

HADDINGTON HOUSE JOURNAL

An International Theological Journal



VOLUME 14

2012

Editorial Policy

1. The journal will seek to provide an annual publication reflective of the theological basis and ethos of the Trust for students, laity and ministers to develop their minds and souls through in-depth articles and reviews.
2. The journal will seek to keep readers informed about new books or other publications and thus will strive to be a means of encouraging stewardship of time and money.
3. The selection of articles and works for review in each journal will usually reflect the fourfold division of the departments in the theological curriculum: biblical theology, systematic theology, historical theology and applied theology, thereby providing balance as to the content of the journal but also providing harmony for the readers to see the unity of the curriculum. It will not be a journal devoted to one department of the theological curriculum.
4. The journal will endeavour to highlight, by way of articles and reviews, works to assist students and others in their ongoing studies and training.
5. The journal will encourage the cultivation of writing and provide an avenue for publication and exchange of knowledge.
6. The journal will include one article or review devoted to the theme of theological education.
7. The journal will also endeavour to include some news about the wider international, evangelical community of churches and their efforts in mission or theological work.
8. Prior to publication, all articles and reviews will be read by select individuals who uphold the theological basis and ethos of the Trust. It will be their task to comment, proof and ensure the quality of the journal.

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CONTENTS

General Articles

Devotional: Thy Word Is A Lamp.....	5
Urban Ministry in Khayelitsha, South Africa	9
Information Technology in Missions in Theological Colleges in the Majority World	13
“Are You Growin’, Man?” A Second Look at Pauline Growth Imagery.....	21
Discernment As an Essential Leadership Quality.....	27
Heidelberg Catechism Twenty-Fifth Sunday: The Sacraments	33
God’s Good News for a Marginalised African Man, Acts 8:26-40	43

Book Reviews

Department of Biblical Theology	55
Department of Systematic Theology.....	69
Department of Historical Theology.....	84
Department of Applied Theology	98

Book Briefs	119
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Academic Articles

Developments In Biblical Counseling	127
Deaconesses	155
Daniel Defoe’s <i>Robinson Crusoe</i>	173

Index of Books Reviewed	189
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*Front cover: The childhood home of Andrew Murray
Graaff-Reinet, South Africa*

Back cover: Article contributors

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Editor's Preface

Welcome to the 2012 *Haddington House Journal*, our fourteenth volume. Allow me first to take this opportunity to provide an overview of the contents of this year's volume. In our General Articles we begin and end with biblical exposition. Since 2011 was a very significant anniversary year – the 400th anniversary of the King James Version of the English Bible – we have begun with a short devotional incorporating some background on the KJV with scriptural notes. The General Articles end with expository comment by Alistair Wilson, principal at Dumisani in King William's Town, South Africa. Between these two Bible “book-ends” are some fascinating general articles on mission activity in Khayelitsha, South Africa and at African Bible College University in Liberia. These help inform us about global theological training and the opportunities and needs which exist today. Also tucked into the General Articles are two very challenging short articles – the one by Ralph du Toit from Pretoria, who has written most perceptively about discernment in leadership. Study questions have been included with this article, and I believe this could serve as an excellent study article for elders, pastors or theological classes. James Hering of South Carolina has provided a thoughtful testimonial and biblical challenge about our spiritual growth – most worthy to be considered for our spiritual formation. Finally, we have included another installment from Andrew Murray's sermon notes on the Heidelberg Catechism – Lord's Day 25, The Sacraments, translated from the Afrikaans by Gerda van der Merwe. Murray's work here has been largely inaccessible for too long, and it is good to see that gradually Christians are finding out about this translation project and offering encouraging comments.

As usual, our middle section is Book Reviews. These are organized into full reviews first followed by Book Briefs. Of the almost forty books commented upon, there will likely be something of interest to almost everyone. We try to be as reader-friendly as possible by organizing all reviews into categories, so under the full reviews you will find sections for biblical, systematic, historical and practical theology. Then under the Book Briefs we have made topical headings reflective of special trends in publishing (if such has been the case) or other organizational categories.

The final section consists of three longer Academic Articles. They include much more academic apparatus in their writing style. Cameron Fraser from Alberta provides us with an in-depth review into a movement in Christian counseling which has now been around for some time. It will be helpful to all teaching counseling in Christian colleges. Ross Morrison from Prince Edward Island provides an in-depth exegetical and ecclesiological essay on the subject of deaconesses. This paper will be of interest to many in various de-

nominations represented in the journal's readership. The last article, by Kenneth Stewart of Covenant College, Georgia, is an excellent interdisciplinary article combining English literature, biography and missions history on Daniel Defoe's famous *Robinson Crusoe*. It raises many questions needing our attention.

As editor, I want to express a sincere word of thanks to all our contributors. It has been a pleasure to work with you, and we greatly value your taking the time to write for the *Haddington House Journal*. Our prayer is that this volume will furnish a healthy exchange for believers globally, will be enriching, not just mentally but also spiritually, and will be a resource to use in various settings around the world.

Jack C. Whytock,
Editor

Devotional: Thy Word Is A Lamp

Jack C. Whytock

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

Psalm 119:105 (KJV)

“...The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever . . .”

1 Peter 1:24, 25 (KJV)

I have quoted both texts of Scripture above from the King James Version of the Bible for three reasons: first, 2011 was the 400th anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible; second, these verses illustrate the powerful and majestic style of the most significant English Bible version ever printed; third, and most importantly, they speak of profound truth.

Allow me to begin with a few words of background comment on the 1611 King James Version of the Bible and also its impact before making comment on these scriptures.

1611 and the King James Version

The origins of the King James Version of the Bible can be traced back to 1604 and a suggestion by John Rainolds, who proposed that there be a new English Bible translation. Rainolds made this proposal at the Hampton Court Conference, and King James VI of Scotland and I of England immediately agreed. Of course, King James saw this to his political advantage, nevertheless it set in motion “the most important publication in the whole of history”, as one BBC reporter recently wrote. An illustrious group of Bible scholars was assembled; one had the distinction of being hailed as the “most able linguist in Christendom”. The scholars who revised, compared and translated were certainly the greatest body of scholars who had ever been engaged in producing an English Bible. The work was chiefly undertaken by teams at Oxford, Cambridge and Westminster Abbey. In the final stages, intensive editing that included an oral reading of the text was carried out at Stationers’ Hall in London. This reminds us of the profound strength of the King James Bible – it was a work to be read out loud. Some title pages still include this instruction, “Appointed to be read in Churches”.

As an English text it fuses plain Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman vocabulary, yet at times a more technical language is used – some have called this the Latinate influence. In terms of English language history, the King James is reflective of the end of Middle English and the formative early period of

Modern English. Thus the King James Bible and William Shakespeare represent a critical juncture in the evolution of the English language.

The Diffusion of the King James into English Culture

Our culture has been profoundly impacted by the King James Version of the Bible even if we are not always conscious of such. Many of our English idioms come from the King James Bible; for example, “*out of the mouth of babes*”, “*holier than thou*”, “*labour of love*”, “*how are the mighty fallen*”, etc. At each performance of the great oratorio by George Frederic Handel, the *Messiah*, we are being impacted by the King James Bible. The second most popular English religious book, *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan, has too often been ignored, yet it helped to popularize the language and style of the King James Bible for generations. Without a doubt the King James version of the Bible has been at the heart of the diffusion of the English language in the modern period.

PSALM 119:105-112

King James Version (KJV)

¹⁰⁵*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

¹⁰⁶*I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.*

¹⁰⁷*I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.*

¹⁰⁸*Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments.*

¹⁰⁹*My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.*

¹¹⁰*The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.*

¹¹¹*Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.*

¹¹²*I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end.*

Thy Word Is a Lamp

The best way to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the King James version of the Bible is to actually engage with it – take it up and read! Of course, you may have a good contemporary English version beside you, but I think you will be amazed by the power that remains in this great-grandfather Bible in the history of the modern period of English Bibles. It may appear “an-

cient” – 1611 is really not ancient, and you may discover again that yes, the grass does wither and the flowers fade and the petals drop, but the Word of God is still relevant and speaks to the abiding state of all humanity and the human need – it is still alive.

Many argue over Scripture, but far better to take it up and read it. There have been many who have begun by arguing with Scripture; however, when they in humility have actually read the Scriptures they have been brought to faith and have confessed how powerful the Word has been upon their souls – it has been life-transforming.

In a world of darkness, there is a path which is lit by the Scriptures and this path always leads us to One, Christ Jesus, Who said, “*I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*” (KJV) Engage with the Word that endures forever and follow the path to the Light.

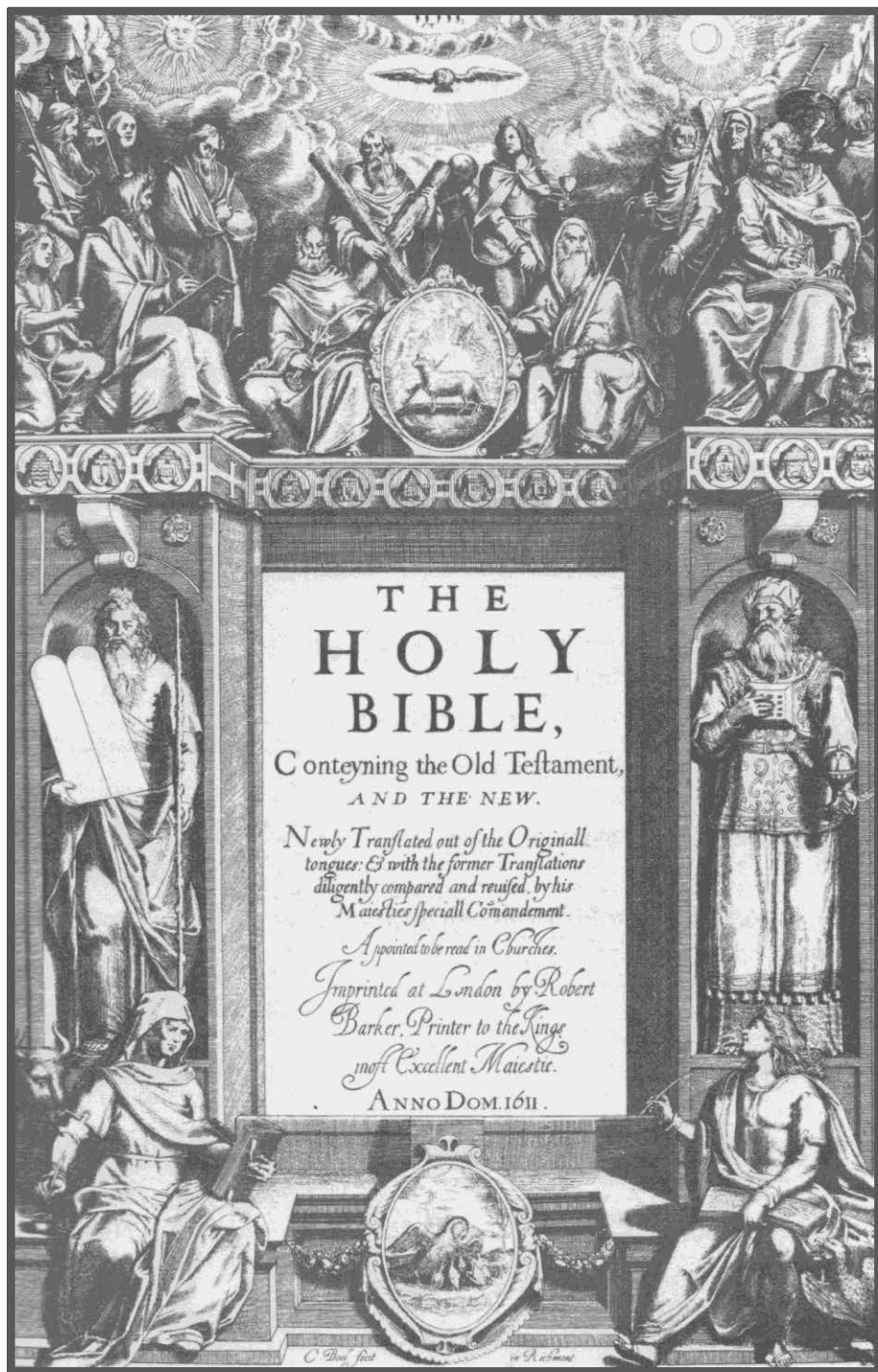
A Brief Outline of Psalm 119:105-112

Verse 105 is really a thematic statement for this section of Psalm 119. The Word of God is a light to guide us through this world of sin. God’s Word is clear, powerful and profound and should be taken up by all – it is not the reserve of clergy only!

