart—when he writes for the church and its disciples—we would all do well to pause and listen carefully. This is not an amateur we are reading. This is a man so thoroughly steeped in the Hebrew prophets that his heart beats with their rhythm. And he has thought long and hard—a career’s worth—on this utterly timely subject.

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John Goldingay. *Do We Need the New Testament? Letting the Old Testament Speak for Itself*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015. 184 pp. £19.99/\$22.00.

In his provocatively titled book, *Do We Need the New Testament?*, John Goldingay seeks, as the subtitle suggests, to invite Christians to listen to the OT’s own voice rather than marginalizing it or subordinating it to the NT. While he affirms that we do need the NT as a revelation of Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection, he argues that the NT does not offer a significantly different or better revelation of God’s character and his dealings with people than are found in what Goldingay prefers to call the “First Testament” (FT).

The book contains nine chapters, framed by a brief introduction and conclusion. In his first chapter, Goldingay questions how necessary the NT is to various aspects of biblical theology and practice (such as salvation, mission, and spirituality), repeatedly stressing the continuity between the two Testaments. The most important theological development in the NT, he argues, is the hope of resurrection and, on the flip side, Jesus’s teachings about hell (pp. 24–25). Even the pivotal events of Jesus’s death and resurrection, he holds, were simply “the logical end term of a stance that God had been taking through First Testament times, ... God has always been able and willing to carry their [his people’s]



waywardness.... Israel has always been able to respond to God and to be in relationship with him” (p. 14)—a point he underscores when he explores the significance of Jesus in more depth in chapter 2. In chapter 3 he turns to the third person of the Trinity, highlighting the Spirit’s activity in the FT and drawing parallels to the NT, while also explaining some NT texts dealing with the relationship between the Spirit and the law.

In chapter 4 Goldingay turns his attention to the biblical narrative, highlighting the individual contributions of the various “middle narratives” (i.e., large narrative complexes or biblical teachings that imply a large-scale narrative), which, he contends, are sometimes overlooked in treatments of the overarching grand narrative. Narrowing in to focus on the book of Hebrews in chapter 5, Goldingay contends that Christians have “mis(?)read” that book, leading to a diminished understanding of sacrifice and a misguided focus on “models of faith” in the FT (p. 95). Instead, he argues, Hebrews should encourage us to see a parallel between the church and FT Israel. Despite Jesus’s coming, the church still struggles, like Israel, to follow God faithfully.

Goldingay discusses “the costly loss of First Testament spirituality” in chapter 6, exploring the Psalms as a source of testimony, protest, intercession, and critique of superpowers. And in chapter 7 he examines the concept of memory, describing the FT as Israel’s deliberate memory of its past, which shapes its faith and self-understanding. Turning to the law in chapter 8, Goldingay notes how Jesus’s teaching draws out the implications of the Torah and also offers hermeneutical guidelines to consider when reading commands in both Testaments. Finally, in chapter 9 he reflects on the recent resurgence in theological interpretation of Scripture (especially as advocated by Francis Watson and Craig Bartholomew), arguing against an approach that is Christocentric, Trinitarian, or “constrained by the Rule of Faith” (p. 169) on the grounds that such a stance can limit and skew our perception of the discrete witness of FT texts. Nevertheless, Goldingay contends that biblical interpretation is inherently theological and that it should acknowledge “how Jesus is the decisive moment in God’s fulfilling his purpose in the world.” Theological interpretation should also recognize that the God of the FT is the same God who is revealed in the NT as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and should consider the interpretive tradition of the church (p. 175).

At points the book could use further clarification. For example, I am not quite sure how Goldingay sees the relationship between memory and history, and many readers will question statements like “much of the account in Chronicles of David is imaginary” (p. 131). Moreover, while chapter 7 makes a significant point about the role Israel’s memory should play in the church’s construction of its identity, some readers may find it overly theoretical. Another point that requires further explanation is Goldingay’s claim that “the First Testament makes little or no link between sacrifice and sin or forgiveness” (p. 92). He rightly brings out other aspects of sacrifice that are often ignored, but it would be helpful if he included some discussion of the Day of Atonement. And I would like to hear more from Goldingay about how biblical scholars and theologians may fruitfully interact to produce both better theology and better readings of Scripture.

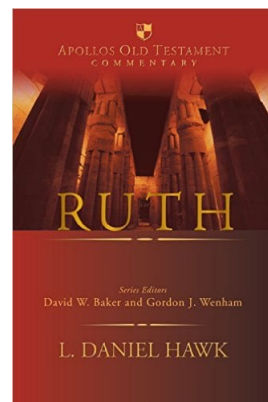
Despite some lingering reservations, *Do We Need the New Testament?* offers a much-needed corrective to the tendency to neglect or devalue the OT found in much of the contemporary church. The book would be of great value to any theological student, pastor, or interested layperson who desires to explore the rich theological, spiritual, and ethical resources that the OT has to offer the church or who seeks to gain a better grasp of the relationship between the Testaments. Readers can expect to have their assumptions challenged, their minds informed, and their passion for the OT (re)ignited by

Goldingay's insightful and engaging discussion, which pairs penetrating analysis with a fervent love for Israel's Scriptures.

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L. Daniel Hawk. *Ruth*. Apollos Old Testament Commentary Series. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015. 176 pp. £19.99/\$30.00.

In 2015 three commentaries on Ruth were published with the same target audience and from the evangelical end of the theological spectrum, among which is the present work by Daniel Hawk (the others are by James McKeown in Eerdmans' Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary series and Daniel Block in the Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament series). Commentaries need to jostle for attention in the Ruth marketplace, and Hawk's commentary draws attention to itself by highlighting the themes of identity and ethnicity. Monographs and articles have been written on Ruth focusing on these issues (e.g., Peter H. W. Lau, *Identity and Ethics in the Book of Ruth: A Social Identity Approach*, BZAW 416 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011]; Victor H. Matthews, "The Determination of Social Identity in the Story of Ruth," *BTB* 36 [2006]: 49–54), but this is the first commentary to use social-identity theory as its primary interpretive lens. Most of Hawk's previous work has been on the book of Joshua, and his expertise in OT narrative shines through in this commentary.



For those not familiar with the general form of the Apollos series, an introductory chapter is followed by comments on each section of biblical text, in this case the individual chapters of Ruth. The introduction to the commentary contains a judicious discussion of ethnicity and identity, which is necessary groundwork since Hawk views Ruth's Moabite ethnicity as generating "the energy that drives the plot" (p. 20). Along with many recent commentators, Hawk situates the composition of Ruth in the time of Ezra-Nehemiah (pp. 31–36). Regarding the theology of Ruth, Hawk notes that, although God is frequently mentioned by the characters, the narrator only mentions God acting once (pp. 39–40). The effect is that the actions of the characters are foregrounded, though I'm not convinced that this necessarily portrays God as acting "*in response to* rather than *as the cause of* human acts of blessing and *hesed*" (p. 42; emphasis original). A separate treatment of the central themes of *hesed* ("lovingkindness") and redemption would have rounded out the introductory chapter.

The commentary on the Ruth chapters proceeds as follows: a new translation, textual notes, literary form and structure, comments according to textual units, and an explanation section. In what follows I will mention some of Hawk's more noteworthy interpretations from each chapter. Regarding Ruth 1, his discussion of *šûb* ("to return") and *hālak* ("to go, walk") points out their spiritual associations with conversion beyond the physical journey to/from Moab (pp. 50–51). Naomi's saying no more to Ruth (1:18) is viewed as the mother-in-law giving the silent treatment in the hope that Ruth might leave (p. 62). The explanation section deals with marginalised groups in the OT as well as legitimate responses to suffering (pp. 64–68). Regarding Ruth 2, Hawk follows Jonathan Grossman ("Gleaning among the Ears'—'Gathering among the Sheaves': Characterizing the Image of the Supervising Boy (Ruth 2)," *JBL*

126 [2007]: 703–16) in viewing the foreman’s response to Ruth as reflecting the prevailing exclusivist stance against Ruth (pp. 79–80). The explanation section for Ruth 2 also highlights the importance of showing hospitality to outsiders (pp. 88–91).

Regarding Ruth 3, Hawk proposes that Ruth deliberately calls upon Boaz to function as a *gō’ēl* (“kinsman-redeemer”) as a strategy for him to marry Ruth and concurrently “defuse the scandal of her Moabite identity” (p. 107). Hawk finds Boaz’s speech in Ruth 3:13 “completely confusing” (p. 111), but I do not find Boaz’s words so baffling, since it is dangerous for her to return back to town in the middle of the night. The explanation section for this chapter deals with the poor in the OT. Regarding Ruth 4, Hawk translates *pēlōnî ’almōnî* (4:1) as “Nobody Special” (p. 119), but this rendering seems to imply that the Hebrew expression is actually the nearer kinsman’s name. Some readers might find Hawk’s description of Boaz’s transaction at the town gate a little negative: he “games the system” (p. 121) and the redemption of the field is a “clever ruse, a smoke screen” (p. 126). The explanation section discusses the expansive application of the law in the narrative of Ruth and elsewhere in the OT, as well as helpfully drawing the trajectory of this principle through to Jesus (Mark 2:23–28). There is also a clear discussion of intermarriage in Ruth with reference to the law’s prohibition of this practice (Deut 7:2–4).

Sometimes during the act of reading, one wishes that the book would not end. This was my experience of reading this commentary. The book is well written, with the prose displaying an elegant grace. When interpretive difficulties arise, different views are adduced and a position taken. Hawk points out clearly the literary structures of chapters and phrases, as well as the structural parallels and similarities between chapters. He is well attuned to the nuances and subtleties of the Hebrew language, often bringing out the significance of a word or phrase that is lost in English translations. He also draws out the tensions in the plot of the story of Ruth (e.g., Boaz’s somewhat breathless speech to the kinsman-redeemer in Ruth 4:4), an important feature missing in many commentaries. For all these reasons I was happily swept along as I read.

Yet I also did not want the commentary to end because of elements that I was anticipating might be in it. The editor’s preface lists the target audience as “preachers, teachers and students of the Bible.” This commentary series aims at both exegesis and hermeneutics, hoping to serve both the academy and the church. The former target audience is covered better than the latter. As I read the introductory chapter and the explanation sections, I was left wanting more theology, and in particular, biblical theology of the sort that traces motifs through the Scriptures as a whole. Hawk sets themes within the context of the OT, but there were only brief hints now and then of how these themes might be drawn through to Christ and the NT. Christian preachers and teachers would appreciate some more concrete application to context(s) today, and this requires a consideration of the difference Jesus makes as the culmination or expression of a particular theme. But maybe I am expecting too much from a single commentary. So perhaps a full suite of up-to-date commentaries on Ruth for those with exegetical, hermeneutical, and homiletical interests might comprise Hawk, McKeown, and at least one other focusing on biblical theology with an eye to contemporary Christian application. I’ve found Hawk’s and McKeown’s commentaries to have their strengths in exegesis and hermeneutics, respectively (Block’s Zondervan commentary was not at hand for this review). On its own, though, Hawk would still be a fine resource for teaching through the book of Ruth.

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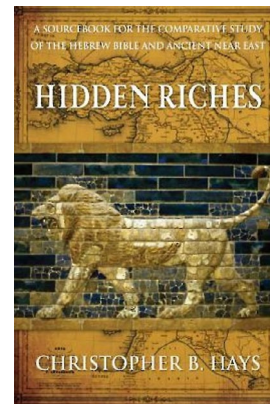
Christopher B. Hays. *Hidden Riches: A Sourcebook for the Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014. xxv + 425 pp. £27.89/\$45.00.

Existing collections of ancient texts from the OT world are extensive, but give little aid for interpreting them in relation to Hebrew compositions. Hays aims to fill the gap by presenting a smaller selection and trying to answer questions about the origins and purposes of the texts and their genres, instigating analysis and comparison and suggesting paths for further study. Recent scholarly translations are used for most of the texts and readers are expected to have a Bible to hand.

In the 'Introduction' and informative 'History and Methods of Comparative Study' (pp. 3–38), Hays makes the case for comparisons, assumes the 'dominant critical theories of biblical composition' and ends an historical survey with the late William W. Hallo's emphasis on contrast as well as comparisons. The ancient texts are then introduced in the order of the biblical canon, from creation (e.g., Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, Egyptian Memphite Theology) to Nehemiah's Memoir (e.g., Egyptian Inscription of Udjahorresne). Inevitably the majority of the texts are common to other compilations of ANE texts with their OT parallels (e.g., *ANET*, *COS*), such as the Gilgamesh Epic's tablet XI for the flood story, Sargon's Birth Story for Moses, Babylonian Chronicles for Kings, prophetic texts from Mari and Nineveh, Instruction of Amenemope for Proverbs, the Babylonian Job for Job and the Sumerian city-laments for Lamentations. A list of 'Reflection Questions' and suggested 'Further Reading' follow each text. Throughout Hays carefully admits the present Hebrew narrative texts may retain elements of earlier accounts but were re-written long afterwards to accord with later historical and social circumstances. For example, the blessings and curses following the report of Solomon building the Temple (1 Kgs 9:3–9) are similar to those in Assyrian building accounts which '*might* suggest the biblical account derives from the Neo-Assyrian period', yet a later date is also possible because Neo-Babylonian kings did not recount battles in their building inscriptions, as the Assyrians did (p. 210, italics original). In the case of Deuteronomy, the book 'adapts the treaty/oath form ... and it seems possible that it is an Assyrian-period reshaping of materials that are not strictly related to the treaty/oath form and may even have preexisted their incorporation into Deuteronomy' (p. 187). When comparing Hittite and late Babylonian rituals with Leviticus 16 (dated 9th–7th centuries BC), he again allows that biblical texts may preserve much older material (p. 159).

However, his adherence to 'critical theories of biblical composition' and the lack of evidence for written Hebrew texts prior to the tenth century BC (p. 7) lead him to emphasise comparisons with compositions from that time onwards. His assertion that there is 'little likelihood that the prophets would have written down their own words' (p. 270) in the eighth century BC fails to take account of the prophetic text about Balaam written on a wall at Tell Deir 'Alla in the Jordan Valley early in that century! While it is true no Hebrew texts survive in copies from the second millennium BC, and direct comparisons can only be made between extant texts, when attention is given to the contents of biblical writings many can be seen to reflect accurately the times they describe to an extent that implies written rather than oral tradition. That, of course, exceeds the scope of this book, but should not be overlooked.

The Joseph story is an example. Both the biography of Joseph and the Proverbs of Ahiqar 'reflect the struggle of nonnative peoples to prove themselves trustworthy to an imperial ruler' and share other



features that show their relevance to a diaspora context, as do Daniel and Esther ('Court Stories', pp. 97–112). Ahiqar has roots in seventh-century BC Assyria, aspects of Joseph 'reflect contact with Egyptian culture', knowledge which Hebrew authors could have gained 'well into the first millennium BCE' (p. 109). Here the Egyptian culture reflected is consistent with a date early in the second millennium BC rather than in the first, as has been demonstrated repeatedly (e.g., James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1997] 77–106), indicating a premonarchic origin for the body of the narrative, whether in pre-biblical Hebrew or another language, written in biblical Hebrew later.

These similarities demand neither contemporaneity of composition nor influence from one composition on another. The situations they describe can have arisen repeatedly, so giving rise to narratives with common elements independently. Noting that the Egyptian Story of Sinuhe is sometimes set beside Joseph, Hays argues that it 'is of an entirely different nature' (p. 110), observing that some Egyptologists now dismiss Sinuhe as unhistorical. We may see the Story of Sinuhe as valuable in showing that a lengthy biography concerning an Egyptian's life in Canaan could be composed as a work of literature in the nineteenth century BC, perhaps drawn from real life—recently recovered fragments of a tomb inscription of about the same date share some of the traits which have led to Sinuhe being dubbed unhistorical (see James P. Allen, "The Historical Inscription of Khnumhotep at Dahshur: Preliminary Report," *BASOR* 352 [November 2008], 29–39). When he says Exodus 25–31 and 35–40 are 'supposed to describe the construction of the tabernacle' (p. 209), Hays expresses a sense of doubt without justification, ignoring the textual and artifactual evidence from the Late Bronze Age for such structures (see Richard E. Averbeck, "Tabernacle," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003], 818).

Had the reviewer chosen the texts he would have added the rituals found in thirteenth-century BC buildings at Emar on the mid-Euphrates because they present close similarities to rituals in the Pentateuch (see "Rituals from Emar," trans. Daniel Fleming [*COS* 1.122:427–43]). To illuminate the decrees of Darius and Artaxerxes in Ezra 6 and 7, Hays introduces a Roman-era copy of Darius's 'Letter to Gadatas' about wrongful taxation. Closer to the Aramaic biblical reports here would be the Xanthos Decree concerning the provisions for a new cult and the permission to reconstruct the Jewish temple in Elephantine (see Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002], 306–9; and "Recommendation for Reconstruction of Temple," trans. Bezalel Porten [*COS* 3.52:130–31]).

Any book which helps readers to appreciate biblical texts better by stimulating them to understand other ancient texts is welcome and this one should certainly do that.

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John Kartje. *Wisdom Epistemology in the Psalter: A Study of Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 472. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014. xii + 215 pp. £99.95/\$140.00.

The present monograph by John Kartje, an astrophysicist turned biblical scholar, analyzes four prominently located psalms in the Psalter with a focus on understanding the epistemological settings behind the texts. Kartje concludes that these psalms, in their canonical order, capture an “epistemological progression” in acknowledging, confronting and engaging the question of human suffering and flourishing (pp. 171–72).

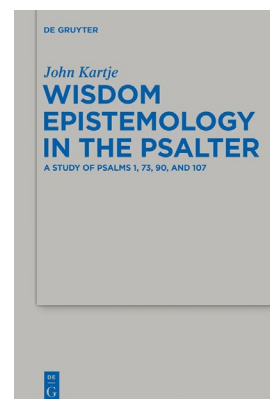
By his own assessment, Kartje’s angle of analysis is unprecedented in Psalms scholarship (p. 52), though it remains to be seen if the majority of Psalms scholars will adopt his conclusions. His basic premise is that a “society’s ‘social epistemology’ is largely responsible for structuring its operative worldview” (p. 77). He argues that conceptual metaphors in its texts are tools for organizing and transmitting a society’s knowledge. The texts contain information about how such knowledge is to be understood, challenged, and passed on to the next generation. Kartje’s method is summed up by three fundamental questions: “(1) what propositions does this text contain; (2) do the propositions constitute genuine knowledge; (3) how are the propositions related to the socially constructed worldview represented in the text?” (p. 29). In what follows, we will illustrate Kartje’s application of his method to Psalm 1, which is also representative of the strengths and weaknesses in the rest of his analysis.

Firstly, the main proposition of a text can be observed by its conceptual metaphor(s). In Psalm 1, the main conceptual metaphor is “Life Is a Journey” (p. 78). This metaphor invites questions about its nature (e.g., Who are the travelers? What are the destinations? How can one succeed in the journey?). Psalm 1, however, provides limited answers to these questions. Here, the knowledge proposition is simply that “the [Torah-pious] righteous prosper and the wicked fail” (p. 83).

Secondly, does this proposition constitute genuine knowledge that corresponds to reality? Kartje summarizes that Psalm 1 does not show explicitly how this knowledge is drawn from empirical observations in life. The proposition of the two different journeys of the righteous and the wicked, as a fixed and binary state of affairs, is intended to be accepted without question by the original readers of Psalm 1.

Thirdly, how is this proposition related to ancient Israel’s worldview? Kartje posits that readers of Psalm 1 apply their knowledge about the righteous and wicked to discerning moral character within their social context (p. 83). If the readers perceive a man as “righteous” yet who is suffering, the limited worldview presented in Psalm 1 will lead them to question their original supposition that the man is “righteous.” The readers will have to modify their assessment of the sufferer’s moral character based on the binary worldview of Psalm 1.

Nonetheless, by comparing the analyses between the four psalms, Kartje argues for an “epistemological progression” in how the Psalter understands human suffering (pp. 167–72). Psalm 73 complicates the knowledge proposition of Psalm 1 by showing that the wicked *can* prosper and the righteous *can* suffer. Moreover, the seeming impossibility of moving across the fixed categories of blessedness and cursedness, as presented in Psalm 1, becomes surprisingly possible in Psalm 90. By the time Psalm 107 arrives, “suffering is not necessarily tied to moral culpability and even the wicked



have access to divine salvation” (p. 157). Thus, Kartje argues for an editorially intended “epistemological progression” presented across the Psalter.

Three features stand out in Kartje’s proposal. First, Kartje’s methodological innovation requires one to build bridges between modern Western theories of social epistemology and how the ancient near Eastern recipients of the Psalter actually perceived knowledge. Kartje is simultaneously *reconstructing* the epistemology of the society “behind” the text and *prescribing* an epistemological program in “front” of the text. This circularity of method raises questions about whether distinctions between the reconstruction and prescription can be made and how valid is that epistemology reconstructed from the texts. Second, what makes Kartje’s thesis coherent is his selection, limitation, and comparison of Pss 1, 73, 90, and 107. It is through comparing the epistemological insights in these psalms that we can trace the “progression” in addressing human suffering claimed by Kartje. His basis for selecting these psalms is that they contain “wisdom-centered” literary elements that function to address the “fundamental problem of why people suffer” (p. 67). However, herein also lies the problem—these four psalms are not the only psalms that meet this criterion, for Kartje has passed over many psalms that would problematize his thesis. For instance, if Psalm 112, with a similar proposition to Psalm 1, were analyzed, the epistemological “progression” that Kartje proposes would be undermined since Psalm 112 is canonically located after Psalm 90. Third, although Kartje highlights the canonical order of the four psalms and a possible “wisdom-centered” influence that shapes an “epistemological progression” in the Psalms (pp. 69, 172–73), his work, *in toto*, is not an argument for the canonical shape of the Psalter. Arguments for the canonical structuring of the Psalter are limited by Kartje to the epistemological study of the four psalms of interest. Important themes, such as Davidic kingship or YHWH’s kingship, are only featured lightly (pp. 88–87, 172–73).

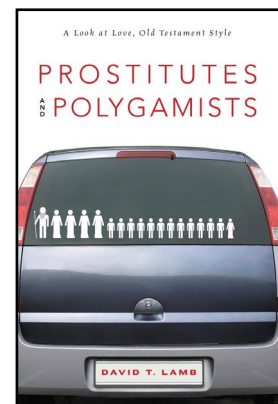
Despite these methodological concerns, Kartje’s work remains a unique contribution and will be helpful to scholars working with epistemological and social-scientific approaches to the OT, and especially to the wisdom psalms.

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David T. Lamb. *Prostitutes and Polygamists: A Look at Love, Old Testament Style*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. 206 pp. £10.99/\$16.99.

David Lamb thinks we don’t talk enough about sex. The Bible does, *a lot*, and so should we. This book represents his attempt to make sense of the obvious sexual brokenness of OT “heroes.” The beauty of redemption is that God takes flawed men and women and weaves them into his plan. If he can do this with them, he can do this with us, too. That message comes through clearly.

But this is not your grandmother’s book on sexual ethics (unless your progenitor, like King David’s, was a prostitute [see Matt 1:5–6]). This much should be obvious from the cover image—an SUV with sticker outlines of a patriarch, his four wives, twelve sons, and a daughter—which gives a pretty good sense of the book’s tone. Watch out, this book is *funny*. He defends his



“wacky sense of humor” (p. 28–29), claiming that it helps us deal with pain, speak the truth, and stay humble. There’s no doubt that his humor is disarming (Lamb had me laughing even against my will at times). Certain audiences will appreciate that. For others, however, I fear he may have crossed the line. In places he is unnecessarily edgy, reading sex into the text where it is not (e.g., p. 20, Esther’s approach to the king; p. 38, *plants* are sexually active?). More significantly, at times his casual style betrays sloppy theology. He assumes that the protagonists know these stories had been written about them (p. 22; on what basis?). He claims, without explanation, that “humans have two distinct natures,” referring to maleness and femaleness (p. 37; how does our incarnate Lord represent both genders?). He confuses “name” with epithet, referring to the Hebrew *ishah* (“woman,” p. 43). These may seem to be picky matters, but a popular audience is even more susceptible to unintended implications of imprecision. They expect that a Bible expert knows what he is talking about, and therefore they deserve a more rigorous articulation of the basis for his claims. I, for one, would like to see justification for this conclusion:

God’s first words to the humans are essentially, “Have lots of sex!” In terms of the earth-filling mandate, I think we can check that one off our to-do list, but that doesn’t mean God wants us to stop having sex. (p. 38)

Why not? In a book about OT sexual ethics, this question begs an answer. And while Lamb *jokingly* exposes readers to ancient ways of thinking, he could offer a more sober assessment of ancient Near Eastern issues. For example, his analysis of the “days” of creation and the *imago Dei* (pp. 34–35) could benefit from richer engagement with current scholarship (e.g., J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* [Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005]; W. Randall Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness: Humanity, Divinity, and Monotheism*, CHANE 15 [Leiden: Brill, 2003]). Sandra L. Richter (*The Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008]) has shown how the themes of both creation and covenant can be adequately addressed without sacrificing accessibility. Lamb also misses a wonderful opportunity to explore the *covenantal* context for sexual ethics. After all, the Israelite instructional material is not primarily addressed to the world at large, but is embedded in a narrative in which Yahweh is setting Israel apart as his covenant people. While I would not disagree with Lamb’s claim that marriage between one man and one woman is God’s “ideal” (p. 117–18), the command against adultery has more to do with protecting the stability of the covenant community and the rights of fellow covenant partners than outlining an abstract ideal.

On the bright side, Lamb’s analysis gets stronger towards the end, and he tones down his humor in the chapters on rape and incest, which comes as a welcome relief. I found his most provocative proposal—that the condemnation of Sodom has more to do with inhospitality and injustice than homosexuality—surprisingly persuasive. Lamb notes that later biblical reflections on Sodom, even in the most sexually charged passage of Ezekiel 16, focus on the “abominations” of Israel’s neglect of the needy (vv. 49–50) rather than sexual violence (p. 178–79), though I would hasten to add that the Sodomites’ violent intentions surely represent an *extreme* form of inhospitality. For the record, Lamb disagrees with LGBT hermeneutics by holding that the OT clearly condemns homosexuality (Lev 18:22; 20:13) and that “there is nothing in the context of these Leviticus laws to suggest they were temporary laws meant to apply only to Israel or that it would have been fine in the context of a committed homosexual relationship” (p. 163). Even so, the focus of his book is biblical narrative, not instructional material, so readers hoping for a fuller response to the arguments of the “gay Christian” movement will have to look elsewhere (e.g., Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and*

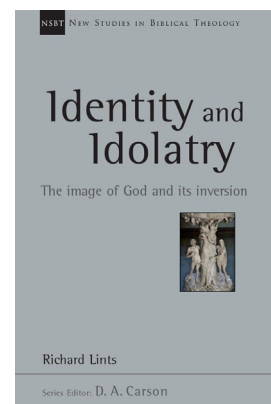
Hermeneutics [Nashville: Abingdon, 2002]). Since homosexual behavior is never expressly condemned in OT *narrative* (in contrast to OT law), it gets little treatment by Lamb. One could fairly conclude that a purely narrative focus proves inadequate as a basis for a biblical ethic. Christopher J. H. Wright's both-and approach to these biblical genres is a more reliable guide (*Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004], 327–32).

Lamb doesn't shirk the opportunity to address other urgent problems, including sexual abuse, date rape, sex trafficking, voyeurism, and incest. In spite of the tough topics addressed, this book is an easy read. It could work for a college/career group that would benefit from edgy humor to break the ice. This, I imagine, is his intended audience. So for his ability to connect with them he gets high marks. However, be aware that Lamb's perspective is decidedly Western and his tone American in his blunt talk about sex. He engages briefly with modern polygamy in Mormonism and in the African tribal context (p. 80), but his treatment is far from thorough and he makes no mention of Islam (incidentally, some of my Filipino Muslim friends once told me they *wished* their husbands would take a second wife so they could have help with the housework!). Lamb leaves readers wondering whether polygamy is unbiblical or merely un-American. In a multi-cultural world where sexual ethics are less and less obvious, a clear, sober, and thorough answer to this question is still sorely needed. Paul Copan's treatment of polygamy in *Is God a Moral Monster?: Making Sense of the Old Testament God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011) is the right sort of beginning, but a more comprehensive treatment of other sexual issues remains to be written.

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Richard Lints. *Identity and Idolatry: The Image of God and Its Inversion*. New Studies in Biblical Theology 36. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015. 192 pp. £14.99/\$22.00.

Richard Lints's recent book (the body of which is 155 pages) is the thirty-sixth volume in the New Studies in Biblical Theology series. Chapters 1 and 2 discuss the definition and nature of the image of God (especially in Gen 1) and the necessity of it being understood conceptually by considering the whole canon of Scripture, which is self-interpreting (i.e., interpreting the parts by the whole and the whole by the parts). Chapter 3 attempts to understand the image of God within the context of Genesis 1's portrayal of creation as a cosmic temple. Chapter 4 continues to elaborate on humans as the image of God, especially in the light of Genesis 1–11. The end of Chapter 4 makes an important transition to the remainder of the book: God has created humans to be creatures who reflect. Humans were originally made to reflect God, but when they turned from him, they were still reflective creatures, and thus reflected something in the creation (idols) to which they were committed. This idea leads into Chapter 5, which is titled "Turning the *Imago Dei* Upside Down." The theme running through this chapter is that "what you revere you resemble either for ruin or restoration." The emphasis of the chapter is on revering (being committed to) idols and becoming like them (here especially Lints appeals to my own earlier work on idolatry, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press,



2008]). This prominent theme occurs elsewhere in the book. Chapter 6 continues to elaborate on the destructive aspect of becoming like one's idols but especially underscores the reversal of this condition. Only Christ, the perfect image of God, can reverse this condition and break the enormous power that idols exercise over their worshippers (this chapter is similar to Beale, *We Become What We Worship*, chs. 8, 10). Chapter 7 changes focus from the biblical period to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Lints narrates briefly the lives of what he terms "the secular prophets" (p. 129). These were philosophers who did not believe in God and argued that those who did affirm belief in God had used their idolatrous imaginations to make up such a belief to which they committed themselves. Such beliefs in God were manufactured to meet people's psychological and existential needs to depend on something else, to overcome their fears, and to solve their problems. Since there was no God, such people, according to the secular prophets, were worshipping something that did not exist, which is the essence of idolatry. Chapter 8, the concluding chapter, provides further discussion of the nature of idolatry, some illustrations of contemporary idolatries, and the solution to idol worship in Christ.

First, I have some comments on the strengths of the book and then some reflections on how the book could perhaps have been made even better.

The traditional approach to defining the image of God in humanity has been ontological in focus. Humans reflect various attributes of God (spirit, reason, morality, holiness, righteousness, etc.). However, over the past two decades or so, scholars, especially biblical theologians, have focused on a functional approach to defining God's image in humanity (though a number of traditional theologians have affirmed both the ontological and functional aspects of the image of God in humanity, e.g., A. A. Hoekema, *Created In God's Image* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986], 66–73). For example, some have seen this to be summarized partly in Genesis 1:26, 28: ruling and subduing, being fruitful and multiplying, and filling the earth with image bearers that reflect God's glory. These functions reflect God's actions in Genesis 1 of ruling and subduing the chaos of creation, creating and multiplying creation, and filling creation with his glorious handiwork. God's concluding act of resting may indicate a mandate for humanity to "rest" in Gen 2:2–3 (though this is implied and even the implication is debated). For myself, these reflective functions presuppose that humans have been made in the ontological image of God (as summarized above).

Lints clearly favors the functional perspective but he summarizes it with the word "identity" (pp. 23–30). This is a helpful word since it seems to encompass both the ontological and functional, while focusing on the functional. As far as I know, no one else has emphasized this in the way that Lints does. Lints's attempt to add new terminology to the image of God discussion and to continue the trend of moving away from focusing on ontology reminds me of Richard Bauckham's similar move in not focusing on the ontological nature of Christ's deity but rather on Christ's divine "identity" (see his *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies of the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008]). Instead of trying philosophically to define Christ's divine nature, Bauckham sees it to be more helpful to view the NT writers as including Jesus in the unique "identity" of the one God of Israel (especially in applying OT texts about the one God of Israel to Jesus). Lints's introduction of the term "identity" is not just a semantic synonym with the earlier functional approach but adds a new dimension to image-of-God language. "Human identity is in view rather than human nature" (p. 23). Human "identity" for Lints is primarily understood as a "reflective identity" (p. 29) and "is rooted in what it reflects" (p. 30). One either reflects God or something in the created order

(which is idolatrous). The former results in “worship, honour, completion, and satisfaction” and the latter in “perversion, corruption, consumption, and possession” (p. 29).

One notion that would have enhanced Lints’s discussion of the image of God throughout the book (and especially on p. 124) is that part of Adam being “formed” in the image of God was that he was given “life” from God, both physically and spiritually (Gen 2:7). It is this “life” that became corrupted and distorted in that, while his physical life continued (but became subject to corruption and would subsequently end), his spiritual existence also continued but in separation from the blessedness of life with God (which was spiritual death). Subsequently, the life that Adam and Eve had possessed began to be regained, as symbolized by the clothing of Genesis 3:21 (so J. H. Kim, *The Significance of the Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus*, JSNTSup 268 (London: T&T Clark, 2004, 13–17). This new Adamic clothing pointed to Christ regaining that life in inaugurated manner and consummately for believers in the new-covenant age (on which see G. K. Beale, “Colossians,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007], 866–68, on Col 3:9–10). The reason this notion of “life” is important for Lints’s image of God discussion is that “life” appears to be at the heart of one’s *identity*, a word and concept so central to Lints’s approach. For example, in the present inter-Advent age one’s individual life is either corporately identified with the life of the first Adam (his sin and condemnation) or with the Last Adam (his life of obedience, resurrection life, and justification), and the latter is directly related to being “in the image of the one who created him” (Col 3:9–10, on which, among others, see the standard commentaries on Colossians by Douglas Moo and P. T. O’Brien).

The idea that idolatry means resembling something in the creation to which one is committed runs throughout Lints’s book and, as noted above, is not new. But referring to this as “identity” is new and helpful. However, there could have been more biblical material adduced to support the “resembling what you revere” theme instead only of referring to others who have discussed this material. A little exegetical review would have been helpful (e.g., discussion of Isa 6:9–13 and Ps 115:4–8 [=Ps 135:15–18], among other OT passages), since this is such a central theme throughout the book.

Lints perceptively adds to the positive understanding of reflecting what you revere in developing the sonship-image idea. It has been pointed out by others that sonship is image language. Thus, to be in the image of a parent is to be a son (Gen 5:1–2), which means that Adam and Eve being in God’s image (Gen 1:26, 28) indicates that they are children of God. Lints develops this by noting that part of a son being in the image of his father is to love and honor the father and thus to want to become like, and actually begin to resemble, the father whom he so highly respects. It is the same in our relationship to our heavenly Father (p. 72).

Lints also insightfully discusses the notion that idolatry is not merely an intellectual error (believing in false gods) but is especially a matter of the heart (a desire to control one’s destiny and find fulfillment in the wrong way). It is the intrinsic desire for fulfillment of our deepest longing, for significance, and for security that drives idolatry. But we can never be fulfilled by the idol, only by the true God. Yet, the addiction to the idol nevertheless drives the worshipper into further devotion to the idol, hoping to find fulfillment but still not finding it and becoming more dissatisfied. Indeed, the idol creates addictive passions that consume people but do not deliver them (here it would have been helpful for Lints to have discussed the potential involvement of demons behind the idols, as referenced in 1 Cor 10:19–22). Yet the worshipper remains loyal to the idol, becoming possessed by it. The idolater’s identity changes depending on the particular kind of idol worshipped (pp. 40, 111, 155, 157, 171). While these are heart

issues, the life of the mind is still crucial, since idolatry is rooted in forgetting God's word and faithfulness is rooted in remembering it (p. 79). This has significant practical implications for Christians, especially with respect to knowing their Bible well in resisting idolatry.

Lints also helpfully reminds readers that the NT employs two main arguments against idolatry: (1) idolatry inverts the Creator-creature relationship, whereby creatures think they can shape their Creator according to their own imagination; and (2) idols represent gods that do not exist (p. 109).

One of the most intriguing illustrations of modern-day idolatry offered by Lints is that of a kind of interpretive idol worship. Idol worship occurs when believers are not careful in interpreting passages in the Bible and so interpret erroneously, especially according to their own uncritical and narrow presuppositions, and they commit themselves to such false interpretations. Accordingly, God's word "becomes refashioned in our own image" (p. 164). This becomes even worse when pastors do this in their preaching, since they are affecting whole congregations. This issue needed more elaboration than Lints gave to it, since it is of such importance to preaching and the ministry of pastors to their flocks. I am thankful, nevertheless, that Lints mentioned it because of its grave and practical importance for God's people. May pastors and teachers take to heart what he has said.

There are a few areas of the book that Lints could have made even better. The discussion of the temple in chapter 3 needed more exegetical grounding in the scriptural evidence supporting the notion that Genesis 1 and 2 presents respectively the cosmos as a temple and the garden of Eden as a sanctuary. In addition, there could have been a better review of the secondary works arguing for these notions, since such a vast amount of literature has arisen over the past decade supporting such an idea (e.g., John H. Walton and the literature cited by him in *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011]; see also Richard M. Davidson, *The Flame of Yahweh* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007], 47–48). This would have helped readers to understand the richness of the idea.

With respect to the same extended discussion of the temple, there is no clear link between the idea of the image of God and the cosmos as a temple or Eden as a sanctuary, besides the general comment that the image of God in Genesis 1 and 2 is to be understood contextually in the light of the temple notion. One specific proposal that could have been made is that once God creates Eden as a sanctuary, he places Adam as God's living image in that sanctuary, just as ancient pagan temples were constructed to house the image of a god. In contrast to the garbled ancient Near Eastern view, Genesis 1–2 is the true narrative of such a temple-building and image-placing project.

Likewise, I was looking for a clear discussion about how Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy relates to the issue of idolatry, as there was with respect to the other secular philosophers discussed in Chapter 7, but I found none. Why is talking about Nietzsche relevant to the idolatry discussion?

There are a number of other strengths and some additional critiques that could be mentioned here. Nevertheless, this is a good and creative book, and it helped me better to understand the image of God and the perversion of that image in idolatry. I am grateful that Lints wrote this book, and I commend it to others for a better understanding of this significant issue of the image of God and idolatry. The rich themes of the book have significant practical implications for Christians.

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J. Alec Motyer. *A Christian's Pocket Guide to Loving the Old Testament*. Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2015. xiv + 99 pp. £4.99/\$7.99.

Alec Motyer is a respected, senior evangelical scholar of the OT. I first learned about him through his commentary *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), and because of the quality of that commentary I was interested in picking up this work. The Foreword and Afterword are written by Tim Keller and D. A. Carson, respectively, who commend Motyer as an able guide to reading the OT in continuity with the work of Christ and the NT.

This short book provides a host of reasons why Christians should love the OT. Originating as a series of lectures for a Bible conference in 2012, the book reads like the advice of a pastor leading his flock through the Scriptures, their Bibles open on their laps in front of them.

Chapter 1 invites the reader into a prayerful meditation on Psalm 19. Using this psalm as a starting point, Motyer emphasizes the intrinsic and experiential value of God's word in the OT. After that he lists several other passages on the theme of God's word (Ezek 2:8–3:4; Gen 1:3, 6–7; Isa 40:6–8; Ps 12:6; Jer 15:19). At this point we might wish the text of Scripture were printed for the reader and more complete exposition given.

The next two chapters provide a theological basis for loving the OT. Chapter 2 explores how the OT was Jesus's Bible, so we can be like him by loving it. Motyer explains the nature of the prophetic office in Israel and argues that even the historical books of the OT are prophetic because they reveal the work and principles of God. Chapter 3 argues from the NT for the divine inspiration of the OT, both from Jesus's habit of calling it "the Holy Scriptures" or "the Word of God" and from Paul's statement of this doctrine in 2 Timothy 3:15.

In the next few chapters Motyer explains how the OT provides essential information for Christians. Chapter 4 argues we need the OT to understand Jesus, who is "the great central reality of the Scriptures" (p. 20). Chapter 5 observes that the OT explains the meaning of NT words such as "redemption." Chapter 6 asserts that the NT simply assumes things about God that the OT tells us, such as the doctrine that God is Creator. Chapter 7 compares the OT to a "straight line" (pp. 42–44), namely, a continuous story, that goes from creation to the NT, so it is our pre-history as Christians.

The next few chapters explore several "great unities," those things that unite the Bible as one, not two testaments. Chapter 8 focuses on God's covenant, summarizing covenants associated with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Jeremiah. He implies, but does not explain, that these diverse covenants are part of a single covenant between God and his people. Chapter 9 discusses God himself as one of "the great unities" of the Bible. Motyer explains how the various titles attributed to God (e.g., the Lord of Hosts, the Angel of the Lord, and the Spirit of God) contribute to our knowledge of God. Chapter 10 describes the one way of salvation. Motyer emphasizes that Israelites were saved from sin through the grace of God, just as Christians are today. Chapter 11 discusses the Messiah. He portrays the failure of leadership in the time of the judges, a growing hunt for a Messiah in Samuel to Kings, and the messianic hope in the Prophets. This history shows the failure of kingship in Israel and the "rich forecast" (p. 86) of the messianic hope.

The final chapters treat various topics. Chapter 12 provides a guide to the Prophets and Psalms. He offers welcome comments on how understanding literary structure in the Prophets will overcome



the problem of the reader's unfamiliarity with these books, as well as how the Psalms teach us to "take it to the Lord" (p. 96) in all the variety and complexity of life. Chapter 13 explains how Yahweh is the only true God because he fulfills prophecy. Motyer begins with Isaiah's teaching about God as the only God who fulfills prophecy and then lists five types of fulfillment seen in the NT. Since prophecy is often mistreated or ignored for lack of understanding, this section provides useful categories for the novice reader.

Chapter 14 concludes the book with practical advice about knowing Scripture through memorization, reading the Bible every year, and completing "projects" to keep track of topics in a book. His advice is brief and pastoral, though it is not very concrete. The book would have been improved if it had included links to online resources or a bibliography of print materials that could help in Bible reading and memorization.