Verse 106 is a personal covenant that the writer will follow the laws of the Lord. What a great general covenant! Sometimes believers make some very bizarre personal covenants which are very precise but not universal. This is surely a universal covenant for all believers.

Verses 106b-110 affirm that God’s Word gives us *direction in right living*; it *brings renewal* in days of struggle, suffering and discouragement; it surely *affects, inspires and fills our worship*; and it guides us through the *traps of relationships* in which we live daily.

Verses 111-112 affirm the blessed heritage of believers by means of the Word of God. What contentment, joy, peace and blessing we find through the Word. Finally, as in a great coda in music, the writer personally concludes with a resounding resolve to keep his heart obediently seeking to live in the way of the Lord to the day of his death.



Facsimile of the title leaf of the 1611 King James Version of the Bible

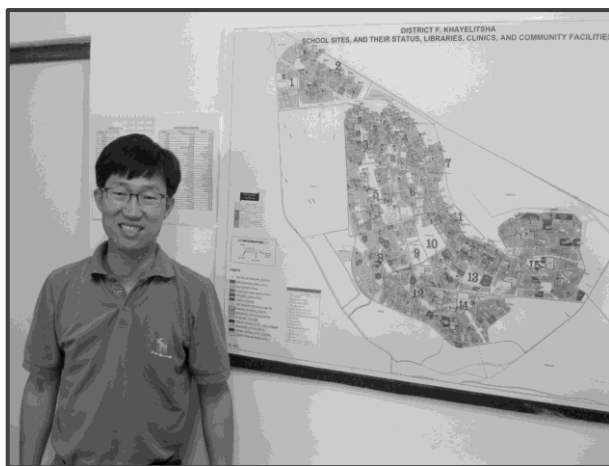
Urban Ministry in Khayelitsha, South Africa

Jack C. Whytock

Presently over fifty percent of the world's population lives in urban centres, and this figure is growing rapidly. We are witnessing an incredible demographic shift world-wide. This is also having tremendous impact upon missions and ministry in the rural areas and also on the urban centres.¹

Many people around the world have heard of at least two of the large townships in South Africa: Soweto or Khayelitsha. Both are large population settlement areas. Soweto is near Johannesburg and Khayelitsha is on the Cape Flats in Cape Town. Both are urban centres of an unique variety historically, which is not my focus here. However, I do want to focus upon the reality and challenges of mission today in the light of the urbanization of Africa by reporting on one urban ministry in Khayelitsha.

A large urban informal township or “suburb” such as Khayelitsha (Xhosa for “new home”) is an urban-magnet, bedroom community on the edge of another major urban centre, Cape Town. It constantly attracts newcomers from well beyond its own border; many from the Eastern Cape Province migrate here for work as well as others from countries such as Zimbabwe or other African nations. Within such communities today the traditional mainline churches are very few in number. The majority of churches belong to the grouping known as African Initiated Churches (AICs, sometimes also called African Independent Churches).² In fact, Khayelitsha has an es-



Pastor Jun Sung Jin, who serves at Africa Theological College as Training Coordinator

¹ Two very helpful chapters on urbanization in Africa and spirituality are Wilber O'Donovan's, "The Ugly Side of Urbanization" and "Cultural Crisis and Death in the Cities," in *Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster, 2000), 40-73.

² See the book brief on *Mission in an African Way* in the *Haddington House Journal* 13 (2011): 99.

timated population of anywhere between 800,000 to 1,000,000 and 85% of the existing churches within its boundaries are AICs. The question is, “What about the training of the leaders of these majority churches in such an urban environment?” The statistics are hard to ascertain, but likely 80-85% of the leaders have not had Bible college instruction or in-depth mentoring.

In 2001 a Korean mission was founded in Khayelitsha on an ecumenical and evangelical model to help train African leaders. From this mission, “African Leadership for the Kingdom”, the Africa Theological College and several other ministries such as an extensive children’s ministry, youth work, camp work, etc., have emerged. Africa Theological College runs a two-year

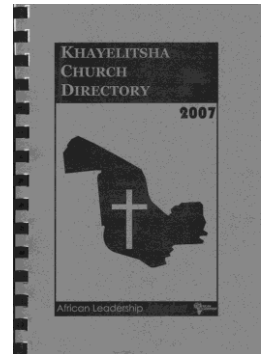


training programme. Classes are conducted Monday through Thursday evenings from 5:30-8:00 p.m. in the heart of the Khayelitsha community. Khayelitsha is presently “divided” into fifteen suburbs or divisions, and Africa Theological College is strategically located in Ilitha Park near the Khayelitsha Train Station, which is situated in quite a central area of Khayelitsha. A facility has been built with two classrooms, a small library and a meeting room.

The vision of Africa Theological College “is to train and produce local church leaders who transform the lives of the people in Khayelitsha through the gospel of Jesus”. The centre in Khayelitsha may be viewed as the mother and there are various satellites across Southern Africa each with local leadership, such as in Soweto. The two-year curriculum primarily uses a twelve-book series. This series covers the Old and New Testaments, how to preach

the Bible, Bible doctrine, personal spiritual life, church administration, teaching techniques and methods, history of the church, evangelism and discipleship, how to interpret the Bible and how to counsel people biblically.

No doubt there are many other colleges which could be selected and upon which we could report. However, I believe this single spotlight on Africa Theological College is challenging and informative. We learn about the global missions community, we learn about the urban context for training, we learn about the numerical presence of the AICs, we learn about the methodology being used by one training ministry, and we learn that Kingdom work is proceeding.



A classroom at Africa Theological College, Khayelitsha, South Africa

Information Technology in Missions in Theological Colleges in the Majority World¹

Ray Silver*

** Ray Silver has served as a short-term missionary in Liberia by using his computer skills at African Bible College University in Yekepa in Nimba County, two hundred miles from Monrovia. He worked for sixteen years as a computer controller for NewPage, a paper mill in Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia.*



The purpose of this paper is to explain how Information Technology (IT) is used and supported in theological colleges in the majority world. This paper will cover: the general purposes of IT in theological colleges, the specific challenges of the African Bible College University (ABCU) in Liberia, West Africa and then survey a few IT organizations that are striving to support the IT needs of missionary organizations. The paper will highlight the diverse ways in which IT missionary workers can serve the Lord.

Purposes of IT in Theological Colleges

A Christian academic environment challenges the students to find new ways of spreading the gospel, such as the Internet, in their own country. The IT ideas being utilized in North America, such as the Internet, to spread the gospel are quickly being adopted and pursued by academic institutions worldwide. Here are some of the ways IT is being used in theological colleges in the majority world:

Communication. As in North America, educational institutions in Africa are being significantly impacted by the spread and ubiquitous use of IT. Africans want to be on the web for emailing and social communicating, doing research for writing papers, finding and publishing news articles, taking on-line courses, creating teaching materials, etc. They have the same pedagogical needs and wants as in the West, as well as some needs specific to Africa.

Christian Mass Media Content. Africa is a large continent – four times the size of the U.S. Its communication infrastructure is not as tightly integrated or as homogeneous as in North America, so communication is a bigger challenge. Christian radio is heavily used to bring the gospel to remote places where there may not even be a stable power source or phone lines (In-

¹ Majority World is another way of referring to the third world or developing world countries.

ternet access). IT is used in communication studios for the production and broadcasting of media content for radio, TV and the World Wide Web (WWW).

Training. For the training of Christian workers, there is often a shortage of good schools and trained professors to cover all the teaching needs of the students. One option that is being pursued is “online courses”. This allows trained professors from outside the local training institution to teach classes that would otherwise be very difficult to provide for the students.

Research. In times past, theological institutions were bastions of published theological material which was readily accessible for research and personal edification. In the majority world, there is often a limited amount of such material available to students. The ability to perform research online from places such as JSTOR (www.JSTOR.org – a website for journal storage) provides students and faculty with access to resources that would certainly not be available anywhere close to where the actual classroom training is being conducted. With Internet access, students are helped to remain closer to their own home town or mission instead of having to make expensive travels abroad to further their education.

Case Study: African Bible College University, Liberia, West Africa

African Bible College University in Liberia has all the same, regular challenges of maintaining an IT infrastructure that any accredited learning institution already deals with in North America. ABCU is a good example of using IT to aid theological training. The University offers degrees in Bible (for

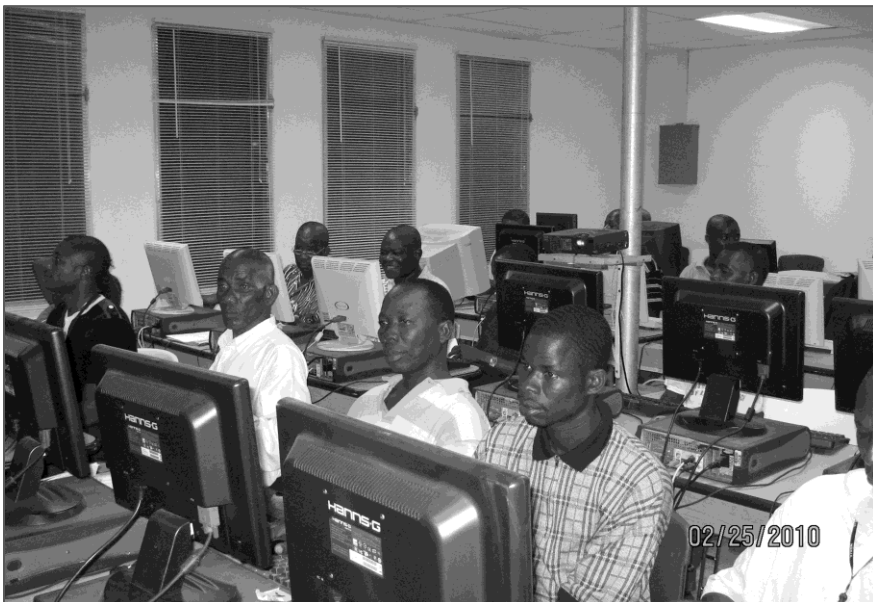


Figure 1. Students participating in classroom instruction in the computer lab at ABCU.

pastors), education (for teachers) and communications (for workers in Christian radio and television). See Figure 1.

Due to a recent civil war, much of the country's infrastructure is still not operational. There is no public power, land line telephone system or mail system. The roads are in poor condition making the transportation of people and goods difficult and expensive. Therefore, computers are used heavily for the spreading of information and communication (such as email, etc.).

ABCU also has difficulty getting academically-qualified professors to come to Liberia for a significant length of time. They are experimenting with distance learning as one option for teaching classes. This will allow courses to be offered by qualified and experienced professors in far away locations. For this, they need stable, broadband Internet access, a strong networking environment and good host PC's to display the multimedia content in a timely fashion.



Ray and a class at ABCU

Internet access is via satellite connection. This access is expensive for the amount of bandwidth provided. Networking is not as good as a land line due to the satellite transmission delays. Also, the satellite signal is a shared connection with other users in the same geographical vicinity. During some periods of heavy rain, the satellite signal can be totally blocked. Sometimes traffic congestion causes significant delays which impact real-time Internet connections such as online learning or streaming media such as radio or TV broadcasts. ABCU is in the process of bringing a Christian radio station on

the air. Students will learn to operate a real Christian radio station and will be involved in producing the broadcast content. ABCU would also like to stream the radio broadcast out on the Internet.

There is also a need for skilled IT workers to support the whole IT infrastructure. ABCU is running a fully accredited university with over 100 students and they have no full-time IT staff. Short-term missionaries are able to come and provide some assistance. The challenge is to maintain a consistent system architecture that will allow for strategic growth of the IT infrastructure. Without a permanent IT staff, the systems are not being upgraded and maintained properly and therefore they quickly degrade. Often the work that is carried out resembles triage work performed in the ER department in a hospital. The most severe problems are solved first and the workload is determined by crisis management. The student IT assistants have no formal IT training so there is a large need for on-the-job training to make their work much more productive.

This need for full-time IT workers is currently being filled by short-term missionaries. These IT workers are full-time career IT workers in their home countries. They provide great experience and knowledge while they are on-site at ABCU. Their limitations are in the area of long-term planning and strategy. System growth tends to be haphazard and inefficient. Some projects have to be redone two or three times due to lack of proper planning from the beginning. Lack of continuity in planning and implementation makes long-term projects hard to undertake. This is especially true in areas such as networking and server maintenance. Also, the IT missionary's time available to mentor the student IT assistants is quite limited due to the time constraints of a short-term mission – there is much work to be done in a short period of time. There is not much time left over for IT skills transfer to the IT assistants.