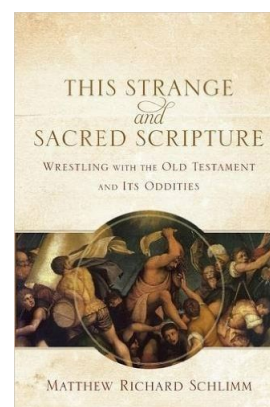
This is a book geared toward a popular audience rather than being an academic work. Motyer's original three lectures are broken down into fourteen short chapters, making each chapter a suitable length for squeezing into a busy day. At times Motyer strikes a conversational tone, such as chapter 3, where he starts out with a "silly question." He frequently uses exclamation points and has left some rhetorical flourishes in the text. Regrettably, on p. 4, Motyer lists the terms used to describe the word of God in Psalm 19, but the heading indicates Psalm 1. Aside from that small error, the book is a welcome volume that will be useful for teachers trying to convince their students about the value of the OT or for intelligent lay persons to learn from a seasoned pastor-theologian why they should love the OT.

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Matthew Richard Schlimm. *This Strange and Sacred Scripture: Wrestling with the Old Testament and Its Oddities*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. xvi + 254 pp. £12.78/\$22.99.

To many people the OT seems like an odd book. Christians have often neglected it and non-Christians have even despised it. It is filled with strange stories and ancient customs that press us to ask a variety of difficult questions: Does science contradict what the Bible says about creation? Why did God allow and even command so much violence in the OT? Does the Bible value men and women equally? How should we understand accounts that appear to contain inconsistencies and even contradictions?

Entering this discussion is Matthew Richard Schlimm, assistant professor of OT at University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. In this book, Schlimm seeks to explain some of the most difficult aspects of the OT while maintaining a commitment to it as Christian Scripture, yet also refusing "easy solutions that disrespect readers' honest reactions to the Bible" (p. xi). The book is organized topically, written for a Christian audience, and designed primarily for college students, seminarians, and educated laity (pp. xi–xii). Although parts of this work are helpful and worth exploring, from an evangelical perspective I have substantial reservations about Schlimm's overall approach and conclusions.



In Chapter 1 Schlimm summarizes many oddities and difficulties that readers encounter in the OT. His thesis throughout is that by viewing the OT as “our friend in faith” (p. 5) we are able to maintain commitment to it while also having the freedom to question it. Just as friends occasionally disagree with one another, at times the OT and its readers may “have fundamentally different perspectives on some matters” (p. 9), but by persisting in relationship with the OT, Schlimm argues, we will grow in our faith and benefit from its wise, if at times strange, perspective.

Chapters 2–11 examine various issues that readers often find problematic in a careful study of the OT. Schlimm discusses the relationship between the early chapters of Genesis and modern claims of evolutionary science (chs. 2–3), arguing that the biblical accounts of Genesis 1–4 are best understood figuratively and thus do not contravene the theory of evolution (p. 42). He explores the prevalence of unfaithful activity (ch. 4) and violence (ch. 5) in the OT, gender issues (ch. 6), strange elements in OT law (ch. 7) and its modern applicability (ch. 8), perceived contradictions within the Bible (ch. 9), prayers of sadness and anger (ch. 10), and the wrath of God (ch. 11).

The concluding chapter addresses the question of the OT’s authority and brings the discussion full circle by advocating that the OT be viewed as “our friend in faith.” Schlimm argues that rather than rulers or bosses—figures with more overt authority over us—it is our friends who truly shape and influence us. By viewing the OT this way, Schlimm concludes, we will be offered “a richer, fuller, and more faithful life than we could ever manage on our own” (p. 207). An appendix at the end offers a literal translation of Genesis 2:4b–4:16 along with some commentary on its literary features.

Several aspects of Schlimm’s work in this book are commendable. His writing is lucid, organized, and free of unnecessary technical jargon, making it accessible to the wider audience he is addressing (cf. p. xi). In particular, his chapters discussing the strange laws of the Bible (ch. 7) and prayers of sadness and anger (ch. 10) are well balanced and would be helpful for those wanting to grapple with these often perplexing sections of Scripture.

However, other elements of this work are difficult to agree with. His view that the creation account and the bulk of prediluvian narrative are figurative and non-historical is not convincing in my view (for an alternative reading of Genesis 1–4, see C. John Collins, *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006]). Moreover, although Schlimm concludes in chapter 2 that the fall narrative of Genesis 3 is figurative, in chapter 4 he seems to view the fall as an historical event, saying, “Moral living has always been challenging, ever since humanity left Eden” (p. 58). In addition, while his discussion of gender advocates egalitarianism, he explicitly acknowledges that 1 Timothy 2:11–14 is “at odds” with his interpretation (p. 92n24). One is left wondering at this point if the NT is our friend in faith as well, and what this means for a Christian interpretation of gender roles in the Bible.

My most substantial disagreement with this work, though, pertains to Schlimm’s overriding metaphor of the OT as “our friend in faith.” Schlimm is critical of classical views of biblical authority that advocate inerrancy and infallibility, and his recasting of the OT as our “friend” does not invest appropriate authority in the biblical text. Although our friends certainly shape us and heavily influence our identity, ultimately they are not authorities *over* us. We may disagree with friends and disregard their counsel with no direct repercussions. We have no *responsibility* to obey our friends’ instruction or teaching. The same can hardly be said of our relationship with the Bible.

In his closing discussion Schlimm seems unduly skeptical of authorities such as rulers or bosses, noting that such positions can easily be abused and intimating that our obedience to them is typically

rote and mechanical (pp. 204–5). This characterization seems unnecessary and is ultimately irrelevant to a discussion of the OT’s authority, since the misuse of authority does not invalidate its proper use. Perhaps a better metaphor for understanding the OT’s authority would be to view it as a “friendly ruler”—one who has explicit authority over us and whom we are responsible to obey, yet one who does not abuse this authority, using it for our good always (cf. Deut 6:24). Those interested in exploring tough questions in the Bible within an evangelical framework are instead encouraged to read Christopher J. H. Wright, *The God I Don’t Understand: Reflections on Tough Questions of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

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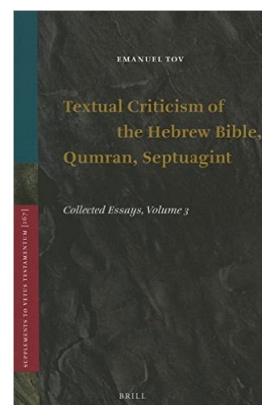
Emanuel Tov. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, Septuagint: Collected Essays, Volume 3*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 167. Leiden: Brill, 2015. xxiii + 539 pp. £132.00/\$218.00.

Progress in textual criticism is cumulative—we stand on the shoulders of giants. This collection of erudite essays demonstrates just that. Emanuel Tov is professor emeritus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and author of such groundbreaking works as *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011).

This book, the third volume of his collected writings (volumes 1–2 were published in 1999 and 2008), is a compilation of thirty-three revised and updated articles written by Tov between 2008 and 2014. His treatments of textual criticism fall into three major areas: (1) Hebrew Bible, (2) Qumran, and (3) Septuagint. These sections contain 18, 9, and 6 essays, respectively.

Readers of this journal might be especially interested to get the author’s take on the textual diversity of authoritative collections (ch. 2), the concept of consistency in the world of ancient scribes and translators (ch. 3), the diffusion of biblical manuscripts (ch. 5), computer-assisted tools for textual criticism (ch. 7), the close of the *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, 40 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955–2009) publication project (ch. 20), and the Septuagint between Judaism and Christianity (ch. 30). All of these studies, as well as the others not mentioned above, have many implications for surrounding disciplines. Limited by space considerations, however, only two examples will be highlighted here.

One area that would be pertinent to other fields, especially NT studies, would be the diffusion of biblical manuscripts in antiquity. In his essay on this topic, Tov states, “The peak years of scroll production, at least for those found at Qumran, were between 100 BCE and 50 CE, again in ever-increasing numbers” (p. 61). While Tov acknowledges that the available evidence is limited and such approximations are still speculative, these do not lead him to the conclusion that biblical manuscripts were rare or inaccessible. For example, he cogently maintains, “There is no solid evidence in favor of the idea that in early centuries there were very few or no copies of the biblical books in the private domain and that such copies were found only in the Temple” (p. 73). At the same time, his attempt to better estimate the number of scrolls circulating in antiquity is unnecessarily impeded by some of his



stated assumptions, such as when he says, “In early centuries, the literacy rate was very low, and *this assumption makes it unlikely* that there would have been more than a few copies of the biblical books among the public in those centuries” (p. 74, italics added). For a brief survey of problems associated with such widely held scholarly assumptions about ancient literacy, see my article, “Ancient Literacy in New Testament Research: Incorporating A Few More Lines of Enquiry,” *TJ* 36 (2015): 161–89.

The second example included here is more philosophical in nature than many other chapters, as Tov himself acknowledges. While analyzing the milieu of ancient biblical scribes and translators, he argues, “I suggest that consistency was not part of their world... The absence of consistency did not disturb the ancients, since the aspiration for consistency is an invention of later centuries” (p. 36). He goes on to conclude that “the ancients did not strive for consistency” (p. 44). But the ancients were not so categorical, as can be seen in the writings of Strabo, the Greek historian and geographer (ca. 64/63 BCE–24 CE) who laments at length regarding the inconsistency of what ancients wrote and even how they spelled. In fact, Strabo devotes a long section in one of his writings to textual inconsistencies and his desire for more consistency. Three brief citations from Strabo will need to suffice.

Strabo writes, “Some change the text and make it read ‘Alazones,’ others ‘Araazones,’ and for the words ‘from Alybê’ they read ‘from Alopê,’ or ‘from Alobê.’” He then states, “[Ephorus] change of the text, with innovations so contrary to the evidence of the early manuscripts, looks like rashness.” Still later he explains, “One should spell the name with two l’s he says, but on account of the metre the poet spells it with only one... How, then, can the opinions of these men deserve approval? ... [T]hese men also disturb the early text ... some things are arbitrarily inserted in the text” (*Geog.* 12.1 LCL 211:404–9).

None of these counterexamples from Strabo should mute the more general warning bell that Tov sounds, namely, that the concept of consistency does not apply equally to every kind of literary activity. But a compelling case can be made in the opposite direction of his unqualified assertions above that many ancients in the world of the biblical writers, scribes, and translators *did* care about consistency, and the aspiration for consistency was *not* merely an invention of later centuries. This conclusion has obvious implications for the doctrine of Scripture, not just the field of textual criticism.

In any case, Tov’s remarkable collection is packed with meticulous research and a wealth of knowledge. He has provided an elegant account for students and a plethora of knowledge for scholars, demonstrating again that when it comes to the vast domain of textual criticism, we can never know too much.

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— NEW TESTAMENT —

Ernst Baasland. *Parables and Rhetoric in the Sermon on the Mount: New Approaches to a Classical Text*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 351. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015. xxxii + 703 pp. £114.46/\$269.00.

It is a joy to read a work that is the fruit of a lifetime of study. *Parables and Rhetoric in the Sermon on the Mount* by Ernst Baasland is such a work. In this monograph, Baasland (retired professor at MF Norwegian School of Theology) argues that an application of the insights of parable theory opens up the way for “a new approach to the Sermon on the Mount” (p. v).

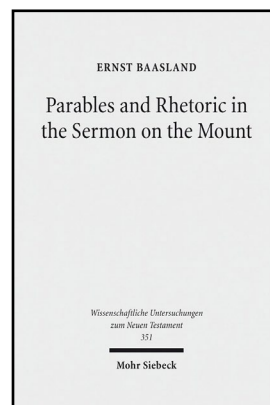
Baasland’s study has dual foci: investigating both the parables and rhetoric of the Sermon on the Mount (SM) (p. v). Baasland laments that although “more than one third” of the SM consists of parables, “scholarship has too often neglected this important issue” (pp. v, 584). Baasland’s work seeks to fill this lacuna.

Baasland takes an inductive approach in writing this monograph. Chapter one surveys the history of interpretation of the SM (since Jülicher); then, in chapters two through eight, Baasland meticulously analyzes the text, saving his core argumentation for the conclusion of his book in chapter nine. This allows his readers to consider all the evidence presented to make an informed decision regarding the validity of Baasland’s thesis, which can be stated thus:

The parables and rhetoric of the Sermon on the Mount illuminate its religious and philosophical setting. The Jewish background for the Sermon is often investigated and this task is continued here, but simultaneously with more emphasis on the parallels in the (Greek) Hellenistic literature. Through the parables and rhetoric in the Sermon and its parallels in Jewish and Graeco-Roman Literature we obtain a better understanding of the philosophy of life in the Sermon.... The rhetoric of the SM wants to persuade the would-be disciple to move in a certain direction. The extensive use of parables demonstrates that the SM seeks to shape the follower’s lifestyle according to a profound wisdom [i.e., a lifestyle reflecting superabundant generosity]. (pp. v, 490, 630)

It is helpful to understand Baasland’s *a priori* assumptions in approaching the text of the SM. Baasland assumes that both the SM and Luke’s Sermon on the Plain share common sources in Mark, the hypothetical “Q” document, and a certain *Vorlage* consisting “most likely” of a deliberative speech within Q, which Baasland labels the “Inaugural Speech” (pp. 36–37, 594, 598). Baasland is also influenced by Kennedy’s rhetorical work on the SM (George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984]), and he follows Kennedy’s conclusion that the species of rhetoric employed in the SM is deliberative, rather than judicial or epideictic (pp. 32, 599). Baasland’s rhetorical outline of the SM is as follows: *Exordium* (5:3–12); *Propositio* (5:13–20 or 5:12–20); *Argumentatio* I (5:21–48); *Argumentatio* II (6:1–18); *Argumentatio* III (6:19–34); *Argumentatio* IV (7:1–12); and *Peroratio* (7:13–27).

There is much to commend in Baasland’s work. It is meticulously detailed (perhaps too much so as the fourth chapter alone has 850 footnotes), exudes erudition acquired over a lifetime of scholarly



inquiry on the topics at hand, and the comprehensive treatment of each passage (including the surveys of the various schools of interpretation) is worth the price of this book.

As good as Baasland's work is, it is not without faults. First, the book is not accessible (neither in its content or price) to non-specialists. Baasland's assumption of his readers' fluency in German, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Coptic, and Aramaic makes for a steep climb up the SM. Second, and more systemic, is the fact that Baasland tends to contradict himself at different points. Regarding his structural outline (p. 33) Baasland initially claims that Matt 5:12 is part of the *exordium*, but later apparently changes his mind and labels it as part of his *propositio* (p. 599). Baasland is also imprecise and inconsistent in his claim regarding the amount of parabolic material in the SM. He initially claims that "more than one third" of the SM consists of parables (p. v), then later changes this language to "about one third consists of metaphorical sayings" (p. 584). This is important because Baasland seems to distinguish between "parables" and "metaphorical sayings" as do other parables scholars (pp. 4–5, 13–17). Baasland's work would have been improved had he attempted to clearly define what he means by the term "parable." Third, Baasland's classification of the SM as deliberative rhetoric and his rhetorical outline remain unconvincing. Baasland concedes that there is evidence of judicial and epideictic rhetoric throughout the SM (p. 599). Perhaps it is best to see the SM as "Christian rhetoric" in which Matthew/Jesus employed rhetorical devices in innovative ways to best communicate the Christian message, rather than following a strict, formulaic outline.

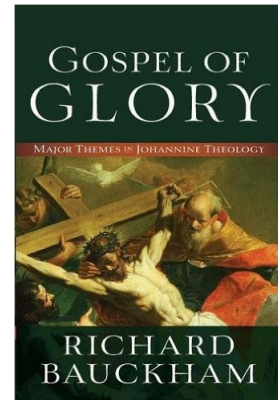
In sum, *Parables and Rhetoric* reveals the complexity in contemporary approaches to the SM and the parables of Jesus. While some of Baasland's conclusions are unconvincing, he does succeed in demonstrating that the parables and rhetoric employed in the SM "illuminate its religious and philosophical setting" (p. v). Despite the steep climb and price, Baasland's work demands a hearing from serious students of the SM.

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Richard Bauckham. *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. xvii + 237 pp. £14.99/\$24.99.

For readers who anticipate the full course meal of his forthcoming commentary on the Gospel of John (NIGTC), with this book Bauckham, senior scholar at Ridley Hall (Cambridge), presents a platter of weighty hors d'oeuvres, each one a meal in itself. The volume consists of an array of eight themes, most having been presented as conference lectures and two having been previously published. Though the chapters are self-contained essays that can be read out of sequence, some are best read in order, which the author occasionally implies with comments that anticipate subsequent chapters, especially noted in the first two chapters.

The first chapter engages the idea of "individualism" by which Bauckham does not have in view Western individualism. Rather, he distinguishes his use of the term as more closely associated with "individuation or individuality." His concern is to counter



the spell that “the imaginary Johannine community has cast ... over Johannine scholarship” (p. 2). Thus, he highlights the Gospel’s feature concerning the significance of the individual’s relationship to God through Jesus. He makes his point convincingly with tabulation of sixty-seven aphoristic sayings that are unrelenting in not allowing readers or hearers “to forget that response to Jesus has to be individual to be real” (p. 7).

In John’s Gospel Jesus calls for conversion that entails “an intimate and abiding relationship between the individual and Jesus” (pp. 9–10; cf. 18). Bauckham warns against scholarly temptations for either “theological or sociological reasons, to flatten the contours of the canon to the detriment of this specially Johannine emphasis” (p. 19) upon individual response to Jesus. These insights are welcome contributions to Johannine scholarship, for they reinforce observations and beliefs held by many Christians who claim no academic credentials. The author challenges scholars who assume that John’s Gospel contains the message of a theoretical Johannine community to engage the Gospel’s text and recognize its invitation to readers to discover the Jesus others have come to believe individually.

This divine to human relationship derives from the Father’s love for the Son. Thus, the theme of chapter 2, “Divine and Human Community” naturally follows. Here, Bauckham features the meaning of “one” in John’s Gospel, emphasizing the unity of God’s people that comes about in Jesus who is in the Father. So, the oneness of God’s people is analogous to the oneness of the Son and the Father, an analogy that is repeatedly suggested by several expressions in the Gospel (e.g., καθώς, 6:57; 10:14–15; 13:34; 20:21). From here he engages the social Trinity concept of recent theologians which he believes is in agreement with John’s binitarian thought. His discussion features Moltmann’s thought while he finds John’s “in-one-another” expression of the Father-Son relationship a corrective to Volz’s too restrictive concept of the imagery.

Chapters 3 and 4 alone render the book worth purchasing. “Glory” is the theme of chapter 3 where Bauckham demonstrates that John’s use of δόξα bears the Hebrew senses of “honor, reputation,” and “visible splendor,” and sometimes “slipping back and forth from one meaning to the other” (p. 44). Similarly, δοξάζω signifies “to glorify” but can mean “to endow with visible splendor.” Throughout Israel’s history God reveals himself “only in hiddenness” (p. 46). So, when the audible Word became visible flesh, God’s glory hidden in the cloud remains hidden but veiled in human flesh, a kind of veil that allows for revelation to take on a visible form. In John’s Gospel glory “helps to explicate the relationship between the Sinai covenant ... and the incarnation and cross of Jesus” (p. 43). In the cross a “paradox—honor in humiliation, visible splendor in disfigurement and death—exists to make us reckon with a love that is sufficient to resolve the paradox” (p. 61). It is Jesus’s resurrection that distinguishes his crucifixion from all others and constitutes it as his glory. Here, Bauckham makes a claim to which I will return: he identifies Jesus’s resurrection as “the seventh of the Gospel’s seven signs” (p. 60), and as with all the signs, “it signals revelation of God’s glory,” but specifically “that revelation to which all the other signs have only pointed” (p. 60).

Concerning John 1:14—“the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory”—Bauckham rightly contends, against others that the “we” are not Christian believers in general but are eyewitnesses who saw Jesus in his flesh. Here he echoes his programmatic thesis in *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*. Jesus’s disciples bear witness concerning the revelation of God’s glory through Jesus in the flesh by way of “exquisitely told narratives” within the Fourth Gospel (p. 68).

In chapter 4 the author offers a fresh approach to John’s interpretation of Jesus’s “death-and-resurrection/exaltation” by tracing his use of four theologically laden words: love, life, glory, and truth.

Here, the Lazarus episode figures prominently. Jesus restores Lazarus “with mortal life as a sign of the eternal life that his own death will acquire for his friends” (p. 67). Bauckham insightfully points to Isaiah 25 as a link between the wedding banquet and restoration of life to Lazarus but “even more importantly, the seventh, climactic sign, which is Jesus’ own resurrection” (p. 72).

Concerning the third term, “glory,” the author provides a helpful summary of his previous chapter. Of the four words, “truth” is the most difficult “to define in John’s usage” (p. 74). In John’s Gospel the adjective “true” can mean “true as opposed to false,” but often it bears the sense of “real” in contrast to “provisional,” for Jesus is the real light, the real bread from heaven, and the real vine. So, a significant way in which John uses “truth” with reference to Jesus’s “death-and-resurrection/exaltation” is the many ways his death fulfills Scripture. For example, Jesus is “the true Passover Lamb, slain to effect the new exodus from the empire of sin (1:29; 19:33, 36). He is the true temple of the messianic age from which the water of life flows (7:38; 19:34; 21:11; cf. Ezek 47:1–12)” (p. 74). Jesus’s fulfilling of Scripture “enacts God’s faithfulness” (p. 74).

Bauckham discovers no explicit reference to either the Lord’s Table or Christian baptism in John’s Gospel. Yet, as he argues in chapter 5, it is hardly improper to draw upon this Gospel to fill out “sacramental liturgies and spirituality with words and images” since Christian “sacraments represent those central realities of salvation in Christ to which this Gospel gives memorable expression” (p. 107).

In chapter 6 Bauckham respectfully engages Bultmann’s concept of John’s dualism but eventually rejects his analysis of the binaries of light/darkness, earthly/heavenly, blindness/sightedness, children of the devil/children of God, etc. (see pp. 121–24 for tabulation of John’s dualities). The arrival of the Son in the flesh set the dualistic categories of the Gospel into motion. “Light dispels darkness, requiring decision, while the world that rejects Jesus is conjured and saved by him through its very rejection of him” (p. 129).

Chapter 7 features correlations between the first week portrayed in the Gospel and the last week, the Passion. Bauckham lays this out in a helpful chart (pp. 134–35). With the same measure of careful reading that he gives to the other themes, he offers insightful commentary concerning how John crafts the beginning of his Gospel so that it “contains, in anticipation, its end” (p. 184).

In his final chapter the author underscores how the Synoptic Gospels and John’s Gospel complement one another rather than stand in contradiction. I would prefer more carefully formulated wording than “symbolic” versus “literal,” which Bauckham accepts from Luke Timothy Johnson, when countering his claim that unlike the Synoptic Gospels, John’s Jesus “appears as more a symbolic than a literal figure” because he carries John’s “narrative burden of revealing God in the world” (p. 200). Johnson seems to confuse literal with real and symbolic with unreal, a significant category error. Had Bauckham corrected Johnson’s misused terms, he would have clarified the root of the error. Indeed, because Jesus is the audible Word made visible in flesh he is divine anthropomorphism incarnate. But this hardly legitimates Johnson’s assessment, which Bauckham properly rejects by saying, “The ‘metahistorical’ aspect of John’s story—Jesus comes from God and returns to God—does not deprive the historical of its reality, but interprets its meaning” (p. 200).

Two issues are worthy of brief counter-response. I quickly pass over the first because others have already addressed Bauckham’s rejection of the apostle John as the Fourth Gospel’s author. In my estimation, the arguments presented in this book would be enhanced were he to accept John’s authorship. Even so, readers will benefit greatly because the authorship issue is unobtrusive.

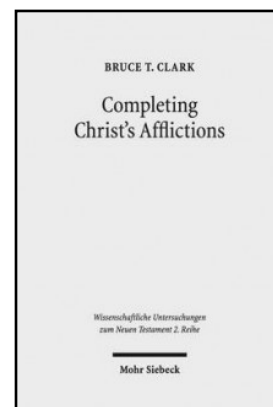
The second issue warrants more attention. Twice, earlier, I have mentioned that Bauckham regards Jesus's resurrection as the seventh of seven signs in John's Gospel. He claims that John 2:18–19 specifically identifies the resurrection as a sign. Three factors count against his argument. First, Jesus's signs, whether miraculous or not, point away from themselves to the greater reality they symbolically represent, namely his "death-and-resurrection/exaltation" (to use Bauckham's expression). Second, it seems apparent that Bauckham misconstrues the use of "sign" in John 2:18–19. After Jesus clears the temple of merchants, the Jewish leaders inquire of him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" If they had eyes to see, they would have recognized the clearing of the temple as a sign. Thus, Jesus's reply itself—"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up"—completes the sign with authorization for his actions in the temple. That Jesus offers a riddle rather than perform another act, such as a miracle, does not mean that he denies the authorities the sign they demand. His riddle functions as an integrated feature of his dramatized sign, simultaneously revealing and concealing reference to his body as the temple that will be sacrificed and three days later raised from the dead. Third, Bauckham's own discussion concerning the meaning of "true" as "real" in contrast to "provisional"—in the sense that Jesus is the real light, the real bread from heaven, and the real vine—may support my point. Jesus's exaltation by way of the cross is the reality pointed to by all of his signs, dramatized or spoken (whether miraculous or not), which are provisional. Thus, Jesus's resurrection is not the seventh and climactic sign, as Bauckham suggests. Rather, it is the ultimate revelatory act to which all of Jesus's signs point. The final and climactic sign in the series of signs John's Gospel features is the raising of Lazarus. But these quibbles are small and take nothing from the cache of riches that awaits students, preachers, and scholars who will read *Gospel of Glory*.

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Bruce T. Clark. *Completing Christ's Afflictions: Christ, Paul, and the Reconciliation of All Things*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.383. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015. xii + 190 pp. £66.18/\$105.00.

Thirty-five years ago, Morna Hooker published an essay entitled "Interchange and Suffering" in which she called exegetes of Col 1:24 to account: "Most commentators are concerned to stress what Paul does *not* mean here ... [this verse] provides an interesting example of the way in which commentators have allowed their theological convictions to influence their interpretation of the text" (in *Suffering and Martyrdom in the New Testament*, ed. W. Horbury and B. McNeil [Cambridge: CUP, 1981], 81–82). Apparently the condition has altered little in the intervening decades, for Bruce Clark begins his book (based on his Cambridge PhD thesis) by remarking in near identical fashion that biblical scholars fail to investigate the text with the same sort of straightforward, honest exegesis that would be used anywhere else.

Completing Christ's Afflictions represents Clark's attempt to fill this vacancy, and its seven chapters address critical internal and external matters. Chapter 1 offers a concise history of the interpretation of Col 1:24, by which Clark demonstrates a tendency among commentators—both



pre-modern and modern—to ignore the context in which the verse is embedded. Thus, his specific research question is “How does Col 1:24 relate to its context?” (p. 11). However, one of the perennial challenges of the text is how to render the verb ἀνταναπληρώω, which occurs only here in the NT and which has been traditionally rendered “to fill up” or “to complete.” Thus, chapter 2 contributes detailed analysis of the term’s usage in Greek literature written between the 4th century BCE and the mid-4th century CE. He concludes that in nearly every instance the word conveys a consistent “storyline” best captured by the translation “to bring to completion in place of another” (p. 158), and that this high level of consistency ought to dictate the way it is translated in Colossians 1:24. Chapter 3 returns to internal concerns, taking up exploration of the other constituents in the verse (e.g., νῦν, χάριω, ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, etc.), and chapters 4–5 turn focus to the main actors in Colossians 1, seeking to identify the “Christ” whose afflictions are completed and the “Paul” who completes them.

Chapter 5 is particularly noteworthy, for Clark asserts that Paul stands in an entirely unique relationship with Christ as διάκονος (“servant”): Paul’s capacity to “bring to completion” Christ’s afflictions relates immediately to this position, and is thus irreplicable. Moreover, the afflictions of Christ and Paul *together* “constitute the entirety of the divine act of reconciliation” (p. 156). Chapter 6 delivers exegesis of 2 Corinthians 5:18–6:4, a passage which shares substantial conceptual overlap with Colossians 1:24. Reading the latter in light of the former lends credence to several claims, he writes: (a) the suffering of Christ and Paul there spoken of stands distinct from the suffering of the Christian community, (b) Paul’s suffering is distinguishable from Christ’s, and yet (c) it partakes nevertheless of the same nature, and (d) the *telos* of Christ’s and Paul’s suffering is “to ‘present’ God’s people (to God)” (p. 154). Chapter 7 ties off the project with concise summaries and restatements of Clark’s findings.

I begin with several features of this book that give me pause, before calling attention to its considerable merits. First, given that the audience which this journal targets consists in part of students and pastors, it bears noting that *Completing Christ’s Afflictions* is quite a difficult read both in terms of its content and its style; the former of course could not be helped, for lexical studies trade in minutiae; the latter—even in the case of a scholarly monograph such as this—could have been alleviated with greater attention to the lucidity and accessibility of the prose. Second, it seems odd that a book which places such a high premium on word studies never engages the work of Ferdinand de Saussure or Ludwig Wittgenstein—or at least James Barr, whose shadow still stretches across biblical studies. Clark attributes his methodology to Moisés Silva’s *Biblical Words and Their Meaning*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) and footnotes several books by John Lyons, but nowhere does he acknowledge the dangers of lexical studies, much less indicate how he avoided them. Third, one of the book’s central claims is that Col 1:24 and 2 Cor 5:18–6:4 refer *solely* to Paul’s own suffering and not the suffering which believers in general experience. However, even if one is prepared to concede that Paul speaks concerning himself in these passages, it is quite a large jump to argue that Paul therefore envisions a categorically distinct kind of suffering to which he alone is privy. It seems to me that the use of the first person plural which peppers 2 Corinthians 5 invites a more imaginative reading.

Even if there are elements which cause the reader concern, *Completing Christ’s Afflictions* is undoubtedly an exceptional book which warrants glowing commendation. Several qualities chiefly distinguish it. First, it is a volume which required ingenuity to execute and courage to publish: not only does he explore avenues which scholars have long called “dead ends,” but he manages to mount fresh arguments which assail near consensus opinions (as in the case of his interpretation of 2 Cor 5:21) in biblical studies. Second, Clark’s book exhibits his remarkable ability to read large swaths of material

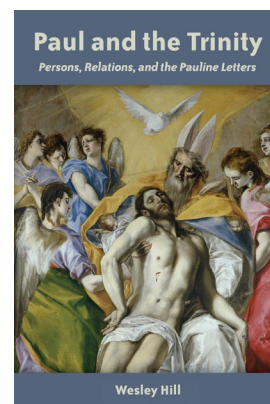
and determine patterns of continuity within that material. This proficiency is perhaps best displayed in his interaction with the ancient Greek corpus, but it is also evidenced in his thorough knowledge of the letters of Paul to which his footnotes and parenthetical comments bear witness. Third, his book has surely established itself as *the* starting point for all future interactions with Paul's most difficult verse. *Completing Christ's Afflictions* may require earnest attention, but the substantial payoff amply rewards the reader's efforts.

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Wesley Hill. *Paul and the Trinity: Persons, Relations, and the Pauline Letters*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, xiv + 210 pp. £12.99/\$26.00.

Wesley Hill's book on *Paul and the Trinity* grows out of his PhD work at Durham University under Francis Watson. It is encouraging that a topic like this would be acceptable for doctoral research; the chances of seeing such in NT scholarship twenty or thirty years ago were almost nil. The book is nicely structured with an introductory chapter and then a chapter setting the course for the study. In chapters three and four the relation of Jesus to God is considered through an analysis of Phil 2:6–11 and 1 Cor 8:6 and 15:24–28. Hill then turns in the final chapter to the Spirit's relation to God and Jesus before offering a conclusion.

In chapter one Hill situates his study against the broader landscape of NT scholarship. He argues that scholars should follow a trinitarian model in unpacking the identities of God, Jesus, and the Spirit in Pauline theology. First, he considers the low christology of scholars like James Dunn, James McGrath, and P. M. Casey. These scholars emphasize Paul's monotheism and contend that Jesus does not quite reach the same stature as God in Pauline thought. Second, another historical approach which features a number of scholars, including Richard Bauckham and Larry Hurtado, argues for a high christology. There are distinctions between Bauckham and Hurtado, of course, but they both maintain that Jesus was worshiped as God and Bauckham contends that Jesus is included in the divine identity. Despite the differences between the scholars surveyed here, they all read Paul historically and emphasize that they are not privileging later creeds like Nicea in formulating Pauline christology. Hill argues for another approach. Whereas previous scholars have asked a *vertical* question, seeking to decipher whether Jesus reached God's level, Hill says the question of the identities of God, Jesus, and the Spirit should be pursued by considering their relation to one another. He finds predecessors in the work of Nils Dahl, Leander Keck, and more recently Kavin Rowe and Francis Watson. Hill also considers trinitarian theology today with a brief sketch of Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, Jurgen Moltmann, John Zizioulas, Colin Gunton, and Robert Jenson. Recent trinitarian theology emphasizes that the persons of the Trinity are known by their relation to one another. Hill opts for a two-fold approach in his own study. First, he offers a historical reading of Paul to defend his relational understanding of the Trinity. Second, he uses trinitarian theologies as dialogical and dialectical resources to interpret Paul. Exegesis and theology, then, function together to interpret Paul.



Hill's chapter here is most interesting and illuminating and mainly helpful. I wonder, however, if there is some lack of precision. He acknowledges a variety of trinitarian *theologies* regarding relations today. On what basis does he choose his dialogue partners and is clarity lost if the category of relations is selected without specifying the differences between the various trinitarian theologies proffered? Also, I wondered if the historical (Hurtado and Bauckham) and theological (Hill) approaches should be played off against one another. In other words, there is more than one way to skin the cat. Hill's perspective is illuminating but so also is Bauckham's. They are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

In the second chapter Hill examines texts where God is related to Jesus. For instance, God's raising Jesus from the dead is linked in Romans 4 to the justification of the ungodly and to the life generated in Sarah's womb. Hill argues that Abraham's God in the flow of Romans 4 is christologically determined, so that the identity of Abraham's God cannot be segregated from the identity of Jesus Christ. So too, in Rom 8:11 and 8:29 the God who raised Jesus is the one who foreknew the Gentiles as his people, so that "God's identity is bound up with the Son" (p. 64). Similarly, in Galatians, God's raising of Jesus is linked with the calling of Paul and the calling of the Gentiles to faith. God's identity, then, is revealed in his actions in history in Jesus Christ. Hill concludes from the priority of the Christ-event in Paul's theology that the category of monotheism should not receive precedence in unpacking Pauline christology. Instead, we should begin with the identity of God which is bound up from the beginning with the identity of Jesus. God is who he is by virtue of his relation with Jesus. Hill clarifies that he is not thinking of intra-trinitarian relations but of the identity of God and Jesus in soteriological contexts.

Such reflections stir up profound questions about the nature of the Trinity, and Hill doesn't clearly opt for Aquinas over Jenson or vice-versa (see p. 74, n. 62). Still, I wonder if some further discussion might have helped at this juncture. God's relation to Jesus *in history* (raising him from the dead for instance) is not necessary for God's relation to the Son in the immanent Trinity. Otherwise, the incarnation would be necessary for divine identity, and the freedom and grace of God in redemption are jeopardized. To be sure, Hill restricts himself to the economic Trinity (p. 165n80), but some clarifying comments would have helped readers traverse the rugged and steep slopes of trinitarian theology, for discussion about the identity of God, despite Hill's limiting his study to the economic Trinity, almost inevitably raises questions about the immanent Trinity. Christ as creator (1 Cor 8:6) and his "being in the form of God" (Phil 2:6), after all, are not reflections on the economic Trinity. Hill is informed by the early creeds and interpreters of the church, but he does not follow them all the way, for their christological and exegetical reflections were not restricted to the economic Trinity.

Chapter three examines God's relation to Jesus in Philippians 2:6–11, and Hill argues that the identities of both are mutually determined. God is identified with reference to Jesus, and Jesus is identified with reference to God. Still, God in Pauline theology sends Jesus, exalts him, and raises him from the dead. It seems that Jesus, says Hill, is subordinate to God. Does that fact call into question the mutuality posited by the author? Hill argues that the relationship between God and Jesus is complex and asymmetrical. On the one hand, they are one, but on the other hand, Jesus obeys God and does everything to his glory. Trinitarian theology functions as a resource to explain these various ways of talking in Pauline texts. In the great confessional text found in Philippians 2:6–11 Jesus's exaltation redounds to the glory of God. Hill reflects on the interpretations of other scholars, and argues that the identity of Jesus and God are bound together in this text. At the same time, all that happens to Jesus is for God's glory. Hill calls on the resources of Trinitarian theology in the early church to unpack the unity between God and Jesus and the asymmetrical relationship between them.

Chapter four is similar in some respects, for Hill pursues the same question of the relation between God and Jesus with respect to 1 Corinthians 8:6 and 15:24–28. Again, he argues for what he calls “asymmetrical mutuality.” There is a sense, says Hill, in which Jesus is subordinate, and yet God’s identity as Father is determined as well by his relation to Jesus. He argues from 1 Corinthians 8:6 that God and Jesus both share the divine name, and yet Jesus is still distinct from the Father. Hill rightly observes that Bauckham’s own construal lacks complexity here, for he fails to observe the distinctions between God and Jesus. Hill says that we need to call on Trinitarian resources from the past and embrace *redoublement*. What we have here are two realities: Jesus and God share the same fundamental identity, and they are distinct from one another. He sees the same reality in 1 Corinthians 15:24–28, though I think Hill strays from the text and Pauline categories in saying that we almost have a two-way submission here. Actually, Hill mainly and rightly emphasizes the distinctions *and* mutuality between the Father and the Son. The submission of the Son in 1 Corinthians 15 doesn’t cancel out the truth that the Son is the Son. We see again the asymmetrical mutuality between the Father and the Son, so that there is both identity and distinction.

In chapter 5 the relation between God, Jesus, and the Spirit is explored. Once again, Hill argues for asymmetrical mutuality. God is the Father of the Son, and his identity is constituted by his relationship to the Son. At the same time, he sent Jesus and exalted him. So too, the identities of the Father and the Son are constituted by their relationship to the Spirit, and the Spirit is who he is by virtue of his relation to the Father and the Son. The Spirit, after all, is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. Hill works this out exegetically by considering 1 Cor 12:3; Gal 4:4–7; and 2 Cor 3:17. The mutual identity between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit is also illustrated and defended by consulting a number of other texts in Paul. Hence, those who opt for a binitarian reading of Paul badly misread his theology, as if the identity of God and Jesus can be explicated apart from the Spirit.

This is an important and largely convincing study. Hill has shown that the Father, Son, and Spirit in Paul are constituted by their relation to one another. Still, some of the texts explored also have implications for the immanent Trinity (1 Cor 8:6; Phil 2:6), and Hill doesn’t explore this dimension of the text. He does show, on the other hand, that retrieving the tradition of the early confessions and interpreters helps shed light on Pauline texts. At the same time, and even more fundamentally, these early interpreters came to their conclusions because careful reflection on Pauline texts and the remainder of the canon drove them to formulate what the scriptures teach about God, Christ, and the Spirit. The christology of the early fathers, as Hill shows, is not bereft of exegesis but is grounded in exegesis. They were not satisfied with one-dimensional answers but probed the text and came up with conclusions that accounted for the multifaceted character of the NT witness. Hill reproduces in his own exegesis the kind of biblical and theological reflection which our ancestors practiced. Such conclusions will not convince those who do not see a unified theology in the NT. But after years and years of speculative reconstructions by NT scholars, perhaps we are recognizing afresh that our ancestors were not more speculative than we. Indeed, they were often more grounded in the scriptures and pursued the scriptures with a “faith seeking understanding.” Wesley Hill engages in the same practice in this stimulating work, and we can thank him for that.

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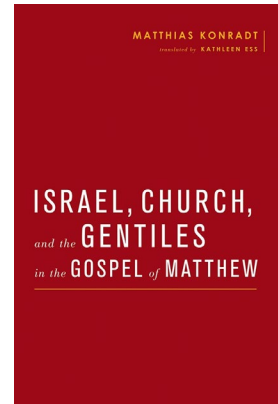
Matthias Konradt. *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew*. Translated by Kathleen Ess. Baylor-Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014. Xiv + 485 pp. £55.12/\$79.95.

This English translation of Konradt's 2007 WUNT monograph, *Israel, Kirche und die Völker im Matthäusevangelium*, circles around several critical Matthean issues in exploring the relationship between Jesus's mission to Israel and to the nations (and by extension the mission of the disciples and the church). That is: how are we to understand the relationship between 10:5–6 (cf. also 15:24) and 28:19? The former instructs the disciples to “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” while the latter sends them to “make disciples of all nations.”

Konradt concludes that there is a strong emphasis on the ministry of Jesus and the disciples to Israel from the outset that does not abate by the end of the narrative. The movement to the Gentiles does not eclipse the mission to Israel, for the disciples “will not have gone through all the towns of Israel” before the Parousia (10:23). Their preaching ministry to Israel, consequently, continues in the life of the church. The universal mission, on the other hand, does not come out of nowhere. It is more than anticipated in the name “son of Abraham” (1:1), the worship of the magi (2:1–12), and appearances of other Gentiles throughout the narrative. But it is more publicly disclosed as the story climaxes in the cross, resurrection, and ascension. These two missions are not to be seen in competition with each other, nor does one “replace” or “supersede” the other. Rather, *the mission to the Gentile world is part of the Jewish Messiah's mission to Israel*; in the OT it is an expected part of the restoration of Israel. More than that, it has been God's intention since the election of Abraham. “Matthean universalism is thus grounded in Israel, just as vice versa, with Abraham, and so from the very beginning, Israel is directed toward the Gentile world” (p. 268). Therefore “28.19 supplements 10.6” (p. 316) because the mission to the nations is a “theological necessity” (p. 309), the “completion of [Jesus's] mission to Israel” (p. 308). This soteriological relationship is encapsulated by Jesus's two-fold messianic identity: Son of David and Son of God. The former pertains to his mission to Israel, which is evident from the beginning and retained throughout the narrative. The latter represents his mission to the world, which is present from the outset but undergoes a “sophisticated unclinking” (p. 287) by the end.

Konradt moves, then, to consider the relationship between Israel and the ecclesia, which is not to be collapsed into the relationship between Israel and the Gentiles. To be sure, the dynamic between 10:5–6 and 28:19 speaks to both, but they are not the same issue. Konradt concludes that the ecclesia should not be considered the new Israel, true Israel, nor in anyway equated with *Israel*. “Rather, the ecclesia is the part of Israel (and the rest of the world) that has recognized the Christ event ... as the eschatological salvific act of Israel's God and has allowed itself be called to discipleship and follow Christ” (p. 336). It now has a mission to both Israel and to all the nations. Israel, therefore, are still “the people of God,” only now with a new *role*: they are the first recipients of the preaching of the Messiah. Thus, Israel is not “replaced” by the church.

Moreover, in Matthew there is no collective or generalized condemnation of Israel. Rather, “Matthew depicts a differentiated reaction to Jesus in Israel” (p. 135) whereby the crowds are distinguished from their leaders (especially those in Jerusalem) who will be judged. The Jerusalem leadership, therefore,



are replaced by the disciples as the teachers of Israel, and the Temple is replaced by the church as the locus to which the Gentiles come for salvation. This is the point of the parables in 21:28–22:14 and the use of Isa 56:7 in 21:13, all of which must be read in the context of chapter 23's woes on the Jerusalem authorities (including "this generation", which again refers to Israel's leaders). The crowds, then, have to choose between the old regime and the new Messiah.

Konradt's multidimensional thesis has a lot to commend it. I will mention only two of its several strengths. While his understanding of Matthean universalism rising organically out of the Messiah's mission to Israel as the fulfilment of OT expectations is not new, his argumentation for it is very thorough and nearly unassailable. This should be a standard work for years to come on the ever pressing question of the relationship between Israel and the nations in the narrative discourse of the first gospel.

Secondly, Konradt is correct that "replacement" theology needs to ignore all the positive attention given to Israel in Matthew. It basically has to make Jesus a failure in his efforts toward "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24). Related, Konradt is right that Israel does not collectively reject Jesus, and Jesus does not generalize his condemning pronouncements. Rather, the "replacement" going on is that of the leadership and the Temple with the disciples and the church. This helps us understand the "whatever you ask in prayer" comment in 21:22. "Whatever" is qualified by the context of the previous verse which is an imprecatory comment on the temple (note Jesus says "this mountain" as he stands in Mount Zion's shadow): the church is guaranteed to receive whatever is asked in relation to the new temple's mission in being a beacon to the idolatrous nations to come to the true and living God.

It is these very strengths, however, that lead me to a couple questions that seem to go unaddressed. How is Israel *Israel*? That is, Konradt claims that "a process of differentiation [is] taking place within Israel ... [that] continues through the persistent task of the mission to Israel" (p. 264). Moreover, "the destruction of Jerusalem becomes a warning that those who set themselves against Jesus and his ecclesia will have to face eschatological punishment" (ibid.). But Konradt also says it is a "mistaken conclusion that non-Christ-believing Judaism is no longer 'Israel'" (p. 345). How then are "those that set themselves against Jesus and his ecclesia" still a part of Israel? Simply insofar as they receive the preaching of the kingdom first? Is that enough? This tension in the thesis seems unresolved.

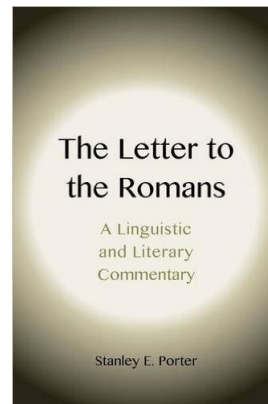
On the other hand, Konradt states that "*Jesus'* people (ὁ λαὸς αὐτοῦ) and *his* Church (μου ἡ ἐκκλησία) are not identical" (p. 344), and the ecclesia "has emerged (and is still emerging) from Israel and the (other) nations" (p. 353). But "the nations will be added to the λαός" (p. 275) as "Gentiles join *Israel* insofar as they are incorporated into the children of Abraham" (p. 321). How are these concepts reconciled (since "it is ultimately insufficient to ... conceive of the ecclesia as a special messianic group within Israel"; p. 349)? Do the nations come *into* Israel through the salvific work of Israel's messiah? Or is the church an entirely separate entity that has grown *out of* Israel? That "Israel and the ecclesia are situated on different soteriological levels" (p. 344) seems confusing in light of Konradt's insistence that Jesus's missions to Israel and the rest of the world are actually one and the same.

Such questions notwithstanding, Konradt's thesis is very strong and the English-reading world is fortunate to have this recent translation.

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Stanley E. Porter. *The Letter to the Romans: A Linguistic and Literary Commentary*. New Testament Monographs 37. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015. xii + 375 pp. £19.50/\$29.50.

Stan Porter needs no introduction since he is one of the most prolific and fascinating NT scholars of our day. Porter takes a distinct approach in this commentary by adopting a linguistic and literary approach. The linguistic approach adopted is Systemic Functional Linguistics. Porter explains this approach in some detail in the introduction, though it is rather difficult to understand for ordinary readers since many technical terms are used to describe the approach. In the commentary proper, on the other hand, the use of such terminology is kept to a minimum so that the reader who is unfamiliar with Systemic Functional Linguistics can follow what Porter is saying. But there is also a liability to this procedure since the basis for some of Porter's claims is not explicated in the commentary. Those who are interested in such will need to await a more detailed and formal approach.



Apart from the emphasis on linguistics, Porter's introduction is quite typical and represents what is found in other standard commentaries. Porter canvases the various purposes of the letter and argues that a number of reasons may account for the letter, but he particularly emphasizes the theological cast of the letter and its status as real letter written to believers in Rome. The letter is divided into a five-part structure: 1) opening (1:1–7); 2) thanksgiving (1:8–15); 3) body (1:16–11:36); 4) parenthesis (12:1–15:33); and 5) closing (16:1–27). In terms of the character of the letter, Porter, like other scholars, sees a dialogical element, and hence emphasizes the diatribe. Still, the focus on the diatribe in some texts (like Rom 3:25–26) is quite distinctive. Porter sees the climax of the letter in chapter 5 where the reconciliation of God with human beings is celebrated. Justification cannot be the climax, according to Porter, since it denotes one's legal status before God and lacks the warmth and relational character present in reconciliation.

The bulk of the commentary consists of a close reading of the letter. Porter wants the reader to hear Paul and to pay careful attention to the text itself. It is useful to indicate some of the judgments made by Porter as a commentator. Porter spies a slap against the empire in the opening which declares that the gospel centers on Jesus Christ. He says that the body of the letter is not anti-imperial, though he sees an anti-imperial theme in believers being identified as God's sons in Romans 8. Despite Porter's claims, a critique of the empire seems unlikely, especially since Paul says nothing negative about the government in Rom 13:1–7. Porter agrees with most that the theme of the letter is in 1:16–17, and he understands God's righteousness forensically. On the other hand, Porter is not shy about traveling his own path. Romans 2:1 is not directed against Jews only but is directed to moral Jews and Gentiles. The obedience in Romans 2 is not hypothetical but represents the change of life of those who have repented of their sins. The sphere of the law (3:19) cannot be limited to the Jews since the word law in Romans is not limited to the Torah (so also according to Porter in 3:21 and 7:7) but may refer to any law written or unwritten. The superior textual reading in 5:1 is not the indicative: "we have peace with God," but the subjunctive: "we should enjoy peace with God."

Porter also adopts readings that are endorsed by many scholars, especially evangelicals. Romans 3:25 has the meaning of propitiation, says Porter, no matter how unpalatable that is to moderns, though he dissents from the notion that it refers to the mercy seat. We are not surprised to learn as well that

he supports “faith in Jesus Christ” since Porter has contributed to this debate previously. The contested words in Rom. 5:12 ἐφ’ ᾧ, where the impact of Adam’s sin is discussed, should be translated “because.”

We also get Porter’s take on matters where there is significant debate. For instance, baptism, which is referenced in Romans 6, was by immersion according to the author. Disagreement on Romans 7 will continue until the parousia, and Porter says Paul describes his own experience as a believer. The role of the law in Rom 10:4 is also intensely debated, and Porter doesn’t go into details but argues that the law has come to an end relative to righteousness. Porter thinks Paul is ironic in 11:15 so that life from the dead means Israel would accept the resurrection of Jesus or that it symbolizes Israel returning to God as the promised people. The salvation of all Israel (11:26) includes both Jews and Gentiles and thus the redemption of the church is promised.

A few other judgments of Porter are worth noting. Calling Jesus Lord in 10:13 is equivalent to identifying him as Yahweh. Porter’s expertise in grammar made us wonder how he will handle the participles and infinitives in Rom 12:9–21. He sees them as imperatival, though we are not given much of an explanation as to why he makes this judgment. When it comes to the exhortation to obey ruling authorities (13:1–7), Porter says that the call to submit is limited to morally righteous authorities. In Romans 14 the weak are primarily Jewish, while the strong are mainly Gentile, and the dispute is over Jewish food laws. It is not a problem that Romans 16 addresses those Paul knew in Rome since many traveled in the Roman world. He also argues in chapter 16 that Phoebe was a leader of the church in Cenchræe and that Junia was a full-fledged apostle.

Since this is a literary and linguistic commentary, many theological issues are not probed or discussed in much detail. If readers are looking for theological discussion on matters like the new perspective, original sin, or election, they are apt to be disappointed. Still, Porter makes it clear at the outset that such is not the aim of the commentary. He offers a close reading of the text. The interpretive decisions cataloged above are obviously disputed and there is not space in this review to adjudicate matters. Given the brevity of the commentary, Porter often defends his interpretation without much argumentation. But if he delved into matters more deeply the commentary would be much longer. In closing, we can be grateful for the reading of Romans provided by a seasoned scholar.

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Peter J. Tomson and Joshua J. Schwartz, eds. *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History*. *Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum* 13. Leiden: Brill, 2014. xii + 550 pp. £138.00/\$223.00.

Does it really matter if the study of Judaism and Christianity in the first two centuries CE is treated as one single history instead of two separate histories? The authors of this volume argue compellingly that it does.

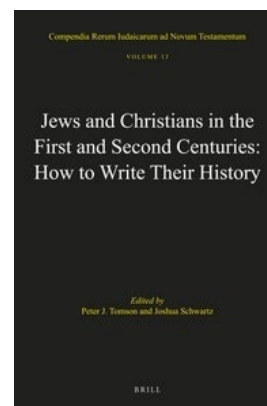
In the introduction of this collection of essays, the editors insist that we need a whole new approach and paradigm, which they duly provide, regarding the so-called “parting of the ways” between Jews and Christians. They claim that we must study the sources and histories of both Judaism and Christianity simultaneously as one unitary history. In order to do this, they argue, certain common factors that unite Jewish and Christian history during the course of the first two centuries CE, such as the Roman Empire, ought to receive more attention than previously given. By studying the Jewish revolts against Rome and the Christian persecutions under the Roman Empire, for instance, historians will be in a better position to identify the factors that caused the eventual separation between Judaism and Christianity. This is especially important, according to the editors, since “the separation between Judaism and Christianity that materialized during the second century CE was not caused by ‘essential’ theological differences, such as over the profession of the Messiah or of the divine Word, nor the disputes about the implementation of the Jewish law” (p. 5). Rather, they continue:

Our hypothesis is that indeed there were such issues of dissent, but that they were only converted into being causes for separation in the crucible of political and social forces provoked by the Roman occupation, especially the three Jewish revolts, their merciless repression, and the need for the suppressed to respond to the exigencies of the Roman occupation. These political and social forces, while being obvious, were hitherto not sufficiently brought to bear on the shared early history of Jews and Christians. (p. 5).

Not all of the contributors to this volume agree with or embrace this new “shared history” paradigm or the ensuing methodology as outlined by the editors. Thus, there is no strong overarching argument. Nevertheless, the new paradigm and methodology does provide the organizing theme and is a helpful reference point to keep in mind throughout the work, which is divided into three parts: (1) Varieties of Judaism and Christianity in the Late Second Temple Times, (2) The Period of the Revolts 66–135 CE, and (3) Post-Revolt Jewish and Christian Identities.

The sixteen essays range across a variety of topics. For example, the longest chapter in the book is titled with the question, “Why Did Judaeans Go to War with Rome in 66–67 CE?” Steve Mason spends 80 pages reflecting on historical method, only to conclude, rather limply, that the war “seems to have begun because of longstanding and potentially deadly inter-ethnic rivalries in a small region” (p. 205).

Ze’ev Safrai’s chapter focuses tightly on the socio-economic and cultural developments in the Galilee during the late first to early third century CE. “Since the overall data indicate stability during the entire Roman period,” he writes, “it follows that the Galilee was not damaged during the Revolts; its settlement infrastructure remained unharmed. This conclusion greatly limits the possible scope of the socio-economic impact of the Great Revolt” (p. 278). The author readily acknowledges that such thumbnail sketches, felicitous on the whole, sometimes oversimplify. Nevertheless, he handles the topic



expertly, writing with precision and an eye for detail. His study also collaborates well with many other recent studies that are gradually modifying the state of ancient economies, not just in the Galilee (see, among others, Bradley Root, *First Century Galilee: A Fresh Examination of the Sources*, WUNT 2.378 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014]), but also across the entire Mediterranean world.

Not all of the subjects or timeframes included in this study, however, have such well-documented evidence (virtually nothing in the second century is similar to Josephus's history of the first century and before), and so the authors sometimes speculate by drawing upon related records. But overall this is a richly documented account that weaves into the cast of these two main groups several others—such as the Essenes, Romans, Sicarii, Zealots—to form a layered history of connected, sometimes shared, experiences.

There are two other points worth noting for the readers of this journal. First, the authors of this volume jump into discussions about Jews and Christians without attempting to define either. Granted, several authors at least footnote whether they prefer translating Ἰουδαῖοι as Jews or Judaeans, but none of them attempts to define Christian. Should the reader, then, understand the term in the same sense as it was probably used in Acts 11:26 (i.e., someone who holds Jesus to be the Messiah), or something else? The only author to even approach this difficult task is John Barclay, but not in dialogue with other works covering similar material (cf. Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007]).

Second, this book has the most to offer those who already have a firm understanding of the key events and players during the first two centuries CE. The uninitiated may come away thinking that too many Christian sources were absent from the discussion, such as the Jewish-Christian conflicts as they are reflected in the Book of Revelation—not least of all in chapters 2–3—or the excommunication of the Jewish believers in Jesus from the synagogues in the canonical Gospels, for instance, John 9:22. But that would be a mistake. This continuing project and forthcoming volumes provide a sense of forward-looking excitement as they will presumably continue to fill in those major gaps. Either way, for those interested in the historiography of this period, this study is essential reading.

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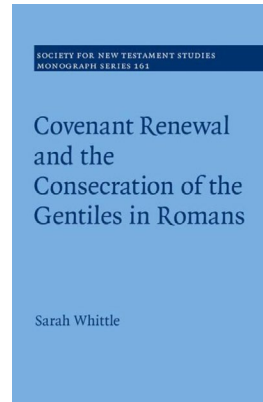
Sarah Whittle. *Covenant Renewal and the Consecration of the Gentiles in Romans*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 161. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. xi + 214 pp. £60.00/\$95.00.

In this study Whittle explores “Paul’s engagement with the scriptural narrative of covenant making and renewal, and the inclusion of the Gentiles, in order to determine whether, or to what extent, his use of ἄγιοι is rooted in Sinai and its covenant-making tradition” (p. 2). Important for Whittle, however, here is the contention that it is Deuteronomy’s depiction of Sinai that offers a “literary paradigm for the creation of a people that was to influence Paul” (p. 9).

Given that Sinai functioned as the primary event that constituted the people of God—and that Deuteronomy retells this event in Moses’s farewell address—Paul may have drawn upon Deuteronomy (and other covenant renewal texts) in order to establish the Gentiles as members of this renewed covenant. Paul draws upon this eschatological covenant renewal narrative through explicit Scripture citations (Part I) and broader covenantal motifs (Part II).

In Part I (“Romans 9–11: Paul’s Covenant-Renewal Hermeneutics”) Whittle examines the use of Hosea in Rom 9:24–25 (ch. 2), Deuteronomy 30 in Romans 10:6–8 (ch. 3), and Isaiah 27 and 59 in Rom 11:26–27 (ch. 5). I confess that I found the argument difficult to follow. The reader expects that the influence of Deuteronomy will be given pride of place, but of course Romans 9:24–25 invokes Hosea in order to speak of God’s new act of making the Gentiles his own people. Whittle asserts: “Undoubtedly, Paul’s thought is shaped by the Deuteronomic story of sin, exile and restoration that anticipated a merciful act of God that would enable Israel’s faithfulness” (p. 43). Whittle is on safer ground in chapter 3 since here Paul does explicitly invoke Deuteronomy 30 (and 9) in Romans 10:6–8. Whittle argues that Paul interprets the covenant renewal and restoration of Deuteronomy 30 in terms of “a confession of faith in Christ, as τέλος of law (10:4)” that is inclusive of Gentile believers (p. 45). Paul assumes the broader context of Deuteronomy 30, for Paul presumes that “the Gentiles and the remnant are in Deuteronomy 30” those who experience Moses’ prophetic anticipation of obedience, circumcision of the heart, and the ability to fulfill the Torah (pp. 56–57). It is difficult to tell exactly what Whittle thinks about the function of the Isaiah citations in Romans 11:25–26 given that she largely attempts to reproduce and defend the interpretations of N. T. Wright. The broad point, I take it, is that Paul sees the sending of Israel’s Messiah and the salvation of the Gentiles as God’s faithfulness to his covenant which has been renewed. Whittle summarizes Part I by saying: “Wright’s claim that the ‘great renewal of covenant’, the climax of Israel’s hope, has been fulfilled in Christ is an important one” (p. 74). More specifically, “Paul sees the Gentiles and the remnant participating in the renewed covenant” (p. 75).

In Part II Whittle examines Romans 12–15, though here she selects texts “not because of their overt covenant-renewal citations but because they appear fruitful for following Paul’s theological narrative of covenant renewal and Gentile inclusion from 9–11, drawing this trajectory to the proposed climax: the Gentiles’ consecration (15:16)” (p. 23). Whittle claims that Paul’s use of cultic metaphors in 12:1–2 “is fulfillment language” (p. 80) and should be understood as the appropriate Gentile response to God’s act of covenant making (ch. 5). More explicitly, Whittle is able to discern that the specific sacrifice in view in 12:1–2 is the peace offering, and these peace offerings “are the appropriate response to God’s covenant mercy, carried out at times of covenant making and renewal” (p. 86). Turning to 13:8–10, Whittle



suggests that the holy people of God, now inclusive of Gentiles, are able to fulfill the commandments of the Torah (epitomized in Lev 19:18), because God has made good on his promise to renew the covenant by sending the Spirit and enabling eschatological obedience (ch. 6). In ch. 7 Whittle argues that Paul's vision of a Jewish and Gentile community praising God together with one voice is warranted by the fact that God has fulfilled the promises made to the fathers (Rom 15:8). And in ch. 8 Whittle argues that within 15:15–16 Paul ascribes to himself a priestly eschatological role that is reminiscent of Moses who was "Israel's priestly covenant mediator at Israel's consecration" (p. 189).

Whittle has demonstrated that Paul takes up Israel's Scriptures, particularly certain passages pertaining to God's covenant and its eschatological renewal with Israel, and reads them with respect to the salvation and inclusion of the Gentiles within the people of God. Her specific thesis, namely, that "Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic narrative ... provide a framework by which Paul is able to incorporate the Gentiles into Israel's restoration and renewal" (p. 186) is certainly a possibility, but it is in need of further substantiation. The thesis might be bolstered by devoting more work to indicating what this Deuteronomistic framework actually is, as well as how it was understood, appropriated, and/or critiqued by authors that are contemporaneous to Paul. Nevertheless, the book is rich with exegetical insights and makes an important contribution to Pauline hermeneutics.

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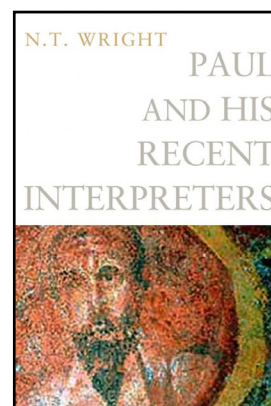
N. T. Wright. *Paul and His Recent Interpreters*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015. 384 pp. £25.00/\$39.99.

In *Paul and His Recent Interpreters*, N. T. Wright surveys and evaluates the major movements in contemporary scholarship on Paul. This is not the final word on Pauline studies, but it does provide a much-needed framework for understanding the trends that continue to dominate the field.

Although he focuses on the years since 1970, Wright first sets this recent scholarship against the backdrop of earlier debates. The "new perspective" thus appears as a turn away from the anti-Jewish and idealizing reading of Paul that dominated from the 19th century until Rudolf Bultmann. The "apocalyptic" trend in recent scholarship likewise finds its roots in the older debate about whether justification was really the heart of Paul's theology or was secondary to the idea of "participation," i.e., of being "in" Christ.

From the 1970s on Wright gives attention to four broad movements. E. P. Sanders launched the first of these, the so-called "new perspective," with his insistence that ancient Judaism was not really a system of "works righteousness." Although Sanders's depiction of Judaism has been criticized at points, Wright reminds us that even Sanders's opponents have since moved to a view of Judaism that is worlds apart from the caricatures popular in earlier generations.

This suggests, though, that when Paul opposed "faith in Christ" to "works of the law" he was not fighting the rigid and hopeless legalism deplored by Luther. Wright emphasizes how the various "new perspective" interpretations all attempt to explain, in that case, just what Paul *was* opposing in Galatians and Romans. Why pit "faith" against "works" if Jews already understood that salvation came by grace?



Wright is sympathetic to James D. G. Dunn's proposal that "works of the law" were a problem because they separated Israel from the nations. Since Paul believed that God was forging a unified people of both Jew and Gentile in Christ, the Torah that defined a distinctly Jewish identity had to be set aside. As one of the leading "new perspective" thinkers Wright sounds defensive here. He insists that he and Dunn never denied the reality of sin, the necessity of individual salvation, or the centrality of faith in Christ "apart from the law." Fair enough. I think that much of the misunderstanding around the "new perspective" has arisen from the fact that, for Wright and Dunn, Judaism *already* prioritized faith over works. So while these scholars see issues of ethnic identity as the focus of Galatians and Romans, this is in the context of Paul's (and most Jews') presumption that works could not earn salvation. Still, Wright recognizes that this point was confused by the way some (like the early Francis Watson) did reduce "justification by faith" to a rhetorical ploy designed to ease his Gentile mission.

Wright's brief survey of the reaction against the "new perspective" does little to untangle the debate and does not do justice to the arguments for a more "Lutheran" reading. Having chosen Stephen Westerholm to represent this response, Wright's dismissiveness is disappointing. He could at least have noted the places where his own reading and Westerholm's actually agree. Both, for example, insist that Paul thought Jewish attempts to keep Torah were a good thing prior to Christ, not the idolatrous grasping Luther suggested. Wright does help us, though, to keep in view the larger picture: that the "new perspective" launched a fresh attempt to understand Paul within the actual Judaism of his day and to locate the Apostle's theology of justification within a broader understanding of God's purposes for the church.

Wright next describes the "apocalyptic" reading of Paul's theology championed recently by J. Louis Martyn and Douglas A. Campbell. Both of these writers depict the cross as a radical break with everything that came before, so that any kind of "salvation history" is impossible. Both also stress Paul's theology of participation with Christ, with Campbell denying that "justification" has any place in Paul's theology at all. Wright notices, though, how often these "apocalyptic" readings are forced to "neutralize" Paul's talk about justification by claiming that the Apostle is simply quoting his opponents' views. Wright also drives home the fact that this "apocalyptic" theology has little to do with the thought we find in actual Jewish apocalypses. To the extent, then, that the label "apocalyptic" is meant to connect such a Paul with his contemporary context, it rests on hollow foundations.

Wright's third movement is the social scientific analysis of Paul's letters. Here Wright draws attention to the divide between social historians like Wayne Meeks and the "purer," more theory-driven, sociological approaches of the early "Context Group." Wright sides firmly with the former and warns against the use of comparative sociological models to infer what Pauline communities "must have" been like, especially when models of "millenarian movements" and the like are drawn from the later history of Christianity itself. On the other hand, Wright applauds the attempts of Meeks and others to understand how Paul's thought arose from and shaped the distinctive life of the Apostle's actual churches.

The fourth movement described by Wright is the most recent and the least familiar to most of Paul's readers. European political philosophers, some of them atheists, have suddenly rediscovered Paul as a resource for thinking about modern, pluralistic societies. Wright's treatment of these philosophical readings is short and will likely confuse readers without a background in Continental thought. He does well, though, to place this recent movement on the map of Pauline scholarship and to treat it as a serious addition to the conversation.

Reading between the lines of this survey we gain a clear picture of the contribution Wright sees himself making to the field. He believes that “justification” and “participation in Christ” can and must be held together as aspects of one over-arching story. In this story Jesus the Messiah represents God’s way of making good on his commitment to renew Israel, remake humanity, and refashion the broken cosmos. God is not only rescuing individuals from sin and death, but is also forming concrete communities to embody that new creation in the midst of the present age. At this broad level it is difficult to find fault with Wright’s project and his sketch of the field underlines how often these emphases have been neglected. Wright himself stresses how these themes resonate with classic Reformed (as opposed to Lutheran) readings of Paul.

Readers will inevitably complain that Wright has neglected some developments like the rhetorical analysis of Paul’s letters or the explosion of interest in Paul’s use of the Old Testament. One might wonder why certain scholars (David Horrell?) are singled out for so much space while others (Abraham Malherbe and Philip Esler?) are given short shrift. Still, Wright succeeds admirably in sketching a “big picture” of the movements in contemporary Pauline studies that is easily missed amid crowd of books and articles on the Apostle.

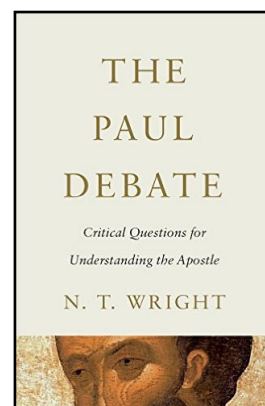
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N. T. Wright. *The Paul Debate: Critical Questions for Understanding the Apostle*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015. xii + 110 pp. £19.99/\$34.95.

N. T. Wright is a leading New Testament scholar and an influential voice in worldwide Christianity. Wright’s research on the Apostle Paul, undertaken throughout his career, has been groundbreaking, paradigm-shifting, and exciting. Several years ago Wright released his *magnum opus*, the two-volume *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013). In *The Paul Debate*, Wright seeks to answer the five most common criticisms of *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (PFG).

Actually I suspect the book is designed to answer the *six* most common criticisms of PFG, five related to *content*, but one related to its bookcase-hogging *girth*. While PFG has received wildly enthusiastic praise—rightly in my view—nearly all reviewers have poked fun at its porky size. In fact, in a review of PFG on my blog, I quipped that it was so large that it constituted “its own planetary system”—and I was both surprised and amused to find Wright mentioning this specific critique of PFG in *The Paul Debate* (p. viii). So Wright is aware of such criticisms. If in *The Paul Debate* Wright desires to showcase a trimmer synthesis of Paul, then he succeeds. But how muscular is the content?

In the first chapter Wright seeks to clarify a provocative claim advanced in PFG—that Paul was intentionally doing “theology,” and inviting his communities to do the same, in a way that was previously unprecedented. Paul believed that a new mind, a messiah-mind, was needed so that his churches could meet the practical challenge of living a new-creation life in the midst of the present evil age. As one family (Jew and Gentile together) with one messiah-mind, they could pursue holiness and unity.



Chapter 2 is concerned with the way Paul arrived at conclusions about how Jesus was placed “*within* the identity of Israel’s God” (p. 22). Wright suggests that a neglected motif within Second Temple Judaism was decisive: Israel’s God would “*act to deliver his people from the powers of evil and to set up his kingdom over the nations*” and would “*come back in a new way to dwell with his people*” (p. 31, emphasis original). In other words, for Paul, Jesus the Messiah is the embodiment of Israel’s God, the fulfillment of God’s promises to his people and the world. In my judgment Wright’s basic proposal is brilliantly illuminating here, but his suggestion that Jesus is *within* the so-called “divine identity” needs to be substantially reworked. Wright relies on Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), but Bauckham’s approach has limitations. For example, Jesus and God (the Father) are not viewed by Paul as consistently within a singular divine identity, but as distinct *persons* who shape one another’s identity through dialogue (e.g., see Paul’s prosopological exegesis of Rom 15:3, 9; 2 Cor 4:13).

Does God fulfill his covenant promises in the course of continuous history as that history climaxes in Jesus’s actions? Or does God disruptively break into history to win the victory? In Chapter 3, Wright shows that pitting apocalyptic invasion against fulfillment is anachronistic vis-à-vis Second Temple Judaism. Such a dichotomy also fails to deal seriously with continuity for Paul between the God who promises and the God who invades. Surpassing his efforts in *PFQ*, Wright convincingly rebuts a slew of nonsense concerning apocalyptic in Paul.

The fourth chapter concerns the controversial topics of justification and supersession. Wright is critical of traditional Protestant schemes that reduce justification to the transactional salvation of sinners. For Wright, “*The Messiah sums up Israel in himself*” (p. 76, emphasis original), so justification is predicated on incorporation into the Messiah. The Messiah represents God’s people, because in the resurrection God did for the Messiah in the middle of time what he was to do for his people at the end. In other words, this is not supersession in the sense of wholesale replacement, but rather incorporative representation.

Chapter 5, “Theology, Mission, and Method,” is a grab bag. With regard to mission, Paul’s primary goal was neither to save souls from the wrath of God nor to transform culture. Paul was seeking to found communities that thought with the mind of the Messiah, so they could “produce signs of the new creation in the middle of the old world” (p. 96). From mission Wright jumps to method. Wright seems to be fending off the charge that he has merely *deduced* results in Paul from a scheme he has dreamed up elsewhere. The proper way forward is the way which Wright insists that he has sought to follow. *Abduction* involves inductive study of the data and inference to the best explanation, not *deduction* from an a priori system.

Who will find this book most winning? Graduate students who want to isolate points of debate in Pauline theology will find basic orientation and food for further thought. Many pastors will enjoy it. Scholars will probably only be partially satisfied. *The Paul Debate* advances discussion, but since it features general refutations rather than point-by-point engagement with other scholars, it is unlikely to sway scholarly judgment appreciably.

In *The Paul Debate* Wright is a prize fighter in top form. In his earlier *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, Wright flexed his considerable intellectual muscle, but what emerged was akin to a sumo wrestler—massive and powerful yet with the ripple of muscle hidden. The stripped-down style of *The Paul Debate*

allows Wright to showcase a svelte, powerful Pauline theology. New moves are on display that readers will not want to miss.

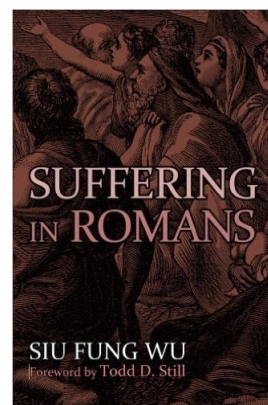
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Siu Fung Wu. *Suffering in Romans*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015. xx + 288 pp. £22.00/\$34.00.

Siu Fung Wu's engaging book limelights Paul's remarks on suffering in Rom 5 and 8, seeking more narrowly to interpret them from the vantage point of the original audience. Thus, Wu utilizes an "audience focused" approach in an effort to understand how an inchoate Christian community made up of religious and social misfits located in the epicenter of the world's most powerful empire might have heard comments like Romans 8:17: we are heirs with Christ *if* we suffer with him. This research question Wu pursues inductively, suspending overt presentation of a "theology of suffering" for his conclusion. The book itself develops in roughly four stages, and these stages provide a lens through which to observe the main lines of his argument.

Chapters 1 and 2 comprise "stage one," and here Wu sketches out both the nature of his audience-focused methodology and the likely social, political, and economic make-up of the letter's first readers. Given that Wu identifies the reading strategy of his book as its major contribution, these chapters are of particular importance as they frame and direct everything which follows. While the constituency of the church in Rome cannot be precisely known, Wu finds it plausible based on historical investigation that "the majority of the members would be familiar with socioeconomic hardship and religio-political injustice, or at least they regularly interacted with people who experienced hardship" (pp. 41–2). "Stage two" (chapter 3) shifts to exegesis of Rom 5 where in vv. 1–11 Paul first introduces the notion of suffering, suggesting surprisingly that affliction is actually something in which believers *boast*, and in vv. 12–21 he articulates how the reconciliation announced in v. 11 occurs. Wu's rigorous four-chapter analysis of Romans 8 commands the lion's share of his attention: (a) chapters 4 and 5 of the book address vv. 1–17, which depict suffering as a vocation to which believers are called; (b) chapter 6 examines the role believers' suffering plays in the renewal of the cosmos (vv. 18–30); and (c) chapter 7 delineates what it means to share in the "triumph of God" even as believers suffer innocently for and together with Christ (vv. 31–39). "Stage four" brings Wu's project full-circle by succinctly enumerating the audience's "theology of suffering" which his research yields. Wu submits (a) that believers are unequivocally called to suffer, and that their suffering is an appointed means by which creation is reconstituted; (b) that suffering derives from God's paternal favor, not his displeasure; (c) that suffering is bound up inextricably in Christ's suffering and guarantees a share in Christ's vindication; (d) that it is suffering which enables believers to partake in the victory of God; and (e) that the biblical canon "bear[s] witness to this theology," which Wu outlines (p. 224).

Wu's book advances the current discussion regarding Paul's characterization of believers' suffering in several respects. First, his reading of Romans 5 and 8 with an eye turned specifically towards what these texts say about suffering is unique. His exegesis compels, and he manages to be thorough without exhausting the reader with ancillaries. Second, reading Romans 5 and 8 in tandem permits Wu to engage



in thoughtful intratextual exegesis, and he makes a strong case for the indispensability of interpreting them in light of each other. Third, Wu does an excellent job at foregrounding the OT material on which Romans 5–8 build. For instance, while a number of scholars pinpoint Genesis 1–3 as the backdrop to Romans 5:1–21, Wu alone shows how Paul reimagines the Genesis narrative so as to account for the proliferation of sin, death, and alienation from God which characterizes the human condition.

These virtues notwithstanding, both methodological and exegetical critiques may yet be justified. With regard to methodology I would call attention to two items. First, Wu largely presupposes his brand of reader-response criticism, leaving the reader to wonder both how he understands it to fit within the broader conversation and (more importantly perhaps) how he would respond to incisive objections lodged against it (e.g., Thomas A. Schmitz, *Modern Literary Theory and Ancient Texts: An Introduction* [Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007], 88). Second, Wu distinguishes his method from those who pursue an “implied” or “ideal” reader, hoping via his historical survey to more nearly approximate the “actual” reader. However, given his agenda, it is surprising to find spare treatment of primary literature and heavy reliance upon biblical scholars. One is left to question whether this procedure is adequate to sustain the weight of the project.

With regard to exegesis, I would make two observations. First, Wu contends on page 162 (as elsewhere) that through conformity to Christ “a large royal family of God is formed, and God’s program of transforming humanity and renewing creation is being completed in this process.” However, he never details how exactly participating in suffering effects this renewal. The proposal itself allures, for in addition to exegetical insight it extends pastoral promise; yet, nuance is needed in order for the proposal to gain traction. Second, while Wu produces impressive work on Paul’s use of Psalm 44:22 in Romans 8:36, I am reluctant to follow his conclusion that the quotation “[responds] to the questions in 8:35 and affirms that no suffering can separate believers from Christ’s love” (p. 193). It seems more plausible on the basis of the psalm itself and the development of Paul’s argument to point that it functions rather to substantiate the notion that believers experiencing adversity have indeed been separated from divine love. Paul then counters both the litany of questions in v. 35 and the quotation in v. 36 with the adversative “No!” Evidence to the contrary, suffering is actually an experience of God’s power and affection.

One need not agree with every element of Wu’s book to commend it heartily. He is a patient, sure-footed guide alert to the matters of which biblical students must be aware. The book will no doubt enrich contemporary discussion both of Romans and of the place of suffering in the writings of Paul.

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— HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY —

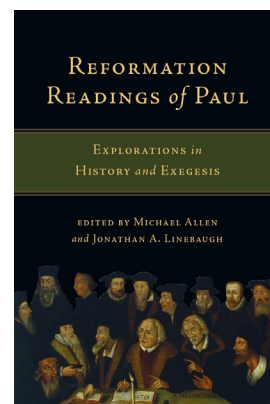
Michael Allen and Jonathan A. Linebaugh, eds. *Reformation Readings of Paul: Explorations in History and Exegesis*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015. 280 pp. £19.30/\$28.00.

In *Reformation Readings of Paul*, Michael Allen and Jonathan A. Linebaugh provide a well-arranged, cross-disciplinary, warm-hearted case study in “exegetical eavesdropping” (p. 17) between present-day biblical scholars and key figures from the Reformation (Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Bucer, John Calvin, and Thomas Cranmer). The book’s main interest is “to invite the reformers back into the discussion about Paul’s texts and the theology they articulated as a reading of those texts” (p. 13).

Allen and Linebaugh’s examination of the reformer’s engagement with and use of Scripture is structurally organized in a point and counter-point format. Each section begins with a historical theologian explaining the methodology and exegetical conclusions from key reformers on specific Pauline texts. Following this survey, a chosen biblical scholar holds the reformers’ exegetical feet to the proverbial fire of modern-day biblical studies. This format allows readers to appreciate the reformers both as theologians and exegetes. It also allows readers to appreciate the strengths and advancements of modern biblical studies. Thus, the reformers’ writings are tethered to the contemporary world. This allows, for example, one to consider the practical link of Philipp Melanchthon’s 1521 work, *Loci Communes*, on modern theological interpretation.

A second feature of this book is how it recasts the reformers’ vision of a Pauline description of the Christian life (p. 224). The reformers unashamedly used Scripture, explicitly the Pauline *corpus*, as their handbook to set the axioms of theology and the contours of the Christian life. Whether it be Luther’s commentary on Galatians, Melanchthon’s commentary on Romans, Bucer’s doctrine of election, Calvin’s application of the “spectacles” of Holy Scripture to his Corinthian commentaries and fortified vision for pastoral ministry, or Cranmer’s 1552 *Book of Common Prayer*, each reformer seemingly learned to preach, teach, write, and pray from Paul. One is left asking: What does Paul have to say about the present-day Christian life and ministry?

A third feature of this book is its interaction with the New Perspective on Paul. This book, contrary to the claims by some proponents of the New Paul Perspective, demonstrates two things. First, many advocates of the New Paul Perspective are not well-versed in the writings of the reformers. Second, many of the reformers were not ignorant of Judaism even if they had “little idea of what the early Christian communities were like and tended to read them in non-historical ways” (p. 272). Unforeseen in this book, and appreciated greatly, is the parallel between Roman Catholicism and Judaism. Gerald Bray writes, “The point has to be understood, because modern critics of the reformers claim Luther and his followers knew nothing about Second Temple Judaism and therefore misunderstood what Paul was saying about the so-called works of the law. It is true, of course, that no Christians in the premodern times knew as much about Judaism, but it is remarkable how close the medieval church came to replicating it” (p. 271). Bray notes the medieval church taught all baptized persons were in the covenant of grace already, so “their spiritual status was exactly the same as that of the ancient Jews—and what is more, they also understood that they had been saved by grace. As in Second Temple



Judaism, the works enjoined on those within the covenant were designed to prevent the loss of salvation that would inevitably occur if they sinned after baptism, and there was no atonement for it” (p. 271). Medieval Catholicism, much like the apostle Paul, did not persecute the Church in order to merit favor with God, but to protect the boundaries of the covenant. One is left asking: Do advocates of the New Paul Perspective fail to understand the spiritual nature of Second Temple Judaism and its parallels with Roman Catholicism?

Still, one feature of this book is problematic and fosters a disjointed aura to the text. For the most part, there is a general evenness to this volume. However, there are points where some individuals spend extended time discussing their method of evaluation to the exclusion of evaluation, they take excursions down the rabbit trail of Karl Barth, or they offer atomistic descriptions of views by focusing on one text to the exclusion of their broader works (p. 123–61). These features, while open, honest, and scholarly, seemed to be uneven in comparison to the rest of the chapters in the book. Nevertheless, they are a valuable contribution to exegetical discussions, so their inclusion is not without warrant.

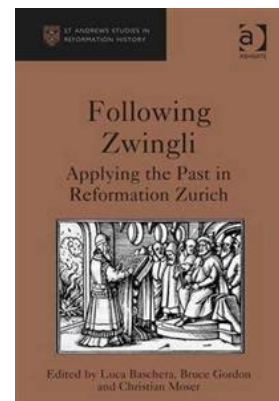
The reformers of the 16th century were readers, exegetes, theologians, and pastors. The voluminous literature afforded to us by them were produced not only for scholarly purposes, but in the guilds of pastoral concern, trial, tribulation, and persecution. We owe a great debt of service to Michael Allen and Jonathan Linebaugh, as *Reformation Readings of Paul* not only sets the standard for explorations in history and exegesis, it also, by God’s grace, motivates contemporary readers to see through the commentaries of the reformers, and the interactions of biblical theologians, the writings of the Scripture, in order to recapture a Pauline perspective for the Christian life, which is a bold vision of our new life in Jesus Christ.

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Luca Baschera, Bruce Gordon, and Christian Moser, eds. *Following Zwingli: Applying the Past in Reformation Zurich*. St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2014. 300 pp. £95.00/\$149.95

What does the past have to say about the present? This question drives *Following Zwingli*, which explores the long shadow cast by renaissance humanism on reformation Zürich in the years following Huldrych Zwingli’s death in 1531. One of the newest offerings from Ashgate’s St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History series, *Following Zwingli* draws on the expertise of Swiss reformation specialists Luca Baschera, Bruce Gordon, and Christian Moser as they consider “how a radically new form of Christian community was created in the sixteenth century and how various models were employed to form patterns of learning, piety, and behavior” (p. 10).