Traditional mission field needs such as building construction requiring services such as electricians, carpenters, welders, etc. are well understood, planned for and supported. IT workers are a fairly new and huge need on the mission field. The organizations responsible for sending mission help need to be made more aware of the urgent need for full-time IT missionaries.

Challenges for IT Use at ABCU:

General Challenges:

- Lack of IT training among the student IT assistants.
- Software patching consumes precious bandwidth.
- Virus scanning software must be diligently maintained.
- Equipment hardware refresh needs. Moving from Windows/XP to Windows 7 will require many new PC's.

- Wireless security. Many students now have laptops and the scarce wireless network resources must be protected from general public use.
- Workable backup strategy. Financial records, student records, etc., require a simple, robust solution in case of hardware loss (failure, theft, etc).
- Varied and frequently changing client devices needing configuration. ABCU has many short-term workers who bring their own hardware (such as iPods, Macs, PC laptops, etc.) which must be configured and supported for each new visitor.
- Internet content filtering is needed to protect precious Internet bandwidth and to maintain the Christian testimony of the university and the integrity of the student body. Currently, Cyberoam provides this function with a hardware appliance. However, it was destroyed recently by lightning and it has been difficult to restore this box.

There Are a Host of Hardware Challenges That Are Specific to ABCU:

- Hot, humid climate with no air conditioning. Liberia is a tropical rain-forest country that receives two hundred inches of rain per year. Humidity accelerates the corrosion of electrical contacts and makes printing difficult since paper curls easily. Overheating causes intermittent problems and premature equipment failure. During the tropical rains, the Internet access is sometime cut off since the heavy rains actually shut out the satellite signal.
- Heavy sand dust. During the dry season, the orange, Harmattan sand dust blows down from the Sahara desert and is sucked into hardware by the cooling fans. Not only does it hinder cooling by putting a coating of dust on components, but it's like having a sand blaster aimed at your hardware.
- Spare parts are hard to obtain and expensive. They are only available in the capital city of Monrovia – 7 hours away. The variety of hardware is small, expensive and often “out of stock”. Even basic tools such as network pliers and cable testers are hard to obtain. Anything out of the ordinary must be shipped from the United States by container. There is no shipping into the country at this time. It takes significant planning and lead time to receive even basic supplies. The schedule dates for containers are ad hoc, and therefore it is difficult to coordinate IT upgrade projects with other construction projects being carried on. Wiring of the new communication building for IT capability was a good example of mismatched planning schedules. The construction of the building was almost completed and the IT network

and workstation planning was still in the infancy stage. This is not a good time to start looking for the parts needed to bring the IT environment online by the time the building is ready to open.

- Lightning storms in the rainy season wreak havoc on network cabling and routers. Often gear will be struck and destroyed by lightning. There is a shortage of surge suppressors and often sensitive electronic equipment is plugged directly into the wall sockets. Network components are especially susceptible to lightning since they are connected from building to building and the underground LAN cable acts like a lightning rod. Currently, there is no surge protection on the campus LAN network.
- Unavailable and unstable voltage source. Liberia does not have a public electric power utility. All electricity at ABCU is self-generated with diesel generators which run from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily. This means that every single day, the entire IT infrastructure is shutdown and then rebooted the next day. Most IT gear is not meant to take this kind of cold, hard shutdown on a daily basis. There is also an urgent need to have surge suppressors for all electrical equipment since the line voltage is not very clean.
- Mixed voltage supplies. The campus has both 120 and 220 volt lines. Most equipment from the United States is 120v. Liberia itself has chosen 220v for the country standard, like most of Europe. Therefore, at the college 120 to 220 adapters are very common. These make for poor connections and often cause power problems.
- Printing is difficult in the hot, humid environment. Paper curls easily and jams the printers. Toners and paper stock are hard to obtain. Spare parts for printers are again a major hurdle. Printers become virtually disposable for lack of operational supplies or knowledgeable staff to maintain them. Printer paper is expensive and hard to obtain.
- Network cables are chewed up by rodents. Just running regular Cat 5 network cable is short sighted since little creatures like to cut their teeth on this. Network cabling needs to have conduit or else armor to prevent random network failures due to cable failure. The network cables in the cabinet in Figure 2 had been destroyed by rodents and the cabinet had to be rewired.

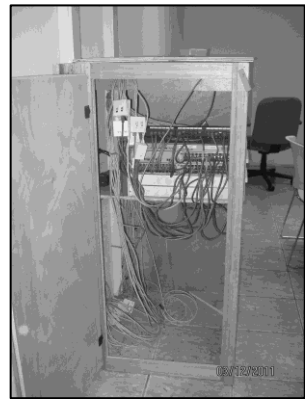


Figure 2. A network cabinet in need of shielded cable.

There are some software challenges that are specific to ABCU:

- Site licensing for Microsoft products (Windows and Office) is needed. This would make administration much easier.
- Active Directory (AD) Domain Administration. AD needs maintenance as computer users and devices are added/modified/deleted from the university network system.

IT Organizations Doing IT Mission Work

Much thanks to Dorinda Beeley from Lightsys.org for her input to this list of IT organizations that are striving to provide IT resources to mission organizations that need IT expertise.

LightSys (www.lightsys.org)

- LightSys is dedicated to equipping Christian missions and ministries with the computing technology correct for them, including the knowledge and contacts needed to support that technology.
- Mobilization and connecting – spreading awareness of the need for missions IT and helping connect interns and IT professionals with short-term and long-term opportunities.

Mark 5 Ministries (www.mark5ministries.org)

- “We are still a community of Christians dedicated to solving computing technology problems for missionaries.”

Missionary Tech Support (www.MissionaryTechSupport.com)

- A ministry dedicated to providing free end-user and infrastructure technical support to evangelical Christian missionaries and missions worldwide.

Christian Technology Initiative (www.christiantechologyinitiative.org)

- We are passionate about helping small to medium-sized ministries be as efficient and effective in their ministry work as possible.

IT Without Borders (www.itwob.org)

- IT Without Borders is a groundbreaking new charity conceived in 2010 to answer the urgent call of Christian aid workers in developing countries.
- An Australia-based organization hoping to crowd-source IT solutions/helpdesk for “Christian aid workers”.

Cross Link Group (www.crosslinkgroup.com)

- Cross Link Group's mission is to provide affordable, professional, and functional infrastructure and technology services to every ministry they serve. Their goal is to enable ministries to leverage technology, in good stewardship, to achieve their mission.

Computers In Ministry/Computers In Missions (www.cimonline.org)

- Computers In Ministry is a non-profit Christian organization which exists solely to support the information technology needs of Christian ministries.

Conclusion

IT in theological colleges in the majority world is a powerful tool for learning and for spreading the gospel.

However, there are very unique challenges. The biggest ones are: a major shortage of IT expertise, a lack of hardware/infrastructure support, and financial support. IT work should also be seen as a missionary calling and therefore requires financial support. IT missionaries must be very independent because of working in such an isolated IT environment, and they must be self-taught in order to stay abreast of the rapidly changing technologies.

On a personal note, in Mark 10:45 Christ says, "He came not to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many." From this verse, my goal is to serve the church by meeting the IT needs on the mission field. From working at ABCU in Liberia, I have experienced first-hand the huge IT needs of a theological college in Africa. Having full-time IT support staff is critical to maintaining the current environment and pursuing strategic growth in the future.

The work at ABCU is very strategic to the spread of the gospel in Liberia. Most of the students are planning to stay in Liberia and minister to their own people. Since they will have an accredited university degree, this will allow many of them to advance as leaders in whatever role God provides for them. In the long term, this will give the gospel a major foothold in the whole country and allow Christian truth to be brought to the forefront of any issues that are raised – not only in the church, but also in schools, broadcasting environments and even in the public arena.

Instead of just teaching the students, we are teaching them to teach others from a Christian worldview perspective. This allows the individual effort of a single missionary to be multiplied many times over and will have a wonderful compounding effect over time. For me, this is the dream of the IT missionary working in a theological college in the majority world.

“Are You Growin’, Man?” A Second Look at Pauline Growth Imagery

James P. Hering*

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Those who grew up in the 1960s will remember the strong influence which the Beat Generation¹ exerted upon our day-to-day speech. At the time, we were largely ignorant of the writings and culture which engendered our hip-cool lingo and equally unaware that our speech was festooned with remnants of that earlier counterculture. Hollywood and the record industry had, by then, imbibed it into their screen characters and lyrics. Beat lingo no longer jarred our sensibilities, awoke social consciousness or upset our parents; it had “gone mainstream.” As with many emerging social phenomena, the Christian community was not left untouched by the new forms of expressions and lifestyle. Our youth leaders were cool, our music hip, our hair long and our clothing slightly bohemian. Youth groups that were “with it” met in coffeehouses. Our manner of speaking, as might be expected, also followed suit. “Are you growin’, man?” served as a greeting-cum-accountability check.

For some of us who had come out of paganism and drug use, the faith was, even with such adopted social trappings, a completely new life and home. Together we were “growing” away from our former lives into the likeness of Christ, Who described this transformation in declaring, “Behold, I make all things new.” I remember those days with not a small amount of nostalgia. It was nostalgia, I must add, that kept me hanging on to certain *outward* forms far beyond their sell-by date. Yes, by 1978 I was the guy at church that talked like a retro-hippie² and looked disturbingly like an Elvis

¹ “Beat Generation” referred to the emerging generation which grew up predominately in the Western nations in the 1950s and early 1960s. It was a generation which loved music (hence beat) and freedom of expression, often threw off moral restraint and advocated non-conformity. More specifically, it often refers to the writers and artists of this movement.

² “Hippie” – The “hippie” subculture arose predominately in the Western nations in the mid-1960s and inherited many of the characteristics and values of the Beat Generation in addition to much drug abuse and lenient morality – love and peace were

impersonator. I cannot recall the day when I became aware of my cultural obsolescence, but it hit me like a hammer. I cut my hair and sideburns, tossed the bell bottoms, stopped punctuating every phrase with “man”, and, of course, I ceased using the “overwrought” growth metaphor to describe my spiritual condition. In its place I substituted the heady vocabulary of the Reformers. A clean-cut man emerged, speaking an intentional, *confessional* language. Or so I thought.

It was a late afternoon in Aberdeen, over twenty years since my outward transformation. Looking over my books I could see granite walls and the naked winter landscape of Scotland, all soaked in the cold and wet they call *dreich*. Tired of the tedium of my redaction-critical work on Colossians, I began considering some rather negative remarks of a particular commentator regarding St. Paul’s *overuse* of growth imagery. Having long forgotten my own criticism of Christian faith-speak in my youth, I looked closely at the author’s examples with an eye towards exonerating the Apostle. To my surprise, I found that the commentator was correct in his observation: Paul had a fascination with the growth metaphor that could be fairly described as enthusiastic. Whether speaking of plant life, the human body or even buildings, Paul tended to characterize the spiritual health of Christians (and the church as a whole) in terms of the growth metaphor. Now this might be obvious to those who have never discarded such language, but it was a revelation and lesson to me. By eliminating growth language from my Christian vocabulary, I had made myself blind to its presence in the Word of God. My theological landscape had become as gray and lifeless as the icy streets below me. I wondered how many souls I had chilled with my fallow theological jargon.

Looking beyond Paul, it seemed that some form of growth sprang forth from every page of the Bible, from the gardens which bookend its story to the root of Jesse of whom it speaks. Trees with their branches, leaves and fruits, fields alive with vines and grazing animals testify to something beyond themselves. Behind all of the natural imagery I saw the Lord Himself, the Giver of life, the true Vine, the Shepherd of the sheep. It was clearly time for me to re-tool my lifeless vocabulary.

After all due *metanoia*, I looked more closely at Paul’s growth metaphor. In describing the spiritual life of Christians, he seizes upon images such as “being knitted together”, “being built up” or “being rooted” in Christ or His Body. Surprisingly, these verbal expressions, with almost no exceptions, are unique to Paul. Whereas numerous New Testament writers make use of words such as “fruit” or “root”, they are typically not connected to a broader growth metaphor as an expression of Christian piety.³ One almost gets the impression that Paul developed his Christian growth imagery without referent other than the images evoked by the Lord Himself in His teaching and parables. Closer inspection of the Gospels bears this out; one New Testament

the mantras. Often the word “hippie” characterized a hair style as well, generally long hair and unconventional dress.