Focusing primarily on the ministerial career of Zwingli’s successor, Heinrich Bullinger, the editors of *Following Zwingli* have compiled essays that consider how *memoria*, *emulatio*, *imitatio*, and *applicatio* helped to inform and shape the developing model of church and society in Zürich during the early modern period. As each of the essays demonstrate,



appropriating beliefs and models found in the sources of antiquity did not mean an uncritical, mechanical or verbatim reaffirmation of certain truth claims from a time gone by. Instead, the greater concern was to convey transcendent truths rooted in the past, but in a stylistically engendered way that spoke to the contemporary context of reformation Zürich. Thus, *Following Zwingli* demonstrates how the concluding portrait of a transformed Zürich unveiled at the close of the 16th century was the by-product of a commitment to such a pedagogy. The unique implementation of models and concepts from the past as a means of forming certain thoughts and directing behavior served as the brushstrokes of influence cast upon a Zürich canvass already painted on by Zwingli.

This link to the past as a means of reshaping the community of Zürich serves as the thread of continuity binding the essays in *Following Zwingli* together. Apart from the first chapter, which was co-authored by the book's editors and helpfully frames Zwingli's own place in this narrative, the remaining ten chapters offer specific case studies that speak to how ideas from the past helped to shape the course of certain aspects of Zürich's society. It is here that the book may face some criticism, for several of the chapters bear little to no link to the work of Zwingli. Thus, if one comes to *Following Zwingli* looking for strong Zwinglian impressions on the Swiss Confederate State, then this book will fall short of expectation. Even the strong influence of Martin Bucer on the Zürich church following Zwingli's death, an important discovery highlighted by Amy Nelson Burnett ("The Myth of the Swiss Lutherans: Martin Bucer and the Eucharistic Controversy in Bern," *Zwingliana* 32 [2005]: 45–70), is left without mention. However, this weakness is a tradeoff for one of the book's strengths—the breadth of its scope. Expanding beyond Zwingli's reach and the typical ecclesiastical influences, *Following Zwingli* explores a sweeping and diverse range of sources that not only spoke to the changes in the Swiss Church, but also to the Zürich community at the dawn of the early modern era.

As might be expected, many of the sources that served to transform Zürich came from the biblical text. For instance, a chapter by Jon Wood, highlighting Bullinger's use of the motifs of Old Testament prophet and priesthood, reveals how biblical office patterns could be parlayed into an argument for Zürich's restructured episcopacy. Similarly, a chapter by Moser winsomely demonstrates how "the book of Ruth was especially well suited to help propagate a distinct Christian morality for the citizenry ... a cause championed by the reformers of Zurich" (p. 122). Even something as volatile as the historic place of Jesus's mother, Mary, could be employed as an exemplar of both proper female culture (p. 138) and true faith for the community at large (p. 173).

Outside Scripture, other sources spoke with similarly strong voices to the city's culture. Drinking from the fount of Patristic sources, Mark Taplin reveals in chapter 2 how Josias Simler utilized the *consensus patrum* (singular voice of the fathers) to not only address contemporary heresies promoted by radicals like Kaspar Schwenckfeld, but also to rebut the charges of Nestorianism that lingered from Zwingli's debate with Luther at Marburg. Even overtly pagan sources, like Aristotle's writings and the oft-censured Roman poet Matial's *Epigrams*, could be redeemed as a means of realizing an elevated level of morality and learning in the Zürich community. And, as demonstrated by chapters 10 and 11, sourcing should not be exclusively framed in terms of the ancient. In those two concluding chapters Matthew McLean and Bruce Gordon reveal how the lives of those just one generation removed from an earlier context were effectively able to convey that learning was to be "used and shared rather than owned" (p. 252); culture-shaping truth could even be passed down from father to son.

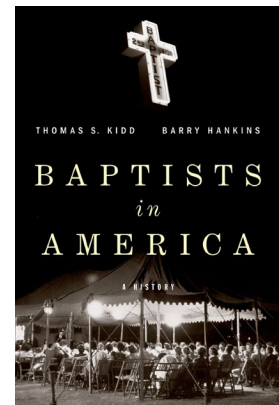
Overall, *Following Zwingli* is a compelling read that invites its audience to return to the very sources that once spoke to and ultimately reshaped Zürich following the city's formal reformation in 1525. The

chapters are thoroughly sourced and well written. The book is pitched to an academically and historically astute audience, thus the language is often technical and assumes a high level of familiarity with the history of the Swiss reformation. But for those interested in the transmission of ideas during the early modern period, *Following Zwingli* opens the reader up to a tumultuous and fragmented Zürich during the 16th century; a community replete with no shortage of convictions left for subsequent generations to consider in their own contemporary world.

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Thomas Kidd and Barry Hankins. *Baptists in America: A History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 352 pp. £19.99/\$29.95.

Thomas Kidd and Barry Hankins provide a familiar outline of Baptist history in America beginning with the recognition of Baptists being treated as outlaws in the 17th century and concluding with the depiction of Baptists ousting some of their own in the 20th century. These bookends are representative of the respective academic strengths of the authors, as Kidd has published works on religion in the colonial era and Hankins has contributed titles on the Southern Baptist controversy that marked the end of an era. Between these bookends lies ample support for their conclusion that Baptists can be “insiders or outsiders in American culture, and are often both simultaneously” (p. 252), an observation that applies equally to Kidd and Hankins’s skill as reputable historians. Both are professors of history at Baylor University but their status as Baptist insiders is hardly noticeable in light of their inclusive approach to the multifaceted nature of the Baptist family and their evenhanded examination of controversial matters that produce Baptist family fights. Together they deliver an informative work that should become the definitive statement on Baptists in America for years to come.



In the interest of full disclosure, I have recently co-authored a book on Baptist history, along with Nathan Finn and Michael Haykin, entitled *The Baptist Story: From English Sect to Global Movement* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015). As the title suggests, we focused on Baptists worldwide. This approach allowed us to explore the breadth of the Baptist movement but prevented us from exposing its depth in various areas. By focusing on Baptists in America, Kidd and Hankins provide depth to their story. Although the overall storyline is familiar, the people are presented with personality, issues are rooted in ideas, and movements are given momentum.

For example, personalities are evident as nearly every chapter begins with an historical illustration that introduces the subject that follows. The whipping of Obadiah Holmes leads to the discussion of Baptists as outlaws (p. 1); the conversion of Jacob Bowers following an earthquake introduces the topic of the Great Revival (pp. 76–77); the silencing of an outspoken slave named Winney highlights the injustice against African-American Baptists (p. 98); and the audacious move by Billy Graham in removing a barrier dividing blacks from whites at his Chattanooga crusade begins the chapter on Baptists and the Civil Rights Movement (p. 211). The authors weave similar such stories throughout the text.

The content of the chapters is impressive. Kidd and Hankins provide substantive discussion on issues pertaining to persecution and disestablishment, awakenings and institutions, missions and anti-missions, participation in and perspectives on war, and schism and consolidation, to name a few. Such topics are covered with due attention given to movers and shakers of Baptist life but local congregations and lesser-known Baptists are not overlooked. For example, the impact of Francis Wayland in the wider American culture is presented alongside a small Baptist church in Cades Cove, Tennessee reacting to cultural change (pp. 122–23); and the Supreme Court’s decisions eliminating prayer and Bible reading in public schools are seen through the eyes of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as well as the editors of the *Alabama Baptist* whose names were otherwise lost to history (pp. 206–8). By connecting the contributions of major players with minor participants, Kidd and Hankins recognize that the bulk of Baptist life takes place on the local level, an observation that Baptist insiders can readily appreciate.

The shift between insider and outsider status occurs frequently in the book. The authors note, for example, that Baptist attempts to position themselves as cultural insiders have provided only a temporary reprieve from cultural disdain. Thus Northern Baptists, who distanced themselves from fundamentalists by embracing modernism, soon found themselves excluded from their newfound liberal company for not being modern enough (pp. 193–95). Consequently, when Baptists addressed issues on the national level their interplay with the wider culture is presented in reactionary terms. Kidd and Hankins agree, therefore, with Mark Noll’s assessment that “Baptists offer attitudes and dispositions but not much in the way of distinctive theological, intellectual, or academic positions” (p. 248). This is to say, as is evident throughout the book, that Baptists have been more successful at turning on each other than they have been at turning around American culture.

Critiques of this book should be limited, partly because it is quite an exceptional work and partly because one does not want to reinforce the claim that “Baptists are notorious for two things – evangelism and schism” (p. 251). Thus, the suggestions that follow are simply personal preferences that are in no way designed to undercut this fine book. First, the placement of pictures is somewhat puzzling. The decision to include a total of nine photos in the middle of the book leaves one wondering why more pictures were not included at more appropriate junctures. Second, the presentation of two separate chapters on black and white Baptists, which follow two previous chapters on slavery, seems to accentuate the racial divide among Baptists as it relates to the larger narrative of insider/outsider status. To be sure, the issue of race relations is one that Baptists still need to address more fully and one is not suggesting that the historical record be whitewashed; but one would prefer a more perfect blending of black Baptist history within the larger narrative so that their contributions are seen as having an equally important impact. Finally, though the authors give equal time to moderates and conservatives in the inerrancy controversy among Southern Baptists, the appearance and progress of the Cooperative Baptist movement is strangely absent. Attention turns instead to how conservative Southern Baptists began taking their stand against culture. The question of what happened to the “losers” is never answered.

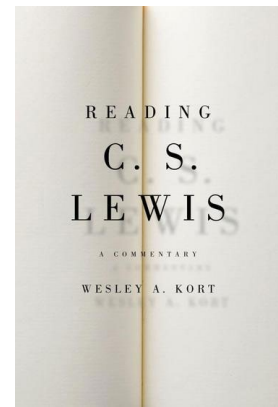
Baptists in America is a book worth reading because the story is told with clarity and zest. It is a book worth owning because it has substance and depth. It is also available in an audio version through Audible. The fact that two Baptist professors have published a book through Oxford University Press

complete with professional narration speaks not only to the value of the work but ironically supports the thesis that Baptists can be insiders or outsiders, and sometimes both simultaneously.

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Wesley A. Kort. *Reading C. S. Lewis: A Commentary*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. ix + 236 pp. £17.99/\$29.95.

The overall goal of *Reading C. S. Lewis* is to “give attention both to particular texts and to a structural wholeness or coherence in Lewis’s work” (p. viii). Wesley Kort, who describes himself as “neither a devote nor detractor” (p. vii) of Lewis, notes a tension between those who admire Lewis’s work because of the academic credibility it brings to Christianity, and those who are critical of it because his defense of Christianity compromises the value of his other scholarly or imaginative works. Kort hopes to provide an alternative reading of Lewis, one that brings into view “the stable, basic, and even controlling constants of his work” (p. vii).



In order to understand and appreciate Lewis’s overall project, Kort organizes Lewis’s writings into three parts: “reasonable assumptions,” “cultural critiques,” and “applied principles.” Within each part, Kort includes essays on individual works of Lewis, which can be read as stand-alone commentaries, followed by a summary essay pulling together the thematic issues that inform Lewis’s vision of reality and his apologetical method.

After a helpful introduction sketching the context for Lewis’s work—his “Englishness,” his identification with and love of Ireland, his erudition, his interest in myth, his relationship with English modernity, his return to Christianity, and his expectations for his readers—Kort begins part one of the book by looking at Lewis’s spiritual autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*. Also in this first section are discussions of *The Problem of Pain*, *The Screwtape Letters*, and *Mere Christianity*.

Basic to all of these texts, according to Kort, is Lewis’s assumption that many foundational and important moral and religious matters are generally agreed upon by all reasonable people. The texts considered in this section are important because they highlight Lewis’s desire to present Christianity, and not materialism, as the best explanation of shared human experience. These shared human experiences include joy, the sublime, the numinous, our awareness of a moral law, and the universal sense that we are a part of a story bigger than ourselves. Such experiences “occur widely and are sufficiently revealing to warrant a basic place in one’s worldview” (p. 88). These shared experiences, if we allow them, open us up to reality and help us find our place within it as fully functioning persons.

In part two, Kort discusses Lewis’s critique of modernity as expounded in *The Abolition of Man* and embodied in each of the texts of the space trilogy. This section will be most helpful for those who have read Lewis’s space trilogy and (rightly) sensed that there is more going on than meets the eye.

Scientism, and its resultant materialism, has led to a fact-value split, the myth of progress, urbanization, and the unmooring of man from the larger world. Lewis is keen to recover an earlier outlook of the world, an outlook that values place, virtue, and openness to the spiritual. Lewis believes

that one's character and view of the world matters for a "healthy culture is a prerequisite for the right understanding and practice of religion" (p. 109). To illustrate the ills of modern man, in his space trilogy, Lewis sets side-by-side competing outlooks and trajectories: Weston and Ransom, N.I.C.E and St. Anne's, the "bent" humans and the innocent *hrossa*. One champions "objective" science, the other all that is good about language, tradition, culture (including science), and virtue; one is on a trajectory of destruction, the other on a path toward sanctification; one lives for self, the other for a larger story.

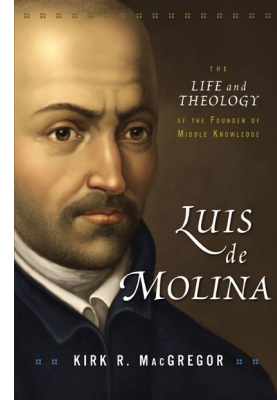
In the part three of the book, Kort explores the first two and last two Narnian books as well as Lewis's non-fiction text *The Four Loves*. The text explored in this section reveal Lewis's constructive project where he delineates and defends, through imaginative works and application of moral and doctrinal principles, the truth, goodness, and beauty of the Christian worldview. Some moral principles and doctrines that find expression within the world of Narnia are the emphasis on place—Lantern Waste, Aslan's How, Cair Paravel—over temporality, virtue and vice, creation, the fall, redemption, and restoration, the modern enchantment of power, historical skepticism (in *Prince Caspian* the memory of Aslan's coming had faded), unbelief (explored through the character of King Miraz, Nickabrik, and Trumpkin), faith (explored through the characters of Lucy and Susan), and identity formation through relating to and loving things, others, and God.

One shortcoming of Kort's book is the relative absence of any discussion related to Lewis's faith in Christ and the foundation of this faith to his personal identity. Kort notes that Lewis does hold to a high Christology, but thinks this Christology is not dominant in Lewis's works (and the reader is left wondering if it is also not dominant in Lewis's life). As Kort puts it, "in my opinion, what counts most in his conversion to Christianity ... is that Christianity offers a more adequate account of things than is available in alternative accounts, especially non-religious ones" (p. 24). There is little mention of the living God, the "transcendent interferer," who (as Lewis put it in *Miracles*) "approaches us at infinite speed." For Lewis, faith in Christ was fundamental to everything else, including intellectual theorizing: in looking to Christ, we find him, and with him everything else besides. Still Kort's book is a helpful guide to those who want to understand individual texts as well as some of the overall themes of Lewis's substantial body of work.

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Kirk R. MacGregor. *Luis de Molina: The Life and Theology of the Founder of Middle Knowledge*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. 288 pp. £17.99/\$27.99.

Luis de Molina: The Life and Theology of the Founder of Middle Knowledge is driven towards the following theses: (1) Molina's story proves just as captivating, edifying, and inspiring as the stories of Luther and Calvin (p. 15); (2) Molina was an original thinker whose theological system is not identical to Calvin's system or Arminius's system (p. 19); and (3) Molina was a brilliant practitioner and theologian whose innovative thought continues to provide answers to questions posed by evangelicals in modernity (p. 29). For the purposes of this review, I will focus on the first two of these.



Regarding the first previously mentioned purpose, MacGregor uses Molina's life events as the background to articulate Molina's philosophy, theology, and social justice views. Thus, each chapter contains a suitable amount of biographical remarks before expressing Molina's thought on the relevant matter. It isn't until one reaches the end of the book where a robust view of Molina's life emerges. The following is a summary of MacGregor's biographical account of Molina: Molina had an evangelical and Luther-like conversion experience (pp. 36–38), he was a key player in trying to solve the ecumenical tensions that were brought about by the Reformation (p. 61), he was targeted by the Inquisition (p. 172), he was almost anathematized (p. 228), and that he faithfully stuck to his position and was ultimately vindicated (p. 241). Much more could be said, but ultimately, even from this brief sketch, Molina's life seems as edifying and inspiring as the lives of Luther and Calvin.

In order to address the book's second thesis, it would be helpful to first articulate Molina's theory of middle knowledge. Molina believed that between God's natural knowledge (knowledge of necessary truths) and free knowledge (knowledge of what *could* happen in all circumstances), was God's knowledge of what individuals *would* do in every circumstance (p. 92). Accordingly, God chooses to actualize a world where individuals would freely act in accordance with His desires, at least as far as feasibility permits.

What grounds the truth of the proposition that S would do action A in circumstance C? God possesses supercomprehension which allows Him to have, "unlimited intellectual capacity to perceive infinitely, within his own mind, the individual essence (or pattern) for every possible thing he could create," which includes, "knowing what each essence, if instantiated, would do ... in any possible set of circumstances in which it existed" (pp. 100–1). MacGregor points out that this system is different than Calvin's system, as individuals here have genuine freedom to respond to God's grace. Molina also differs from Arminius's system in holding that God not only possesses middle knowledge, but that middle knowledge is logically prior to any decision made by God (p. 20). This being so, it is hard to argue that Molina's system isn't unique in its own right.

Due to the present scarcity of English translated material from Molina, there isn't anything in print that even resembles MacGregor's ground-breaking work on the life of Molina. For this reason alone, MacGregor's work deserves attention. And as articulated above, I think MacGregor has clearly been successful in arguing for his theses. It is therefore, no question that MacGregor's work should be seen as successfully contributing to the literature on Molina and his thought.

Nevertheless, MacGregor's work isn't without its own problems. First, MacGregor paints a picture of Molina as a theologian who is offering a middle way between the Reformation and Trent, not only philosophically but also theologically. It is here that MacGregor could have been more thorough in investigating coherency problems with Molina's thought and Roman Catholic teaching. For example, MacGregor argues that Molina embraced justification as a once-for-all transformative event (p. 69) that happens when a sinner responds to God's prevenient grace by personally surrendering to God (p. 67). MacGregor isn't at all clear how this relates to the Roman Catholic position that baptism is the normative means of tying the sinner to Jesus and thus initially justifying the sinner before God. Moreover, even granting that Molina's view of justification is consistent with Roman Catholic teaching, questions still remain. For instance, would a Molinistic understanding of the perseverance of the saints seem plausible given that Molina's doctrine implies that all of those who are baptized will forever be right with God? Having said all of this, it seems that MacGregor's evangelical interpretation of Molina might come at the cost of Molina's Roman Catholic identity.

Second, there seems to be some real tension in either Molina's thought or MacGregor's interpretation of Molina as it relates to God's nature and knowledge. According to MacGregor, Molina rejected that God is *actus purus* (pure actuality) as with middle knowledge. Here, God would be seen as passive in respect to human actions and it would thus, be human actions that would be acting upon God insofar as effecting his divine decree (pp. 161–63). This reason for rejecting God as pure actuality is a little puzzling as this seems completely at odds with MacGregor's statement that "God does not get His knowledge from things but knows all things *in* Himself and *from* Himself" (p. 22, emphasis original). For Molina, God's middle knowledge is logically prior to His election and of course the elect's actions. This means that there is no obvious way in which individuals effect or cause anything in God (see Thomas P. Flint, *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998], 85); and this being the case, there would be no reason to reject God as pure actuality. While I'm uncertain if the tension belongs to Molina or MacGregor's interpretation, overall this book is very clear and consistent in thought. Regardless of one's soteriological persuasion, this book deserves to be on the shelf of all students interested in the Reformation, the Free Will and Divine Foreknowledge Problem, and the Problem of Predestination.

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Scott M. Manetsch. *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536–1609*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. 428 pp. £23.49/\$35.00

This book finds its genesis in the published sermons of Theodore Beza, John Calvin's successor in Geneva. As Scott Manetsch worked through Beza's sermons, the popular caricatures of his theology as stagnant, speculative and scholastic were exposed, leading Manetsch to research the pastoral theology of Geneva's pastors in the 16th and 17th centuries. The product—*Calvin's Company of Pastors*. Manetsch travels more along the path of social history than intellectual history—utilizing archival materials, published sermons, catechisms, prayer books, personal correspondence, minutes, and theological writings—to present an engaging and readable history of pastoral life in 16th and 17th century Geneva.

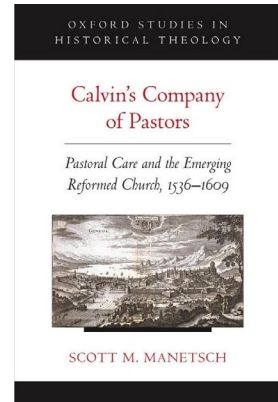
Manetsch focuses on Calvin's Company of Pastors, otherwise known as the Venerable Company. This group of ministers was a formal church institution established by Calvin, which met each Friday morning to examine candidates for ministry and discuss theological and practical business for the church, both locally and internationally. The Company was comprised of eight to ten ministers from the city's churches, four professors from the Genevan Academy and another ten to eleven rural pastors from the surrounding area.

Manetsch's central purpose in the book is as follows:

To examine the pastoral theology and practical ministry activities of this cadre of men who served as pastors in Geneva's churches during nearly three-quarters of a century from 1536 to 1609. It explores not only how Calvin, Beza, Goulart, and their colleagues defined the office and functions of the reformed pastorate, but also the manner in which this conceptual ideal was translated into everyday practice in their ministries of preaching, pastoral care, church discipline, visitation, catechesis, and the administration of the sacraments. (p. 2)

On his deathbed, Calvin urged his closest friends and long-time colleagues to "change nothing and avoid innovation." Manetsch's work examines the degree to which Geneva's ministers were faithful to Calvin's dying wish—a matter previously unexamined by historians. The beginning date in the chronological scope relates to the year that Calvin arrived in Geneva and the choice of 1609 extends to four years beyond Beza's death. Such a scope allows for an examination of the period spanning Calvin's and Beza's successive ministries, as well as the early period of a new leadership after the two reformers.

Manetsch divides his study into two general sections. The first, chapters 1 through 5, examines the history and nature of the pastoral office. Chapter one sets the scene with an overview of Geneva and its Reformation; chapter two introduces the personnel in the Company, while chapters 3 through 5 look at the pastoral vocation, pastors and their households, and rhythms of ministry, respectively. The second part of the book explores more closely the specific duties performed by the ministers: preaching (chapter 6), church discipline (chapter 7), writing (chapter 8), and pastoral care, administered through sacraments, catechesis, visitation, and spiritual consolation (chapter 9). Throughout each chapter, Manetsch looks at the symbiotic relationship between theory and practice, revealing how social and political, as well as theology and biblical exegesis, influenced the pastoral office among this company of men.



Manetsch's work will benefit church pastors in two main ways. First, the book removes any veneer that one may have of Calvin's Geneva and its ministers. The book exposes the "golden-age" fallacy, as it breathes with the earthy reality of pastoral ministry, amidst the busyness and complexity of Genevan life. Many of the virtues of the ministers are highlighted, but so too are their vices. For example, Antoine La Faye said that the first ministers belonging to the Company were not even qualified to herd goats. Some were known to be poor preachers; others, glory-hunters; while still others were of questionable character. One minister was disciplined for groping a female parishioner, arguing that he did so "in order to test if she was a good girl"! The Company experienced deep rifts, marriage breakups, and bitter family disputes. Calvin's family was no exception: his brother, Antoine, and wife, Anne, did not enjoy a happy marriage. She later committed adultery with a servant and the marriage ended in divorce. Manetsch's book takes the shine off these Reformed "heroes," while at the same time it reveals how God used fallen-yet-faithful men to consolidate the Reformation in Geneva and Europe.

Second, the book provides modern pastors with a wealth of material from which to mine valuable lessons and resources for ministry. In chapter 6, which deals with the ministry of the Word, one learns what preaching is, the importance of avoiding pretentious reference to the original languages in the pulpit (Calvin took his Hebrew or Greek Bible into the pulpit but never referred to "the original"), preaching in the vernacular to common people, applying God's Word, and not despising valid insights gleaned from the liberal arts (Beza). Chapter 7, on moral oversight within the context of church discipline, is detailed yet informative. At times the Consistory's discipline appears "heavy-handed, harsh, punitive—at least to modern sensibilities." The number of suspensions alone—9,200 between 1542 and 1609—question the pastoral wisdom and spiritual benefits of this kind of church discipline. Nevertheless, the Consistory minutes reveal a deep commitment to pastoral care, from which modern pastors can learn much. Chapter 8 broadens one's learning in pastoral care, covering baptism, catechism and religious instruction, the Lord's Supper, pastoral visitation, and spiritual counsel and consolation. Here one finds a number of helpful tips and resources, from the content of church services and the administration of baptism, to ministering individually to people.

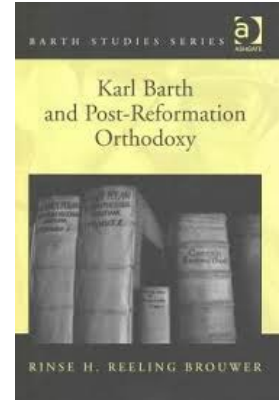
Manetsch concludes the book with an epilogue, in which he gleans a number of lessons for contemporary ministry, none of which are ground-breaking, but all of which are timely reminders: the vocation of Christian ministry is difficult and involves many hardships; accountability and collegiality is vital for long-term pastoral work; the Scriptures must play the leading role in renewing and sustaining the Reformation; and pastoral care must be given high priority—Christian ministry needs to be Word-centered *and* people-centered.

The book exhibits the best of academic research and scholarship coupled with insightful application for modern-day pastors. It is historically accurate, detailed and informative; but the wealth of data never intrudes into the narrative. Manetsch has performed a masterful job of compiling extensive information (a large proportion that appears seemingly dry and irrelevant) into an engaging and vivid portrait of Geneva's Reformed ministers.

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Rise H. Reeling Brouwer. *Karl Barth and Post-Reformation Orthodoxy*. Barth Studies Series. Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2015). viii + 275 pp. £65.00/\$119.95.

Amongst proponents of Reformed and evangelical theology, Karl Barth is often touted as an outsider, someone proposing a theology alien to their tradition or, at worst, as an enemy to their theological principles. For the latter, the prevailing issues often center on Barth's doctrine of Scripture, his creative reworking of the doctrine of election, and, at times, his theological interpretation. While the former may echo similar concerns, it is Barth's use of the post-Reformation orthodox writers that is often criticized (covering a period of thought from around 1560–1710). As the critique goes, Barth was too removed from the actual source material of this particularly creative and broad period of Reformation theology, and his reading of this material through secondhand collections gave Barth a misguided notion of Reformed thought (that he, as the critique goes, unwisely followed in the development of his own theological system). The main culprits for this (perceived) confusion are the texts that became known simply as "Heppe" and "Schmid," which are volumes of excerpted texts covering Reformed and Lutheran dogmatics respectively. Barth himself recalled the discovery of these texts in 1924 as he prepared to teach a course on dogmatics (eventually given under the title "Instruction in the Christian Religion"). This course in Christian theology was published as *The Göttingen Dogmatics*, and serves as a helpful introduction to Barth's early thinking. This work is, in McCormack's words, a kind of "Sentence Commentary" in the vein of medieval works on Lombard, but now on Heppe. It is not surprising, given this claim, that many would see Barth's reliance upon Heppe as a crutch rather than a true reliance and meditation on the Reformed orthodox writers.



If Barth's primary engagement with the orthodox writers of the Reformed tradition, whose project he can be seen as expanding and developing, is through a sourcebook, then this is a devastating blow to the claim that Barth was working within this tradition (in any meaningful sense). The question of Barth's sources then, is an important one, considering Barth's acceptance and critique of various thinkers from this era. Brouwer's work is an attempt to give an account of Barth's use of thinkers from this era, assessing how often and in what ways Barth engaged this strand of the tradition. To begin, Brouwer offers a detailed description of Barth's own holdings. This was particularly telling. From the time he came across Heppe in 1924, Barth already owned Ursinus's *Summa Theologiae*, Witsius's *De Oeconomia Foederum*, and Burman's, *Synopsis Theologiae Dogmaticae*. From then on Barth continued acquiring Reformed and Lutheran dogmatic primary texts into the 1950s. Brouwer helpfully provides the author name, reference number in the Barth library, title, publication date, whether the source was Reformed or Lutheran, Barth's own acquisition details (particularly *when* he acquired the text), and how many times Barth cites each given work in the *Church Dogmatics*. From there, Brouwer assesses the scope and contours of Barth's collection and turns to his use of these texts in the *Church Dogmatics* in general, and, in particular, focuses on the excursuses on the "Old Protestant Orthodoxy." This sets up the rest of the book, where Brouwer canvases Barth's development with the primary literature from the *Göttingen Dogmatics* to his *Church Dogmatics*. Focusing each chapter on a person (or persons) or a text in relation to a given doctrine (or set of doctrines), Brouwer unfolds the theological landscape Barth was engaging and reveals the degree to which Barth really did engage it. What Brouwer argues, through all of this, is a much more nuanced view than is generally assumed. Barth was a close reader of these texts, to be sure,

but Heppie was also an important source and continued to impact Barth's thinking. Brouwer concludes with a discussion of this latter point specifically, focusing on how Heppie's continued influence on Barth played out throughout his work.

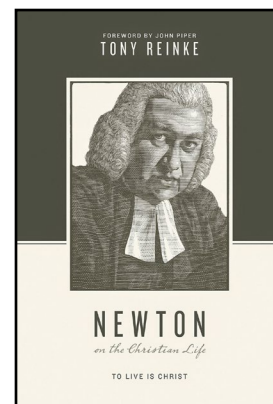
As can probably be seen from the above description, this book is primarily written for Barth scholars and historical theologians with a particular interest in Reformed Dogmatics in relation to Barth's own appropriation. That said, the meat of the volume is not simply a description of Barth's *use* of these texts, but of the text themselves. Detailed discussions of Ramist logic, simplicity, the divine attributes, Trinity, providence, scripture, ecclesiology and justification are just some of the points of engagement. In this sense, even though not entirely robust (each section focuses on a given thinker or select grouping of thinkers), this volume serves as a helpful companion to one's engagement with post-Reformation Reformed theology (with the interesting feature of seeing Barth's use and critique). Overall, this is an incredibly thorough, well-researched, and developed account of Barth's use of the Reformed High-Orthodox. With the current interest in engaging these sources, and with the continued interest in Barth, this volume will be of particular interest to scholars seeking to place Barth in relation to the Reformed tradition.

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Tony Reinke. *Newton on the Christian Life: To Live is Christ*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015. 285 pp. £13.78/\$19.99.

Charles Spurgeon once observed, "A man's private letters often let you into the secrets of his heart" (*The Sword and Trowel* [London, United Kingdom, 1868], 108). If this aphorism carries an ounce of veracity, Spurgeon would certainly have recommended Tony Reinke's spiritual biography on John Newton. *Newton on the Christian Life*, one of the latest additions to the Theologians on the Christian Life series edited by Stephen Nichols and Justin Taylor, is an alloy of precious truths excavated from hundreds of Newton's letters, sermons, and hymns. Consequently, Reinke is confident he has captured the voice of "the old African blasphemer," for "through all of these letters Newton still speaks" (p. 23). Reinke successfully demonstrates that the man touted as one of the greatest letter-writers of all time was a theologian in his own right. "He was, and remains, one of the church's most perceptive and practical theologians on the Christian life" (p. 27). As a staff writer and researcher at desiringgod.org, the author exercises proficiency in compiling information and delivering theological motifs in an organized and devotional style. Reinke's depiction of Newton is certainly more hagiographic than, for instance, Carl Trueman's *Luther on the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015). Still, the reader must remember that Newton authored the famous hymn "Amazing Grace" and not *Bondage of the Will*. Newton's life and thought demand a more devotional biography.

Reinke is unequivocal in his estimation of Newtonian theology: "What I have found is that at the core of his pastoral theology radiates the all-sufficiency of Christ" (p. 30). This premise is unmistakably the central motif of the book. Newton consistently juxtaposes Christ's all-sufficiency with sinful imagery



like broken cisterns, “Mr. Self,” and fleshly powers that blind the sinner from “beholding Christ” (pp. 240, 249, 75). The all-sufficiency of Christ is also a natural corollary to “the *all-in-all-ness*—of Christ,” another ubiquitous theme (p. 51). Like Newton’s ministry, this book is imbued with Christology. In fact, the glory of Christ is so integral to Newton’s biblicism that Reinke identifies it as his “hermeneutical key to understanding the entire Bible” (p. 215). Therefore, the subtitle, “To Live is Christ,” could not be more apropos for a former slave trader-turned-abolitionist whose conversion was as dramatic as the storm that nearly claimed his life in 1748. The author presents *gospel simplicity* as the “essence of the Christian life” for Newton. Keeping one’s eye simply upon Christ and looking to his person and work, the sinner is freed from the deadly complexity of sin (p. 72).

For Newton, the grace of the cross was not simply amazing. It was the “sufficient grace” typified in 2 Corinthians 12, perhaps his favorite text (pp. 42–43). According to the pastor from both Olney and London, the series of “marvelous mercies”—not self-examination—was “the key ground for genuine Christian assurance” (p. 221). Hence, Newton described “the greatest Christian in the world” as the man of faith refined by these trials (p. 105). Newton himself knew them well. After all, the majestic hymn “Amazing Grace” wasn’t just biographical of David; it was also autobiographical.

In the foreword, John Piper praises Reinke’s ability to capture the tenor of Newton’s writings: “the voice of Tony Reinke and the voice of John Newton have become almost indistinguishable” (p. 15). Such a laudatory description is indicative not only of Reinke’s aptitude as a writer/researcher but also of his purpose for this book. *Newton on the Christian Life* is incisive not just for its history, but for its spirituality as well. The heart of John Newton is on full display. The author achieves precisely what the editors of this series set out to accomplish in presenting “perspectives from the past” (p. 13). However, if the voice of John Newton sounds *too* much like Tony Reinke, it may simply be Reinke behind the curtain. Despite the author’s adequate citations, there are several occasions when Reinke appears to be speaking *for* Newton, not *as* Newton—indicated many times by a single footnote underlining a page of commentary. Again, due to the purpose of this book, Reinke should be given more latitude. As a spiritual biography, more explanatory width is needed.

Never does the author over-embellish Newton’s strengths. At one point, Reinke even questions Newton’s lack of pneumatology in his ministry (p. 51). For the sake of Christian piety, it serves as a worthy critique in a book perfectly engineered for church devotionals. Apart from its spiritual cardiology, perhaps what makes this work so suitable for mass audiences is its natural flow of thought and Reinke’s ornately simple prose. His willingness to articulate theological truths in imaginative ways struck me as very Piper-like. Perhaps my only substantial critique concerns Reinke’s own criticism of Newton regarding God’s delight over his children (pp. 260–61). While I agree that Newton could have discussed this theme with more frequency in his writings, offering the doctrine of limited atonement as a solution does not coalesce with a pastor who preferred the theology of Andrew Fuller and who likened his use of Calvinism to diluting sugar in tea (pp. 25–26). These small exceptions aside, Reinke’s spiritual portrayal of John Newton leaves the reader with an increased love of Christ, conviction of one’s sinfulness, and a sense of one’s utter dependence upon the grace of God. *Newton on the Christian Life* is devotional history I would recommend for any scholar, pastor, or Christian.

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Owen Strachan. *Awakening the Evangelical Mind: An Intellectual History of the Neo-Evangelical Movement*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. 238 pp. £17.35/\$24.99.

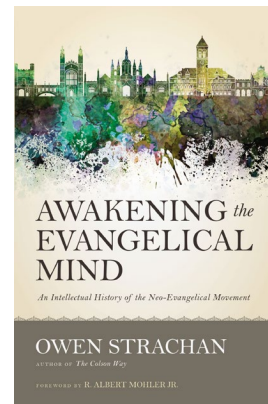
Today, scholars such as Alvin Plantinga, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Mark Noll, and James Davidson Hunter openly declare their evangelical faith in the secular academy while contributing important research to their respective fields. Owen Strachan aims to explain the roots of this recent re-emergence of evangelical intellectualism with his study on the history of the neo-evangelical movement. He argues that this “mid-century attempt to reengage the life of the mind represents the most significant intellectual development among American Christians since the institutional heyday of the 18th and 19th centuries” (p. 25).

Strachan’s book begins with a biographical study of Harold John Ockenga, the senior statesman of neo-evangelicalism, whose orthodox but intellectual and culturally aware Christianity led to the founding of many institutions and influenced a number of leaders within the movement. Ockenga was a reformed minister influenced by the holiness movement and educated at both Princeton and Westminster Seminary. He firmly believed that Christianity and intellectual pursuits could, and should, go hand-in-hand. Strachan connects Ockenga to the group of scholars he calls the “Cambridge evangelicals.” This group of evangelicals attended Harvard (and Boston University) in the 1940s and includes Carl F. Henry, Edward John Carnell, Kenneth Kantzer, and George Eldon Ladd. They and their peers entered the elite university in order to gain training and the credentials that would allow them to contend with and evangelize the “liberals” in the secular academy.

Ockenga and the Cambridge evangelicals represented a “profound counter-move to the anti-intellectualism of their peers” (p. 72). This anti-intellectualism was at least partially rooted in the fears of parents who saw their children leave the faith after attending secular institutions. The proliferation of Bible colleges in the 1920s and 1930s was a safe alternative for students who wanted the experience of college without the intellectual risk. The Cambridge evangelicals bucked this trend, which set the stage for renewed evangelical engagement with the academy. Strachan spends the rest of the book narrating the institution-building endeavors of these men as they founded the National Association of Evangelicals, Fuller Seminary, *Christianity Today*, the Evangelical Theological Society, and the failed Crusade University.

Strachan is associate professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, former director of the Carl F. H. Henry Institute for Evangelical Engagement, and holds a Ph.D. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. His background reflects the influence of neo-evangelicalism, but the book is fair in its assessments of evangelicalism and evangelicals. For example, when explaining the Cambridge evangelicals’ sudden interest in attending Harvard, Strachan admits that World War II “created openings for students that Harvard would otherwise have rejected” (p. 77). Strachan makes every effort to provide a balanced account of the strengths and weaknesses of neo-evangelicals.

This book excels in lucidly narrating and weaving together the histories of these men. It also engages with many different scholars of the history of American evangelicalism. Throughout the book, Strachan explicitly responds to Molly Worthen, who argues that evangelicals have experienced an ongoing “crisis of authority” leading to “anxiety” and “animosity toward intellectual life” (*Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2013], 2). For Worthen,



this crisis is rooted in evangelicals' undue allegiance to rationalism and the inerrancy of scripture. Strachan responds to these claims by arguing that "this shared project [evangelical intellectualism] faltered because of a lack of confidence in biblical authority, not because biblical authority as a concept is unworkable and untenable in light of secularity" (p. 173). Sometimes the evidence used in these two books is the same, yet interpreted very differently. Whereas Worthen uses George Ladd's tenure at Fuller Theological Seminary to exemplify the seminary's lack of tolerance for ideas that did not toe the fundamentalist line, Strachan uses Ladd's work as an example of Fuller's culture of academic freedom. This reader suspects that both accounts contain a seed of accuracy, and perhaps Worthen's and Strachan's books should be read together in order to gain a more accurate picture of the strengths and limitations of neo-evangelical intellectual pursuits.

Strachan's study could be strengthened by closer attention to definitions, especially his use of the terms "life of the mind" and "evangelical." In the conclusion, he traces the "evangelical mind" back to medieval universities, the Protestant Reformation, and countless theologians and philosophers including Augustine and Aquinas. Many historians, including Mark Noll and David Bebbington, have argued that "evangelicalism" as a movement did not begin until the eighteenth century, and was therefore a much more recent phenomenon (David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* [London: Routledge, 1989], and Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003]). Were the ideas of neo-evangelicals an inheritance of older, orthodox Christian scholarship such as that of Augustine (as Strachan seems to assume), or more modern revivalistic evangelicalism (rooted in ideas of pietism and the enlightenment, as Worthen contends)? This is an important historical question that Strachan's research only begins to acknowledge.

Awakening the Evangelical Mind will serve as a great resource for evangelicals, especially reformed evangelicals, looking to understand the roots of their own movement. By bringing Ockenga and the Cambridge evangelicals together, it builds on the work of historians such as Garth M. Rosell and George Marsden. Its excellent bibliography will also enable interested readers to dig deeper into the wealth of scholarship on evangelicals during the 20th century.

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Douglas A. Sweeney. *Edwards the Exegete: Biblical Interpretation and Anglo-Protestant Culture on the Edge of the Enlightenment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. xii + 391 pp. £47.99/\$74.00.

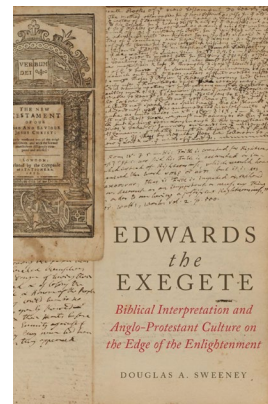
In recent years a growing number of scholars have written on Jonathan Edwards's bibliology. Yet, within that broad category Edwards's approach to biblical interpretation remains an understudied topic. Though scholars have published several fine essays and written a handful of monographs on Edwards's interpretation of particular biblical books, before now no one has ventured a comprehensive, book-length treatment of Edwards's hermeneutic.

Doug Sweeney is a church historian who serves as director of the Jonathan Edwards Center at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Over the past fifteen years or so no scholar has done more than Sweeney to shine light on Edwards's views on biblical interpretation. He has co-edited a compilation of Edwards's sermons, written numerous journal articles and book chapters on Edwards's use of Scripture, and published a fine book that examines Edwards's pastoral vision (*Jonathan Edwards and the Ministry of the Word* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009]). Sweeney's work on this topic has culminated in his latest book, *Edwards the Exegete: Biblical Interpretation and Anglo-Protestant Culture on the Edge of the Enlightenment*.

Sweeney argues, "we fail to comprehend Edwards' life, thought, and ministry when viewing them apart from his biblical exegesis" (p. ix). This is a mistake because, as Sweeney notes, "Edwards devoted most of his waking life to studying the Bible, its extra-biblical contexts, its theological meanings, and its import for everyday religion" (p. 5). Over the course of ten chapters, divided into five parts, Sweeney sketches the contours of Edwards's hermeneutic. The opening two chapters offer necessary prolegomena. Edwards's world was saturated with Scripture, even as Enlightenment scholars were raising questions about the Bible's veracity. Edwards studied the Bible using the best critical tools of his era. However, he never wavered in his high view of Scripture and his study of the Bible was always for the sake of personal devotion and public proclamation. As an heir of the Reformed tradition, he believed Scripture was true and that it was a unified text theologically. He practiced both literal and spiritual exegesis. Edwards was what many scholars would call a pre-critical interpreter, though Sweeney frequently pushes back on that term, preferring simply to understand Edwards in his own context rather than scrutinize him according to contemporary standards (pp. 42, 101, 153).

The remainder of *Edwards the Exegete* looks at four different, sometimes overlapping hermeneutical strategies Edwards employed. Each part includes a chapter focusing on definition and survey, followed by a chapter devoted to a case study from Edwards's corpus. Edwards embraced a canonical hermeneutic, assuming a unity between the Old and New Testaments and drawing on the analogy of Scripture and the analogy of faith for interpretive boundaries. The Old Testament was interpreted in light of the New, as illustrated in the case study of Edwards's use of Hebrews to interpret Melchizedek. Edwards also adopted a christological hermeneutic, interpreting all of Scripture, including the Old Testament, through the lens of Christ's life and death. This approach was illustrated in his spiritual exegesis of the Song of Songs, wherein the erotic imagery is applied to Christ's love for the church.

Edwards next employed a redemptive-historical approach, built on the foundation of federal theology, which provided an eschatological flavor to his exegesis of Scripture. Not surprisingly, Sweeney focuses on Edwards's postmillennial view of John's Revelation as his case study. (However, Sweeney



argues the “postmillennial” label is anachronistic [p. 163].) Finally, Edwards emphasized spiritual application in his hermeneutic, mining “Scriptures for instruction from his Maker on the course of human flourishing” (p. 188). For example, in his preaching and teaching on justification he also focused on the necessity of sanctification in an effort to counteract the intellectualist tendencies among some Protestants.

Throughout the book, Sweeney evidences both a sweeping knowledge of Edwards’s writings—published and unpublished—and a clear grasp of the history of interpretation. Time and again, Sweeney demonstrates familiarity with the best of historical scholarship, whether he is discussing nuances within Deism, challenging common assumptions that the reformers and their successors rejected allegory, or acknowledging the existence of a Christian version of the Enlightenment. Sweeney is also familiar with all of the commentators and other scholars whom Edwards drew upon in his own exegesis. Sweeney debunks the common claim that Edwards embraced a view of justification that is amenable to Catholicism; like his Puritan forebears and early evangelical contemporaries, Edwards was resolutely anti-Catholic. Sweeney ably argues that Edwards held to multiple interpretations of Scripture, like most pre-modern exegetes, but that he refracted his interpretations through a synthesis of the Enlightenment and the classic Reformed emphasis on illumination. Edwards was familiar with theories of historical criticism, and at times appropriated them, but he remained a pastoral interpreter who was irrevocably convinced of the inspiration, truthfulness, and sufficiency of Scripture.

Edwards the Exegete is a first-rate work of historical scholarship that fills a gaping hole in Edwards studies. At the same time, I found the book to be edifying and instructive. Though Sweeney is writing for the guild, his critical-yet-sympathetic account of Edwards’s thought, coupled with so much of Edwards’s own exegetical musings cited and summarized throughout the book, both informed my understanding of Edwards’s exegesis and refined my own thoughts about hermeneutics. This book is essential reading for scholars interested in Edwards, the historical of biblical interpretation, and early transatlantic evangelicalism. It would also prove a fruitful resource for biblical scholars and theologians interested in the Theological Interpretation of Scripture movement. But this is also that rare technical scholarly monograph on Edwards’s thought that everyday pastors should also read. I hope Oxford University Press will publish a less-expensive paperback edition so that Sweeney’s excellent book will be more accessible to those who labor at the same exegetical work to which Edwards’s dedicated his own ministry. Highly recommended.

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Roger White, Judith Wolfe, and Brendan N. Wolfe, eds. *C. S. Lewis and His Circle: Essays and Memoirs from the Oxford C. S. Lewis Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 266 pp. £20.00/\$29.95.

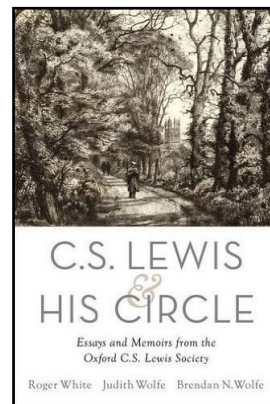
Gleaned from the archives of the Oxford C. S. Lewis Society, the offerings in this book are talks and presentations made over the years “in the same intellectual and university community that formed and sustained” the Inklings (p. xi). Some of these talks have not been transcribed and published until now. Part One of the book is a collection of essays on philosophy, theology, and literature; Part Two contains memoirs of C. S. Lewis and his family and friends, and finally memories of some of the Inklings. Almost all of the voices in the volume are British, thus bringing welcome perspectives and insights, especially for North American readers. Rather than trying to interact with all of the essays, I will take the books in its parts.

The book begins with the “academic” essays, and readers of these chapters will appreciate the depth and insights they find in Part One. The essays represent a range of topics that reflect something of the breadth of Lewis’s own writings and thinking. Notable in the “Philosophy and Theology” collection and generous in tone throughout is Elizabeth Anscombe’s final words on Chapter III of Lewis’s *Miracles*. Professor Anscombe’s talk (from 1985) revisits her famous debate with Lewis at the 1948 Oxford Socratic Club, which resulted in Lewis reworking that chapter in the later edition of the book. Moreover, Anscombe’s comments published here clarify her precise concerns with Lewis’s chapter, “The Cardinal Difficulty of Naturalism.” Moving from Lewis to Charles Williams, Paul Fiddes offers an analysis of the Augustinian *privatio boni* view of evil in Williams’s work. The essays in this section of Part One suggest something of the rich theological and philosophical conversation that members of the Oxford C. S. Lewis Society enjoyed over the years and now, thanks to the editors’ careful selections, available to a wider audience.

The Literature section of Part One offers a rather heterogeneous selection of papers on topics ranging from Narnia and the Space Trilogy to the Lewis Diaries and W. H. Auden and the Inklings. Rowan Williams offers an impressionistic talk on *That Hideous Strength* suitable to guide an evening’s conversation. Malcolm Guite reflects on what may be one of C. S. Lewis’s lasting contributions to the twentieth century Christian conversation in his comments on that “far-off country,” that longing for God which we all experience and some try to suppress or satisfy in inappropriate ways; Guite offers Lewis’s comments on this spiritual longing as a way forward for Christians in their conversations with people who have imbibed postmodern modes of thinking. Walter Hooper’s comments on “It all began with a picture” are, as always, refreshing and delightful reading.

The essays in Part One provide stimulating and reflective reading for those interested in the many sides of Lewis’s thinking and writings. Leaving the reader wishing for more, they give glimpses that nuance the reader’s understanding of and appreciation for the ways in which Lewis engaged the issues of his day and how he wrote effectively for multiple audiences.

Part Two turns from the academic to personal memories of C. S. Lewis, his brother Warnie, and friends such as Owen Barfield, George Sayer, John Wain, and Nevil Coghill. George Sayer’s offering, though altogether too brief, tells of Lewis’s visits to the Sayer home in Malvern, providing delightful glimpses into a side of Lewis that few of us know much about. Owen Barfield clarifies some misunderstandings about “the Great War” he encountered with Lewis. John Wain offers two chapters,



one of Warnie's Diaries and one on Nevill Coghill, who impressed Lewis from the first time he met him when they were both undergraduates at Oxford. Included too is Ronald Head's memory of the Lewis brothers as parishioners of Holy Trinity Church, Headington, and Peter Bide who married Jack and Joy in Joy's hospital room. For readers who want to know more about Jack Lewis the man, the chapters in Part Two offer pleasurable glimpses that are not available anywhere else.

In publishing *C. S. Lewis and His Circle*, the editors and Oxford University Press provide a rich and stimulating collection of academic essays and personal reflections that all Lewis scholars and readers will welcome. At times whetting the reader's appetite for more of the same, and at times asking the reader to leap from one topic to another, these chapters offer something for everybody. And therein lies the book's strength and pleasure. Recommended and delightful.

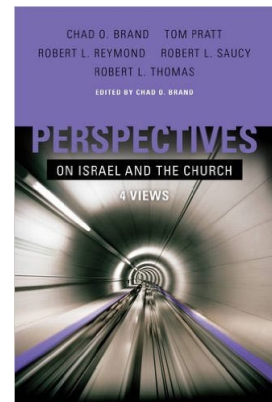
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— SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND BIOETHICS —

Chad Owen Brand, ed. *Perspectives on Israel and the Church: 4 Views*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2015. viii + 317 pp. £20.96/\$29.99.

This book succeeds in presenting four different perspectives on Israel and the church in rigorous academic and engaging ways. Each view has a unique hermeneutical, ecclesiological, and eschatological position especially when it considers the relationship of "Israel" and the "church." Each view is presented and then it is followed by three responses from those who are competing to win the mind of the reader. The four views are: Traditional Covenantal, Traditional Dispensational, Progressive Dispensational, and Progressive Covenantal.

First, Robert Reymond presents the Traditional Covenantal view. Traditional Covenant theology as is indicated by its name focuses on covenants. It believes in three covenants: the covenant of redemption, works, and grace. The covenant of redemption is between the members of the Trinity before the foundation of the world, the covenant of works is between God and our first human parents before their fall into sin, and the covenant of grace is seen after their fall as well as throughout the Bible, starting from Genesis 3:15. The covenant of grace can also be seen in the covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the New Covenant (Jer 31:34). In other words, the covenant of grace is seen throughout the Old and New Testaments. From the perspective of Traditional Covenant theology, salvation in both testaments is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The people of God in the Old Testament believed in the coming Messiah while in the New Testament they believed in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah (Luke 22:37; 24:25–27). Furthermore, the church is spiritual Israel, the sacrifice is Jesus Christ, the priesthood is for all believers, the temple is the hearts of believers, and the Promised Land is the Kingdom of God. In other words, there is no future role for the Jews and all Old Testament expectations are fulfilled in the church.



Second, Robert Thomas argues for the Traditional Dispensational view. The followers of this school believe that God deals with human beings differently in different dispensations. Each dispensation has unique elements and/or a covenant that shapes the way in which God relates to human beings. These dispensations are: innocence, conscience, human government, Abrahamic promise, Mosaic Law, grace, and the millennium which is followed by the eternal state. From this perspective, Israel and the church must be distinct. The promises of God to Old Testament Israel will be literally fulfilled. Furthermore, the Jews today are Israel and interpreters should read the Old Testament literally without bringing into it the meaning of the New Testament. In other words, the Jewish people today are the recipients of the Old Testament promises including the land promises. In this perspective, the age of the church will be over at the rapture. The Jewish people will go through the tribulation, believe in Christ, and then they will experience the fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies in the millennium.

Third, Robert Saucy presents the Progressive Dispensational view. This view asserts the distinction of Israel from the Church. However, unlike traditional dispensationalists Saucy has adopted a more sophisticated hermeneutic. He states that the “fundamental principle of hermeneutics underlying progressive dispensationalism’s interpretation of Scripture is that all of Scripture is to be understood according to its plain meaning, derived from historical-grammatical interpretation done in consideration of its literary genre and both the divine and human authors” (p. 165). The divine context goes beyond the historical context yet it is still an author-centered hermeneutic. Furthermore, the historical meaning is like the seed that develops into a tree, i.e., the canonical meaning. The genes are the same and if the seeds did not grow into a tree then we need to limit ourselves to the literal historical meaning. In summary, the church is not Israel. The latter is distinct in its identity as well as its role in God’s plan. Messianic prophecies will be fulfilled in the future in Israel in the land of Israel.

Fourth, Chad Brand and Tom Pratt Jr. present the Progressive Covenantal view. They present their view in five points: (1) The oneness of God demands one people. (2) The people of God are his by divine election and spiritual birth. (3) The people of God arise from the supporting root of historic Israel. (4) The marker of the people is the internal presence of the Holy Spirit. (5) The people of God are the body of Christ. Integrating the New Perspective on Paul they discuss election in dialogue with monotheism within the framework of salvation history. They affirm that the church today is the people of God without accepting the notion of replacement. They argue that “the entire debate over the significance of Israel and the church in eschatological perspective is bound up in the history of salvation as it is revealed in the metanarrative of Scripture” (p. 292). In other words, they clearly argue that the church does not replace Israel and ethnic Israel will be saved in the future. Both Israel and the church will be one in the millennium and the eternal state.

In light of the aforementioned description, it is fitting to make the following comments. First, Evangelical theologians in the West especially in North America continue to ignore the wider Christian context. Both the Orthodox Church and the Catholic churches have made some important contributions towards a better understanding of the relationship of the church and Israel. Unfortunately, the book focuses on the Evangelical world and ignores “Two Covenant Theology” as understood in some Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic circles. It also overlooks some of the dominant discussions within Messianic Judaism as summarized by Richard Harvey in his book *Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology: A Constructive Approach* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2009). It ignores all the Palestinian theological voices. The book does not engage the Kairos document, Naim Ateek, Mitri Raheb, Christ at the Checkpoint conferences, or other writings including my book, *The Land of Christ: A Palestinian*

Cry (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013). It marginalizes the missional impact of the pertinent study and its importance to the nations of the Middle East as well as to the Islamic world. Admittedly, the Palestinian question has partly been raised, which is a step forward, but there is a lot of space for further development.

Second, the four scholars have not unpacked the diversity of the meaning of the word “Israel” in Scripture, and most of the times they highlighted a synchronic meaning. At certain times it was stated that the seed of Abraham will be distinct physically (p. 167) and the definition of Israel is based on its territory or borders (pp. 169–70). Assuming continuity between biblical Israel and the contemporary Jewish people has not been verified or discussed. Furthermore, equating biblical Israel with the modern state of Israel or highlighting their unbroken continuity marginalizes the distinctions between the words “Hebrew,” “Israel,” and “Jew.” A person could be a Hebrew but not Jewish or Israelite—for example, Abraham. A person could be a member of Israel and a Hebrew without being Jewish—for example, the prophet Samuel. He lived at a time in which the referent “Jew” was not yet coined. In fact, the word “Jew” does not occur in the Pentateuch. It is a post-exilic term. One could be Jewish but not an Israelite or Hebrew—for example, Antiochus the Macedonian king (2 Macc 9:17). A person could be brought into the household of Israel and could become Jewish, but not a Hebrew or a descendant of Jacob—for example Achior the Ammonite (Jdt 14:10). In addition, the book of Esther informs us that many nations became Jews (Est 8:17). In short, the terms “Israel,” “Jew,” and “Hebrew” are not identical. We cannot define Israel in a simplistic way that ignores its multiple meanings, social locations, and diversity in the genre of the text. The meaning of “Israel” is related to the discourse in which it is embedded. Israel has many meanings in the Scriptures that have not been highlighted in this book. Clearly DNA or biology or blood is not the defining factor in determining membership in Israel (Matt 3:9; John 8:37–39). The implications of membership in Israel are important for the continuity/discontinuity discussion. Further, the borders of “Israel” in the Scriptures are diverse. The Pentateuch alone presents three different borders. The discussion needs to reconsider this territorial flexibility.

Third, the time is ripe for Evangelicals to move away from an event-centered eschatology in which we discuss the programs of God and instead focus on a theocentric eschatology or perhaps a Christocentric eschatology in which we discover the heart of the missional God. The question of the relationship of Israel and the church needs to shift away from ontological discussions and move into more functional ones. How can the church be a blessing to Israel and the rest of the world? How can the Jewish people be a blessing today? The context of the discussion needs to be expanded and should include both Messianic Jewish and Palestinian Christians. Last, I still welcome the book and hope that it will motivate the people of God to ask the same questions in the occupied Palestinian Territories today. Perhaps, the discussion will be different.

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Peter J. Leithart. *Traces of the Trinity: Signs of God in Creation and Human Experience*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2015. viii + 165 pp. £10.99/\$17.99.

Are Christian doctrines merely statements that we assent to on the basis of biblical evidence or do they make more expansive claims about the nature of reality? Specifically, is the doctrine of the Trinity an esoteric datum about God that the biblical evidence forces upon us or might it offer deeper insight into the nature of the cosmos and human experience? In *Traces of the Trinity*, Peter Leithart makes a case for the latter by offering a thoughtful and thought-provoking examination of the stuff of life and of the cosmos through the lens of the Trinity. It is a unique and much needed project.

Leithart lays out his thesis in the preface. Guided by the Trinitarian concept of mutual indwelling (*perichoresis*) he aims to plumb creation and human experience for evidence of such mutual indwelling. This impulse is driven by the simple conviction that if “the Triune God created the world ... that should have *some* implications for the kind of world that it is” (p. viii). But more than his thesis, Leithart lays out his approach in the preface and it is important to grasp. He calls it an exercise in speculative theology and it is really an invitation to look at the world differently. Accordingly, he unfolds his argument (which is not an argument in the traditional sense) slowly over the following chapters, in most cases not engaging in much explicit theologizing or application. This lack of explication may be confusing to some readers but biblically and theologically astute readers will increasingly find themselves anticipating the end long before its arrival.

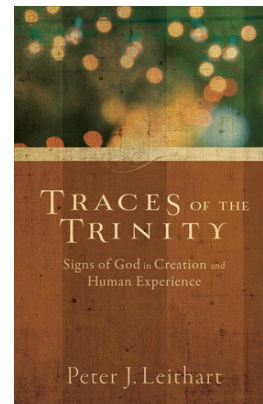
He begins with a trio of chapters concerning human interaction with the world and other humans. In the first he observes that in our experience with the world there is both separation and indwelling. While we can always separate between objects and ourselves, both we and the objects are shaped by each other’s presence. Further, there are a variety of ways in which “outside” us and “inside” us are blurred, as in breathing and eating. We humans, like our skin, are porous in a variety of ways.

In the second chapter he extends these observations to human relationships. In spite of philosophies to the contrary (and Leithart interacts with Thomas Hobbes and John Locke), we humans are not fundamentally isolated individuals. Rather, society and the individual are mutually informing realities. Chapter three extends these ideas by looking specifically at the quality of mutual indwelling in sexual love. In sexual relationships more than just bodies are entwined; whole new persons are formed.

From these somewhat concrete observations, Leithart moves into a further trio of chapters that examine time, language and music for signs of this same interdependence. Humanity’s enduring struggle to understand time and change provides the ground for reflection on the way in which past and future mingle in the present. Rather than being external to us, he sees time and change as being integrated into the people and events that engage them. As our subjective experience of time during exciting or boring moments attests, “[t]ime is molded by what takes place in it” (p. 73).

Like time, Leithart insists that language is not something outside the world but is in the world and shapes the world while being shaped by it. In what is probably the most intellectually challenging chapter, he touches on issues of the referentiality of language, intertextuality, and metaphor. While it deftly introduces many readers to new concepts it is likely to leave experts in these areas dissatisfied.

In perhaps one of the most observable examples of the reality of mutual indwelling, Leithart considers sound and music in particular. Many of his observations about the nature of sound and



music are so obvious that many readers will not have ever considered them: the way different sounds can inhabit the same space; the way notes include their own harmonics in the same sonic “space”; the differences between sight and sound.

In two more conceptual chapters Leithart considers interpenetrating elements in ethics and thought. Discussions of ethics often focus on rules, or situations, or the motives of the ethical actor. But basing ethical systems on any one of these is problematic. Rather, he suggests that careful ethical thought considers how these three interplay in any given situation.

It is here that he turns toward application of the principle of interpenetration that he has been observing in the world. He borrows an insight from Gabriel Marcel regarding “availability.” Being “available” means to receive situations not as intrusions but rather as opportunities to “imprint myself on the other who intrudes.” Doing so creates a moment of mutual indwelling as one both receives the intruder and makes a mark on him at the same time. This openness to the mutual indwelling of people in our lives must be extended beyond those we choose to engage with at this level, like spouse and children, to include the stranger and the enemy. He makes the connection explicit at the close of the chapter: “The nature of the universe as I’ve described it encourages an ethic of self-giving love; if we are going to live in accord with the shape of things, we need to adopt a stance of availability, of openness to others and willingness to enter when others open to us” (p. 135).

He extends this thinking to patterns of thought as well. While there is strength in clear reasoning, straight lines, and hard corners, there is more to thought than making distinctions. Many issues are plots on a continuum. Even opposites are somewhat dependent on each other for their specification. This being so, he advocates more creative reasoning and resistance to the tendency to facile separation of positions into “in” and “out,” right and left, liberal and conservative, etc.

In a final chapter the author finally becomes biblically and theologically explicit. He surveys the theological history of the concept of *perichoresis* and offers a whirlwind tour of the biblical testimony to it, focusing particularly on John. Scripture not only testifies to this divine interpenetration, it invites humanity into it and calls the church to be agents of that invitation.

Leithart closes the book with an epilogue in which he engages a couple of theologians regarding the legitimacy of this sort of God-talk. Since the book has not been, up to this point, an exercise in academic theological argumentation, the epilogue seems a little out of place. However, together with Leithart’s engagement with various thinkers throughout the book, it points readers to the broader theological discussion.

While the epilogue makes clear that the author is capable of heavy theological lifting, in the main the book is pitched for an inquisitive though not necessarily theologically trained audience. Leithart’s writing is clear and engaging. Where he does introduce weightier theological and philosophical materials his summaries are clearly articulated. He employs humor and cultural and literary references that explain as well as they entertain. The brisk treatment of the biblical material leaves the reader wishing for more. But this, too, may be intentional as it propels the reader to engage in their own reflection on the world, human experience, and the biblical materials in search of further *Traces of the Trinity*.

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Thomas H. McCall. *An Invitation to Analytic Christian Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015. 183 pp. £15.20/\$22.00.

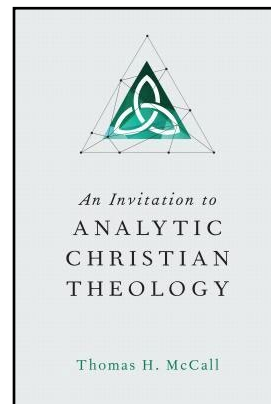
The label “analytic theology” has been bouncing around for a few years now. Given the novelty of this category, it hasn’t always been entirely clear what this new theology amounts to. So I am very enthusiastic about Thomas H. McCall’s new book on the subject: *An Invitation to Analytic Christian Theology*. Given his past works, McCall is a very apt and competent theologian to give this short, highly informative, and very appealing introduction to Christian analytic theology.

McCall spends his first chapter attempting to explain analytic theology, “both what it *isn’t* and what it *is*” (p. 9). He begins this chapter by giving a concise history of analytic theology and its philosophical roots. As McCall notes, for much of the twentieth century academic philosophy—especially Anglo-American “analytic” philosophy—was often thought by many scholars to be synonymous with logical positivism, an analytic philosophical project that sought to show, among other things, that theological claims were meaningless. Here I believe McCall is implicitly addressing the baggage of worries that often come with the term “analytic” due to perceived connections with logical positivism. He then traces out how a cadre of Christian philosophers began to arise from the analytic tradition with ever increasing success (i.e., getting more and more published) by making stronger and stronger arguments within the philosophy of religion. McCall claims that part of this growing movement of philosophy transitioned to turning its sight on distinctly Christian topics, giving a new vigor to philosophical theology that had not been in existence for some time before that. McCall then suggests that the notion of “analytic theology” eventually arose from within this group of philosophical theologians to where we even have an actual *Journal of Analytic Theology* today.

But what is analytic theology? McCall defines it as a “systematic theology attuned to the skills, resources, and virtues of analytic philosophy” (p. 16). McCall spends the rest of the first chapter explaining what these virtues are. In sum, McCall characterizes, correctly in my view, analytic theology as a mode of philosophical theology that uses the specific tools of traditional analytic philosophy, including precise attention to language, logic, and concepts in order to meticulously clarify and explain, or at least to do so as much as possible.

After attempting to explain analytic theology, McCall then addresses various objections and misunderstandings that those unsympathetic with analytic philosophy might have. For example, one might think that analytic theology relies on a strictly univocal account of language or that it attempts to remove mystery from theology. Or analytic theology is just a species of natural theology, or “perfect-being” theology, which is apparently odious to some. Some have evidently worried that analytic theology is also spiritually unedifying. Though his responses are fairly brief to each of these objections, McCall admirably addresses them making the case that Christian analytic theology suffers more from misunderstandings and stereotypes than from substantive problems within its methodology. More needs to be said here, but McCall has successfully dulled the initial edges of these objections.

Most of the following chapters of McCall’s book attempt to show, by way of case studies, how the practice of analytic theology might be exemplified. Each of these chapters covers analytic theology’s connections with Scripture, history of doctrine, and culture (broadly conceived), respectively. McCall’s



chapter on the history of doctrine is one of the most enlightening in showing how extremely beneficial analytic theology can be. Following theologian John Webster, McCall is attracted to the notion of “retrieval theology” (pp. 85–87). As he understands Webster, retrieval theology is not only appropriating theological claims and insights from historical theology but defending such claims and using them in the service of constructive theology in creative ways. It is in this latter task that McCall believes analytic theology can be most helpful, and the various case studies he appeals to make a strong case for analytic theology’s potential insightfulness to this area.

McCall’s book is engaging and clear. As a Christian and as an analytically trained philosopher, I am unsurprisingly sympathetic to using analytic philosophical insights and tools within theology. Given the suspicion that many evangelical theologians might have with analytic philosophy, the first chapter of this book would probably be the most beneficial to those theologians in that McCall tries to dispel some of the stereotypes and clichés associated with analytic theology. By discussing various case studies, McCall does a good job of giving a sense of what Christian analytic theology might look like when practiced and how it could be incredibly advantageous if brought more into the conversation of contemporary theological discussion, including evangelical discussion.

However, at least at one point, I did find McCall’s chapter dealing with analytic theology and Scripture injudicious. McCall attempts to show how an analytic theological method can be brought to bear upon a topic in biblical theology. The main topic in question is compatibilism—an explanation of the Gordian knot of God’s sovereignty and human responsibility. McCall particularly examines D. A. Carson’s biblical case for compatibilism and spends an inordinate number of pages (almost 14% of the book) attempting to trounce Carson’s view. Though there is some insightful discussion here, the overall tenor of this section of McCall’s book is unfair and for the following reason.

McCall comments, “Carson’s choice of term *compatibilism* is interesting” (p. 61). Given McCall’s ensuing criticisms, “interesting” seems to mean here that Carson isn’t using the term “compatibilism” in the way it is normally used among analytic philosophers and theologians. But given that Carson is not an analytic theologian or philosopher, this amounts to McCall criticizing a scholar S of a field F_1 for not knowing how to use some term t_1 (or terms t_2, \dots, t_n) as used in some other field F_2 that S is not an expert in. But why should one expect S to know that? To expect such is clearly unfair. This is especially incongruous given McCall’s later comment that when interacting with non-Western scholars, analytic engagement “will have to proceed with humility, openness, and respect” (p. 157). But this same respect should surely be practiced even within a completely Western context between scholars from different disciplines. Thus, the overall effect of this section of McCall’s book comes off as very one-sided. He is right to point out that the claim for something being “biblical” or “unbiblical” needs to be clarified and given more precision—part of the impetus of his criticism against Carson. But perhaps McCall should have picked a subject in biblical theology that didn’t tempt him to grind familiar axes (see his previous interactions with John Piper on the same subject in *Trinity Journal* 29.2 [2008]: 204–46).

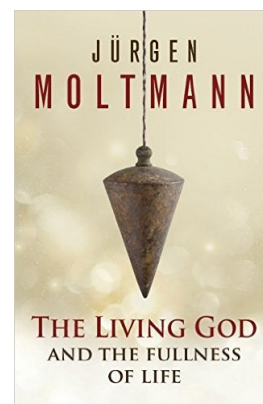
Despite this criticism, McCall’s *An Invitation to Analytic Christian Theology* is an excellent introduction to this fairly new theological approach. For those suspicious of anything analytic, I highly recommend McCall’s book for the first chapter alone. I hope that this book serves to make the analytical

method more appealing, and those who use it more accepted, to ongoing contemporary and evangelical theological discussion.

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Jürgen Moltmann. *The Living God and the Fullness of Life*. Translated by Margeret Kohl. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015. xi + 229 pp. £12.00/\$30.00.

The Living God and the Fullness of Life is the capstone publication of one of the world's leading theologians. Jürgen Moltmann is largely known for his academic work as Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at the University of Tübingen and for his multiple-volume systematic theology series, the most popular of which are *The Crucified God*, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (London: SCM, 1973) and *Theology of Hope*, trans. Theologie der Hoffnung (New York: Harper & Row, 1965). Moltmann's writings are known for correcting the various ideological and social imbalances introduced by modernism. This perspective lends itself to a revised doctrine of creation that (among other things) emphasizes God's immanence (in contrast to absolute transcendence), environmental care (in contrast to domineering industrialism), and physical resurrection of God's people and the cosmos (in contrast to nihilist and escapist eschatologies). Perhaps most of all, Moltmann's work is characterized by a powerful combination of original thought and an ecumenical spirit. In the end, *The Living God* serves as a sweeping visitation of major theological topics, allowing Moltmann to correct any misunderstandings others might have had of his theology over the years and distill some of the most distinctive and insightful discoveries he has made throughout his career.



“The modern world,” he writes in the preface, “takes its bearings from humanistic and materialistic concepts of life. And what men and women experience there is a diminished life” (p. 1). This grave tone initiates a discussion about the nature of Modernity and what it means for Christian life and thought. Moltmann draws attention to common, destructive patterns, asking if the “Enlightenment” is really just that, and highlighting the elementary nonsense of epistemological reductionism: “It is like the transformation brought about by a conjuring trick ... theology is ‘nothing other’ than anthropology; anthropology is ‘nothing other’ than economy; economy is ‘nothing other’ than biology; biology is ‘nothing other’ than neurology; neurology is ‘nothing other’ than system theory; and so forth” (p. 14). The result of systematically reducing the complex to the simple is “a world without mystery, a world devoid of surprises, a calculable world, a controlled world” (p. 17). Indeed, as later noted, the limitless application of the Roman method of *divide et impera* (“divide and conquer”) is supposed to be about “the truth of nature,” but perhaps one has “merely overpowered it because it was weaker?” (p. 185).

Part One (“The Living God”) gets more specific by revisiting key areas in theology proper. The Christian “living God” (a common biblical word-pair) frames Moltmann’s discussion of such topics as omnipresence, the “outpouring” metaphor in pneumatology, and divine immutability. “It is impossible,” he writes, “to consider God as being unchangeable and immovable without declaring God to be dead”

(p. 36). In contrast to the lifeless models of God forged during the “Enlightenment,” the “living God is experienced both actively and passively. God speaks and God listens. God acts and God suffers” (p. 41).

Indeed, conservative theologians contending for God’s immutability in dogmatics will find Moltmann’s assessment challenging—but hopefully instructive given his larger concerns. It might be noted that Moltmann’s promotion of “fathomless astonishment” (p. 55) in theological methodology is at-home with those who would take issue with his more controversial proposals (e.g., the vulnerability of God; see pp. 37–43). Herman Bavinck, for example, shared Moltmann’s concerns about modernity and the centrality of God’s incomprehensibility in theology (the lack of which Bavinck critiqued within his own Reformed circles; see *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008], 2:41; he famously wrote on p. 29: “Mystery is the lifeblood of dogmatics.”). We recall that for over a thousand years the mysteriousness of God was often a regular part of theology and dogmatics—until the modern era, which spawned epistemological fundamentalisms (both theistic and atheistic) that viewed knowledge and detailed discourse of God as the primary realm of unquestionable certainties. This encouraged Christians to view divine incomprehensibility with suspicion instead of acceptance. This does not suggest, however, that Moltmann’s essential approach is mystical or without convictional bite. Elsewhere, Moltmann says, “It is true that we cannot see God, yet that is not because God is so far off but because God is so close.... God is closer to us than we can be to ourselves, said Augustine ... that is not only true for us ourselves, it also applies to everything God has created” (p. 170). But, for those who paint Moltmann’s approach as being perhaps too broad or open, all of these larger considerations should at least be kept in mind.

Part Two (“The Fullness of Life”) lucidly addresses the meaning of “eternal life” (ch. 4), joy and fun (ch. 5), freedom (ch. 6), friendship with God (ch. 7), love and suffering (ch. 8), the relationship between spirituality and the five human senses (ch. 9), hope (ch. 10), and eternal human life in Christ as “a never-ending festival” (ch. 11). In each area, Moltmann makes subtle and profound observations, such as:

If men and women are only guests on earth, then they are not responsible for the guesthouse “earth,” for they are only occasionally present in this earthly inn. It is impossible to ignore the inherent contempt for the earth ... when I die I have no wish “to go to heaven”; I expect “the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come,” to put it in the Christian terms of the Nicene Creed. (p. 84)

Christianity lives in its festivals.... [Yet the] elderly rich have their cocktail parties, where courtesies and platitudes are exchanged, and everyone watches to see what the other one is doing. One no longer knows how to be festive, and one has stopped trying. (p. 93, 97)

The more deeply love draws us into life, the more alive we become, but our experience of suffering is greater, too. The more alive life is, the more deadly for us is death. That is the dialectic of affirmed and loved life. (p. 99)

Existence is more primal than nonexistence, life is more than death: first of all comes love, then grief, and hope runs ahead of despair.... Why is Christianity uniquely a religion of joy, although at its center stands the suffering and dying of Christ on the cross? It is because behind Golgatha there stands the sun of the world of the resurrection. (p. 101)

If we human beings are “a part of the universe,” we shall respect everything for its own sake, apart from its utility for human beings and shall encounter all “fellow creatures” with reverence for life. (p. 161)

If in prayer we seek the reality of God’s world, as with the first lines of the Lord’s Prayer, then prayer is the very opposite of the “opiate of the people.” It is, rather, that in prayer we begin a withdrawal cure, withdrawal from the opiates of the secular world. (p. 173)

Moltmann’s story of being a German prisoner during WWII (p. 173) was also particularly moving.

The numinous, sapiential, and lively character of the work reminds one of post-series theological digests (e.g., Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956]). Despite a handful of typos (“first,” p. 134; “spirituality”; p. 136; “eiher, 138; formatting, bottom p. 46), readers of all kinds—including evangelicals who may disagree on points—cannot but benefit from *The Living God*.

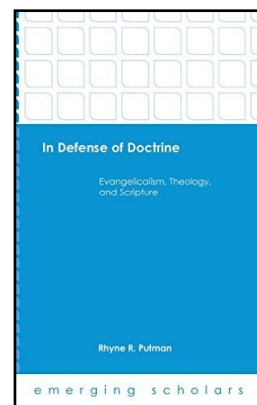
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Rhyne R. Putnam. *In Defense of Doctrine: Evangelicalism, Theology, and Scripture*. Emerging Scholars. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015. xi + 468 pp. £30.40/\$44.00.

Rhyne Putnam sees the historical phenomenon of doctrine, or more precisely “the issue of doctrinal continuity” (p. 370), as “*the* problem of evangelical theology” (p. 20, emphasis original). His assertion would be difficult to debate, as this problem pulsates throughout contemporary scholarship. Many espousing modern hermeneutical theory “have served systematic theology with divorce papers” (p. 178); at the same time many evangelicals continue to cling to propositional theology despite ferocious waves of scholarly opposition. Putnam has stomach for neither position, both of which he considers unbiblical. He reneges any “uncritical Biblicism that conflates one’s interpretation of Scripture with the inspired text” (p. 16) or “reduce[s] doctrines to propositions or rules” (p. 323), and he simultaneously rejects the alleged “radical discontinuity between the beliefs of first-century faith communities and the apologetic works and creeds put forward by patristic and medieval theologians” (p. 325).



Seeking a *via media*, Putnam sets out on an ambitious, if not courageous, quest: to demonstrate that modern hermeneutical theory opposes neither orthodoxy nor the development of evangelical doctrine, but, on the contrary, provides a most reliable tool for affirming historic and ongoing doctrinal development. “Evangelicals can commit to the task of constructive theology and maintain continuity with the revealed teachings of Scripture, and hermeneutical theory provides a way to make a case for this continuity” (p. 327). Insisting that the Bible is a “theodrama,” he openly rejects both hard “propositionalist” theologizing (p. 296) and “totalizing schemes” (p. 324) such as covenant theology and dispensationalism (p. 295). With Thiselton and Vanhoozer as his primary interlocutors he taps numerous hermeneutical models and metaphors, synthesizes them and applies them, and thereby seeks to defend the development, growth, and progress of doctrine (p. 325).

Putnam first summarizes Thiselton: “revealed truth ... ‘arise[s]’ in the contingencies of history” (149). Less “disclosure” than dynamic reality, theology bears “certain transforming effects” (p. 131). In other words, the changing horizons of human interpreters force a “*hermeneutical dialectic* of question and answer to the development” of doctrine (p. 159, emphasis original). Putnam’s conclusion? “Doctrines are provisional, contingent, and action-guiding public commitments that develop in the context of Christian life” (p. 171), and come about as “an ongoing, life-related dialectic between revealed truth and expectation that remains open to God’s new and future acts in the world” (p. 145). Appreciative of much from Thiselton, Putnam draws more from Vanhoozer’s “theo-dramatic approach to Christian doctrine” (p. 175) and use of speech act theory. The performative action of words, their illocutionary force, shapes each interpretive community. Vanhoozer’s dramatic hermeneutical metaphors emerge: the “script” of the Bible requires “improvisation” and “reincorporation” (pp. 198–200). To these metaphors Putnam adds his own improvement, “rehearsal” (p. 204). He then summarizes the utility of these metaphors: “the true value of the theo-dramatic model is in its normative direction for doctrinal development” (p. 207), whereby the interpreters improvise by “relating the situation in front of the text to the theo-drama within the text” (p. 253). Interpreters must employ “*imagination* as a vital tool for doctrinal understanding” as they *rehearse* their theological reflections (p. 299, emphasis original).

In chapter 7, Putnam helpfully speaks of “dispositional” belief, by which he offers partial explanation for theological continuity over the ages. For example, though not all in church history have known the term *homoousios*, “one does not need to maintain consciously the proposition that Jesus shares the same metaphysical substance with God the Father ... in order to affirm it when presented with it and its conceptual framework for the first time” (p. 372). The hypostatic union *per se* was a new development, but appeared in keeping with the “pattern of judgment practiced by writers of the New Testament” and cohering with a believing “disposition” (p. 373). Thus doctrinal continuity prevails according to the biblical text when later interpreters coopt contemporary terms and concepts to reframe theology. Scripture functions as a tuning fork, attesting the theological expression in the believer’s heart because it sounds with biblical timbre.

These useful insights, however, expand in less persuasive directions. Situating theological continuity in patterns of judgment, illocutions rather than locutions, human improvisation and imagination rather than revelation and illumination, Putnam erects an inescapable theological tentativeness, despite his pleas to the contrary (pp. 316–21). “Critical hermeneutical realism means that doctrines derived from the interpretation of Scripture are held both provisionally and as cognitive statements about God and the world” (p. 389). He calls for “humble agnosticism” on less perspicuous texts and “humble affirmation” of clearer ones (p. 390). Putnam puts final hope in hermeneutics: “humility in doctrinal development means acknowledging that God has revealed himself, *that we can have confidence in our ability to interpret his revelation* with his guidance” (p. 390, emphasis added). All knowledge is evidently a product of human interpretation, so that the interpreter is not only caught between the two worlds of ancient text and contemporary context, but is also trapped in a cocoon of provisionality. The critical realist must insist, provisionally, I suppose, that all knowledge is provisional. But to assert the absolute provisionality of all theological knowledge lacks biblical support, and humility does not entail provisionality. In fact, epistemic provisionality where God has spoken clearly lacks humility. Is the task of hermeneutics hermetically sealed from surety? Is the divine Source of language unable (or unwilling!) to communicate substance substantively in his revealed Word? Though sharing Putnam’s distaste for timeless propositional abstraction, I fail to see how the provisional status produced by hermeneutical

hegemony upholds “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3), “the deposit” of truth (1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14).

Furthermore, it appears that Putnam has inverted perspicuity and perspicacity. The clarity of the Bible is not the happy product of hermeneutical feats, but the very grounds of hermeneutical endeavor. Putnam celebrates the “astonishing” theological common ground between the Protestant traditions (p. 395). But this solidarity stems not from the effectiveness of human interpretative efforts, but from God’s capacity to communicate to mankind exactly what he intends. God is understood because he has made himself understandable; he is not understandable because he is understood. While certain biblical themes are less clear than others, God has not left his children in the throes of epistemic contingency. Only by a more robust consideration of the nature of Scripture as divine, the Spirit-wrought unity of the biblical text, the functional usefulness of perspicuity, and the paradigmatically critical doctrines of inspiration and illumination will we undertake the hermeneutical task properly.

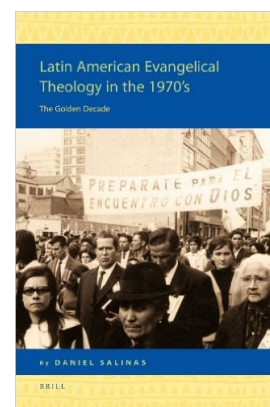
To wrap up, notable elements of Putnam’s project deserve praise. The book flows with sophisticated yet strikingly accessible, and even at times whimsical, prose. Putnam communicates complexities with verbal ease, making the book a reading pleasure from start to finish. Even though the work engages sophisticated hermeneutical themes, the reader enjoys a clarity-rich analysis and synthesis of Thiselton, Vanhoozer and other scholars. As the title of his book makes explicit, Putnam sets out to preserve orthodoxy, to which he consistently affirms his own commitments. Indeed some his hermeneutical insights and applications helpfully answer important questions about the growth of evangelical theology. At the end of the day, however, I fail to see how his critical realism and hermeneutical provisionality functionally deliver a reliable defense of doctrine. The preservation of orthodoxy must draw upon something other than the method espoused here, as the hegemonic hermeneutical paradigm cannot sustain the load.

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Daniel Salinas. *Latin American Evangelical Theology in the 1970’s: The Golden Decade*. Religion in the Americas Series. Leiden: Brill, 2009. x + 229 pp. £109.00/\$142.00.

Latin American theology is often identified with the Roman Catholic Liberationist tradition that originated in the late 1970s. However, as Colombian historian Daniel Salinas has shown in this volume, there was an important indigenous and parallel development of evangelical theology in Latin America. This is required reading for all seeking to understand evangelical movements outside the northern latitudes.