³ 1 Peter 2:2 and 2 Peter 3:18 are notable exceptions.

pericope, for instance, demonstrates a particularly strong level of verbal coincidence between the imagery of Jesus and Paul: Jesus’ Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20; Matthew 13:1-23; Luke 8:4-15).

This parable was without doubt a favorite didactic tool of the early Church as it is preserved in each of the Synoptic Gospels in its entirety, including the rather lengthy concluding Midrash of Jesus. In looking closely at the vocabulary of the parable, there are several words which describe the work of God (as depicted in the various seeds): *root*, *mystery*, *growth*, *fruit* and *fruit bearing*.⁴ A quick survey of these terms as used among the New Testament authors returns an unexpected result: their use is limited primarily to the Gospels and Paul.⁵ In Paul, moreover, they are *all* incorporated at numerous points and expanded forms⁶ and uniquely related to the growth metaphor. Furthermore, three of the words in our survey, *root*, *fruit bearing* and *mystery* are *unique to this parable*, being found nowhere else in the Gospels. This presents us with an excellent control mechanism for linking this particular vocabulary with other texts. Consistent with the pattern we have observed above, these three words are *almost uniquely adopted by Paul*.⁷

These verbal coincidences, however thought-provoking, do not necessarily establish a genetic link between the parable and the vocabulary of Paul. What our findings do illustrate, I think, is a strong tendency for Paul to adapt growth metaphors to advance his view of the process of sanctification. Outside of the Gospels there is no other New Testament author who more consistently relies upon natural phenomena to communicate the living nature of Christian faith. His understanding (or adaptation!) and employment of the growth metaphor has spanned the centuries to our time and remains ever-green (I couldn’t resist).

Are we in step with the ancient, organic patterns of describing the living relationship to our Lord? Perhaps there are some contemporaries who have sullied the waters by employing these wonderful metaphors in an over-wrought or unworthy manner. The old Latin adage *Abusus non tollit usum* reminds us not to surrender proper use in the face of misuse. What we have here is a didactic gift which is simply indispensable for understanding our Christian life. It has been taken upon the lips of our Lord, the Evangelists, the Apostles and the Church Fathers. Why should it not be on ours? I can testify that I have returned, with gusto, to my old ways: The question really hasn’t changed after all: “Are you growin’, man?”

⁴ ῥίζα, μυστήριον, αὐξάνω, καρπός and καρποφορέω, respectively.

⁵ See Hebrews 12:11, 15; 13:15; James 3:17,18; 5:7,18; Rev. 1:20; 5:5; 10:7; 17:5,7. Most of these incidences do not reflect the growth metaphor.

⁶ ῥίζα, for example, is found in verbal (ῥιζόω) form only in Paul. Space prevents a listing of the Pauline occurrences, which are 42 in total.

⁷ The only exception is the use of mystery in Rev. 1:20; 10:7; 17:5, 7. The application here is apocalyptic in nature and is not applied as a growth metaphor.

A Concluding Afterthought

I have thought much on the process of growing and have reached a rather anticlimactic conclusion: growth is a function of remaining in the fight. No secrets or formulae, just steady persistence in obedience. If you remain at your station, you will grow, for it is the work of the Holy Spirit. Remaining, of course, is first “in Christ” and secondly in the fellowship of believers (I have grown most when I have had the privilege to be near mature and godly believers!). I have noted that growth seems to come in spurts and a bit more slowly to those who have been in Christ for a long period of time. It seems to me that we quickly reach the limits of our humanity (frailty and sin) in our ability to grow (and even dry out at times, shrinking rather than growing)! All these obstacles will be removed one day, when we see the Lord “face to face”. If I were to describe the growth process, I think I would characterize it as remaining in the boxing ring. There is suffering and struggle, but we hover near the trainer’s corner, where we find encouragement and help (healing). Our own growth, in times of struggle, may not be apparent at all. Much more important, it seems to me, is whether or not we know where our trainer is!

Paul’s Growth Imagery

Being “rooted together” – to “grow up”

Eph. 4:15-16 (ESV)

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to *grow up* in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body *grow* so that it builds itself up in love.

Col. 2:2, 19

²that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ,

¹⁹and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, *grows* with a growth that is from God.

Being “built up”

Eph.2:20

¹⁹So then . . . you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ *built on* the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone . . .

Col.2:6-7

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ *rooted and built up* in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Being “rooted”

Eph.3:17

¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being *rooted* and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend . . . the love of Christ . . .

Col.2:7

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ *rooted* and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Discernment As an Essential Leadership Quality

Ralph C. du Toit*

** Ralph du Toit is the pastor of Neos Christian Reformed Church in Pretoria, South Africa. He is the editor of Christi and serves as his denomination's archivist. The following was given as an evening lecture class at the Andrew Murray Bible School in Bronkhorstspuit and is a topic often overlooked in the theological education and training of leaders. Readers are encouraged to take up this article and then go back to the Haddington House Journal, volume 12, and compare with Warren Charlton's "John McNicol: Word and Spirit" (pp. 121-147).*



Introduction

We live in a day and age where leaders are prone to ask for recipes for success. What produced success for others might just as well work for me. Leadership is often regarded as the effective application of successful models rather than principles. Unfortunately this tendency also has its effect on church leadership. What I will be pleading for in the time allotted for this lecture is the constant awareness that there must be a distinct difference between church leadership and secular leadership. This awareness must lead us to the conviction that spiritual discernment is the essential leadership quality for good Christian leadership.

Secular leadership stands in direct conflict with church leadership because it focuses, through achievement, on the enhancement and upliftment of the leader itself. It is therefore humanistic in its nature. All attention is directed to the outstanding qualities of this leader. The achievement of goals of secular leadership are often to the eventual benefit of the leader. Christian leadership focuses on the ability to discern, in the presence of many possibilities, what the will of the Father is in a specific situation. It focuses on the Kingdom of God and has the upliftment of Jesus Christ as Lord in mind.

Essentially I plead for a strategic *and* spiritual approach to Christian leadership as opposed to a sole strategic approach.¹

Discernment in Theology

At the very heart of the Christian leadership process lies one fundamental question. What does God want? Or, to put it another way, What is His wis-

¹ A helpful resource is Roy M. Oswald and Robert F. Friedrich, *Discerning Your Congregation's Future: A Strategic and Spiritual Approach* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1996).

dom in a specific situation? It is so fundamental that the answer to this question determines the make-up of the Christian community. Jesus made it clear that whoever does the will of God is a member of the family of God.

Mark 3:35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Jesus led by example on the night of His agony in the garden of Gethsemane. In the midst of the biggest Christian-leadership decision ever made, the process of discernment and the underlying question and answer session was present. His prayer was simply and profoundly that God's will be done.

Mark 14:35, 36 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

Discernment was vital to the outcome. Leadership sometimes requires relatively quick decisions under immense pressure. In this decision-making process, discernment is essential.

The desire and longing to seek God's will is "discernment"; this should be the hallmark of Christian leadership. All true followers of Christ, and therefore mostly applicable to Christian leaders, should adhere to Jesus' plea in Luke.

Luke 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

According to the New Testament, the church as the community of Christ is gathered and led by the Holy Spirit. From this then the logical principle should be derived that the leaders of this community must also be gathered and led by the Holy Spirit. Again the New Testament confirms this principle in the words of Paul in Romans.

Rom 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Up to this point it all sounds very clear and simple. Just do God's will! The complication in this matter and the ultimate challenge to Christian leadership is that no one person can fully comprehend the will of God. Each of us can glimpse an understanding of what God desires. By sharing these understandings in the applicable faith community we engage in a discernment process. Essential elements of this discernment process are prayer and sharing. Through this the Holy Spirit will move amongst us and start to build a collective consensus as to what the will of God is in the specific situation.

This challenge is often so demanding and time consuming that the easy way out is to skip the process of discernment all together and therefore fall into the secular leadership trap.

In our sinfulness, we can never be assured that we have truly and fully comprehended God's will, let alone acted on it. The New Testament constantly reminds us, in the words of Habakkuk, of the element of faith in what we do.

Romans 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

We trust the Holy Spirit to lead us in this process of faith. A discernment process should never be seen as closed. In faithfulness, we make decisions and act on them for the service of God, but we are ever open to God's further guidance. True Christian leadership is the acceptance of the duty, privilege and fulfillment in living the will of God in the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

Discernment in Prophetic Voice

Responsible discernment as an essential element of Christian leadership asks for the collective wisdom of a faith community guided by God rather than taking the risk of submitting to the often risky prophetic revelation of an individual leader.

Christian leadership based on the "Moses-like up the mountain and returning with a revelation" experience can easily lead a faith community down a path of despair. An individual can mistake his own, often humanistic wishes, for the voice of the Spirit.

Corporate discernment is, in almost every case, more reliable than individual discernment. The exceptions are those times when God requires an individual to be a prophetic voice to God's people or the voice of conscience to an irreverent community. For example, a community of faith may be pursuing comfort over discipleship and avoiding action when deeds of justice and mercy are called for. Even in such cases an individual needs to test what is discerned as the will of God with at least one other Christian leader who is faithful in prayer and Scripture reading.

Unless the abovementioned is distinctly applicable to you, invite your faith community to participate in any leadership process with spiritual discernment as the essential element.

Discernment in Prayer

The etymological basis of the term discernment comes from the Greek word that means to "sift through". Very early it was seen as sifting the wheat from the chaff, sifting through our own interior experiences, ideas, thoughts and feelings. Throw all the options of possible leadership decisions into the

basket and go through a process by which God will guide you through His Holy Spirit as to the right leadership decision.

It is simply impossible to acquire spiritual discernment if we do not pray, that is, consciously seek to find God. Prayer is the conscious decision to “involve” God in the decision-making process. Maybe “involve” is not the right word. Prayer brings an openness, a freedom wherein we are able to adopt the unconditional attitude, “God, when you show me a direction to follow, I will say ‘yes’ no matter what the cost.”

Discernment is not simply having a Christian leader offer a prayer and then going about working out a solution using the best of rational skills. That is similar to secular-leadership decision making. Discernment does not mean that we simply go along with the prayer, because that is what we are supposed to do – and then get down to the real work of deciding through rational discourse.

Discernment means just the opposite. Our real work in Christian leadership is in praying prior to our leadership and decision-making meetings, with the rest of the meeting flowing from that. What follows prayer is not so much a reasoned approach to decisions than a faithful approach with a spiritual awareness of God’s collective guidance.

Discernment and Fasting

The church has lost the spiritual discipline of fasting prior to major decision making as an integral part of the discernment process. What originated in Christianity is now part of almost every major religion apart from Christianity!

Collective fasting as a prerequisite to major decisions is biblical.

Act 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Guiding Principles for Discernment As an Essential Quality of Christian Leadership

- 1) Discernment is a part of the total leadership process and cannot be achieved without careful, prayerful attention to seeking the will of God for a faith community. When this community is identifying needs or developing strategic action plans, discernment should be evident in frequent times of reflective prayer.
- 2) Discernment should be conceived as part of an ongoing leadership process to determine how God guides the community in their decisions.
- 3) Discernment requires that people understand faith communities are called to be effective servants serving the Master in His will.
- 4) Discernment involves thinking, praying and assessing the alternatives a faith community might be facing.

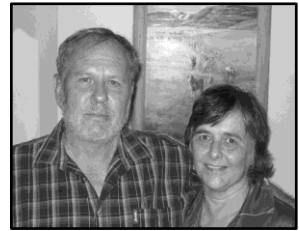
- 5) Discernment takes time and cannot be hurried. When it is hurried, it is likely because those in leadership roles have already made up their minds about a solution and want a quick process to sanctify their position.

Questions for Application

- 1) du Toit mentions “time” as one factor that tempts Christian leaders to bypass “spiritual discernment” and replace it with a secular leadership model (pp. 2-3). What specific measures can be implemented to guard against this temptation and encourage the development of spiritual discernment?
- 2) List and discuss at least three dangers with high-speed communication in the practise of spiritual discernment. Likewise, list three positive applications of high-speed communication for Christian leadership and discernment.
- 3) Re-read the Scripture verses contained in this article. Write a personal prayer based on these Scriptures concerning your desire for spiritual discernment.