The book is divided in six chapters. The opening chapter establishes the methodological and thematic stage; that is, Salinas’ work is a historiography of the evangelical movement in Latin American. His central thesis “is that evangelical theological production in Hispanic Latin America experienced a decisive maturing process in defining its identity, methodology, and main lines of action in the decade between 1969 and 1979” (p. 6). Furthermore, Salinas defines the term



“evangelical” as it is used in Latin American to refer to a Protestant minority, often persecuted, with a contentious relation to Roman Catholicism (p. 8). Theologically, *evangélicos* are heirs of the Protestant Reformation who place emphasis on the *5 solas*. They share an emphasis in personal piety and morality, but with a strong inclination toward the social dimension of the gospel in the heritage of Methodism, pietism, Anabaptism, and Puritanism. As a result, these theologians and pastors began to produce theology with explicit contextual concerns, addressing situations of marginalization, deprivation, wars, and impoverishment in the Americas.

In the second chapter, “Mutual Perceptions,” he provides a panorama of the socio-political relations between the United States and Latin American. The narrative skillfully demonstrates why one finds certain theological loci, missionary priorities, and pastoral concerns different from the north (USA). It also allows the reader to trace the controversial and politically complex realities that gave Latin American evangelicalism a distinct shape over against the established evangelical priorities in the United States.

The third chapter, “The Two Congresses of 1969,” examines two important Protestant gatherings that set the mission and theological agendas for large sectors of Latin American: CELA III (Third Evangelical Latin American Conference) and CLADE I (First Latin American Congress of Evangelization). Salinas examines the formation of these two congresses by reviewing personal correspondence, articles, sponsorships from the North, and the interpretation of these congresses by leaders in the USA and in Latin American. Salinas correctly suggests that these gatherings are indispensable for understanding “the development of an autochthonous evangelical theological production in Hispanic Latin America in the 1970’s” (p. 49). For instance, CLADE I was convened under the sponsorship of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association as a response to CELA III. Why? Key evangelical leaders in the North perceived it to be a liberal congress with communist tendencies due to its relationship with the World Council of Churches. However, although CLADE I represented itself as a clear evangelical presence in Latin American, it was not yet a fully Latin American affair. The foreign interests of its sponsors dominated its agenda and themes. Nevertheless, the reactions provoked by the congress served as a catalyst for the formation of what is arguably the most important interdenominational evangelical movement in Latin American.

In Chapter four, entitled “The *Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana—FTL*,” Salinas delves into the formation of the Latin American Theological Fellowship (FTL), and its impact on Latin American evangelical theology (p. 83). The FTL was an interdenominational effort, established for the advancement of theological reflection with a strong missional orientation. More than a dozen nationalities and several denominations were represented. After first affirming a firm commitment to the Bible, its goals were to tie a commitment to social transformation as a necessary implication of Gospel proclamation. This would be called “*Misión Integral*” or Holistic or Integral Mission (p. 118). Noteworthy scholars such as John R.W. Stott, Carl F. H. Henry and Leon Morris were important collaborators.

In chapter five, “Latin American Theologians in International Forums,” Salinas focuses on the rise of two prominent Latino scholars, René Padilla and Samuel Escobar, and their international contributions at the International Congress on World Evangelization (ICOWE) in 1974. From within their own evangelical milieu, these pastor-theologians elaborated upon the nature of the Christian Gospel. These men re-conceptualized evangelism as a holistic proclamation with its inseparable social dimensions. Salinas assesses the mixed reception of FTL’s participation by highlighting the complex dynamics between theologians in the majority World and in North America.

Chapter six, “CLADE II—Huampaní, Peru, November 1979,” explores CLADE II. Distinct from CLADE I, it was the first congress with a completely indigenous ethos, reflecting the concerns of a large majority of evangelicals in Latin American, as well as solidifying the FTL as the premier forum for theological reflection in the region. Salinas chronicles the congress’ critiques of North American evangelicals. While there was gratitude and appreciation for the efforts of many missionaries who shared their lives, the shape of evangelical missionary theology, the congress suggested, was strongly tied to political conservatism. Furthermore, it was accommodating of imperial interventions in the region, while also culturally alienating with paternalistic attitudes towards Latin American cultures.

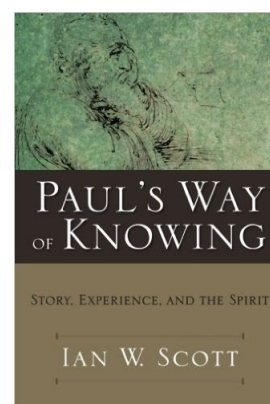
These six chapters accomplish a great deal for advancing our understanding of the evangelical priorities in Latin American. Specifically, Salinas offers the reader a solid account in giving attention to the following: the connection between social, political and theological aspects, his research on personal correspondence of key thinkers from the North and South, the documentation in English of official evangelical confessions, and the contribution of the FTL to the broader international evangelical community. Two contributions should be highlighted: First, members of the FTL saw the proclamation of the gospel as inseparable from the social and ethical responsibilities of the church. At the same time, they were critical of liberation theologians who reduced the gospel to social ethics. Secondly, the FTL coined the term “*Misión integral*” (holistic mission) which is now a type of *lingua franca* in evangelical missiology. In the decades to come, as the global conversation matures among evangelicals from different regions of the world, Salinas’s book will be an important signpost in this journey.

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Ian W. Scott. *Paul’s Way of Knowing: Story, Experience, and the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. xvii + 341 pp. £18.33/\$50.00.

Ian Scott, associate professor of New Testament at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, has contributed an interesting study of Paul’s epistemology with *Paul’s Way of Knowing*. Originally published in 2006 as *Implicit Epistemology in the Letters of Paul* by the esteemed German academic publisher Mohr Siebeck, Pauline scholars in particular and NT scholars in general should welcome this Baker Academic edition. In reality this monograph should also be of interest to Christian apologists, philosophy students with an interest in epistemology, and those interested in the intersection of theology and philosophy.

Paul’s Way of Knowing begins with recognizing a dilemma which Christianity has faced from its earliest days. The Christian looks like an ignoramus when judged against the backdrop of Greco-Roman standards of rationality. In reckoning with this larger background concern, Scott considers “how, Paul, as the most influential Christian thinker in the first century, assumed he could know about God” (p. 2). Scott begins his study with an overarching introduction (pp. 1–12) which explains the plan of the book and offers some caveats about the study. These caveats reveal what the book is about (and what it is not about). Scott is concerned with Paul’s “implicit” epistemology, not a comparison of Paul to other contemporaneous thinkers nor is the author concerned with Paul’s conscious theory of knowing nor with how Paul came



to his understanding. Scott is concerned to “bring to the surface his tacit assumptions about how people come to knowledge” (p. 11).

Scott divides the book into three parts: Human reason in Paul’s letters; the structure of Paul’s knowledge; and coming to knowledge in Paul’s letter to the Galatians. Part one consists of three chapters in which Scott seeks to exhibit what Paul explicitly says about human reasoning. He turns to the two passages where Paul discusses human knowing (or not knowing as the case may be), Romans 1:18–32 and 1 Corinthians 1:17–2:16. Paul clearly ties human knowledge in these texts to the moral or ethical condition of the human knower. This leads to a consideration in the second chapter of the broader picture of Paul’s thinking about ethicizing and theologizing and the role of conversion in these processes. Heavily weighing in these discussions is Paul’s hermeneutics of the cross which Scott deals with in the third chapter. Here the author looks at various scholars and their views of this crucicentric interpretive grid.

The second part of the book addresses the structure of Paul’s knowledge. Scott addresses Paul’s knowledge of “mundane” affairs in the fourth chapter. In the fifth chapter the author details the nature and extent of Paul’s theological knowledge. The narrative shape of Paul’s knowledge comes to the fore here and will remain with us for the rest of the study. Paul’s way of thinking exists in the form of a story. This narrative structure carries over into the sixth chapter on Paul’s ethical knowledge and the way roles in the story provide the appropriate shapes of ethical character. In other words, the NT saint embodies a role akin to that of an OT saint. Chapter seven, the concluding chapter of the second part of the book, concerns Paul’s experiential knowledge within the narrative structure we have become aware of earlier in the study. Here the author reckons with Paul’s knowledge of authority and personal relationship in general and the apostle’s knowledge of God and Christ in particular.

The third part of the book provides a test case of Paul’s implicit theory of knowledge in his letter to the churches of Galatia. Chapter eight deals with Paul’s reading of the world within the narrative structure of knowledge. Chapter nine wrestles with “interpretive gaps” at the heart of Paul’s argument in Galatians, specifically issues related to faith versus works of the law and the faith of/in Christ debate. The tenth chapter addresses the coherency of the reconfigured story. That is, Paul reveals that the story can and is changed as the drama of redemption unfolds. The final chapter of part three, chapter eleven, focuses upon “re-plotting” the Galatian audience. The story is reconfigured and so there needs to be a resettling of believers into the changed narrative environment involving the antithesis of flesh and Spirit, identification with Christ, and the relation of Israel’s past and current ethics. The book concludes with a reconsideration of the narrative form of Paul’s knowledge, gaps in Paul’s discussion of knowledge, and further dilemmas.

Scott has given us much food for thought here. The author is most assuredly correct when he points out that Paul’s understanding of human rationality is tied to the moral condition of the human knower (pp. 15–48). Humans as made in God’s image are a unified whole. The question revolves around whether the human knower is converted or not. The knower is either orientated in sin, curved in on oneself, or is regenerated and turned toward God in Christ with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. The human knower’s rational faculties are not bypassed or crushed but are enlightened and renewed so that they function properly (to use Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga’s language). In other words, the human knower is either in sin and all his or her faculties are infected or he or she is in Christ by the Spirit and is oriented towards the glory of the Father.

The author is also correct that human knowing for Paul (and the Scriptures as a whole) cannot be abstracted from the story of the creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. In other words, humans know whatever they know in the context of an unfolding drama. Within the Reformed tradition, this insight has contributed to the rise of covenant theology and more recently the redemptive historical theological mode pioneered by Princetonian Geerhardus Vos. This entails the fact that the redemptive drama is unfolding or is progressive. The great story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The story is headed somewhere. Paul's thinking reflects this biblical reality. The story is not running pell mell into oblivion but is heading to its consummation in the new heavens and new earth wherein the saints will have unending fellowship with the Triune God of Scripture.

Ian Scott's study would have been enriched with a consideration of Paul's explicit theory of human knowledge as well as his implicit theory. Scott's study is rich in and of itself, but the addition of Paul's explicit epistemology would only strengthen the argument. The argument would also be enhanced with an explicit recognition of the whole of Paul's literary corpus. A truncated corpus yields a truncated model of Paul's implicit theory of human knowing. Additionally, the apparent embrace of a primarily coherentist epistemology hamstring the value of the study. The coherence theory of knowing (and of truth) needs to be complemented with a biblical correspondence theory of knowing. To put it more boldly, the coherence and correspondence aspects of human knowing need to be set within a biblical epistemology which Paul surely maintained. For instance, does not Paul's discussion of the reality (extra mental) of Christ's resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 require some element of correspondence theory? For Paul it did matter whether Christ was raised in the real world or not. It was not enough for the resurrection to cohere with other beliefs only. It needed to do that for sure. It needed to cohere with the biblical view of God and the progressive revelation of his saving purposes in the world which is accessible to human beings.

Scott is correct that the progressive nature of the story of redemption required reconfiguration and plotment from time to time. But this was designed by God in advance and not in an ad hoc manner which is suggested in Scott's logic. This is not to say Scott thinks God's or Paul's theory of epistemology is ad hoc. But it strikes this reader as a consistent outcome of Scott's narrative of Paul's implicit theory of knowing. Finally, a consideration of Paul's implicit or explicit theory of human knowing must reckon with the fact that Paul is a divinely appointed representative of the risen Lord Jesus Christ and so a study of his thought is not just of interest to historians or other antiquarians but is essential to the life of the church and life of the Christian. It is, in a word, authoritative. Paul is not just one individual among many. He is an apostle.

All of this is to say that the Bible itself has an epistemology. For Paul to believe and teach what he knows to be true requires a specific epistemology to be true. It may take laborious work to determine what that epistemology is, as Scott has done here with regard to Paul, but it is present in the text of Scripture nonetheless. None of these criticisms or observations are intended to discourage the reader from working through this text. Scott has done the church and the academy a great service.

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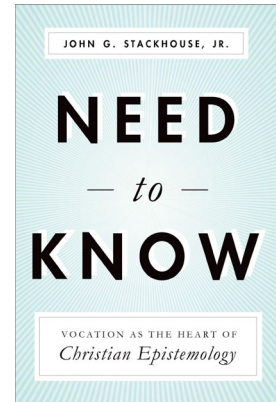
John G. Stackhouse, Jr. *Need to Know: Vocation as the Heart of Christian Epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. xiii + 265 pp. £20.99/\$31.95.

With this volume, John Stackhouse has entered the epistemological fray and made a significant contribution to the conversation about faithful Christian thinking. This book is about how we human beings access truth, and in it the author—who is doubtless well known to readers of *Themelios*—proposes a new epistemological paradigm that attempts to navigate between the Scylla of Enlightenment overconfidence and the Charybdis of postmodern despair.

In the introduction, Stackhouse begins to motivate the paradigm that he will propose by critically considering several popular models of what it means to think “Christianly.” After considering the strengths and weaknesses of conservative, mystical, and liberal Christian models of thinking, and finding each of those ultimately unsatisfactory, he concludes that there is warrant for adopting the Protestant Quadrilateral, which takes Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience to be valid sources of knowledge for human beings, with Scripture being normative among those. Yet even this is not without qualification. In the end, Stackhouse will modify this old and revered model in an attempt to fit it to our actual God-given situation. Recognizing that Christian thinking is supposed to be responsive to God and his world and to support Christian service, the driving assumptions underlying Stackhouse’s paradigm are that God calls us to a particular kind of life and to particular individual vocations, that God provides the resources—including cognitive resources—that we need to fulfill our callings, and that what we need to know will be relative to our specific callings. Thus, we can trust God to provide what we need epistemically to fulfill our particular vocations. However, it also follows that God might well not supply us with knowledge about things that are not related significantly to our particular vocations. As Stackhouse puts it, “we can count on God granting us knowledge only according to our vocation—only, as the saying goes, on a ‘need to know’ basis” (p. 21).

Chapter 1 sets the contemporary stage for Stackhouse’s vocational epistemology by considering the cognitive pluralism and skepticism that characterize the postmodern situation and the historical and cultural genesis of that pluralism and skepticism, beginning with the Enlightenment. In Chapter 2, Stackhouse explores the notion of vocation from a biblical perspective and the implications of vocation for epistemology. His investigation includes attention to redemptive-historical dimensions (creation, fall, redemption, consummation) and social-ecclesial as well as individual dimensions. Throughout, there is the recurrent theme that whatever Christians and the church need in order to fulfill their callings, including knowledge, God can be trusted to provide.

Stackhouse lays out his own positive proposal in Chapters 3 and 4—a self-conscious version of critical realism that is thoughtfully motivated and developed, and that has much in common with the Scottish common sense realism of Thomas Reid and company. In the third chapter, he discusses the elements of his model. The author recognizes five basic resources for our thinking—experience, tradition, the academic disciplines, art, and Scripture. We exploit these resources via three “modes” of thinking: intuition, imagination, and reason. Stackhouse devotes considerable attention to each of these resources and modes, considering not only the nature of each, but something of how they interact to enable us to do and be what we are called to do and be.



He fills in details of the picture in Chapter 4, exploring how we utilize our five resources and engage with them in our different modes of thinking in what he calls a “pentalectic” (p. 148)—a “five-way conversation.” After noting some of our significant cognitive limitations and considering the essential, ineluctable role that interpretation plays in all of our thinking, he proceeds to examine such matters as the authority of Scripture and the cognitive roles of hypotheses, metaphors, and worldviews. In a section in which he draws a distinction between credibility (which is normative) and plausibility (which is not), he gives some defense of his model against the charge of antirealistic relativism. Much of the chapter is devoted to discussing the social dimensions of our thinking. As always, Stackhouse is keen to recognize our finitude and fallenness, as well as the common grace advantages of thinking within the context of our social situations. He maintains that responsible thinking requires that we critically assess the elements of our social contexts and seek to improve our situations to the end of thinking more faithfully. Particularly helpful here is his discussion of the role of trust in the authority or expertise of others.

Early in the final chapter, “Deciding in an Ambiguous World,” Stackhouse endorses a general principle that our beliefs ought to be controlled or proportioned (*à la* Locke), not only by the relative warrant we have for them, but also by their relative importance to us in our particular contexts. He goes on to develop and qualify that principle carefully, and consistently avoids falling into doxastic volitionalism (the view that we have direct control over our believing). This chapter includes a brief but insightful challenge to the modern bifurcation of faith and reason. The author also considers some of our significant cognitive limitations and the enabling epistemic roles played by various normal aspects of the Christian life (e.g., prayer, corporate worship). The chapter ends with a thoughtful discussion of the disciplines of responsible Christian thinking, which Stackhouse takes to be means of grace. Following the lead of Thomas Reid, Stackhouse develops an epistemology marked by humble gratitude, trust, and obedience. As he notes at the end, the epistemology that he recommends here “trades fundamentally on faith, hope, and love” (p. 242). The book concludes with an appendix in which the author attempts to show how his epistemological model has worked to inform his understanding of gender.

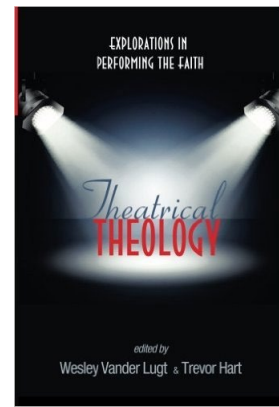
This book will benefit both church and academy. Stackhouse draws from a rich variety of sources in developing his epistemological paradigm—e.g., Calvin, Locke, Reid, Wolterstorff, Alston, Plantinga, Polanyi, Kuhn, and Code, to name but a few. Yet he develops an epistemology for everyone, not just for philosophers. One of the many strengths of the book is its sensitivity to our createdness and fallenness and the complications that arise from both in our situation, as well as the covenantal way in which God relates to us. Also significant is the author’s recognition that we are by nature interpreters who are constrained to work with our interpretations of the data from our resources. A further strength is the author’s avoidance of the sorts of reductionism that have plagued most modern and postmodern epistemologies. While some evangelical readers will find themselves a bit uncomfortable with some aspects of Stackhouse’s view of Scripture, they will appreciate his recognition of the primacy of Scripture among our resources. Finally, although in my judgment the author at times concedes more than is necessary to skepticism, and I’m not convinced that his response to the charge of cognitive relativism is fully satisfactory, he nevertheless produces an epistemological model that is appropriately humble and confident. This book should prove helpful and encouraging to pastors, academics, and

Christians in general who are concerned about thinking in ways that are faithful to Jesus, who is Lord over everything, including the life of the mind.

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Wesley Vander Lugt and Trevor Hart, eds. *Theatrical Theology. Explorations in Performing the Faith*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014. xix + 278 pp. £21.00/\$34.00.

It is not difficult to see why this volume is of significant interest to a reviewer completing a thesis titled 'A theatrical exploration of providence.' But should others not engaged in such inter-disciplinary work also pay attention? I answer with a definite 'yes.' The volume contains essays premised on the fruitfulness of a constructive exchange between theatre and Christian theology. Most of the essays were first presented as papers at the 2012 'Theatrical theology' conference hosted by the *Institute of Theology, Imagination, and the Arts* within the University of St Andrews, Scotland. To offer even the briefest description of all thirteen essays would take us well beyond the limits of this review. I therefore offer some comments only on what I consider to be some of the most important contributions to the volume.



The 'What do Broadway and the West End have to do with Jerusalem?' question should have been put to rest by now, after works such as Hans Urs von Balthasar's multi-volume *Theo-Drama* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988–1998) and Kevin Vanhoozer's *Drama of Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), but the introduction provided by editors Wesley Vander Lugt and Trevor Hart is an excellent reminder and refiner of the answer to the said question. The premise of the volume is that theology is inherently theatrical by virtue of its object, mode, and goal: theology concerns the speech and acts of God in history; it is a self-involving, provisional, and contextual exercise within the theo-drama it seeks to understand. Its end goal is full-fledged participation. Mere comprehension or contemplation will not do. On this final point, the editors highlight the affinity between theatrical and narrative theology, with the former seen as the fruition of the latter.

As a long-serving promoter and participant in the theatre-theology conversation, Kevin Vanhoozer writes on the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity. In a chapter titled 'At Play in the Theodrama of the Lord: The Triune God of the Gospel', Vanhoozer argues for traditional forms of Trinitarian theism, providing nuanced corrections to the proposals of Robert Jenson and Hans Urs von Balthasar. He demonstrates that the Gospel is the dramatic representation of the Trinitarian processions, calling for 'fitting participation' in God's project of reconciliation and renewal.

One of the most seminal essays is written by Trevor Hart. In conversation with Max Harris (*Theatre and Incarnation* [New York: St. Martin's, 1990]), Hart argues that the Son's permanent 'enfleshment' demands a serious engagement with the nature and significance of 'flesh', for God and for humanity alike, the results of which are highly relevant for the wider theology and the arts conversation, but also for the church's engagement with Scripture.

In 'Raising a Tempest. Brookian Theatre as an Analogy for Providence' Timothy Gorringer continues his previous work on theatre and providence by drawing further analogical parallels between theatre direction, as delineated by British theatre director Peter Brook, and divine providential action. The proposal is fresh and the explanatory potential of the exercise is clear, but the present reviewer wishes that more attention had been paid to the biblical text's depictions and conceptualizations of divine action, these then being given adequate weight in the analogical exploration. Arguably, a sustained discussion of providence within a theatrical model for theology is still sorely needed, but Gorringer's work has provided important building blocks for the task.

Shannon Craigo-Snell's essay opens with some refreshingly clear comments on the infamously elusive notion of performance. All present and future participants in the theatre-theology conversation will be most grateful for these. Her proposal is for a theatrical ecclesiology where church is understood as 'a disciplined performance of relationship with God in Jesus Christ, mediated by Scripture, in the hope of the Holy Spirit' (p. 88). In dialogue with Barth and by drawing on Peter Brook's typology of theatre, Craigo-Snell defines and defends an 'empty' church, where 'emptiness' suggests a discipline of hope and response to the newness of God's grace.

In Chapter 11, Richard Carter and Samuel Wells sketch a theatrical doctrine of Scripture and hermeneutics, where the Bible's drama is not simply contextualized but projects its own reality in which it invites participation on the part of reader-performers. Particularly inspiring are the stories about the dramas performed in the Solomon Islands by Carter and the Melanesian Brotherhood, which illustrate the power of theatre to communicate the Gospel and thus to produce social transformation and compelling public witness.

A final word on the volume as a whole. All thirteen essays illustrate the potential of theatre to aid in the theological task, however widely or narrowly construed. There is however a certain methodological and conceptual looseness in the engagement with theatre across the volume. This is not unexpected in such inter-disciplinary projects, but some readers may walk away more confused than enlightened in the end. We can only recommend they revisit the eminently clear introduction to the volume while waiting, in hope, for future contributions which may tie some of the loose ends of what is undoubtedly an enriching exchange between theatre and theology.

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William VanDoodewaard. *The Quest for the Historical Adam: Genesis, Hermeneutics, and Human Origins*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2015. x + 359 pp. £20.72/\$30.00.

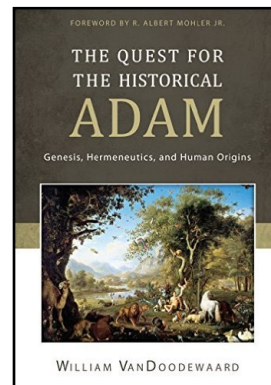
Let me say at the outset that I've given a more thorough—and critical—assessment of this book in an earlier review of recent works in the human origins debate (cf. “Adam and Eve: An Evangelical Impasse?” *Christian Scholar's Review* 45.2 [2016]: 165–83). For present purposes, rather than repeat myself, I'll set aside the larger story and focus instead on VanDoodewaard's core grievance against mainstream evangelicalism.

But first, readers should keep in mind the broader context to this book. The relationship between modern evangelicalism and young earth creationism is ambiguous—at best. In the wider academy, anyone with a whiff of “creationism” is judged beyond the pale of orthodoxy, deserving all the contempt scholars can muster. Such creationist drivel must not be tolerated within polite, sensible academic discourse; roughly speaking, that's the prevailing attitude. Evangelical academics are mindful of the rules of the game, and many sympathize with the anti-creationist sentiment.

Even those from more confessional traditions have long made the case for a greater diversity of interpretations of the early chapters of Genesis, specifically “old-earth” or “progressive creationist” approaches (e.g., in 2000 the PCA Creation Study Committee recommended that sessions and presbyteries tolerate a range of views on creation, including calendar-day, day-age, framework, and analogical days; four years later the OPC made similar recommendations). More recently, evangelical scholars have been developing evermore sophisticated models that integrate evolutionary perspectives with Christian theology.

To chalk this all up to academic peer group pressure is too simplistic. Some of that is happening, of course, but it's not the whole story. In light of doctrines like general revelation, common grace, and the image of God, thoughtful Christians cannot ignore scientific developments. Important hermeneutical shifts and insights have also affected the interpretation of traditional biblical passages. These and other intellectual developments have impacted how evangelical academics approach questions on human origins. Furthermore, in those congregations that have experienced the harmful combativeness and divisiveness of certain creationist apologists, pastors feel the burden to promote a diversity of viable perspectives as an invitation to charity, civility, and unity.

By comparison, those lay evangelicals—and they are many—who believe that the earth is young have become disillusioned with their professorial representatives in the seminaries and colleges; they've sought guidance elsewhere from independent creationist ministries who are valiantly if not stridently defending the young earth position. This “scientific creationism” movement was largely inspired by the landmark volume by Henry Morris and John Whitcomb (*The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications* [Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1961]). Young earth creationism today is a global phenomenon, representing a very wide range of organizations working at different levels of sophistication and credibility. To millions of Christian lay people, such creationists are on the side of the angels, fighting the good fight of faith. Many academic evangelicals, however, seem to orbit within an entirely different universe, one in which the names of Ken Ham and Henry Morris represent a failed movement; by their lights, creationists are not worth taking seriously anyway since Ronald Numbers disemboweled the entire movement, especially in his exposé of Henry Morris's reliance on the writings



of the Seventh-Day Adventist George McCready Price and, ultimately, the visions of Ellen G. White (cf. *The Creationists: From Scientific Creationism to Intelligent Design*, enl. ed. [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006]).

Enter William VanDoodewaard, professor of church history at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. He knows the messy history of the debate and understands the complexities, but his book grew out of a concern with the current state of the discussion. As he sees it, the dominant historiography ignores “a long line of theologians, exegetes, and thinkers” who interpreted Genesis 1–5 as *literal* history (p. 8). VanDoodewaard’s book seeks to recover that tradition, in part by reclaiming a more positive (and unapologetic) use of the word “literal”—earlier orthodox believers were part of a long-standing, catholic, literal hermeneutical tradition that interpreted the early chapters of Genesis as fully historical. Even when the tradition boasted rich typological motifs, it always retained full historicity—including the special creation of the original couple, Adam and Eve, in a young earth with no evolutionary ancestors.

If such claims about hermeneutics and Genesis are not controversial enough, VanDoodewaard’s book also throws down the gauntlet to conservative evangelicals who have departed—he thinks—from this literal tradition. His account is thus a declension story, a cautionary tale. For on this telling, it was the introduction of non-literal approaches to the early chapters of Genesis (e.g., gap theory, day-age theory, etc.) that ultimately paved the way for the rise of liberal approaches to the text. To wit, there is a direct line from old-earth creationism to denying the historicity of Adam. VanDoodewaard does applaud old-earth creationists who retain a historical Adam and Eve—theirs is a lesser error—but he insists that their underlying methodological and hermeneutical moves are intrinsically unstable because of the potential to undermine the biblical text further. He is worth quoting at some length:

Along with the troubling loss of a perspicuous early Genesis is the perhaps even more troubling reality that the history of hermeneutics on Genesis and human origins, particularly in the last two centuries, reveals a repeated pattern toward an erosion of scriptural inerrancy, sufficiency, and historic Christian theology. Despite naysayers, the history of Genesis hermeneutics across the centuries does provide numerous examples of sequential changes: if these changes do not indicate a “slippery slope,” they certainly indicate consecutive slides. In the history of each of the “schools” of alternative approaches and the institutions and denominations that grant latitude to them, there is an unbroken pattern of progressive movement, initially away from the literal tradition on Genesis 1, then away from the Adam and Eve of the literal tradition toward an evolved Adam, and then to no recognizable or existing Adam and Eve at all. There have been exceptions to—and reversals of—this trend, but they are rare. (p. 279)

Don’t miss what he’s saying; these are fighting words. Scholars like C. John Collins, Wayne Grudem, John Piper, Meredith Kline, Michael Horton, and *many* others we could name, have all made a vital mistake in their reading of Genesis, setting in motion a process that—followed through consistently—will only lead to the further eclipse of biblical teaching. Fifty years ago conservative evangelicals were arguing for an old-earth while strenuously denying any viability to theistic evolution; today their evangelical descendants are skittish about Adam and argue for the orthodoxy of an evolutionary creation. No surprise, says VanDoodewaard—jettison the literal hermeneutic and you set up a slide to further decline.

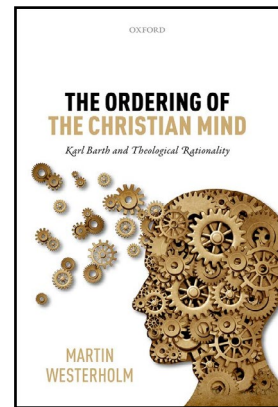
This is no tame book (William VanDoodewaard, one imagines, has no time for Dale Carnegie). I’ve left off any critical assessment, not because none can be marshalled—again, see my *CSR* review

cited above—but because I’ve tried to convey why VanDoodewaard’s book may interest readers of *Themelios*. Some may be tempted to dismiss the book, for don’t we all know the fallacy of slippery slope arguments? But dismissing *The Quest for the Historical Adam* would be a mistake. Pick up the book and read the argument. Many readers of this journal will likely want to argue with it and its author. As they should; it’s a controversial work, its main thesis as provocative as it gets, and VanDoodewaard should be commended for bringing an important new voice to the science-theology dialogue.

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Martin Westerholm. *The Ordering of the Christian Mind: Karl Barth and Theological Rationality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. xiii + 249 pp. £70.00/\$115.00.

In the hundred years since he first commented on Romans, the rationality of Karl Barth’s theology and his conception thereof has prompted reactions both frolicsome and fussy. The Swiss theologian has been painted everything from a naïve fideist and anti-rationalist to a classical and even ‘critical’ realist. Martin Westerholm paints us a different picture. This meticulous, carefully argued book has two fundamental aims: the first is descriptive and seeks to provide us with a new interpretation of Barth’s account of theological reasoning, whereas the second suggests that Barth’s account provides us with a theologically and spiritually bracing construal of well-ordered Christian thought. All of this is exigent because Barth is largely responsible for theology’s preoccupation with questions of theological reason throughout the twentieth century (p. 1). Understanding what Barth has to say, however, requires some considerable ground-clearing.



Throughout the *Church Dogmatics* Barth deconstructs the questions he poses to his material, sometimes spending pages exorcising these questions of false starting points and intentions. This reflects his general concern to put the right things on the table and keep the wrong things off—after all, the right answers often prove useless without the right questions. Westerholm knows that if we are to understand Barth’s account of theological rationality, we must grant him the opportunity to reframe the questions of what it means to be rational and to know the truth.

Two shifts are decisive in Barth’s account of theological reasoning, each flowing out of convictions about the distinction and relation between God and creatures consequent to Barth’s reading of Paul. First, the distinction between God and creatures Barth finds operative in Paul’s letters leads him to reframe the question of truth in terms of how the truth of God may be acknowledged without reducing God to a creaturely quantity. Customarily, the question of truth is concerned with addressing how reason may establish the truth of particular claims. Barth thinks the classical approaches to this question fail to keep God distinct from creatures: where truth is something given on the plane of being or existence (‘realism’), then God becomes another fixture in the metaphysical furniture of the cosmos, and where truth is something grounded in the activities of the human knower (‘idealism’), then God’s activity becomes indistinguishable from human activity. In both scenarios, the truth of God is measured by creaturely criteria, possibilities, and motives. On Barth’s reading of 1 Corinthians, such problems

lie beneath the discord Paul encounters at Corinth. The question, therefore, is how creatures may acknowledge the truth of God without becoming idolatrous – a motivation Barth discerns behind Paul’s appeal to the resurrection in the same letter. Second, God’s peculiar relation to creatures leads Barth to reframe the question of reason itself in moral terms. When God encounters us, he does so as Lord and as one who demands a response. The truth of God cannot have anything to do with ‘disinterested’ theoretical reasoning, but since it comes to us in the form of a claim and a summons, it involves the whole nexus of the human knower’s concrete self-determination in obedience to God. Westerholm explains, ‘Barth follows Kant in the first instance in separating the sphere in which knowledge of God is found from the sphere of theoretical reasoning; but he then departs from him in identifying the clue to the proper movements of reason within this sphere’ (p. 28). The question therefore becomes one of how thought is properly ordered through obedience so that it may acknowledge the truth of God. Only in obedience do the movements of reason correspond to the movement of God—the decisive analogy between God and creatures that grounds the coherence of speech is found finally not in being, but in activity. Hence, knowledge alone puffs up, and requires love to edify.

These two shifts enable Westerholm to set forth an interpretation of Barth’s account of theological reasoning in which dialectic and analogy are positively correlated rather than contrastively opposed. For Barth, reason is both dialectical and analogical because acknowledgement of the truth consists not in particular claims, but in particular, well-ordered movements that correspond to the activity of God. Barth’s description of the ordering and activities of the mind stand in a complex relation to his Neo-Protestant inheritance. Westerholm’s clear overview of the background to the question of the ordering of thought is no small achievement; he offers brief but sensitive discussions of Kant, Fichte, Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and Herrmann without losing his focus or his reader (pp. 43–59). Here he sets forth three concepts central to the question of well-ordered thought: the standpoint, orientation, and freedom of thought. Standpoint is a perspective established by certain principles, orientation accounts for how the movements of reason within this perspective are regulated, and freedom signals the extent to which thought either controls or is controlled by the objects it seeks to understand. While the categories come from Kant, they prove very useful in delineating Barth’s indebtedness to the nineteenth century and also his critical freedom from it, won through patient attention to Scripture.

After these introductory maneuvers, the first part of the book consists of two chapters devoted to tracing how Barth reframes the questions of reason and truth through his exegetical work on Paul’s letters throughout the 1920s and the early 1930s. Barth believes that the noetic implications of Paul’s account of faith carry consequences for the reordering of thought in accordance with faith. Part two then spends two further chapters showing how Barth’s study of Anselm is concerned with how thought is ordered in accordance with faith’s movement to understanding. If Paul provides Barth with some noetic implications of a theology of justification, then Anselm provides Barth with the corresponding noetic consequences of a theology of sanctification. Barth’s engagement with Paul and Anselm enables him to address several questions concerning the peculiarity of theological reasoning bequeathed to him by his Neo-Protestant upbringing and context. The bulk of Westerholm’s book is devoted to careful analysis of all this material, and the reader should not be misled into underestimating its importance if space constraints force me to bypass it here. For our purposes, it will suffice to describe what Westerholm argues are the main contours of Barth’s account of well-ordered thought.

To acknowledge the truth of God, the believer must occupy a standpoint in which reason may apprehend truths that depend wholly on the activity of God, similar to the justifying judgment of God

known by faith alone. Faith therefore occupies the standpoint of the eschatological subject, who takes God's knowledge of herself 'in Christ' as the principle of her thought so that she may see as true that which faith says is true. This standpoint is different from the self-referential standpoint of the empirical subject, who takes their own experience and activities as the criterion by which to decide upon the truth and value of any particular claim. Instead, Barth maintains that in baptism, the eschatological subject is present through the mode of promise, which 'corresponds to a mode of givenness that may be presupposed as the basis of theological inquiry even though ... the reality that is promised is not present in fulfillment' (p. 188). Hence, 'promise' is offered as an alternative to the readings of Barth that find analogy, Christology, or revelation as the conceptual key to God's presence to creatures (pp. 90–114). Granted this mode of presence, the believer may reckon with realities that are not present by way of fulfillment and which therefore surpass the phenomenal immediacy of experience.

From this standpoint promised in baptism, the orientation of thought comes from the life of Christ and from the signs that stand as witnesses to this life, such as the creed. If baptism enables the believer to reckon with realities present by way of promise and not fulfillment, then this applies to the creeds and confessions of the church into which the believer is baptized. The church's confession is not 'a final resting-place for theological reasoning; instead, it presents points of orientation that guide Christian thinking in its attempt to apprehend the divine reality that is the origin and end of the given' (p. 195).

Finally, the believer's noetic sanctification consists in their correspondence with the freedom of God's activity, which shapes the freedom of Christian thought. The movement from faith to understanding involves above all grasping the objects of faith in light of their 'necessity' granted them by God's freedom. In other words, understanding consists in grasping the objects of faith in such a way that the mind's freedom is reshaped as it finds the thought of these objects' non-existence inconceivable. This signals a movement away from asking about *whether* a particular claim is true towards asking about the *range* of its truth over the whole person's being, activity, thought, and speech. Only apprehension of the genuine necessity of the object of faith frees the believer from the tyranny of imagined possibilities and worlds that treat the objects of faith as contingent and not universally binding over the whole of the creature's existence. The freedom of thought arises as the creature forsakes the attempt to conceive of anything better than the movement of God's freedom.

Specialists of Barth will find much in this study worth revisiting, and it should not go unnoticed (nor will it) that Westerholm challenges many of the most influential interpretations of Barth's account of rationality. This follows from the author's preference for reading Barth as an exegetical theologian and the consequent focus on carefully interpreting Barth's early exegetical lectures, some of which have only been published in the past several years. The portrait of Barth that emerges is of a 'modern' theologian tackling perennial questions related to the proper function and ordering of reason as they are informed by his reading of the Bible. This is not to say that Westerholm provides us with, nor intends to offer, an account of Barth on rationality that is prescriptive in all respects. He neither demonizes nor divinizes his subject; he lets Barth speak. Questions inevitably remain—perhaps especially about 'fideism'—and not everyone should find in Barth's solutions their own. But only the hardest heart will fail to see something appreciable in Barth's unflinching resolve to let the Bible speak to these questions. Barth stated that the voices of the church are not dead and past, but living voices that deserve to be heard to the extent that they comment on Scripture. When we hear these voices for what they have to

tell us about Scripture, we will find them neither infallible nor unhelpful. We are in Westerholm's debt for helping us to hear Barth's voice in just this sense.

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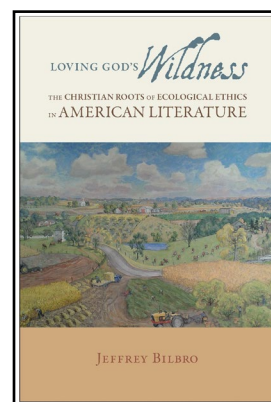
— ETHICS AND PASTORALIA —

Jeffrey Bilbro. *Loving God's Wilderness: The Christian Roots of Ecological Ethics in American Literature*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2015. 240 pp. \$54.95.

In his recent book, Jeffrey Bilbro looks beyond typical theological sources to evaluate how literature written from a background of Christian ideas has impacted environmentalism. By bringing his expertise as an assistant professor of English at Spring Arbor University to bear through literary analysis, Bilbro adds a new perspective to the discussion of Christian influences on environmental ethics.

The volume is divided into five chapters with a conclusion following. In the first chapter, Bilbro introduces some of the history of environmentalism in America within the Christian tradition. He begins with the Puritan colonists and moves through to the early nineteenth century. Chapter 2 offers an in-depth analysis of Henry David Thoreau. Bilbro outlines the way Thoreau adapted the religious language of his era and the Puritan interest in the created order to develop an ecological ethics. In this chapter, Bilbro reaches beyond *Walden* into other books and articles Thoreau wrote, which expands and enriches the rather limited analysis typically done on Thoreau's environmentalism. Muir's modifications of the Disciples of Christ theology are the topic of the third chapter. Bilbro notes that Muir never formally renounced the faith of his youth, but he is insufficiently critical of Muir's departures from orthodoxy. Instead of either anthropocentrism or biocentrism, Bilbro argues that Muir developed a theocentric environmental ethics (p. 73). Despite this argument, Bilbro portrays Muir as finding the *summum bonum* in wilderness, seeking "wild salvation," and rejecting "organized religion" in favor of a "glacier gospel" (p. 83). Bilbro portrays Muir as post-Christian though he never states that explicitly.

Chapter 4 offers a literary analysis of the Roman Catholic Willa Cather, the author of *O Pioneers!* and *My Ántonia*. Bilbro's analysis of Cather shows the interest in a sense of place, balance, and community within Cather's work that offers a base for an ecological ethic. The heroes of Cather's novels, follow the example of Mary when they "obediently submit to God's redemptive plan" and of Jesus when "they attentively watch and pray for God to restore all the members of his household" (p. 22). In this, Bilbro sees Cather rejecting the alleged dualism of the Puritans. The fifth chapter is an analysis of Wendell Berry's ecological ethic as it is presented in *Jayber Crow*. Bilbro effectively shows how the novel *Jayber Crow* reveals Berry's notions of the limits of human work and celebration of rural living. Berry's sense of place and emphasis on maintaining the balance of the farmer's efforts with the welfare of the land is well portrayed. This chapter, however, does not seem to fit with the methodology of the others as it



focuses on only one novel and goes well beyond Berry's environmentalism into his notion of marriage, love, and economics.

In the conclusion, Bilbro very briefly ties the four authors together and points toward "the way that America's Christian tradition can continue to draw creatively on its theological resources to respond to changing cultural conditions" (p. 182). Based on his analysis, however, it is not clear that what results from that creativity will be authentically Christian.