Editor's Note for the Heidelberg Catechism Project

In the 2010 *Haddington House Journal*, we included the first installment of an English translation from Andrew Murray's notes on the Heidelberg Catechism from *Die Heidelbergse Kategismus*, in the collected works of Murray – *Versamelde Werke Dr. Andrew Murray*. Those who enjoy technical questions about linguistics will find the language in which Murray wrote these notes of interest. Since it is thought that Murray's notes on the Heidelberg Catechism date to the 1860s or 1870s, or perhaps later but definitely in the second half of the nineteenth century, technical language naming here can be intriguing. Some sources continue to call this "Dutch" or "Cape Dutch" or a "Dutch dialect", yet in the late nineteenth century the term "Afrikaans" was also being used. Since the first full Afrikaans Bible did not appear until 1933, we are dealing here with the period before this. Thus Murray's language reflects an older dialect tradition of the Afrikaans language.



*Gerda and Leon
van der Merwe*

Gerda van der Merwe of Cullinan, South Africa has worked hard on these translations, for which we are most grateful. Her husband, Leon van der Merwe, has supplied us with a photograph (see journal cover) of the house in Graaff-Reinet, South Africa where Andrew Murray was born and spent his first ten years before going to Aberdeen, Scotland.

Readers should be aware of the role that Andrew Murray played as a "missionary-statesman" during his lifetime. We hope to explore this theme and the theme of Scottish influence in South Africa in future volumes of the *Haddington House Journal*.¹

J. C. W.



¹ A most helpful article exploring the Scottish influence in South Africa is Eddie Brown, "Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, Scottish Influences on", in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology*, Nigel M. De S. Cameron, org. ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 267-269.

The Heidelberg Catechism, Twenty-Fifth Sunday: The Sacraments

**65 Q. It is by faith alone
that we share in Christ and all his blessings:
where then does that faith come from?**

A. The Holy Spirit produces it in our hearts
by the preaching of the holy gospel,
and confirms it
through our use of the holy sacraments.

66 Q. What are sacraments?

A. Sacraments are holy signs and seals for us to see.
They were instituted by God so that
by our use of them
he might make us understand more clearly
the promise of the gospel,
and might put his seal on that promise.

And this is God's gospel promise:
to forgive our sins and give us eternal life
by grace alone
because of Christ's one sacrifice
finished on the cross.

**67 Q. Are both the word and the sacraments then
intended to focus our faith
on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross
as the only ground of our salvation?**

A. Right!
In the gospel the Holy Spirit teaches us
and through the holy sacraments he assures us
that our entire salvation
rests on Christ's one sacrifice for us on the cross.

**68 Q. How many sacraments
did Christ institute in the New Testament?**

A. Two: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Heidelberg Catechism Twenty-Fifth Sunday: The Sacraments

Andrew Murray¹

*“It is the Spirit that makes alive,
the flesh profits nothing.
The words that I speak to you
are spirit and are life.” (John 6:63)*

During the previous Sunday we completed the discussion on faith. After the declaration of the articles of Faith (Sundays 7-22), the working and value of faith that brings justification were explained (Sundays 23, 24). At this point the question arises concerning the origin of that faith. Firstly, we are told (Question 65) that the Holy Spirit establishes faith through the Word and reinforces it through the sacraments. After this (Question 66) the meaning of the sacraments is explained as signs and seals of the promises that are given to us in the gospel, namely forgiveness and life through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. The following point (Question 67) again stresses the fact that it is the Holy Spirit alone Who teaches us that our salvation only exists in the eternal sacrifice that Christ accomplished on the cross. This section of the Catechism (Sundays 25-30) is summarized under the heading: *The Sacraments*. Using this heading as a thematic topic, the teaching of the Catechism will be discussed under the following points: 1. What the sacraments stand for; 2. The sacraments confirm the Word; 3. The sacraments strengthen faith; 4. The sacraments seal salvation; 5. The sacraments in the service of the Holy Spirit.

I

What the sacraments stand for

We learn from the answer to Question 66 that the sacraments are visible *signs* and *seals* instituted by God so that by participating in these we are enabled to better understand the promise of the gospel and we are also sealed in this promise. These attributes may be considered to be of less importance but we should understand that the sacraments seal God’s promise to strengthen our faith in the assurance that we share in the promise of the gospel.

¹ The translator for “Twenty-Fifth Sunday” is Gerda van der Merwe of Cullinan, South Africa. This is part of the ongoing Heidelberg Catechism translation project. See *Haddington House Journal* 12 (2010): 15-18 for background details.

The distinction between the two workings of the sacraments can be illustrated by the transaction when purchasing a farm. The buyer wants the deed of transfer which contains a visible illustration of the property as well as a legal transfer signed by the owner. Even if the buyer has not seen the property physically, from the illustration he can determine whether the farm is square or triangular, which roads or rivers cross the property and if there are any houses built. But although it is of value to have an illustration or map of the property, in itself it is useless. The buyer must have the deed of transfer filed in the deeds office to prove that the farm is registered in his name. This document, however accurately prepared, is not genuine unless the stamp duty has been paid and the seal of the registration office is attached.

The sacraments are visible signs: portraits of the grace prepared for us in the two main works of Christ. First is the grace of the new birth, the beginning of the new life. Thereafter comes the sustaining grace, the pursuance and constant strengthening of the new life. Baptism is the sacrament of the rebirthing grace and initiation into the Church. The water of baptism symbolizes cleansing through the blood and the Spirit of Christ. Communion is the sacrament of sustaining grace. The bread and the wine lead us to understand the way that the body and blood of Christ become our inner strength and life. Only two sacraments were necessary; these two cover the totality of the Christian life.

It is however of little benefit if these sacraments are used as signs but do not become seals in one's life. Many people understand the meaning thereof, but do not know of the sealing, the glorious assurance of which Answer 69 speaks: *"Thus: That Christ appointed this external washing with water, adding thereto this promise, that I am as certainly washed by his blood and Spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away."* Let this be clear to us: the sacraments are not only signs but also seals; God wants us to recognize His Godly affirmation of our faith in partaking in Christ through every contemplation or enjoyment of the sacraments.

The following question could now be raised: Why would God, in this ministry of the Spirit that differs so much from the old dispensation with its multiple ceremonies, now institute these two outward, visible signs? The answer points to the need of man who, because of his sinful nature, cannot be overcome at once: the tangible embodiment of his thoughts are of great assistance. There is something more. Man's body is also saved; the whole of nature will be saved. Through these signs borrowed from nature and enjoyed by the body, we have the prediction, as will be seen later, that the body, like a seed that first has to die, will be resurrected to enter into the glory of the Spirit. The sacraments are visible but holy signs and seals instituted by God.

II

The sacraments confirm the Word

This is a second noteworthy aspect. How closely the Word and the sacraments are linked becomes clear from the following three questions and answers. The answer to the Question (65), where faith comes from, states: *“From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments.”* They thus serve with the Word as the tools of the Holy Spirit working towards faith as the goal. In the following Question (66) we are taught that the sacraments *“are holy visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof, he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel.”* Then Question (67) is raised: *“Are both word and sacraments, then, ordained and appointed for this end, that they may direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the only ground of our salvation?”* And the answer is: *“Yes, indeed: for the Holy Ghost teaches us in the gospel, and assures us by the sacraments, that the whole of our salvation depends upon that one sacrifice of Christ which he offered for us on the cross.”*

Do not think that it is a coincidence or without meaning that the Word of God is mentioned so often in the Catechism’s teaching of the sacraments. It was necessary due to the misconception of the Roman Catholic Church and also the misconception which the human heart had reached by itself.

One of the main misconceptions of the Roman Catholic Church was that the sacrament generated power purely through the presentation thereof by a priest and without faith playing any role therein. Luther stated: “Not the sacrament, but the faith that believes the sacrament is what removes sin – justifies.”² The Roman Catholic Church demanded that he should retract this statement. The result of that misconception was that the Church reserved to itself the right to either issue or reserve blessings. And furthermore through utterly sad ignorance of their unsaved state, people trusted the Church to bless them. Our father³ felt, as did all the Reformers, that in order for the people to be brought to a reasonable and personal, believing relationship with God and Christ in the sacrament, the Word should be the central point of focus. We learnt that they have testified of these three things: the Holy Spirit does not use the sacraments to generate faith, but to strengthen faith that already exists through the Word; the purpose of the sacraments is to seal the

² Martin Luther, *Luther's Works: Word and Sacrament I*, vol. 35, eds. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999, orig. 1960), 35:11. Dr. Murray used the Afrikaans word “*regverdig*” which means “to be justified / sanctified”. An internet reference to Luther’s statement translates this word as “removes sin”. (trans.)

³ From the context it would appear that Dr. Murray used the word “father” to refer to the church father Martin Luther. (trans.)

gospel that should already be known and accepted; and lastly, the Holy Spirit uses the Word and sacraments together to focus our attention on Christ.

Let no one then be of the opinion that because we are not Roman Catholics, there is no need for this explicit emphasis of the Word. No, like all Roman Catholic misconceptions, this one is also in accordance with the natural heart. How often do we see people with little or no regard for religion who would not willingly miss the sacrament of communion? How often do we see a large number of people sit at the communion table exhibiting a kind of reverence but who for themselves can give no account of what they believe or expect? How many people are there who secretly hope that their partaking of communion would cover their sins and open their road to heaven? In these days the Church needs to strongly emphasize that faith should firstly be aroused and fed by the Word; only then can the sacrament strengthen it. No government will supply a sealed deed of sale if there is no map illustrating what is being sealed; in no way can the Holy Spirit use the sacraments to seal that which is not understood and accepted through the Word.

This leads us to the next aspect.

III

The sacraments strengthen faith

In the sixty-seventh Question we read: “*Are both word and sacraments, then, ordained and appointed for this end, that they may direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the only ground of our salvation?*” And the answer is “*Yes.*”

We know how God’s Word emphasizes faith as the one thing God asks of those who come to Him. We also realize that it is not that faith has any value in itself as a work of justification. No, faith is actually the acknowledging of the fact that we have nothing; the humbling of ourselves to live off what we receive and to trust that which belongs to another. Faith is an attitude that makes our mind receptive to receive only that which He gives. Faith is the one thing that God requires and blesses; not only at the beginning of a life in grace or at the hour of conversion and forgiveness, but throughout one’s life. As wide as the riches and fullness in Christ, and as complete as Christ wants every minute of our lives to be, so unique and everlasting is His call on our spirit to believe. The words “*just believe*” are, when understood correctly, words of unutterable meaning and power.

Nowhere was there a greater danger to our faith than exactly with something as tangible as the sacraments. How easily could the sight of the blood of Christ and His broken body as sacrifice and the participation in a certain ritual distract our attention from our faith.⁴ Our church order justly states that the sacraments should in the first place serve to strengthen our faith so that

⁴ Dr. Murray refers to the Roman Catholic ritual, as he knew it, of the bread and wine as transubstantiation of the body and blood of Christ. (*trans.*)

we can testify that: “. . . the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”⁵

The teaching regarding the sacraments is of great value. As often as we look forward to the service of the sacraments, we can expect that our faith will be strengthened. If we expect this, let us then approach it as a true exercise in faith. The first Question of this section today starts like this: “*Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only. . .*”⁶. Whenever we partake in the sacraments, let our hearts be wholly focused on Christ in Whom all blessings are. I always strive to be filled more and more with the thought that God has instituted the sacraments not to let us remain as children, but to let us grow in truth to become people of faith and bring Him the honour.

IV

The sacraments seal salvation

The Catechism offers clear testimony on this point. Faith in itself has no life-giving power. The power of faith is embedded in the object of our faith and the content thereof. Faith in itself is an empty vessel of clay; the treasure that God places into this vessel contains the blessing that saves.

We have already pointed out the expression that says: “*We are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only.*” This is an expression of deep meaning. Much of the ailments of Christianity, the darkness and doubt in which so many Christians live, is due to the fact that they do not believe these words. They only seem to think about the blessings of Christ: the reconciliation, the righteousness of life, the light and the power they expect of Christ. What they do not understand is that we can expect nothing of Christ unless we become partakers of Him. This expression is derived from Scripture: “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.”⁷ As our faith is led to the living Christ and grows in Him, He will become our life.

A second expression regarding salvation is: “. . . *the promise of the gospel, (vis.), that he grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross.*”⁸ This does not imply, which is all too often the case, forgiveness of sins here and the right to eternal life hereafter, but forgiveness and eternal life both here. Justification and rebirth go together; out of redemption the sinner immediately receives life. The power of Christ’s sacrifice is so complete that we are absorbed into the love and life of God. Faith does not only receive the com-

⁵ Gal. 2:20b (KJV).

⁶ The Heidelberg Catechism. Lord’s Day 25, Question 65.