The chief weakness of this volume is that Bilbro does not always accurately represent theological streams discussed in the book. The Puritans are a frequent victim of this inaccuracy, with Bilbro accusing them of Cartesian or Gnostic dualism, treating those forms of dualism as if they are identical (e.g., p. 5). Bilbro's representation of the Puritans resonates with Max Weber's interpretation of their theology, but has less to do with what the Puritans themselves wrote (p. 183n1). Additionally, the author presents the figures in the volume, particularly Thoreau and Muir, as if they were faithful Christians or had merely updated historic statements of doctrines in a manner consistent with Christian orthodoxy. Yet it is doubtful either would have claimed to be Christian. Neither Muir nor Thoreau were orthodox Christians as represented through their writing, though they both were sufficiently familiar with orthodoxy to communicate in terms that resonate with faithful Christians. The roots of ecological ethics in American literature may well be traced to the Christian tradition, but some of the figures presented in this text seem to represent a Christian orthodoxy with which they themselves had only minimal personal acquaintance.

Despite the weakness in the theological interpretation, the literary analysis is very well done. Bilbro should be commended for his work in examining the major texts of Thoreau, Muir, Cather and Berry to trace how Christian themes inspire their environmentalism. Bilbro's analysis gives hope that a God-honoring version of environmentalism can arise within orthodox Christianity itself. Additionally, *Loving God's Wilderness* does something new in the discussion of Christian environmental ethics. This is a book that deserves attention because Bilbro's work advances the research on the topic and makes a compelling case for the relationship between Christianity and American environmentalism.

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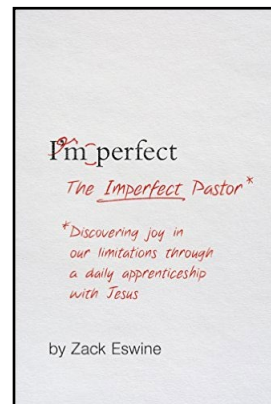
Zack Eswine. *The Imperfect Pastor: Discovering Joy in Our Limitations through a Daily Apprenticeship with Jesus*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015. 271 pp. £10.99/\$17.99.

People enter pastoral ministry in response to a call from God that manifests itself in a desire to make a difference in people's lives for the sake of the gospel, but this desire is easily hijacked so that pastors measure their achievements by the standards of the world (size, fame, etc.). In *The Imperfect Pastor*, Zack Eswine, lead pastor of Riverside Church (Webster Groves, MO) and Director of Homiletics at Covenant Theological Seminary, explores this temptation and how to reshape pastoral ministry by focusing on how our limitations point us to Jesus. This volume explores many of the same themes as Eswine's *Sensing Jesus*, as it is a rewrite that is shorter (about half the size) but includes some new material (about one-third of the book).

The four sections of the book move from identifying problems to offering helpful practices. The first section ("The Calling We Pursue") discusses issues related to the call to ministry, including the desire to do great things as well as the fact that pastors remain humans (noting that even Jonathan Edwards passed gas! [p. 34]) with certain family backgrounds that teach us things, "not all of [which] agree with Jesus" (p. 46), that pop up in our lives. Eswine highlights how pastors must be "fame-shy" like Jesus (p. 60) and embrace their humanity in a particular location (pp. 36–39), knowing that "obscurity and greatness are not opposites" (p. 29) and that Jesus sees us even when we seem "invisible" to the world (p. 68). The second section focuses on temptations pastors face to be everywhere, fix everything, know everything, and do it all quickly. Eswine instructs pastors not to repent of their failure to be or do these things but rather to repent because they have tried (pp. 74, 96, 104). Instead of viewing pastoral ministry as a chance to do great things, one must view it as a slow work, with pastors "long-distance grace runners" (p. 124) who are patient and work in particular context. One should stay where one is ministering for a long time because shepherds "are the returning ones" who "remain when the apostle, the prophet, and the evangelist arrive and then move on" (p. 75).

The third section focuses on "Reshaping Our Inner Life," calling for pastors to have a new ambition of a "God-centered life" (p. 138) that speaks less and listens more ("Wise pastors are listening pastors," p. 141), embraces the boundaries of the particular calling that God has given you (p. 144), views smaller as better than bigger (p. 146), and beholds God's presence throughout the day, week, and year (pp. 172–82). Eswine says that in order to help people behold God in their lives, pastors must behold him in their own lives (p. 155); Eswine therefore seeks to help pastors re-learn what it looks like to behold God. The last section is about "Reshaping Pastoral Ministry" and praises the importance of caring for the sick (ch. 12) and sinners (ch. 13) in a local context (ch. 14) and offers some reflections on how to lead in the church (ch. 15) in light of Eswine's particular experiences. The chapter on "local knowledge" contains many insights into how to research a pastor's community and congregation; this is a special gem in a volume full of them. The final chapter has a call for "romantic realism," noting that "heroic moments are not the normal way that God daily visits his people" but that "we still believe that God is doing something larger than we can presently see" (p. 248), which happens through the Spirit using the Word and Sacrament as delivered by humans.

This book stands in a recent stream of works that move pastors away from visions of greatness in terms of size and fame to that of steadiness and faithfulness to a particular flock. There is always a danger



in these books, as they can inadvertently reinforce the “celebrity pastor” culture as a gifted pastor writes a book that may say “don’t seek this ministry” but can lead other pastors to desire a larger platform or feel inferior because no one is reading their book! This book, however, largely avoids this danger through Eswine’s humility that has been refined in his experiences described throughout the book. He boasts in his weaknesses and discusses the joys of everyday pastoral ministries. A potential problem that could arise in implementing the vision Eswine presents on the local level is that congregants and leaders in the church might not have this sort of vision for the pastor; one will need to introduce these ideas into the local church in order to counter the pressures that Eswine so skillfully notes. While this book is more accessible than *Sensing Jesus*, I am not sure if lay leaders would be as drawn and captivated by the book as pastors, so perhaps there is room for another book designed to help pastors educate congregants on what to expect of a pastor.

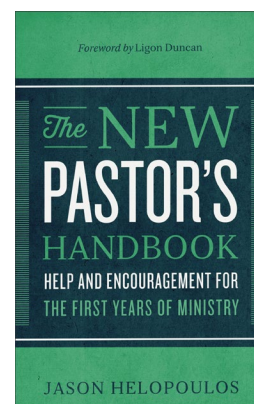
I recommend this book to every pastor and think it would be especially valuable for a seasoned pastor to read alongside of a newer pastor, as the seasoned pastor can echo Eswine’s concerns to the new pastor and may help him think through how to follow Eswine’s lead in his particular setting. One must resist the urge to read through this book quickly, as Eswine’s comments need to be digested slowly and integrated into our lives. In fact, reading through the book quickly to get to the next book reflects many of the temptations Eswine addresses, as one wants to do things fast and know all things to be able to fix all things! This awareness comes from seeking to integrate the insights of this book and may point out the fact that the apprenticeship that Eswine describes is a constant wrestling with the temptations and challenges that he analyzes.

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Jason Helopoulos. *The New Pastor’s Handbook: Help and Encouragement for the First Years of Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015. 208 pp. £9.99/\$14.99.

A new pastor can feel as overwhelmed as a new parent since having people under your care and responsibility is something for which no training can fully prepare you. Jason Helopoulos’s book is designed to help new pastors facing this scary realization, not so that one’s ministry will be easy but so it will not be filled with “unnecessary trouble” (p. 20) through learning from the experience of others. Helopoulos, Associate Pastor at University Reformed Church (East Lansing, MI), recognizes that he might not be the most likely candidate to write a book on pastoral ministry, as he is fairly young and not a famous pastor (see p. 20). Yet in some ways his relative anonymity (he has blogged for The Gospel Coalition and written *A Neglected Grace: Family Worship in the Christian Home*) gives added credibility, as he is an “average” pastor sharing what he has learned from others and from his own experience, meaning his insights should be relevant for fellow “ordinary” pastors.

The book is divided into five parts of uneven length. The first part has three chapters dealing with calling and candidating, and the second part features four chapters discussing types of positions (senior/solo pastor, assistant pastor, youth pastor, church planter) to which a new pastor might be called. These



would be good chapters to read *before* one enters his first pastorate, as it helps one think through if he is called to ministry and the challenges and opportunities of various positions so that one can determine how to approach finding the right call.

The bulk of the book is the third and fourth parts, which focus on encouragements (chs. 8–31) and pitfalls (ch. 32–44), respectively. The encouragements broadly move from priorities to practical matters, as Helopoulos kicks off the section by noting that ministry is “nothing more than loving Christ, loving his people, and loving the Word” (p. 58) and concludes with issues such as weddings and funerals (ch. 29), hospital visitation (ch. 30), and meetings (ch. 31), with topics such as reading (ch. 10), care for one’s self (ch. 13) and family (ch. 11), giving responsibility to others (ch. 16), and handling complaints (ch. 23) interspersed between. A focus on loving people stands out in these encouragements, as Helopoulos speaks about the need to study the history of your people (ch. 12) and care for the person right in front of you (ch. 21), noting that the pastor is to “love [his] people and love them well” (p. 59) and to “cherish the people of God” (p. 113) because they “are a gift—a gift to you” (p. 120). The section on pitfalls reveals tensions in ministry, as one can take oneself too seriously (ch. 35) or not seriously enough (ch. 36); one must not give academic lectures as sermons (ch. 41) but also must not have sermons dominated by illustrations or applications rather than the biblical text (ch. 42); and one must expect disappointment (ch. 40) but avoid discouragement (ch. 34). It is unclear if there is a particular reason for the order of the chapters, as at times neighboring chapters seem thematically linked (e.g., the chapters on taking yourself too seriously and not taking yourself seriously enough), while elsewhere chapters on similar topics are dispersed (e.g., time management in ch. 14, busyness in ch. 22, “dual purposes” of activity in ch. 26). The present order, however, allows for key topics to be addressed from multiple angles (e.g., the importance of the Word [ch. 9] and preaching [ch. 18]; envy [ch. 44] and desire to move to a new position [ch. 38]; silent suffering [ch. 24], discouragement [ch. 34], and “devastation” by people [ch. 40]).

The book ends by highlighting the joys of ministry in the four chapters that comprise the fifth part. Helopoulos reminds pastors that they are called by God to study his Word and enter into the lives of his beloved children, which causes us to grow in knowledge of our sin and experience of his grace. The closing words about perseverance in the face of difficulties come on the heels of this reminder about the nature of this holy work.

This is a valuable book that basically takes the pastoral nuggets one might learn in asides from seminary professors or through a good internship and puts them into one book. The chapters are short, so one could easily read a chapter a day during his first fifty days of ministry. There could be added benefit to reading it in dialogue with an experienced minister at one’s church or in one’s ministry network (e.g., denomination), as the seasoned pastor could reinforce Helopoulos’s insights while offering further wisdom from his own experience. For example, I might push back on Helopoulos’s claim that pastors should expect to work a minimum of 50 hours a week (p. 82); I have been in church settings that have sought to buck the cultural trend of regularly working more than 40 hours a week as a means to better church and family health. I have found a practical way of implementing Helopoulos’s call to have an “open door” in the office while prioritizing study and prayer (ch. 28) in my current setting through a system that indicates if I am praying/studying (and thus can only be interrupted for emergencies). Finally, while Helopoulos rightly points out that one should start slow and not make big changes (ch. 32), there is also a sense in which one should seek to secure some “early wins” to gain trust and confidence in oneself and from congregants.

These suggestions do not detract from a book that would aid seminarians and candidates as they prepare for ministry and start ministering. In fact, it would be a great book for pastors to re-read each year as a reminder of the basics of pastoral ministry that the various challenges in ministry can cause us to forget. It is for new pastors, but can benefit all pastors.

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Joanne J. Jung. *Character Formation in Online Education: A Guide for Instructors, Administrators, and Accrediting Agencies*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. 144 pp. \$16.99.

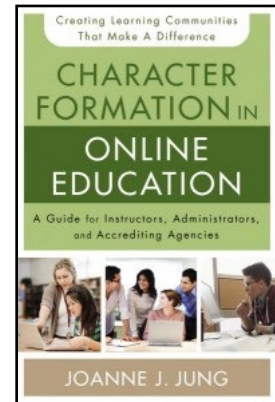
The author is associate professor of biblical and theological studies at Biola University and chair of the Talbot School of Theology committee for online learning. She writes to invite those with online instructional interests to think creatively about developing character and facilitating formation in online students.

Other studies by the author demonstrate her commitment to formation, including *Knowing Grace: Cultivating a Lifestyle of Godliness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011) and *Godly Conversation: Rediscovering the Puritan Practice of Conference* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011).

Online instructors have been waiting for research and publications addressing formation. The author's caricature of online learning run amok hits a nerve with online instructors: "The course is essentially taken in isolation with no requirement to interact or converse with anyone—the professor or other students. It is easy to simply go through the motions of learning in order to earn course credit" (p. 13). But this need not be the case. A well-organized and carefully designed online class "uses a variety of visual, audio, and written media. Assignments are designed to foster interaction with fellow students and the professor. The depth of students' interaction is developed as they process thoughts, ideas, perspectives, and even feelings. The online format, an education without borders, provides a plethora of opportunities to engage with students in their learning and character formation" (p. 14). Indeed, "online education, if it is going to effect character formation, deserves a pedagogy that inspires" (p. 15).

Five qualifications characterize a successful online professor. First, they communicate effectively and winsomely, manifesting care and dedication to students and their learning. Second, they know and communicate your course content well. Third, they understand what makes a good online learner. Fourth, they articulate instructions and expectations clearly. Fifth, they recognize the important of relationships in learning (pp. 26–29).

Learning management systems (LMS) are essential in online learning: "The structure that combines learning and community in an online class is the LMS. . . A good LMS is like a Swiss Army knife.... The LMS is the internal framework into which the course materials are added. All information associated with the course becomes part of the LMS and is archived or stored" (p. 31). Dr. Jung advocates using nine of the myriad functions of an LMS: home, announcements, syllabus, modules, discussions, assignments, grades, conferences, and collaborations (p. 32). "With the communication features of most



LMSs—discussion threads, collaborations, video conferences, written or media comments on graded assignments, and of course, announcements, emails, and audiovisual comments—professors have no excuse for not being present in online courses” (p. 103).

Critical questions drive online discussion and practice. What are the students to learn? How are they to learn it? and How will that learning and its impact on students’ lives be assessed? These questions, fundamental to any learning experience, must be asked and answered more carefully in light of the unique needs of online learners. In fact, questions play a critical role in online education: “Questions are at the heart of learning. A good question affects intelligence, interest, attention, memory, and conduct. The quality of questions is more critical than the quantity to generate transformative learning and an integrative learning community” (p. 56). Questions prompt reflection and reflection is how our minds make connections in grasping a concept or truth. Questions in the form of discussion prompts are critical to formation. The author identifies three levels of prompts based on how directly they support character formation goals: low quality, mediocre, and transformational (p. 68). Understanding students’ lives will be essential to successful prompt questions.

The ability and willingness to integrate is crucial to a student’s formation. But the true key to integration may surprise us. Jung advises:

Researchers continue to affirm Randall Sorenson’s findings that what contributes most to a student’s integration of faith and learning is how well students can determine the convergence of a professor’s authentic, dynamic, and growing relationship with God and the professor’s nondefensive, emotionally unguarded, and even vulnerable relationship with students....The relational attachment that students, both graduate and undergraduate, have with their mentors is the most effective way they learn integration. (p. 101)

Attributes most crucial for mentors who teach their students to integrate include the ability to be self-revealing, caring, welcoming, dedicated, and open-minded (p. 102). All of these attributes are rooted in a spirit-led and Christ-like life.

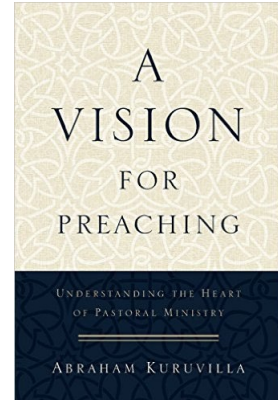
What about actual presence of instructors and students? For those wrestling with the loss of presence in online learning and the gain in face-to-face instruction, a thought-provoking read is Paul R. House, *Bonhoeffer’s Seminary Vision: A Case for Costly Discipleship and Life Together* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015). Reading both books together increases awareness that seminary preparation requires a different kind or another level of character formation than do programs that train students for non-ministerial vocations.

For the instructor or administrator involved in distance education, this book is beneficial. The reviewer recommends this book for the beginning online instructor as well as the seasoned veteran. The author’s infectious enthusiasm for teaching carries over to all forms of instruction, not just online learning. The book is rich with graphics and descriptive illustrations, particularly when the author introduces complex matters. In this regard, the book models instruction in print so essential to online learning. Much of the book is sage instructional advice that would also strengthen face-to-face classroom teaching. A glossary of online terminology supports the book’s content.

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Abraham Kuruvilla. *A Vision for Preaching: Understanding the Heart of Pastoral Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. 224 pp. \$17.99.

Preaching throughout history has held pride of place as it relates to the components of a gathering of Christians for corporate worship. In the last several decades, however, certain publications and movements have seemingly called into question the importance and validity of proclaiming the Word of God to a gathered people. Anti-authoritarian attitudes and the pining after emphasizing other—often good—things, can result in a desire to leave preaching behind as an outmoded vestige that belongs in the past. And yet, there has also concurrently been a championing of textual preaching in certain circles, and this is certainly the case in *A Vision for Preaching* by Abraham Kuruvilla.



Kuruvilla, Professor of Pastoral Ministries at Dallas Theological Seminary, has written several other books on the task of preaching, including *Text to Praxis* and *Privilege the Text*. In the present work the author aims to give an integrated vision, connecting preaching to the entirety of pastoral ministry. He also seeks to fill a specific lacuna in the academic discipline of preaching, namely, “a lack of clarity about how to derive valid application for a modern audience from a specific passage in the ancient text. A robust hermeneutic for making this move from text to audience, which places preaching and application within the larger scheme of the spiritual formation and discipleship of God’s people, has been sorely wanting” (p. 6). Kuruvilla thus sets out to make a case for thorough exegesis, theological hermeneutics, and specific application as essential for the task of faithful proclamation.

The way in which the author defines the task of preaching functions as his primary thesis and the framework for the entire book. He asserts:

Biblical preaching, by a leader of the church, in a gathering of Christians for worship, is the communication of the thrust of a pericope of Scripture discerned by theological exegesis, and of its application to that specific body of believers, that they may be conformed to the image of Christ, for the glory of God—all in the power of the Holy Spirit. (p. 1)

In keeping with this definition, the subsequent contents of the work give detail regarding the distinct realities and function of preaching. Preaching must be exclusively focused on the words God spoke so that the congregation can hear the voice of God. In this way, preaching is *biblical* (chapter 1). Preaching likewise forms the basis of spiritual formation in the corporate worship of the body of Christ, and is rendered by qualified leaders of the church. As such, preaching is *pastoral* (chapter 2) and *ecclesial* (chapter 3).

Kuruvilla continues in this vein and argues that the formative influence of preaching upon believers is conveyed by the communication of the thrust of the text of Scripture utilized for that sermon, what the author refers to as the pericope. The thrust of the pericope, which projects facets of God’s ideal world (i.e., the world in front of the text), is the theology of the text. Thus, preaching is *communicational* (chapter 4) and *theological* (chapter 5). This work is done so that the God’s people might rightly understand and inhabit God’s ideal world. This occurs incrementally as Scripture is preached week by week, pericope by pericope, and thus preaching is *applicational* (chapter 6). The author then notes the only one to perfectly inhabit this ideal world is Jesus Christ, and, therefore, the theology of each

pericope contains a facet of Christlikeness (i.e., *christiconic*). Preaching is *conformational* (chapter 7) in that the text of Scripture is seeking to mold us into the image of Christ. This conforming work is done, ultimately, for the glory of God, and can only be accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit. As such, preaching is *doxological* (chapter 8) and *spiritual* (chapter 9).

This book by Kuruvilla is certainly a worthy addition to the field of homiletics. He is working to develop a particular approach to Scripture, clearly seen in his aforementioned works, as well as the sermonic commentaries he written recently. Specifically, his focus has been on theological hermeneutics, or, stated differently, getting from text to theology to application. Oftentimes the way in which this process goes forward can be somewhat convoluted in preaching textbooks, but Kuruvilla makes fairly plain both the need and the way in which the preacher can successfully walk through this process. (I say fairly plain as the process is made exceedingly plain if one delves into *Privilege the Text*, where more detail is offered.)

The definition the author gives for preaching is comprehensive and well thought out. He teases out this definition in a logical fashion, rightly calling the preacher to ground their task in ecclesial and Trinitarian realities. In the midst of this excellent outworking of the various components of the homiletical task, however, several questions do emerge. For the sake of space, this review will highlight two of the most pertinent issues.

First, Kuruvilla's emphasis on preaching as sacramental appears to be misplaced (pp. 58–66). The author uses a general definition of "sacrament" and seeks especially to compare preaching with the Lord's Supper as conveying God's grace to a people. There is, however, little evidence to support this claim. Connecting the word "proclaim" in 1 Corinthians 11:26 and Colossians 1:28, and noting the connection of God's word and the sacrifices (which is now replaced by the Lord's Supper) in Exodus 24, does not establish a strong case for such a claim. It seems that this chapter on preaching as ecclesial might be strengthened by focusing more on pastoral ministry and preaching in terms of stewardship (1 Cor 4:1–2; 9:17; Eph 3:2; Col 1:25; 1 Tim 3:15; Titus 1:7). In other words, preaching is ecclesial in as far as the preacher faithfully shepherds the people of God and expounds the Scripture, as he is a steward of both these things.

Second, while seeking to correct some of the misplaced zeal that can be found in a Christocentric hermeneutic, the author seemingly goes a bit too far in arguing for his "christiconic" interpretive grid. It would be helpful if Kuruvilla allowed proponents of a Christocentric hermeneutic to actually define what they mean by the term, as his assertion of their "finding Christ *explicitly* in every passage" (p. 138, emphasis original) may be considered a caricature. His understanding of Luke 24 is understandable (Christ is shown in specific texts from the Law, Prophets, and Writings), but in only naming off certain texts as being "clearly" about the Messiah, Kuruvilla seemingly overlooks typology, a litany of prophetic utterances, and patterns that portray the OT as a Messianic document declaring a Messianic hope. As such, nothing that he says is wrong—we should see the preached Word conforming us to the image of Christ sermon by sermon, and seek to be responsible in christological interpretation—but it is hermeneutically constrained to the point that we may miss much in the OT concerning the Messiah.

These issues aside, Kuruvilla's work helps readers tie together the worlds of hermeneutics, growth in the Christian life, Trinitarianism, ecclesiology, and homiletics. This is an ideal work for scholars in the field of homiletics, but even more so for current and aspiring pastors. It is a pleasure to note that while Kuruvilla has published several works on preaching he is not merely remaining in the realm of the theoretical. Having already produced several sermonic commentaries on Genesis, Mark, and

Ephesians, one can hope he can continue down this path so as to continue to show his readers how preachers can move from text to theology to application.

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Jen Pollock Michel. *Teach Us to Want: Longing, Ambition and the Life of Faith*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 215 pp. \$16.00.

Teach Us to Want is an engaging exploration of the role of desire in the Christian life. Michel seeks to make “a biblical case for wanting, and wanting well” (p. 200). The key question is this: Is there a nuanced alternative to uncritically embracing of all our desires on the one hand, and fearfully rejecting them on the other? Michel argues yes. Yet this is not a systematic treatise. It is part personal narrative, part biblical reflection, and part general rumination on the topic of desire in the Christian life.

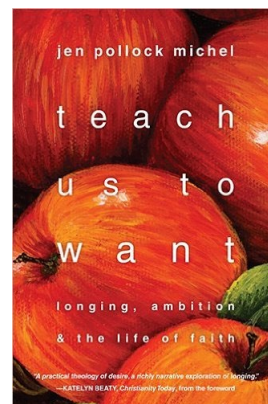
Michel lays the book’s theological foundation in the first three chapters. Chapter 1 addresses our hesitations about desire by arguing that desire, as a category, is good. Yet as chapter 2 argues, the doctrine of sin reminds us that our desires can be corrupted. Chapter 3 demonstrates God’s commitment to renewing our desires by transforming our hearts. The logic of these first three chapters implicitly follows the biblical story line of creation, fall, and redemption. In other words, desire is good, desire can be bad, and God transforms our desires.

It is here that the book’s agenda opens up. Michel introduces the role the Lord’s Prayer serves in transforming our desires. By immersing ourselves in the Lord’s Prayer, “we learn to love what God loves and to make his desires our own. Teach us to pray, Jesus’ disciples asked. *And teach me to want*” (p. 63). Here we see the title’s connection between desire and the Lord’s Prayer. Chapters 4–10 then take various topics related to the Lord’s Prayer as starting points for reflections, including Scripture, prayer, confession, and community.

I offer several observations about Michel’s excellent book, highlighting three enjoyable strengths and one potential weakness.

First, this is an engaging book. The prose is masterful and beautiful and, as a result, enjoyable at every turn. For example, there are several examples in stories from her role as a mother. Recalling an attempt at gaining a confession from her children with sternness, she admits, “My owl eyes coerce no confessions” (p. 33). Regarding another challenge of bringing her son to confession, she observes, “Truth is a big fish. A mother must be strong at the reel” (p. 147).

Second, this is an insightful book. Michel demonstrates throughout that the best way forward is a nuanced “both-and,” rather than a simplistic “either-or” mindset. Should we choose happiness or holiness (pp. 26–28)? Should we focus on personal salvation or earthy engagement (pp. 76–77)? Should we devote ourselves to proclaiming the gospel or blessing the world in everyday ways (p. 88)? And, most pertinently, should we reject desire or embrace it (p. 42)? “Is it possible to be fully alive to the world



of pleasure and at the same time remain fully devoted to God?” (p. 25). In each case, where a healthy, nuanced, both-and approach is needed, she provides it.

She also shares rich insight in her reflections on biblical texts and life experiences. For example, she observes that the prayer for “daily bread ... reminds us that we are bodies, with bodily needs, and invites us to begin believing that those needs matter to God ... [it] forces us back into our bodies and explodes the way we try and elevate the spiritual over and above the earthly” (p. 132).

Third, this is a grace-centered book. Grace is the thread woven throughout the entirety of Michel’s work. We may expect a book about desire to be about *our* desires, but Michel ensures that we not miss how our very desires are shaped by seeing *God’s* desires and, in particular, God’s desires for *us*. Though a healthy theology of sin is essential for understanding our desires’ corruption, she reminds us that the storyline of Scripture moves toward God’s gracious transformation of our hearts. “The renewal of our desires is indeed the bold promise of the new covenant” (p. 29). Beyond this biblical-theological observation, God’s gracious nature is highlighted throughout. “Jesus is tireless in his love.... Jesus is an eternally patient man” (p. 119). She often writes of God’s “reflexive” character: “As if by reflex of character, God blesses” (p. 81), and “his reflexive impulse is to bless” (p. 119). Similarly, as she speaks of God’s desire for his people, she often includes the notion of “friendship” with God, a biblical theme that highlights the scandal of God’s graciousness toward sinners. One doesn’t often say things like this unless the penny of grace has dropped deep.

Fourth—and here is where I offer my criticism—this is a meandering book. While a clear strength is how well *Teach Us to Want* is written, that is true at a micro level. There is hardly a page that is not enjoyable, with sentences and phrases crafted with skill and beauty. However, at a macro-level, the book lacked a clear sense of direction and movement. There was no clear indication of the destination from the beginning, nor were there clear road-markers along the way. And what is true with the book as a whole is also true at the chapter level. The chapters occasionally lacked a clear sense of development, with sections often moving from biblical reflection to personal experience to topical rumination without a clear sense of connection between the parts. This lack of focus and clarity of direction may prove to be a distraction for readers.

This is an important and enjoyable work. In the end, Michel shows that desires are a divine gift—corrupted by sin, to be sure, but to be embraced as we seek their transformation by grace. Especially for those who consider happiness and holiness at odds, Michael wants to prove they have been friends all along. This is a book for anyone looking for an enjoyable and insightful read on a nuanced perspective of our desires and longings.

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C. Ben Mitchell. *Ethics and Moral Reasoning: A Student Guide*. Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013. 112 pp. \$11.99.

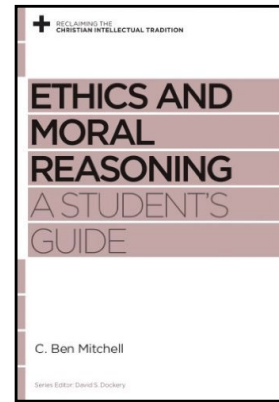
Ben Mitchell, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Union University, contributed this volume to a wonderful little series of books edited by David Dockery on reclaiming the Christian intellectual tradition. The endorsements alone can serve as a valuable testimony to the book's usefulness for students (who are the main audience) and also for curious minds desiring to be informed as well.

Mitchell introduces his presuppositions and end goal in the preface of the book, concerning himself with ethics from a Christian perspective for the end of establishing right relationship with others and right worship before God (p. 18–19).

The book is divided into six chapters, plus a conclusion. In the first chapter Mitchell addresses the challenges from a relativistic moral ethic. The premise of relativism is further introduced via the diversity thesis and dependency thesis—the former stating that morality differs from person to person and culture to culture, and the latter that moral truth depends on the contingencies of the human condition and sociocultural circumstances (p. 25). He finished the chapter giving the classic responses to relativism and identifying the values and ethical standards accepted across cultures no matter the norms also present in that culture.

Chapters 2–3 are an overview of the history of moral reasoning from a biblical understanding. Mitchell begins with the Old Testament, observing the normative ethical standards given from the beginning regarding marriage, work, sanctity of life, gender and racial equality. The chapter finishes with a longer treatment of the Ten Commandments and the normative application of them to Western jurisprudence (p. 39), the relationship between God and man, and human relationships. The third chapter considers the New Testament, particularly the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, and Mitchell observed rightly that Jesus is introducing a transition from the old to the new covenant (p. 54). The Sermon on the Mount deepens the moral truth of the old covenant which Jesus came to fulfill. The final section of chapter 3 introduces the idea of natural law and some of histories great thinkers and modern ones that advanced ideas regarding the search for meaning and happiness.

Chapter 4 presents Enlightenment ethics. First, the Enlightenment cannot be comprehended apart from Kantian ideas. Mitchell addresses Kant and the Enlightenment presupposition of human reason as the fundamental arbiter of morality and truth. Mitchell explored Kantian morals through the Categorical Imperative (p. 66) and offered the critique that Kant's idea is more in line with etiquette than moral duty. Furthermore, the Enlightenment was represented by utilitarianism, particularly in reference to pleasure and pain. According to the book, the problem with utilitarianism occurs in its individualism, making pleasure and pain equivalent from person to person without regard to measure. Mitchell exposes rightly individualism's inability to interpret and calculate well the rightness of a pleasurable act, and the way utilitarianism could permit what is wrong if one could prove it is beneficial for enough people (p. 72). In summary, Mitchell highlights the failure of the Enlightenment to achieve morality through reason, borrowing from Polman's position against Action-Based Ethics (deontology and utilitarianism) that those positions lack a motivational element. Mitchell shows further the Enlightenment's rejection of the spiritual dimensions of ethics and the communal ethics for a false personal autonomy.



Chapter 5 explores the dimensions of evangelical ethics through several ethicists from the last 100 years. Mitchell uses John Murray as an example of Divine Command ethics in the Reformed tradition, in which Murray stresses the inability of humanity to follow God's law and the need for union with Christ through salvation to make one able to embrace God's commands. Moreover, Carl F. H. Henry grounded the Divine Command ethics of evangelicalism in his understanding of God's revelation of himself in the Bible in contrast to the relativistic situational ethic advanced in 1960s. Mitchell concludes by addressing the influence of Arthur Holmes, Stanley Hauerwas, Walter O'Donovan, and Gilbert Meilaender on evangelical ethics.

The final chapter seeks to connect Christian ethical theory with application for students. It addresses topics such as "The Bible as Law Code" and "The Bible as Universal Principles." This chapter is the most practical in nature, and can be far-reaching in its implications for students serious about moral reasoning. Mitchell concludes chapter 6 with the following guide for finding ethical guidance from the Bible (pp. 95–96):

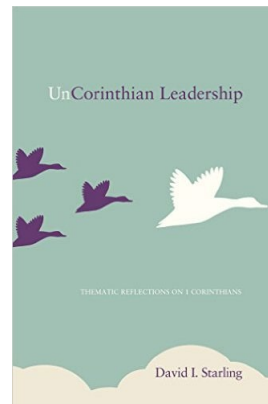
- Pray for divine illumination.
- Define the ethical issue or problems.
- Clarify the issues to be explained.
- Glean all the scriptural data on the issue with attention to: commandments, principles, examples.
- Study the scriptural instruction carefully with attention to: genre, literary style and organization, definitions and grammar, context, overall theme, purpose, and historical significance.
- What does the text say in its context?
- What does the text mean today?
- Apply the biblical instruction: engage in dialogue with the community of the faithful, study the history of Christian ethics.
- Formulate a Christian ethical position.

In the final analysis, the book keeps to its purpose to bring students up to speed on ethical theory and moral reasoning. Mitchell's evangelical commitments and desire for human flourishing can be felt throughout the book. This book serves as a good introduction not only to wider ethical and philosophical theory but for the Christian student's interaction with them, and how they might formulate their own ethical position, with guidance from a seasoned scholar in the field.

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David I. Starling. *UnCorinthian Leadership: Thematic Reflections on 1 Corinthians*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014. 126 pp. \$15.00.

Leadership is a pivotal issue in late-modern society. Nearly everyone today nurtures an opinion of the marks of effective leadership. In most arenas—government, corporate, and academic—leaders are subjected to constant critique. Those deemed successful command large salaries; those regarded as deficient are dismissed. Not surprisingly, the cultural pre-occupation with leadership has invaded the church of Christ. Pastors must be good leaders—versatile and energetic, creative and organized, exhorters and comforters. In a word, they must do whatever is necessary to make their organization, the local church, flourish in a competitive world. Increasingly, Christian workers are evaluated by the same criteria as those used by the competitive world itself, a practice which David Starling, in his brief but excellent book *UnCorinthian Leadership: Thematic Reflections on 1 Corinthians*, wants earnestly to rectify.



Starling focuses on the apostle Paul’s implicit teaching about leadership in the first letter to the church of Corinth. While we might have expected a focus on the second epistle to the Corinthians, where Paul explicitly defends his own leadership, Starling confines himself to the earlier letter and, moving from one major section of the letter to another, assembles an unexpected view of leadership.

According to Starling, Paul’s interpretation of leadership is at cross-purposes with that espoused in secular Corinth. For an understanding of secular Corinth, Starling draws on the excellent work of Australian scholars who, for over thirty years now, have expounded the social setting of the New Testament. It was a milieu in which showy leadership was applauded, replete with egotistical boasting, forceful oratory, and superficial displays, in which leaders who exalted themselves could expect public rewards.

In contrast to this was the world in which Paul moved and had his being, the world of a Roman cross, which was both the most ignominious object in antiquity and the central object of Paul’s religion. In Paul’s mind, he was constrained “to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2). It was an outlook not just different from that of his secular counterparts, but diametrically the opposite; and it issued, not surprisingly, in a form of leadership that many of his own “converts” abhorred.

Starling admirably sifts the biblical evidence to construct Paul’s vision of Christian leadership. In the process, he unearths much that is relevant to Christian leaders today. Few moments of history parallel our times as closely as did the first century. When Paul rejects first-century notions of leadership, he could just as easily have been rejecting our notions today. His own vision of leadership propounds humility, prayer, and service—characteristics epitomized in the cross of Christ. Far from hindering Christian leaders, such characteristics unleash the wisdom and power of God. For this reason, Starling ventures an impassioned plea to conform to the patterns of cross-centered leadership, eschewing secular models for the ways of Christ.

The book is a gem. Not only is the content edifying, but it is also conveyed lucidly in long and fluid sentences. Scattered throughout are trenchant observations such as these:

If we see the essence of [a Christian leader's] task [as] being an attempt to market Christianity in a post-Christian world, the temptation will always be there for us to reinvent the product to make it more appealing. (p. 67)

The story that matters is not the story of an evolving church, adapting its message to fit with its changing times; it is the story of the mighty works of God in Christ, their proclamation to the ends of the earth, and their transmission from one generation to the next. (p. 70)

[Paul's] deep, loyal allegiance to the cause of the gospel and his thirsty, passionate desire to share in its blessings are not competing drives but beautifully harmonious aspects of the one quest (p. 36).

In a day when even Christian leaders often depend (unwittingly?) on secular models, we must be careful to drop our buckets into the wellspring of the cross, where our leadership will be refreshed by the perspective and the power of God. To that end David Starling represents a reliable guide.

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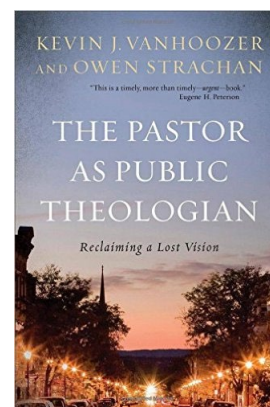
Kevin J. Vanhoozer and Owen Strachan. *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. xi + 221 pp. \$19.99.

Is a pastor primarily a manager? A CEO? A preacher? A counselor? A community organizer? The question of the fundamental identity of the pastor today is likely to evoke various responses.

In *The Pastor as Public Theologian*, Kevin Vanhoozer (professor of systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) and Owen Strachan (associate professor of Christian theology at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) contend that pastors have been led into the wilderness of modernity and are now wandering with a faulty vision of the pastorate. Their response is to reclaim a biblical vision of the pastorate, one in which the pastor is fundamentally a public theologian. Vanhoozer explains this in three steps. “First, pastors are and always have been theologians. Second, every theologian is in some sense a public theologian, a peculiar sort of intellectual, a particular type of generalist.... Third, the purpose of the pastor-theologian being a public intellectual is to serve the people of God by building them up in ‘the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints’” (pp. 15–16).

Readers who are aware of the conventional use of the label “public theology” will recognize that the authors are using the terminology differently. In the words of the authors, “Public theology, as we are using the term, means ‘theology made up of people’: ‘God is at work to bring into being a people under his rule in his place.’ ... The church—not a building but the people of God speaking, acting, and perhaps suffering—is that ‘place’ where God and the kingdom of God best comes into focus” (p. 20).

In the introduction, Vanhoozer addresses the problem, proposal, and prospect of the book: reclaiming a biblical vision of the pastor as a public theologian. Part one includes two chapters by



Strachan in which he argues that the prophets, priest, and king of the Old Testament foreshadow the New Testament pastor-theologian (ch. 1) and that the pastor-theologian is the dominant understanding of the office throughout church history (ch. 2). Part two includes two chapters by Vanhoozer in which he gives the systematic (ch. 3) and practical (ch. 4) vision for the pastorate. The pastor should be seen as a “holy jack-of-all-existential-trades, charged with communicating Christ to everyone, everywhere, at all times” (p. 186). Much of these two chapters flesh out what this looks like. In the final section, Vanhoozer summarizes the book with fifty-five theses on the pastor as public theologian.

Some might question whether academics should be writing about pastoral ministry. This is surely mistaken. Amplified by modernity and increasingly atomistic approaches to scholarship, the relegation of the theologian to the academy has been an unfortunate development. Christian theologians should not only live their life in the church but also write for the church. Nevertheless, instead of trying to go it alone, the authors wisely chose to include short essays throughout from pastors, which home in on the application of each chapter. While some of these pastoral essays prove more insightful and relevant than others, their inclusion provides wisdom and perspective from the front lines of ministry.

One might ask, nonetheless: Is this an intellectual elitist view of the pastorate? The authors work hard against the impression that the public theologian is really code for membership in the “elite intelligentsia.” The public theologian, according to Vanhoozer, is not a “product of the Ivy League but homegrown, as it were, on the farm” (p. 24). Pastors need not have a high IQ, but rather a high “TQ (theology quotient).” This is an important qualification, and yet, when one looks at the pastors selected to write essays throughout the book—those who function as the models for what a public theologian should look like—one might wish that a more diverse group were selected: nine of the twelve pastors who wrote essays have their PhDs or are working on their PhDs from schools such as Oxford, Cambridge, and Princeton. This is a rather elite group (at least it appears so on paper). While this can be a refreshing corrective to the anti-intellectualism that plagues the evangelical church, for some readers this selection of contributors could seem in tension with their concern to distinguish the genius from the pastor.

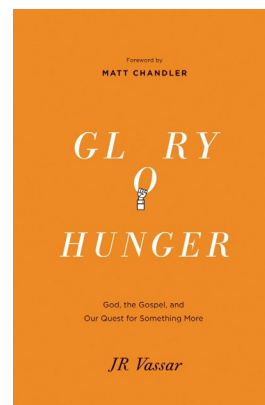
How then should we approach a biblical theology of the pastorate? Throughout the book Strachan and Vanhoozer’s application of theological wisdom to the pastorate was a breath of fresh air in the midst of a climate of “just-get-it-done” approaches to ministry. Nevertheless, it is at one of their foundational points that some readers might raise some questions. Chapter 1, subtitled, “A Brief Biblical Theology of the Pastorate,” creatively traces the offices of the prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Testament and then applies them to the New Testament office of pastor. Strachan himself admits that exegetes and theologians have been reluctant to connect the three Old Testament offices to the pastor-theologian of the New Testament (p. 39). While there are some similarities between certain ministry roles of the Old Testament offices and the New Testament pastor, should we call these similarities “a biblical theology”? The New Testament sees the priesthood as being fulfilled in Christ and applies the office directly to the corporate people of God (1 Pet 2:9) but not to the distinct role of the pastor. The saints will corporately reign with Christ (2 Tim 2:12), but kingship language is not applied specifically to the New Testament pastor/overseer/elder. Could emphasizing the looser connections based on similarities between the Old Testament and New Testament offices overshadow the explicit way the New Testament actually applies the Old Testament offices to Christ and his corporate body? Perhaps Timothy Laniak’s work on pastoral leadership (*Shepherds After My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006]) offers a clearer biblical theological approach to pastoral ministry.

At the end of the day, this book provides a timely vision for the pastorate. *The Pastor as Public Theologian* is associated with a broader movement, which appears to be gaining steam. For instance, see the recently published work by Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson (*The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015]) and the Center for Pastor Theologians (<http://www.pastortheologians.com>). In a day when the Western church has drifted toward theological anemia and many of her leaders have failed to faithfully respond to the complexities of culture, *The Pastor as Public Theologian* and this broader movement is offering a rich and needed vision for the pastorate.

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JR Vassar. *Glory Hunger: God, the Gospel, and Our Quest for Something More*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015. 141 pp. \$14.99.