⁷ Heb. 3:14 (KJV).

⁸ http://www.pca.org/hc_text2.html#LDXXV : Gen. 17:11; Rom. 4:11; Ex. 12; Lev. 6:25; Acts 22:16; Acts 2:38; Mat. 26:28.

plete exemption of sin but also, as fruit thereof, the Godly power to live as a child of God.

The same is taught to us through a third expression: “. . . *the whole of our salvation depends upon that one sacrifice of Christ which he offered for us on the cross.*”⁹ Because the death of Christ is also the exemption of our sins, it is the death of the old self. Not only has Christ’s death reconciled all, it has accomplished all. The complete power of sin has been broken there; the resurrection and transfiguration are the fruit of that sacrifice. Now we are not only partakers of the reconciliation but of everything that Christ has accomplished: His resurrection, transfiguration and the Spirit He has received. With our eyes fixed on Him we can now say: “*This God is a God of complete salvation.*”¹⁰ “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.”¹¹ The sacraments therefore lead us, in spite of our unworthiness and inabilities, to be strong in the faith that we are partakers of Christ and His blessings; to believe that we have, through Him, remission of our sins and eternal life; and finally, to know that the salvation obtained and ensured through His sacrifice is a complete salvation.

V

The sacraments in the service of the Holy Spirit

This next lesson may not be omitted. The Holy Spirit establishes faith through the Word and strengthens faith through the sacraments (Question 65). The Holy Spirit also (Question 67) teaches us through the Word and sacraments and affirms to us that complete salvation is only found in the eternal sacrifice of Christ that took place on the cross. This is consistent with the words of our Lord Jesus: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”¹² All we have heard of the Word and the sacraments, of Christ and His blessings, of faith and the complete salvation in Christ, have their source of power and blessing in the life-giving Spirit.

This truth teaches us two lessons of the utmost importance. The first one is a warning. Take care that the use of the Word and the sacraments without the power of the Holy Spirit does not satisfy your soul. Through the creative use of the Word, deep meditation and excited emotions, we may be touched and strengthened while lacking the true life, the life from God. Take care that you are not carried away to a human faith in the gospel, accept and cling to the truth thereof, while you lack the regeneration, the rebirth of God. Be warned, not only through the Roman Catholic Church who search the bless-

⁹ http://www.prca.org/hc_text2.html#LDXXV: Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27.

¹⁰ This quotation has no reference in the text. See, “Die Heidelbergsche Kategismus”, in *Versamelde Werke Dr. Andrew Murray*, ed., [F. J. Liebenberg] (Stellenbosch: Die Christen-Studentevereniging Van S.A., 1945), X, 267, lines 14 and 15.

¹¹ Heb. 7:25 (KJV).

¹² John 6:63 (KJV).

ing without heeding the Word but as much through the error of the Reformed Church who think that they have all that is necessary if they use the Word and the sacraments. Please take this warning seriously so that it does not become a testimony or judgement against you. Whenever we use the Word or the sacraments, we should be deeply and completely dependent on the Holy Spirit. Only the Spirit can establish and strengthen the living hope within us, teach us and seal our complete salvation in Christ.

The second lesson is an encouragement. Thank the Lord that He sent the Holy Spirit. If anyone uses the Word and the sacraments but feels convicted in his heart that he has not yet submitted to the Lord and received His Spirit, then listen to the good news of the gospel. If anyone has submitted to the Lord but still doubts that the Spirit of God lives in his heart or thinks that it is just all in the mind of man, let him listen. The Holy Spirit was sent! The sacrifice of Christ on the cross was unique, eternal and complete; the Father gave Jesus the Spirit and the power to pour Him out, even on those who are slow to believe. If there is one thing we can be sure of, it is this: the Father wants to and will give you the Spirit today. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”¹³ Kneel in all humility before God. Turn to the compassionate God. You have the right to believe that He will pour out His spirit upon you. Take heart, for as sure as the Word and the sacraments, Christ and His blood, the Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who seek Him in prayer.

To you who know that you are children of God and also know that the Spirit of the Lord lives in you but complain that the work of the Holy Spirit is so weak within yourself, I say: take heart. Maybe you do not know why your use of the Word and the sacraments does not work more powerfully in your life. You may not know why Christ and His blessings are not a greater power in your life. I can tell you this – the Lord tells you: it is because of your unbelief. Please understand that the Father did not give His grace in Christ as a deep well from which you can only draw with the greatest difficulty. Child of God, believe that God is in your heart like a still, deeply hidden but full spring. Be still in the presence of God; practise the faith that will allow the Father, through the Spirit, to do His Godly work in the depth of your soul.

As often as you turn to the agents of grace, the sacraments and to Christ, first let your heart grow still to say: the Spirit of God is in me.¹⁴ Then you will experience the complete blessing in Christ and grasp the infinite value of the only sacrifice through which you are eternally pleasing to God. The Spirit will fulfill your every need in Jesus Christ. The knowledge of the vital role that the Spirit plays in the Word and the sacraments will not depress you. It

¹³ Matt.7:11 (KJV).

¹⁴ See Andrew Murray, “Heidelberg Catechism Twentieth Sunday: On God, the Holy Spirit”, *Haddington House Journal* 12 (2010): 28-33.

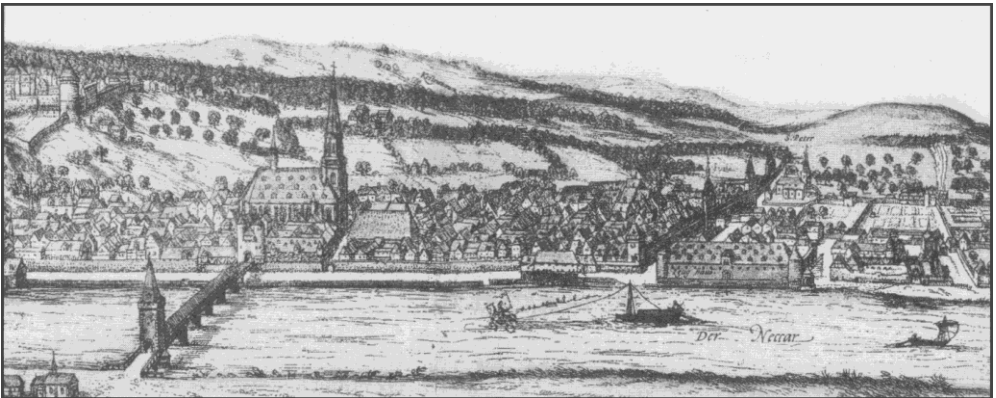
will become the secret of your only comfort; it will become the source of an unutterable joy and unceasing thanksgiving. Amen.



Zacharias Ursinus



Caspar Olevianus



Heidelberg

**God’s Good News for a Marginalised African Man,
Acts 8:26-40**

Alistair I. Wilson*

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Introduction

Many people find themselves on the margins. Like the child who is left unchosen when teams are picked for a school game, many of us know what it is like to be on the outside in various aspects of our lives. And that’s not only true of those who appear marginalised but also of many who *appear* to have their lives in good order and to be at the centre of all the action.

Luke’s account of the expansion of the Christian message in what we call ‘the Acts of the Apostles’ (although perhaps ‘some of the acts of some of the Apostles’ is more accurate) introduces us to several such marginalised characters, but the person we will consider here is a rather surprising example, as we shall see.

Here is our passage in two recent translations:

English Standard Version, Acts 8:26-40	New International Version (NIV2011), Acts 8:26-40 Philip and the Ethiopian
<p>²⁶Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south[d] to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. ²⁷And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had</p>	<p>²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” ²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man</p>

ESV

come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." ³⁰So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³²Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he opens not his mouth.

³³In his humiliation justice was denied him.
Who can describe his generation?
For his life is taken away from the earth."

³⁴And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" ³⁸And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. ³⁹And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

NIV 2011

had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

³¹ "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³² This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

³³ In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?

For his life was taken from the earth."^[b]

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" ³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

³⁶ As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?"

^[37] ³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

As we proceed, I am going to assume that you will use the two printed Bible versions included above. Luke explains how God sets up an encounter between Philip and an important Ethiopian official which enables Philip to help the official understand the significance of the Scriptures and come to faith in Jesus the Messiah.

1. God's Good News

Although the human characters we meet in this narrative are significant (and we will get to know them more fully shortly), the most important actor in this encounter is God.

(a) God Has Acted to Provide the Message

We cannot really understand the encounter between Philip and the Ethiopian, or the various other accounts of the evangelistic activity of the early church, without recognizing that the message which is proclaimed depends entirely on the gracious and effective act of God in the person of Jesus Christ to save a people for Himself. Brief accounts of this act (which includes Jesus' proclamation and acts of power, as well as His death and resurrection) can be found in various parts of the earlier narrative, particularly in the preaching (or *kerygma*) of this action in Acts 2.

The proclamation of God's action is also seen clearly in Acts 8:25:

^{ESV} Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

So the saving act of God in human history lies behind all that will take place between Philip and the Ethiopian. Their encounter really makes no sense without that 'big story' of the Bible as the backdrop.

(b) God Acts to Arrange the Encounter

Now we can see how God is also engaged at a micro-level in creating the encounter between these two men.

– *God sends His messenger* (vv. 26, 29)

In two places in the text, there is a clear statement of the Lord's specific direction of Philip. In verse 26, an 'angel of the Lord'¹ directs Philip to the general area where the encounter will take place; in verse 29, 'the Spirit' (which, without any further qualification, clearly refers to the Spirit of God) gives more specific direction when he is at the intended location.

¹ See D. L. Bock, *Acts* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 340, for references to the angel of the Lord in Acts and also in Luke's Gospel.

– *He sends his messenger to an unlikely place (the wilderness, v. 26) . . . and Philip does as he is told (unlike Jonah)*

If you were to sit down and carefully plan an evangelistic event you would probably take various factors into consideration, such as: Will the event take place in a location with a significant population? or When can we arrange this event so that people are not away on holiday? In general, we plan evangelistic events with a view to reaching as many people as possible. But God sends Philip to a desert road. It seems likely that this would be as unexpected for Philip and for the first hearers of Acts as it is for us. I imagine that is why the road's character as 'the desert road' is specifically mentioned.

The statement in verse 27 that Philip 'got up and went' indicates his immediate and willing obedience. In this respect, as well as in several others, there is perhaps an implicit comparison with the prophet Jonah (although Luke makes no explicit connection with the Jonah narrative). In the account of Jonah, God commands Jonah to go to an unexpected place in order to declare his message to outsiders. Here Philip is commanded to go to an unexpected place so that (as we shall see) he might declare the good news of Jesus to a man who was an outsider. But the striking difference between these two men is that Jonah fled from God (thus showing how little his sound creation theology affected his daily life) while Philip obeys. Although the primary purpose of this passage (and, indeed, any passage of Scripture) is to tell the reader about the character and actions of God (rather than to present us with human 'heroes' and 'villains'), Philip's obedient response to the instructions of God is the first of several aspects of the portrait of Philip presented in this passage which speak very highly of him as a faithful disciple.

We see that God has planned an encounter between His messenger and a person to whom He intends to declare this message of life and hope. Nothing is left to chance and yet the encounter requires the involvement of Philip. As Christians, we can be encouraged that the mission of the church does not rely primarily on human ingenuity or techniques. In fact, in this case, God places Philip in the most unlikely of circumstances. But if we are willing to be used by God and are willing to respond to His promptings, we may find ourselves agents of His grace in unexpected ways.

2. A Marginalised African Man

We are now introduced to the person to whom God has sent Philip. And immediately we might wonder whether the description I have given to this man is at all justified. How can this man be described as 'marginalised'? Is it not clear that he is, in fact, in a very enviable situation?

(a) A Man Who Seems to Have Everything Going for Him

This man does not appear to be marginalised. Let's briefly consider what we know about him.

– *He holds a position of importance and probably wealth in the court of 'Candace' (or, more correctly in the NIV2011, 'the Kandake')*

It appears that this word is a title rather than a personal name, which refers to the 'queen mother' who was the effective ruler of ancient Ethiopia. Ethiopia at this time was not the modern state which goes by that name but a region just south of the source of the Nile which would be roughly equivalent to an area of modern Sudan. We are told that this man is not simply part of the Kandake's court, but that he is 'in charge' of an aspect of the court. What's more, that area of responsibility is the treasury. While any position of leadership in the court of the ruler would be very significant, only the most able and trusted would be placed in charge of 'all the treasury'.

– *Since he had been to Jerusalem to worship, he is clearly associated with the religion of Israel*

So it would appear that this man's social, economic and religious circumstances are all in good order. But, appearances can deceive!

(b) A Man Who Is Marginalised in Various Ways

In the light of what we have learned about this man, what justifies the description of this man as 'marginalised'? I believe that there are three areas where we may suggest that he was marginalised. None of these are stated absolutely unambiguously in the text, but I believe that there is good reason to suggest that each of the following factors led to this man being 'marginalised':

– *colour?* This man came from a part of Africa known as Ethiopia (and often described as 'Cush'). Marguerat notes that the etymology of the Greek term *aithiops* is 'burned face', suggesting dark skin colour.² It is reasonable to assume, then, that this man was probably black.³ Therefore, although he had joined the crowds in Jerusalem, he would have been immediately visible and conspicuous among the hordes of Middle-Eastern worshippers. I live and work in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Nobody in South Africa is unaware of what terrible discrimination has been carried out on the basis that one human being has a different skin colour from another. But the reality of people being marginalised because of their skin colour and physical appearance is by no means limited to the apartheid regime in South Africa.

– *ethnicity?* This man was also probably a Gentile and therefore, while he would be enabled to participate in the temple worship to a certain extent, he would never be able to enter fully into the worship of the temple unless he became a full convert to Judaism.⁴

² D. Marguerat, *Les Actes des Apôtres* (CNT5a; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2007), 306.

³ So also Bock, *Acts*, 341, and others.

⁴ See the discussion in D. L. Bock, *Acts*, 338. Bock appears to be reluctant to view this man as a 'pure Gentile' because of his involvement in the worship of Israel's

– *physical features?* While some commentators note that the term ‘eunuch’ could possibly simply indicate that he was a court official, the more natural reading of the text is that this man was probably a eunuch in the literal sense of being castrated or of having damaged or destroyed sexual organs.⁵ This physical lack also leads to exclusion from the temple according to Deuteronomy 23:1: ‘No-one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of the LORD.’

– *sin (from broader biblical theology) certainly!* Whatever measure of uncertainty may remain about these inferences from Luke’s description of this African man, we can say with confidence that he was marginalised from the presence of God by his sin. The figure of the tax collector which Luke records in his Gospel in Luke 18:9-14 provides a good illustration of the (quite appropriate) sense of being an outsider which sin creates.

3. God's Provision for the Man's Need

God knew this marginalised man and provided what he needed most. What did he provide?

(a) A Bible Translation

When Philip comes within earshot of the chariot of the Ethiopian, he hears him reading from Isaiah 53 (‘silent reading’ was not the norm at this time; people read out loud even when they were alone).⁶ But Isaiah was written in Hebrew. How is this man from Africa able to read a prophecy written in Hebrew? It is possible that the Ethiopian knew Hebrew, but given that, by the early first century AD, relatively few people in Israel apart from the Scribes were familiar with the Scriptures in Hebrew (and so used the Aramaic Targums), it seems more likely that this man would not have read Hebrew. A strong indication of what he was reading is given by the fact that Luke quotes the Scriptures following closely the Greek translation, the ‘Septuagint’ (or LXX), in verses 30 and 32-33. This would suggest that this man was able to access God’s word in a language other than his own through the providential way in which God had prepared a Greek translation of these Scriptures, many decades, even hundreds of years earlier.

(b) A Bible Commentator

Philip asks the Ethiopian if he understands what he is reading. The Ethiopian replies, ‘How can I unless someone explains it to me?’ (v. 31). It is striking that the Ethiopian states quite bluntly that the Scriptures are not suf-

God. That the Ethiopian was associated with the worship of Yahweh is uncontested, but that is a different matter from his ethnicity. With respect to the possibility of becoming a full convert, Marguerat suggests that this would not have been an option for a eunuch (Marguerat, *Actes*, 307, fn 23).

⁵ Marguerat, *Actes*, 306.

⁶ So Marguerat, *Actes*, 308.

ficient in themselves. What he really needs is someone to explain the Scriptures. That is, he needs a reliable guide to help him to make sense of the words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs which he is able to read perfectly well himself but which he cannot *understand* without help.

(c) A Biblical Theologian

But even a commentator is not enough! Some of the most able archaeologists, historians and philologists have not adequately grasped the message of the text the Ethiopian is reading, even though they could provide wonderfully helpful information regarding the issues which they have studied in depth. When Philip begins with Isaiah 53 and declares the Gospel of Jesus (v. 35), he is acting as a biblical theologian. In other words, he is concerned with more than explaining what the details mean; he intends to proclaim how the details fit into a wonderful overarching story of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

Now, as we see God provide a translation of the Scriptures, a Bible commentator and a biblical theologian, I hope you can see how relevant the task of theological education is. Sometimes it seems as though theological education is regarded by many in the church as a distraction from the real task of the church, which is to proclaim the Gospel – like Philip does. But, of course, without those who possess the skills to produce accurate translations of the Scriptures, those who can explain accurately and helpfully to others what the details of the text mean, and those who can explain how all these details come together in the message we call the Gospel, there will be no faithful proclamation of the Gospel. So it seems that what God provided for this Ethiopian man on a desert road was very similar to what theological colleges around the world seek to provide for the churches in their countries and communities.

(d) Most Fundamentally, a Saviour Slain for Him (vv. 32-33)

At the central point of this narrative lies the citation of the passage which the Ethiopian was reading, Isaiah 53:7-8.⁷ We do not have time to carry out detailed exegesis of this passage (which deserves a whole series of sermons devoted to it alone), but a few brief comments may be appropriate:

– *the brief citation brings to mind the whole Suffering Servant passage*

This passage speaks of quiet acceptance in the face of unjust suffering and also of the impossibility of speaking of His descendants. This seems particularly relevant to the experience of a eunuch who (it seems from contemporary literature) would have known contempt from fellow human beings (despite his high office) and who would have been denied the opportunity to father children. But the wider passage indicates that this suffering was not

⁷ See Marguerat, *Actes*, 303. Marguerat is particularly helpful on literary features of the text, although it is unfortunate that he appears to lack confidence in the historical foundations of the narratives.

simply personal misfortune, but rather suffering on behalf of others with the hope that the Suffering Servant will ultimately ‘see the light of life and be satisfied’ (Isa. 53:11).

– *the passage comes within a wider context which seems particularly relevant*

Just a few columns further on from where the Ethiopian is reading are found the following words:

Isaiah 56:3-5: ³ Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the LORD say, “The LORD will surely exclude me from his people.” And let not any eunuch complain, “I am only a dry tree.” ⁴ For this is what the LORD says: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant-- ⁵ to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off.”

Thus, we may imagine, as the Ethiopian is guided by Philip through the Scriptures, it would not be long before he would come across this wonderful message of inclusion and life, despite the realities of his situation.

4. From the Margins to the Heart

God’s Good News – recorded in the text of Isaiah; explained, interpreted and proclaimed by Philip – has its intended effect. Although there is no explicit record of the Ethiopian responding in faith to the message which Philip presents, his responses which are recorded, read in conjunction with the teaching of the wider biblical canon, imply that this is precisely what took place.

(a) “What prevents me from being baptised?” (v. 36)

As the journey continues, they come to some water. The Ethiopian’s question indicates that Philip has included some teaching on baptism and the fact that he asks this question at the first possible opportunity suggests that he takes the matter very seriously. The form of the question is intriguing. Both the ESV and the NIV2011 capture a slight tone of concern in the question. Does this man’s previous experience raise a nagging question about whether there is something about him which will exclude him once again? He has faced so many barriers which have caused him to be marginalised; will there now be a hidden ‘catch’ in the Good News which Philip has been presenting which will lead to disappointment and exclusion once again. Well, of course, Philip and the Ethiopian get down from the chariot and the Ethiopian is baptised, so the implied answer to his question is ‘Nothing!’ That truly is good news! In fact, that baptism should bring this encounter to a close is particularly poignant since baptism indicates inclusion into the people of God. This man who has been kept at the boundaries for so long has now been brought

into the heart of God's family. Bock suggests that the Ethiopian's journey would have taken approximately 'five months each way'.⁸ Luke tells us that this encounter led to a joyful journey home (v. 39). What a different way to spend five months because of God's Good News!

(b) The Task Is Not Finished

Not for Philip. Not for us. God actively directs another mission because there are yet more who need to hear the Good News (v. 40). We may rejoice whenever someone is brought into God's family, but we dare not settle down comfortably before the fire. We must repeatedly go out to the margins, seeking God's direction, so that we may play our part in God's mission to draw people from the margins to the heart of His family.

⁸ Bock, *Acts*, 342.

Book Reviews
and
Book Briefs

Book Reviews

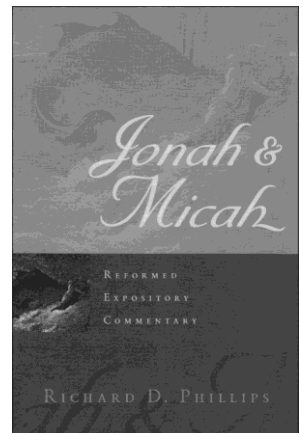
In our books section, we inform readers about works which have been recently added to the Haddington House Library. Most are recent publications, but on occasion we include rare and valuable books we have acquired which students, pastors, patrons and others may want to come and consult. All reviews are made in keeping with our editorial policy; that is, to help our readers in the stewardship of their resources and time. The *Journal* uses the standard abbreviation ‘hc’ to denote hard cover. The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) has been included with all books when available. We begin this section with “**Book Reviews**”, organized according to the four divisions of theology.

Biblical Theology

***Jonah & Micah.* Richard D. Phillips. Reformed Expository Commentary. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2010, 381 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-59638-114-8**

Richard Phillips has given us another very useful contribution to the Reformed Expository Commentary Series. Phillips is a senior pastor at Second Presbyterian Church in Greenville, South Carolina and co-editor of the series. His commentary on Jonah first saw the light of day in a series of sermons at First Presbyterian in Coral Springs, Florida and his work on Micah as a series of Bible studies in his home church. As with the whole series, this commentary is coming not just from an academic exegete but a gifted preacher who is able to tie together the disciplines of biblical and systematic theology in a very pastoral way that speaks to the urgent concerns of today’s generation, much like those of the prophets themselves.

In dealing with both prophets, Phillips shows that at the very heart of the prophets and Old Testament religion as a whole was the grace of God in Christ, even in Micah’s oracles of judgment. This is intentionally and richly brought out in each chapter of the book. In Jonah, chapter titles include: “The Messenger of Grace”, “The Grace of the Lord”, “The Grace of Repentance”



and “Growing in Grace”. In the preface Phillips says, “The book of Jonah challenges us to consider not only what it means to *believe* the gospel of God’s grace, but what it means to *live* the gospel of grace” (p. xiii).

Phillips understands Jesus’ remark “a greater than Jonah is here” (Matt. 12:41) and Micah’s prophesy of the ruler who would be born in Bethlehem, Ephrathah as the mandate for understanding the prophesy Christologically.

While Phillips sees grace as the dominant theme, that theme is woven throughout the book in the “doctrines of grace” which flow from it. All the constituent elements of the historic Reformed faith are in Jonah in the themes of election, sovereignty, and the glory and mercy of God. As a summary of this point, Phillips says, “If there is any story in the Bible that proves the truth of God’s unremitting sovereignty, that story must be Jonah’s. And if we realize the sovereign hand of God in all things, then we will receive the commands of his Word as sovereign calls to humbly obey” (pp. 130-131).

Yet, in Micah, Phillips addresses the problem, not of “denying” the grace of God of which Jonah was guilty, but of “presuming upon” God’s grace. “So confident were the Jews of Micah’s time that God would protect and preserve them that they gave themselves liberty to abuse and oppress their neighbours” (p. 221).

Micah, says Phillips, is not without grace in its delivery of a message of judgment. But Israel’s hope can only be seen “having first driven them to their knees in conviction over sin” (p. 188). I believe Phillips models for us what it is to preach the whole counsel of God. He shows us that only in preaching the wrath of God against sin can we more fully appreciate the need for grace.

His opening comments on Micah reflect Reformational theology’s high view of Scripture as the starting point of knowing God. This is the launching pad of the reforms Micah hopes to bring to the covenant community in particular. How important this is in an evangelical community today that has made the denying of fundamental doctrines like God’s judgment fashionable. It is only through our confidence in the Word as from God Himself that we will confidently speak to the world and bring reform to the church.