Writing a book on mankind's inherent desire for glory is a dangerous task. How does one write to reorient humanity's misguided pursuit of greatness without falling prey to the pitfalls resident in such a goal? One can almost hear the apostle Paul asking, "Who is sufficient for such things?" Surely JR Vassar must have counted the cost and contemplated these risks when he began the ambitious work of seeking both to wound and heal our glory hunger by directing us to the One who designed our innate cravings for greatness. Writing from the perspective of a pastor who is intimately aware of such struggles, Vassar has produced a sermonic guide for the church that is full of transparency, practical applications, and vivid illustrations to help us recapture a biblical perspective of true glory.



Following an introduction, Vassar begins the book with the opening scenes of the Grand Story. Here we find humanity in the presence of God in the Garden of Eden. Vassar skillfully builds the case for how our God-ordained role as God's image bearers confers upon us "intrinsic dignity and worth" (p. 23). Yet instead of finding our dignity and worth in God, in our rebellion we seek it elsewhere, which leads to an "unnamed ache" in our lives for someone to speak the "very good" of creation over us again. Vassar writes, "Our craving to be visible and valuable to people is really a legitimate and primal pang for what we are meant to have with the ultimate person. Glory hunger is the passion and ache we are born with to have that 'very good' spoken over our lives" (p. 24). But the tragic loss of the "very good" pronouncement on account of our rebellion is not final. Vassar writes, "Yet there is hope. Even in the judgment God pronounces upon Adam and Eve, this is a promise that one is coming who will crush the head of the Serpent and overturn this tragic situation" (p. 25). Instead of us "reaching for glory," glory will "come to us, and it will be his work, not ours" (p. 25).

The rest of the book explores humanity's failing attempt to grasp for glory in empty places by way of deficient means. "Our ache for glory," which is "the Genesis memory," (p. 28) unfortunately manifests itself in "illegitimate and idolatrous" ways (p. 24). In chapter 2, Vassar dramatically portrays the brokenness of both idols and idolaters in the pursuit of glory. In chapter 3, he looks specifically at our inability to rehabilitate ourselves by paralleling our self-efforts with the boulder-pushing futility of Sisyphus. Vassar makes clear that we cannot heal ourselves. In chapter 4, he directs us to freedom from

self-absorption through meditation on that which is the “most glorious, most lovely, and supremely valuable”—namely, the gospel of Jesus Christ, which invites us to “renounce our obsessive concern with ourselves” (pp. 61, 64).

In chapter 5, the attention turns from our failings to our focus on the value of God. Vassar writes, “I’ve realized that God will make me happy by filling up my world with pictures of him so that I lose my preoccupation with myself and feel the wonder and awe for which I am really hungry” (p. 79). Chapter 6 acknowledges Christ in his rightful place—the center stage of the cosmos (p. 88). Vassar writes, “The happiest people are those who are free from personal glory hunger and refuse to compete with God for glory” (p. 98). Chapter 7 reminds us that “the worth and preeminence of Jesus” are to be treasured more than our social acceptance (p. 112). In the final chapter, Vassar champions the expulsive power of eschatological perception. He writes, “A vision of the glory to be revealed can liberate us from the glory hunger that keeps us quiet and cowering in and often hostile world that needs to be confronted with the love and lordship of Jesus” (p. 123). He closes by appealing to his readers to be “hungry for the glory that comes from God” while seeking “glory for others and not for themselves” (pp. 128–29).

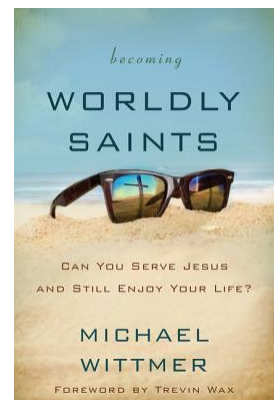
This book represents a well-written, perfectly timed, and merciful antidote for the church of our day. Our selfie-plagued, instagrammed culture is permeated by ubiquitous and shameless examples of self-promotion. Sadly, the central place in society where Christ is to be valued and cherished above all others has become a platform for many narcissistic personalities. Instead of extolling the merits of Jesus, it would appear that some “church leaders” were more concerned with extolling their brand equity or latest book. So I close with a question: In light of Vassar’s tremendous work, how can the evangelical church stop perpetuating the “celebrity culture” that is ravaging many churches and exchange it for a culture of gospel-embracing greatness-seeking that only comes by losing ourselves in Christ? Maybe the solution is found in seeing that “the glory *we* have always wanted deep down, the compliments *we* have craved, and the recognition *we* have desired after every accomplishment are all just misdirected efforts to assuage a God-given ache to be spoken well of by *God*” (p. 114).

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Wittmer, Michael. *Becoming Worldly Saints: Can You Serve Jesus and Still Enjoy Your Life?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. 206 pp. \$15.99.

I suppose I must be one of the people for whom Wittmer wrote his book. As a recovering ascetic who still wonders whether I am enjoying life too much when I should be living more sacrificially, Wittmer confronts me with the rightful place of enjoyment in the Christian life.

Wittmer is professor of systematic theology at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, but he writes for the average churchgoer in easy prose and with plenty of chuckles (warning: fans of Cleveland sports teams may find some material offensive!). His central thesis is that “God wants you to enjoy life” (p. 26), and that Christians should not feel false guilt for enjoying God’s good creation.



He argues his point by showing how a Christian's enjoyment of creation fits into the biblical story of creation, fall, and redemption.

Regarding creation, Wittmer emphasizes the goodness of all that God has made. This puts the lie to spiritualism (a.k.a., gnosticism), which says that "matter doesn't matter." For Wittmer, separating out parts of our lives as secular or irrelevant to our Christian identity goes directly against the Bible's teaching. And so, rather than ignoring God's gifts and focusing exclusively on the Giver, we ought to enjoy creation for what it is.

Wittmer explains the meaning of life in terms of our creational identity: we are to love God, serve others, cultivate the earth, rest every seventh day, and pursue a calling where, in the words of Buechner, our "deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet" (p. 104). All these activities require us to embrace our embodied existence. Wittmer then explains how God's redemptive purposes in the wake of the Fall do not involve the annihilation of this creation, but rather its restoration. Heaven will be a renewal and perfecting of this earth, where our embodied existence will reach its pinnacle. Taking pleasure in God's marvelous world continues to be a central expression of our humanity.

Wittmer has a gift for memorable lines, but one sometimes wonders whether people will hear him correctly. For example, "Thank God for the privilege of being human and of being here. Then go have some fun" (p. 67). This could imply that we can pay our respects to God and then go on our merry way, which is not his point in the larger context.

If one takes him in context, Wittmer's book strikes helpful balances. He does not allow the goodness of all creation to eliminate the biblical priority on our relationship to God: "If God is the source of all value, then everything matters, and those activities that focus most on him matter most of all" (p. 32). Likewise, all wholesome callings are equally good, but being called to church ministry is a "uniquely high" task (p. 105). Wittmer also balances Kuyperian and "two kingdoms" insights, and identifies his own view as fundamentally Kuyperian. He encourages us to live in these tensions, not to escape them.

For this recovering ascetic, much of Wittmer's book was deeply refreshing. The normal, mundane activities of human existence bring glory to God. God gives good gifts that are to be *enjoyed*. Loving my neighbor does not mean I need to save the world singlehandedly, or to feel false guilt when I buy a suit while children in Africa are hungry.

And yet something about the book's overall message does not sit well with Scripture. The call to self-sacrificial suffering is a major part of biblical ethics (Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:57–62; 14:27). The runner straining with all his might to the finish line (1 Cor. 9:24–27) does not come to mind as a way of illustrating how to apply Wittmer's book. (Instead, maybe we think of lounging on the beach? See the cover.) The Bible speaks with intense urgency about the present time (Eph 5:16), but I fear that all too many American Christians will read Wittmer's book as an invitation to a lifestyle of complacent hedonism. The balance between these texts and the legitimacy of delighting in creation is hard to strike, and to his credit, Wittmer does not ignore these passages. But the call to take up one's cross does not seem *functional* in the book, so that at the end a reader could explain how the pursuit of pleasure in God's creation fits with the call to "fill what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ" (Col. 1:24; see 2 Cor. 1:5; 1 Pet. 4:13).

Perhaps there is a theological explanation for this imbalance. Wittmer bases his ethic on our identity as *humans*, not as Christians (p. 70). Hence his explanation of our life calling is based on Genesis 1–2 (loving God, cultivating the earth, etc.). But Paul says that as Christians we are being conformed to the "image of [God's] Son" (Rom 8:29), and Jesus's image not only fulfills those creational mandates,

but is marked by the narrative of *suffering unto glory*. Therefore, our present existence is primarily cross-shaped: we do not forego the good things God gives, but our goal is to live out the sacrificial, self-emptying love of our Savior. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it in his book *The Cost of Discipleship*: “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”

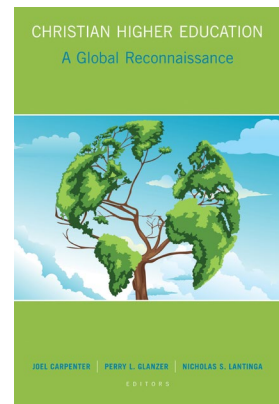
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— MISSION AND CULTURE —

Joel Carpenter, Perry L. Glanzer, and Nicholas S. Lantinga, eds. *Christian Higher Education. A Global Reconnaissance*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. x + 336 pp. £23.99/\$36.00.

Roger Lundin, ed. *Christ Across the Disciplines. Past, Present, Future*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. x + 232 pp. £13.99/\$20.00.

Carpenter, Glanzer and Lantinga assemble a distinguished array of international scholars and administrators to help survey the global landscape of Christian Higher Education. Chapters cover the countries of Kenya, China, Korea, India, Mexico, Brazil, Canada and the United States, while Western and Post-communist Europe are treated as blocks of nations. Noticeably Oceania is left out of this global gathering for no apparent reason. The accounts offer brief histories of local expressions of Christian higher education with an analysis of present realities and challenges for the future. There is something humbling about traveling through these countries’ recent histories of Christian witness in the university and college setting, not least because, despite all manner of commonality, the differences between experiences, and between the cultural and social place of Christianity are massive.



Common questions inevitably emerge: How is ‘Christian’ identity established and maintained for an institution through time? How does the state sponsored massification of higher education affect Christian distinctives? The number of students seeking degrees in Nigeria is mindboggling! How should wider market demands determine what kind of education Christian institutions should offer? This last questions leads to one of the common conundrums. If, as the editors and numerous chapter authors assert, Christian identity is best maintained by a private institution (where accreditation allows), the very private nature of the institutions can lead them to follow market trends to a dilution of the explicitly Christian content of their course offerings. Survival can become a question of the demographic setting and the maturity of the church who may send students to these places for their degrees. Yet, the move from university education being a ‘public good to being a commercial commodity’ (p. 122) disturbs a number of contributors.

On the other hand, whether in Kenya, or Brazil, or Mexico, authors are concerned that particularly evangelical higher education becomes a vehicle for sustaining cultural isolation rather than contributing critically to the common good. Peter Tze Ming Ng (China), writing from a minority Christian context,

demonstrates the way in which Christian higher education can pursue academic excellence as a witness to a largely Non-Christian culture—through the academically rigorous, honest, and open study of Christianity. In another Christian minority setting, J. Dinarkarlal draws attention to the competition (even conflict) between different Christian groups in higher education, when surely the existence of some state anti-conversion laws would present enough of a challenge.

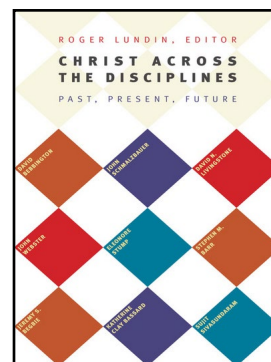
In the UK and North America there is a widespread lament for increasing secularization. This phenomenon is also spreading world wide in higher education, driven in many ways by the market utility model of course and degree offerings. At the same time, in contrast to the global north, church growth and entrepreneurial spirit in the global south shows Christian agency able to stake a claim in new education markets. Problems abound, but there are also exemplary institutions and hopeful signs of initiative and Christian faithfulness.

Within the pages of this one book we find data documenting the raw numbers of students in Christian higher education and mapping the variety of funding models, all collected in historically rich and locally authored chapters. The concluding editorial evaluation does a sterling job of drawing together key insights. A temptation is to think that all that is needed for these growing number of students is an internet connection to an online product of Christian sourcing. While diverse distribution models have their place, the hopeful vision presented here testifies to the continued call for universities and colleges to be both Christian and pedagogically valuable, being embedded in their own cultural context to serve the local good.

If we go on to ask more specifically what kind of curriculum and teaching and research should a Christian university pursue, then we might do worse than dip into *Christ Across the Disciplines*. Part tribute to Arthur Holmes's, *The Idea of a Christian College*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), as also to Wheaton College as somewhat of a standard bearer for Christian higher education, editor Roger Lundin gathers a gaggle of disparate academic voices to speak wisdom from their disciplines of history, theology, and science.

Unlike the comparative uniformity across the chapters of *Christian Higher Education*, Lundin editorially presides over a pleasing cacophony. One can imagine walking from one classroom lecture to another and then bashing out the commonalities and divergences with peer friends long into the night. There really is no one exclusive 'model' for what the product of Christian higher education should look like. Although the back cover rather grandiosely claims that the essays will show how to 'meet the present and future challenges of intellectual and cultural life in a global world,' this grandiloquence is not totally overstated. Notable essays include David Bebbington on the discipline of history's neglect of Christianity in Britain (ch. 1), John Webster's presentation of a theology of the intellectual life (ch. 4), Eleanore Stump on the external and internal contemporary challenge facing Christian scholars (ch. 5), and Jeremy Begbie's recovery of Reformed Christianity's relationship to art via theology (ch. 7). The cultivation of the mind in love of God and the world through these encounters is surely grandiose in its possibilities in face of a challenging world.

As ever, more and different voices will need to be heard, but it is the learning to hear and critically engage that will shape Christian higher education across the disciplines for an integration of faith and learning. For example, Katherine Clay Bassard's essay on race and literature (ch. 8) took me straight to



the bookshelf to follow her literary lead as the intersection of theology and race has become of significant interest, an essential feature of any meaningful Christian conversation of culture in the western world today. The book's concluding chapter by Sujit Sivasundaram explores colonial evangelical missionary contributions to early anthropological and sociological accounts of race. While we may now find these accounts problematic, they nevertheless attested to a global vision among Christians that was not afraid to venture claims and theories for the world that were never meant to be sacrosanct but instead were born of a love of people and the diversity of cultures to be encountered.

Reading these two books together, it is easy to reflect that globally minded Christians in the global north still have a way to go to engage and showcase the insights their fellow academics in other parts of the world are producing as an effort, to use Sivasundaram's term, of 'trans-cultural scholarship'. At the same time there is hope that the wisdom of Christian disciplinary engagement is happening and can be harnessed even more throughout this burgeoning field.

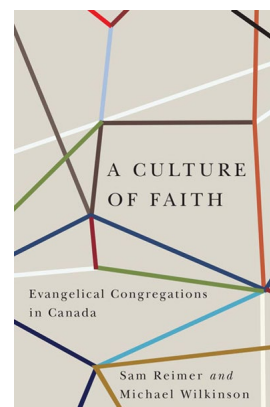
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Sam Reimer and Michael Wilkinson. *A Culture of Faith: Evangelical Congregations in Canada*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015. xii + 284 pp. £23.99/\$32.95.

The secularization thesis that religion has been steadily declining in North America has been at work for many years. In Canada in particular, this was coupled with compelling data that showed stagnated attendance figures in many Mainline Protestant Churches. More recently, however, Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby has clarified this trend as the gradual polarization between religious and non-religious. In *A Culture of Faith: Evangelical Congregations in Canada*, Sam Reimer (Crandall University) and Michael Wilkinson (Trinity Western University) provide an important analysis of evangelicalism within the paradigm of Canada's changing religious landscape.

The authors, who both come from the evangelical tradition, argue that in order for one to understand the larger trends within the collective evangelical subculture one must assess the programs and identities of the individual congregations. Central to their methodology, Reimer and Wilkinson define "evangelical" through British historian David Bebbington's quadrilateral. Their research sample of "evangelical" congregations, entitled the "Canadian Evangelical Churches Study," consists of surveys of 478 lead pastors and 100 pastors for children or youth from congregations within one of five major evangelical traditions in Canada: (1) the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, (2) the Christian Reformed Church, (3) the Mennonite Brethren, (4) the Christian Missionary Alliance, and (5) the mainline Baptist conventions. Those evangelical churches included in their sample are conservative Protestant congregations associated with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (p. 11).

While the number of Mainline Protestants in Canada has declined steadily since 1931, evangelicals have shown a surprising resilience. The authors propose that central to the relative success of evangelicalism in Canada is the ability to facilitate a communal—yet somehow personal—alternative to our individualistic and religiously plural society. Moreover, where evangelical churches are not bound



by tradition in the way that they conduct themselves, each church is able to appeal to its surrounding community as it sees fit—usually in church-aesthetics, worship style, and sermon content. This is further enhanced by the natural tendency of evangelicals to focus on youth and children’s ministry (p. 62). According to the authors, these things have allowed evangelicals to fair “*comparatively well*” (p. 88).

Juxtaposed to the comparative resilience that evangelicalism has demonstrated, however, the authors show cause for concern, and in fact, do not reflect Bibby’s optimism. Much of the evangelical sustainability within the last half-century has related to their ability to maintain a relatively high birth rate. In recent years this has declined and, at best, has leveled with the national average. Further, immigration—specifically of those from other religious traditions—has challenged the numerical growth of Canadian Christianity in general. While evangelism and church relevance have sustained evangelical figures over the past decades, it appears as though these figures have ultimately “plateaued,” and that a shift in cultural demographics may indicate future difficulty for evangelical congregations.

While evangelical churches seek to stave off a decline in congregants, simultaneously they are struggling to retain their clergy. This is also a battle against demographics: as the baby-boomers retire, the number of young people interested in entering pastoral leadership is declining. The six largest evangelical seminaries in Canada reported a decline of roughly 20% in their student bodies (p. 138). Additionally, those individuals who do enter the ministry are prone to “burnouts” and high levels of stress. The authors suggest that this may lead to a shortage of evangelical clergy in Canada in the coming years.

In addition to these staffing difficulties, churches have indicated lower levels of financial support. Within their study, the authors found that evangelicals were consistently giving well-below the 10% “tithes.” Where this coincides with a decline in congregants, again there is cause for concern: churches are receiving much less from fewer sources. These internal difficulties enhance the continual struggle to find sustainability on a larger scale.

Evangelicals have partially combated this uphill battle against demographics with their natural impulse toward evangelism. This has been coupled with a general understanding that Canada has entered a post-Christian era and that it is necessary for churches to rethink the way they engage society. This has produced a number of interesting results, including the “Missional” and “Emergent” church models. Many of their evangelistic efforts have focused on children and youth. As a result, as many as 64.6% of young adults who were raised in an evangelical culture continued to regularly attend church services (p. 178). These ministries have proven to be relatively successful.

The relative vitality of evangelical congregations in Canada may surprise some who support a secularization hypothesis, but it is clear that evangelicalism is not entirely above this decline. Over the last half-century, the evangelical posture toward the ministry, in addition to various demographics, has insulated it from the same numerical decline that has been prevalent among other Christian factions. The operative word within this study is that evangelicals are doing *comparatively well*. While evangelicalism has been notably resilient to the comparative declines of the last half-century, the authors of *A Culture of Faith* indicate that it is now in a precarious position. Because of this, it is difficult to overstate the value of this volume for evangelicals in Canada.

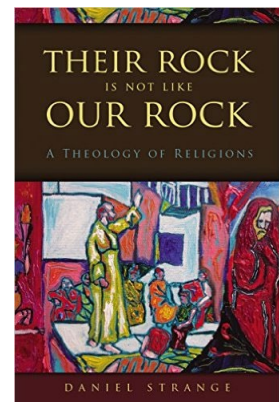
This study is mutually beneficial for both “town and gown.” Firstly, it enlightens the evangelical context in Canada in a way that is useful for sociologists and historians alike. From an academic perspective, it challenges the assumption that *all* Christian Protestantism in Canada has been in decline since the early to middle of the twentieth-century. The shockingly resilient evangelicals appear to be

the exception to the rule. Secondly, on a broader scale, it makes recent trends accessible to pastors and laypeople. While it is important for evangelical leaders to view this study as an account of what *has* happened rather than as an advice column for their future ministry (see pp. 208–10), this volume does raise a host of questions that should inspire reflection among evangelical leadership. For instance: How can the evangelical church more effectively engage the current culture? What does it mean to be “missional” in twenty-first century Canada? With the changing demographics, this study shows that if evangelical churches wish to continue their comparative success, they must reflect upon the manner with which they interact with society. This important sociological study, therefore, finds value for scholars, ministers, and laypeople interested in studying the Christian Church in Canada within the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

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Daniel Strange. *Their Rock is Not Like Our Rock: A Theology of Religions*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. 384 pp. £18.01/\$24.99.

If seeking guidance about the relationship between Christianity and other major world religions from a Reformed evangelical perspective, one that firmly upholds an exclusive perspective on Christianity, then *Their Rock is Not Like Our Rock* is the book for you. With the worldwide resurgence of nearly every major religion, particularly in their fundamentalist variations, the topic of the theology of religions is immensely pertinent today. Daniel Strange sets out to provide “a biblically rich and nuanced theology of religions” (p. 32). As Academic Vice Principle and Lecturer in Culture, Religion, and Public Theology at Oak Hill College, London, Strange contributes an important voice to the theology of religions that would resonate with many Christians grappling with the relationship between Christianity and other religions. The book opens with quotations from Deuteronomy, Hendrik Kraemer, and Max Müller that emphasize “otherness” and discontinuity between Christianity and the other world religions. The author frames his comments by noting that the book is not about soteriology, but rather is a “Reformed evangelical theological religious studies.”



The book offers biblical grounds for constructing a theology of religions. Strange builds his case for a Reformed evangelical perspective by employing insights from notable Reformed theologians—Hendrik Kraemer, Herman Bavinck, Cornelius Van Til, Samuel Zwemer, and Jonathan Edwards. Likewise Strange’s biblical reflections, particularly on Genesis 1–11, on which he lays much of this theological advocacy, rely heavily on Reformed scholars such as Mark Kreitzer, Franz Delitzsch, Meredith Kline, among others. Bottom line: readers are getting an unashamedly strong dose of Reformed evangelical thought throughout the book. Sprinkled throughout are helpful missiological insights and implications.

Strange’s understanding of the religious “Other” (his term) is set in stark terms, along the lines of Kraemer, Barth, and Van Til’s exclusivistic theological orientation that upholds discontinuity between Christianity and other world religions as though there is no revelatory truth outside of the biblical orbit.

Strange's view is that demonic forces are behind the world religions and that, similar to Barth, human religions are a manifestation of human idolatry. Strange's view of religion is put in bold relief:

From the pre-supposition of an epistemologically authoritative biblical revelation, non-Christian religions are sovereignly directed, variegated and dynamic, collective human idolatrous responses to divine revelation behind which stand deceiving demonic forces. Being antithetically against yet parasitically dependent upon the truth of the Christian worldview, non-Christian religions are 'subversively fulfilled' in the gospel of Jesus Christ. (p. 42).

Strange advocates this perspective based in part on his belief in a single-source theory of religion, which argues for a single origin for both theology and history, and the fundamental Creator-creation distinction, which he holds to be crucial to the Reformed worldview.

There is much to praise about Strange's book, and there is much about which to be concerned. On the positive side, Strange's biblical exegesis of Genesis 1–11 and other crucial biblical texts reminds us that the articulation of a robust Christian theology of religions needs to be grounded in the biblical witness. It is refreshing to know that Strange maintains a high view of Scripture and highlights the redemptive biblical narrative against which our theology should be measured. Furthermore, he maintains a high Christology rather than succumbing to an anthropocentric or more general theopocentric view. This is good news in an arena of discourse that often marginalizes Jesus Christ.

What concerns me is the author's view of culture. Again, basing his thinking on Kraemer, Strange admits to being "cautious of speaking about 'truth' and 'goodness' in other religions" (p. 242), exclaiming that there is "a radical difference" between Christianity and the other religions and that religions are "hermetically sealed interpretations of reality (worldviews) and as such as incommensurable, defying superficial comparison" (p. 242). Closer contact with and more personal relational investment in other religious communities around the world may require a more modified position. Strange overlooks the messiness of the world religions, and perhaps that of Jesus himself. That the Word would become flesh and not be recognized as divine by many reminds me that the activity of God is often hidden. Bracketing out soteriological concerns, I would maintain that the inclusive vision of God working in and through other religions has warrant within the biblical narrative and the history of the church. Recognizing the good in other religions and the fact that God has not left them without a witness—regardless of their salvific possibilities—seems a more fruitful approach for the mission of the church.

Can we admit that there is in fact good in the world religions? While Christians may not agree on precisely *what* is "good" in other traditions, how about the Buddhist notion of one not being overly attached to things that pass away, the Muslim idea of submitting to God above all else, or the Confucian ideal of filial piety? To be fair, the author's purview is narrowly theological in that he offers very little evidence for his theological approach in the specific world religions beyond a few statements about Islam. In this regard, a follow up book would be helpful, one in which the author details the history of idolatry replete in all religions, discussing the particularities and how his theological approach might engage those carefully and critically.

A second issue is the author's view of single-source origins of the history of religions and theology, which underscores an anthropological archetype between Old Testament gods and contemporary gods. After arguing, nearly convincingly, for a single-source perspective, to my mind he is unable to sustain his argument with force when applying his theory to the post-biblical world. That is partly due to Strange's assumption about the genealogy of the gods. In Strange's own words, "there may well be

ways in which one can trace phenomenologically historical lineage between the localized deities of the Old Testament and particular gods worshipped today” (p. 211). If a major part of the thesis is just this—that is, defending a single-source theory of revelation—then there needs to be strong post-biblical follow through with examples. The approach in this book sounds like a big-bang theory of cosmology applied to the history of religions. Readers would need to see actual detailed evidence in support of the statement that unearths the genealogical histories that connects the gods of biblical times to the deities in today’s world religions. Otherwise, the theory itself may need to be adjusted.

While I did not agree with some of the perspectives presented in the book, Strange’s work is well worth reading and I thoroughly enjoyed engaging it. For university or seminary teaching, its value is in representing a particular Reformed perspective that would either be embraced or put into dialogue with other Christian understandings of the theology of religion.

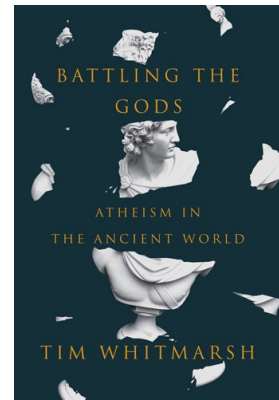
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Tim Whitmarsh. *Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World*. New York: Knopf, 2015. 290 pp. £17.00/\$27.95.

Professor Whitmarsh has given us a compendious range material from the ancient world. Indeed, atop his treatment of the enormous figures of Greek thought, his lively discussions of such thinkers as Diagoras of Melos, Stilpo of Megara, and Hermocles of Cyzicus (names which are, at least to this classicist, far from household) together assure that all who come to this book, whether scholars or the casually interested, will learn much and be pointed in new directions.

This book is similar to recent popular books pitting classical philosophical ideas against Christianity, such as Stephen Greenblatt’s bestselling book about Epicurean philosophy, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (New York: Norton, 2011), or Charles Freeman’s, *The Closing of the Western Mind: The Rise of Faith and the Fall of Reason* (New York: Vintage, 2002) and *A.D. 381* (New York: Overlook, 2009). Like these works, Whitmarsh’s book brings a general sense of admiration for the putative openness of classical culture, its rationalism in debate, and its latitudinarian tolerance, which all these authors maintain were unfortunately crushed by the narrow-mindedness of Christianity and the ruthlessness of the imperial-backed Church.

The essential premise of Whitmarsh’s book is that atheism is not a modern phenomenon, a creation of Enlightenment thinking in the 18th century, but rather that it is as old as theistic belief itself. Specifically in terms of the western intellectual tradition, atheism began among the ancient Greeks who feature in the majority of this book. He writes, “There have been many throughout history and across all cultures who resisted belief in the divine” (p. 4). This is the nearest Whitmarsh comes to a definition of “atheism”—blanket disbelief in the divine. However, a fundamental problem with the book as a whole, especially its first half, is that the author uses “atheism” with varying connotations, with the result that the term loses almost all coherent meaning. At times, for instance, he uses it to mean a skeptical bent



of mind towards matters involving the supernatural or mythological. But such skepticism surely is not what is meant under the commonly accepted definition of atheism in the West.

Whitmarsh goes on to label certain of the ancient Greeks as atheists who displayed similar misgivings about the extraordinary or troubling elements of Greek mythology. Even characters inside the myths themselves who battle against the gods, or who try to deceive them, suggest that such “theomachy expresses a kind of atheism, through the narrative medium of myth” (p. 47). Indeed, the very plotline of the Athenian drama *Prometheus Bound* is viewed along similar lines, based on the idea that “Zeus will one day bear a son who will overthrow his father. In other words, atheism was a narrative possibility within Greek myth” (p. 43).

Such statements leave the reader with a distinct sense of special pleading and cast great doubt on the author’s sweeping generalizations like “atheism was an integral part of the cultural life of Greece” (p. 27). This was simply not the case for how we understand the concept of atheism today. The author could have extricated himself from such imprecision by explaining at the outset that the ancient Greek word *atheos* has a much wider semantic valence than our English word “atheist,” and it was typically used to refer to one who held beliefs about the gods that were not in the mainstream. Such for instance was the case with the Epicureans in antiquity who were labeled as *atheoi* because, although stating in many extant writings that they absolutely believed the gods existed, they nevertheless held to the doctrine that the gods do not hear the prayers of mortals or exercise any providence over the earth. Many of Whitmarsh’s *atheoi* by these lights were consequently not atheists in the modern sense. Yet it is not until page 116 that he delineates these different denotations of the word, and even then only cursorily, all the while labeling many thinkers who did indeed profess belief in God as “atheists.”

Early philosophers ridiculed the traditional, anthropomorphic gods of Greek mythology, and yet affirmed one God over all. The Ionian Pre-Socratics Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes, likewise all made reference to God, but not the gods of the poets. Rather they envisioned an overruling divine presence that permeates the natural world and is the ultimate principle of existence. Another Pre-Socratic, Anaxagoras, would in time call this the Mind governing the universe with reason and order. These are opinions of *atheoi* to be sure, but not atheists, and it was because of such “intimations of Christianity among the ancient Greeks,” to borrow the words of Simone Weil, that many early Church fathers enthusiastically praised the philosophers of antiquity. As Clement of Alexandria put it in a celebrated passage: “This was a schoolmaster to bring the Greek mind to Christ, as the Law of Moses was for the Hebrews. Philosophy was a preliminary education (*propaideia*) preparing the way for him who is to be perfected in Christ” (*Strom.* 5.5).

This nuance does not fit with Whitmarsh’s biases, and so he attempts to explain away these references to the divine by means of speculation and verbal gymnastics. Xenophanes’s one God becomes accordingly “a conceptual placeholder in the absence of any secure definition” for the laws of nature (p. 61), and the references to God made by Anaximander and Anaximenes are merely “a metaphorical extension of the traditional language of divinity” used to express the “interconnected whole of the cosmos” (p. 59). It is significant here that because the famous doctrine of Thales on divine imminence that “all things are full of gods” (Aristotle *De Anima* 411a7) does not fit with Whitmarsh’s strained and tendentious interpretations, he simply avoids mentioning the quote altogether. Furthermore, these speculations on his part harden into facts with each repetition of them, and he makes them the basis for further atheistic readings of thinkers who allude to the ideas of these Pre-Socratics. What is being missed in all of this is the simple fact that many ancient Greek philosophers did not reject the mythological

gods out of a spirit of atheism but out of a deeper spiritualization of their conception of divinity. This process that is observable in so many of the pre-Socratics culminated in the divine “demiurge” of that ardent monotheist, Plato, and in the “unmoved Mover” of Aristotle (whom Whitmarsh ignores almost entirely).

Of course, none of this is to say that there were not atheists in our sense of the word in antiquity, and Whitmarsh is on much firmer ground in the second half of the book when he deals with texts that express atheism in a more forthcoming manner (although even here he still engages in excessive speculation to get the facts to square with his ideological commitments). It is in this way, ultimately, that Whitmarsh’s thesis that atheism is as old as the hills is entirely uncontroversial. Yet on the other hand, the “atheism” of antiquity, when it can be properly called that, is of so qualitatively different a sort than the atheism of the post-Christian West that a real organic unity between the two is difficult to imagine.

This is where Whitmarsh is fundamentally mistaken. Christianity with its claims to absolute truth, with its monopoly on metaphysics and prerogatives on transcendent reality, is not the same as the paganism of our ancient European forbears. To reject the deities of Mount Olympus, who from Homer on down were thought to be neither omniscient nor omnipotent and made no claims on transcendental reality, is tantamount to rejecting the proposition that “there are fairies living in my garden.” But to reject the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the incarnate God in whom “all things consist” (Col 1:17) and who is the ground and source of being, is to embrace fully the nihilistic belief that there is no transcendent reality, no moral absolutes, no metaphysical basis for goodness, beauty, and truth. The only reality that remains in such a barren landscape is the will to exert one’s own power over others, as Nietzsche understood, and among the fruits of post-Christian atheism the most bitter has been the violence and savagery with which its adherents have attacked those of faith.

This is no accident, but is rather the logical step once the nihilism of post-Christian atheism has been embraced. Consider for instance the atheist regimes of the twentieth century, with their massacring of Christian clergy and lay believers for no reason other than their faith, and it becomes clear that this “militant atheism” is of a piece with both the vitriol and the ultimate goals (though admittedly not the tactics) of such contemporary atheists who have striven to “break the spell” and deracinate religion from the very fabric of our society. Even Whitmarsh’s own title partakes on some level of this militant ideology.

But there never was any such atheism in antiquity, as Whitmarsh himself acknowledges, although he tries, unsuccessfully, to explain this fact away by stating that the clergy of the ancient world were not as culturally powerful as was once the case in early-modern, European societies (pp. 205–6). If this were really the deciding factor, why then would we not see similar patterns of militant atheism in, say, Indian society where the Brahman class held supreme authority, or elsewhere likewise where there have been rigid structures of religious control? The historical truth is that militant atheism has only come into existence in Christian societies (and even societies that were not predominantly Christian, such as communist China and Cambodia, nevertheless received their ideology of militant atheism from the West). This is a fact that requires explanation, but it would seem to be an exact playing out of the paradigm outlined above, that the rejection of Christianity is ontologically different than the rejection of any other belief system.

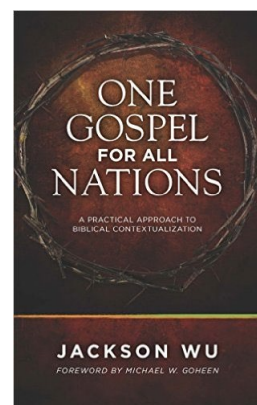
The moral pathos which Christianity engenders to stand up, even to the point of death for what is right and just, once it is divorced from its true source in God and in Him Who came into the world so as to “bear witness unto the truth” (John 18:37) mutates into the most pathological and militant atheism

that is of an altogether different order than the flippantly subversive speculations of one who has not yet known the truth. This is, I believe, the current state of western culture at large, and it marks the essential difference between contemporary atheists and those of former ages and different cultures.

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Jackson Wu. *One Gospel for All Nations: A Practical Approach to Biblical Contextualization*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2015. 298 pp. £13.78/\$19.99.

Contextual theology has garnered considerable interest amongst evangelicals in an ever shrinking, pluralistic world. Many wanting to uphold biblical authority often tend toward a dogmatic approach, adhering to the myth of neutral “objectivity” while others prioritize cultural sensitivity prefer an existential approach, wading into the dangerous waters of unchecked “subjectivity.” With *One Gospel for All Nations*, Jackson Wu enters this conversation. He presupposes Scripture as God’s authoritative special revelation, which transcends every specific cultural setting, and yet also believes that the gospel is *not* an ahistorical abstraction, but was revealed in history, and must be proclaimed to all nations. Central to Wu’s argument is that most evangelicals reduce contextualization to communication and application but miss its foundational starting point: interpretation.



In *One Gospel for All Nations*, Wu offers a perspective on contextualization and prescribes a matching method, which, he argues, will free evangelicals from having to choose between Scripture and culture. He affirms one gospel, seeking to guard against explicitly false teaching and against mistaking the secondary points of Scripture for the main points. To bolster this conviction, he commends to readers an understanding of the gospel that has a *firm* thematic framework. Simultaneously, allows for *flexibility* in the use of explanatory themes in gospel presentations. Armed with the common presupposition that all theology is contextual, Wu contends that evangelicals must embrace their inevitable cultural lenses when interpreting Scripture and developing theology, so that contextualization is not merely done in the communication and application of the gospel, but in the process of interpretation itself.

To begin, Wu argues that even the best of our theology, though communicating genuine truth, will be genuine truth *from a certain cultural and historical perspective*. Wu is quick to add that this is not relativism, for our limited vantage points do not make knowing truth impossible. He just wants to take seriously the fallacy of an acultural theology.

While Wu comforts his readers with the hope of controlling contextualization to prevent cultural syncretism, he also warns against theological syncretism in which theological programs, such as the “Four Spiritual Laws,” become dominant frameworks for interpreting and communicating Scripture. As a self-professed conservative evangelical, Wu affirms the authority of Scripture over culture, yet believes that new categories are needed. “Exegetical contextualization,” as Wu understands it, refers to one’s interpretation of Scripture from a cultural perspective (e.g., identifying one’s own culture’s distinctive themes while reading Scripture), while “cultural contextualization” refers to the interpretation of culture

using a scriptural perspective (e.g., identifying biblical themes while “reading” culture). By distinguishing these, he advances a perspective in which culture plays a role in shaping theology without usurping Scripture. This distinction is the essence of Wu’s “firm, but flexible” model of contextualization.

For Wu, defining the gospel is a first order concern because one’s “understanding of the gospel inevitably influences [one’s] view on contextualization” (p. 29). He warns of reductionist “soterian” gospels, which emphasize the application of an individual’s salvation to the exclusion of the redemptive trajectory of the Old Testament that finds fulfilment in the New Testament, and he thus advocates for a biblical-theological, canonical approach that traces major themes throughout Scripture.

Drawing significantly from Scot McKnight’s *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), Wu argues that at least one or more of the themes: creation, covenant, and kingdom, frame the gospel, keeping it “firm.” These themes mutually reinforce one another and encompass all other theological *sub*themes. For Wu, the gospel is framed by these truths: God is the Creator, therefore, the King of creation. This Creator-King has acted in history covenantally as Israel’s God, and has promised to establish a just kingdom for the nations through David’s offspring, who is Jesus Christ. This is the worldview narrative that must interact with our own worldview and the worldviews of cultures we engage when we do contextualization.

Wu also identifies four key questions that every gospel presentation in Scripture answers: 1. Who is Christ? 2. What has Christ done? 3. Why is Christ important? 4. How should we respond? While we must structure our gospel presentations around the firm framework of creation, covenant, and kingdom, there are a flexible variety of metaphors, symbols, and stories that the Bible uses to answer these four questions.

Then, Wu offers a model for contextualization. Step 1: Wear cultural lenses to identify biblical themes (both framework and explanatory). Step 2: Use these biblical themes to organize a culture’s themes. Step 3: Wear this culture’s lens to interpret Scripture. Step 4: Use a biblical lens to interpret and assess culture.

He concludes by arguing for the legitimacy of cultural lenses in biblical interpretation, and challenges his readers to consider “both-and” approaches to theological debates, reminding us that a multicultural perspective is better than a mono-cultural perspective.

In *One Gospel for All Nations*, Wu demonstrates a thoughtful understanding of how the Bible presents the gospel’s singularity. His critique of a “soterian” gospel that overemphasizes justification and a law/guilt paradigm is a timely word to conservative evangelicals. Though Wu’s appreciation of certain aspects of N. T. Wright’s understanding of Paul may concern certain American evangelicals, his arguments and conclusions still deserve evangelical attention, for one’s understanding of Paul’s one gospel must affect one’s contextualization.

Wu’s arguments should lead many conservative evangelicals to reconsider how they have communicated and even understood the gospel. He refreshingly draws the church’s attention to the absolute necessity of biblical theology in the process of theologizing and its relationship to worldview narratives. Such an emphasis highlights both the continuities and discontinuities between specific cultures’ worldviews and Scripture’s worldview, and helps us to not merely settle for true propositions in our gospel presentations, but to pursue proper and primary emphases. One does wonder, however, if systematic theology, being a part of every evangelical’s local culture, should take as much of a backseat to biblical theology as Wu suggests. Do not biblical theology and systematic theology mutually inform

one another in a harmonious and interdependent fashion? Is it possible to do biblical theology apart from systematic theology? Wu does not seem to appreciate the reciprocity amongst these disciplines.

Similarly, Wu's model depends on a biblical-theological framework and an interpretation influenced by contextual, cultural perspective. However, if there is no acultural theology, is there a possibility of an acultural biblical theology? Is Wu's "firm" gospel frame just another attempt to extract an "acultural gospel" from Scripture? While one may personally agree in her reading of Scripture that creation, covenant, and kingdom represent the firm framework of the gospel, one must still consider how her arrival at this framework was shaped by her specific cultural context. This reviewer is not convinced that Wu has successfully navigated a way out of the hermeneutical spiral for evangelicals.

A few additional minor critiques may be added. Perhaps a more significant discussion of the relationship between the gospel and the presentation of the gospel would clarify Wu's argument. Some of Wu's terminology, diagrams, and organization are difficult to understand. Also, there may be an error in Figure 14, and the recapitulation of ideas from chapters 1–5 in chapter 6's "Process" chapter was not the easiest to follow. Finally, this reviewer is becoming increasingly convinced that every book on contextualization should include a section grappling with the complexities of language and meaning and a theology of religion; such sections are absent in *One Gospel for All Nations*.

Nonetheless Wu has definitely contributed to the evangelical conversation regarding contextualization. I commend this book to any evangelical who is interested in thinking through methods of contextualization. Though Wu does not lead us out of the hermeneutical spiral, his insistence upon returning to biblical theology and using multiple perspectives in biblical interpretation is refreshing, and his firm and flexible model for gospel presentations is both innovative and useful.

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