I cannot recommend this commentary and series highly enough. Phillips’ generous quotations from contemporary and classical preachers and authors show that we stand on the shoulders of giants and that preaching the faith is organically tied to writers of the past.

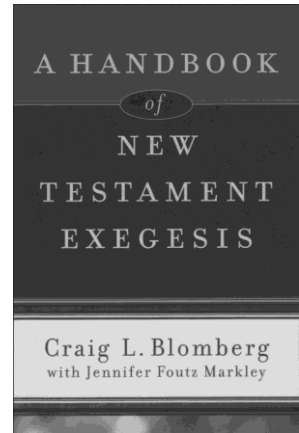
Since this material came originally in sermon form, it is not technical but most accessible. The commentary wonderfully combines solid theology in a devotional spirit which is the ultimate end of all theology.

Reviewed by Kent I. Compton, the minister of the Western Charge of the Free Church of Scotland, PEI. Rev. Compton is a graduate of the University of Prince Edward Island and the Free Church College, Edinburgh.



***A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis.* Craig L. Blomberg with Jennifer Foutz Markley. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010, 298 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-3177-9**

As the title states, this volume deals specifically with the practice of exegesis in the New Testament. What separates this book, however, from other similar works is its declared design. Written for the Bible student with or without a working knowledge of *Koine* Greek, specialist and non-specialist alike, this handbook recognizes and addresses logistical and emotional barriers that hinder the student of Scripture from “faithfully elaborating a full-orbed exegesis of a given passage of Scripture” (p. xiii). This hindrance is associated with the shortcomings of other books related to exegesis in the New Testament. It is primarily selectivity, according to the authors, that detracts



from the effectiveness of other works. One would tend to concur with this assessment. Some textbooks emphasize theory and others miss steps in the full exegetical process. Some offer limited treatment of methodology, others devote too much space to hermeneutical concerns. While Gordon Fee's introductory textbook is acknowledged as popular and effective, the limited number of its examples used is pointed out as a weakness.¹ Since “exegesis is caught as much as it is taught” (p. xiii), the authors seek, in a vein similar to Fee, to increase the number of examples of exegesis and motivational comments. The book (to be thought of more as a “tool box”) follows the ten exegetical steps taught to students at Denver Seminary; however, the authors caution that different textual considerations may emphasize different steps of the exegetical process.

Dr. Craig L. Blomberg, distinguished professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary, Colorado, wrote this handbook in association with Jennifer Foutz Markley, who contributed five of the ten chapters. The volume is divided into ten chapters, corresponding to ten steps of exegesis. It is prefaced by a helpful introduction and closed by a thin summary and an appendix (“Checklist for Doing Biblical Exegesis”) that apparently repeats the summary in list format. A proper bibliography is absent. The chapters are as follows: 1. Textual Criticism, 2. Translation and Translations, 3. Historical-Cultural Context, 4. Literary Context, 5. Word Studies, 6. Grammar, 7. Interpretive Problems, 8. Outlining, 9. Theology, and 10. Application.

¹ Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983).

Chapter one sets the stage for the approach in the rest of the chapters. In it is defined “textual criticism”, the terms relevant in its practice and a description of the history of the transmission of various extant texts along with important characteristics of these texts. This is followed by a lengthy discussion on how one practises textual criticism in the context of exegesis. An example of the utilization of text-critical skills takes 1 Thessalonians 2:7 with a focus on the word in question, “babes”. It is demonstrated, based on text-critical factors, why the word was chosen and why the word “gentle” is a close second for the translation committee. The student is taken logically through the steps and the results are justified. The information presented in this chapter is well-rounded. This chapter presents an unpretentiously readable and ample amount of information tempered by a commendable realism. Greek manuscripts, ancient translations and patristic citations are identified, and it is indicated why certain ones of the listed are more reliable than others.

As important as it is to understand the serious reason for textual criticism’s indispensability, the authors deflate any uneasiness by emphasizing that, “More than 99 percent of the original Greek New Testament can be reconstructed beyond any reasonable doubt” and the remaining variations pose no concern for “mainstream Christian doctrine” (p. 26).

Chapter two discusses the dynamics and challenges behind various translations, striving to imbibe a sense of the significance of the translations’ complexities. The student is introduced to the concepts of formal and functional/dynamic equivalence and the necessary balance that needs to exist between them. Other topics covered in this chapter are: choosing translations, translating metaphors, idioms and euphemisms, reproducing style and rhetorical effect, and inclusive language for humanity. The chapter is illustrated satisfactorily.

Chapter three is entitled “Historical-Cultural Context”. This chapter contains, specifically, the necessary tools for identifying particular aspects of the social atmosphere and historical context as the author and the audience of the text would have understood them (pp. 63-64). According to the authors, the analysis of the historical-cultural context must proceed both diachronically as well as synchronically. The authors instruct in their methodology, naming definite sources such as the Bible itself and ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman writings (pp. 68-84). Social-scientific criticism is also discussed, with caution (pp. 85-91). The institution of patronage as governed by reciprocity conventions is taken as an example, explained and illustrated by Paul’s interaction with the Philippian church and their generosity. It is unfortunate the system of benefaction was not mentioned, as this fits better with biblical examples. In this regard, appropriate references were also missing such as that of R. Saller (1982), particularly S. Joubert (2000, 2001) and A. Batten (2004). Patronage and benefaction of that time should be regarded as two distinguishable social systems with different cultural and geographical roots that are not to be equated in the modern mind.

The topic of literary context is presented in chapter four. A system of concentric layers of literary context is explained, and the student is instructed to navigate from the inner-circle of immediate context to the outer-circle of other books in the New Testament by different authors (pp. 94-102). The authors' approach is and should be compared to G. Osborne's (2006) concentric circles of logical context and his approach. This comparison immediately reveals that chapter four could have been composed more systematically and thoroughly. For instance, there is no guidance given for question formulation at the beginning inner-circle of immediate context.

Chapter five deals with word studies correctly and very thoroughly. The main terms and concepts are discussed within the bounds of sound rules. This chapter is well done. Following naturally from this topic is that of grammar in chapter six. The material is thorough yet concise, highly instructive yet readable and is filled with a good number of examples. The sidebar/chart (p. 151) entitled "Important Tasks in Grammatical Analysis" recommends itself as an indispensably useful summary tool for the exegete.

Interpretive problems are the topic of the seventh chapter. For the sake of clarity, the authors state that "issues of interpretation that are completely beyond final resolution are the exception and not the norm in the New Testament" (pp. 167-168). In this regard they are offering "advice on how to move beyond dependence on commentaries and recognize the issues involved in complex interpretive problems" (p. 168). The authors list a number of problems that may be encountered in scholarly literature and offer guidance concerning the best way to view these difficulties in light of one's own studies.

Chapter eight is a useful presentation providing a system for producing an exegetical outline of a text, not just for those with but also those without Greek training. Theology and application fill the remaining two chapters. There is a balance that needs to exist between Biblical and Systematic Theology that the authors defend by outlining the necessity and process by which legitimate theology proceeds from exegesis (pp. 227-237). The importance of the application of exegetical results is shown by the care taken to present the final chapter. It treats the extensive checks and balances necessary to application, which proceed from the totality of the exegetical endeavor and reminds the student of the importance of the Holy Spirit in the exercise. This final chapter is commendable. A short summary-review concludes the book.

The work is what it claims to be, a handbook of exegesis; that is, one presented in ten logical steps. It is clear that the book has its strengths and weaknesses. The area of literary criticism is not as strong and instructive as in other textbooks. However, text criticism and other subjects are presented very well in an engaging manner. This book should be a useful addition to students, pastors and teachers alike. I do not think, though, that select volumes in the area of exegesis need replacing. Yet Blomberg and Foutz Mark-

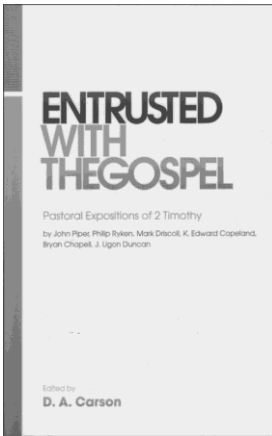
ley's contribution should be adopted as a recommended resource and consulted for its valued theoretical and illustrative insights.

Reviewed by Rev. Dr. Frank Z. Kovács, Toronto, Ontario, a trustee of Haddington House and recent Ph.D. graduate from North-West University in South Africa.



***Entrusted with the Gospel: Pastoral Expositions of 2 Timothy.* Ed., D. A. Carson. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010, 158 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-1583-5**

I was blessed by reading the book edited by D. A. Carson, *Entrusted With The Gospel: Pastoral Expositions of 2 Timothy*. It is very practical and encouraging reading for anyone involved in pastoral ministry. In the preface (p. 9-10), Carson explains that the basis of the book comes from the 2009 National Conference of The Gospel Coalition.¹ The Conference consisted of nine addresses, with six of those addresses being based on the six chapters of 2 Timothy. Though all six chapters were written by different well-known pastors, there is a good flow to the book because it is all rooted in 2 Timothy.



The first chapter, by John Piper, is based on 2 Timothy 1:1-12. The main point that Piper makes in this section is that Timothy is to “keep feeding the white-hot flame of God’s gift – of unashamed courage to speak openly of Christ and to suffer for the gospel” (p. 12). Piper states that his main point is the burden of the entire book (pp. 17-18). He explains that we feed the flame through the grace that

is in Jesus, through the Word of God, and through the promise of life in Christ Jesus. I typically relish anything that John Piper writes, but I did not find his message as inspiring as usual. However, his point is well-made that, like Timothy, we are to fan into flame the gift of God to serve Him and the church.

The second chapter is presented by Philip Ryken and is based on 2 Timothy 1:13-2:13. Ryken really grabbed my interest when he says in his introduction, “There are times – maybe every week – when you wish that you could preach the same passage again and do it right” (p. 25). That really resonated with me! Ryken explains that the section of 2 Timothy that runs from

¹ The Gospel Coalition is a fellowship deeply committed to renewing our faith in the gospel of Christ and to reforming our ministry practices to conform fully to the Scriptures. See their website at www.thegospelcoalition.org.

1:13 to 2:13 is unified by the apostle's concern for faithfulness in Christian life and ministry, amidst all its sufferings.

Ryken says that "a successful ministry is simply this – a faithful ministry, faithful to Jesus Christ in life and doctrine, and faithful in safe-keeping and living out his idol-destroying gospel" (p. 28). He gives an example of someone who was faithful in ministry, namely Onesiphorus, who 1) loved the men who preached God's Word, 2) was courageous, and 3) was fruitful where he went.

Ryken gives three illustrations of faithful work: a soldier, an athlete and a farmer. He quotes J. N. D. Kelly's summary that Christian leaders "should cut out of their lives anything, however good in itself, which is liable to deflect them from total service to Christ" (p. 38). I was very challenged by that remark. He exhorts us to remember Jesus Christ and the faithfulness of God. Philip Ryken's message is interesting, easy to read, and extremely practical. His thoughts and applications follow the text naturally. This was my favorite chapter.

Mark Driscoll is the third contributor and his message is taken from 2 Timothy 2:14-26. Driscoll underscores the fact that problems will arise from within the church, and this will make it difficult for those in ministry leadership. He writes, "They [Paul and Timothy] were acutely aware of the various problems in local churches, but rather than standing at a distance to criticize the church, they threw themselves into the needs of churches and served tirelessly" (pp. 53-54). We meet Christians today who criticize the church but who do nothing to enhance her glory.

Driscoll explains that the church is made up of three kinds of people: 1) positives, 2) negatives and 3) neutrals, which is one way of categorizing people. He further explains:

Positives are people who do gospel-things in gospel-ways for gospel-reasons. . . . Negatives are people who do ungospel-things in ungospel-ways for ungospel-reasons. . . . Neutrals are Christians at varying stages of their sanctification who are not leaders but rather easily influenced followers. (pp. 57-61)

Because all three kinds of people are in the church, Driscoll says that we need to work at staying positive.

Mark Driscoll is extremely practical and helpful in his advice for pastors in dealing with difficulties that arise in the church. His message ends by outlining twenty marks of a positive ministry. Marks that I particularly noted were: 1) Positively emphasize what you are for, not what you're against, 9) Positively rejoice that God rules the church, 13) Positively seek righteousness, faith, love, and peace with urgency, 17) Positively suffer patiently like

Jesus, and 20) Positively use your energy to win converts, not arguments (pp. 64-88).² This chapter is well worth reading again.

The fourth contributor is K. Edward Copeland. His message is taken from 2 Timothy 3:1-9 and is on pitfalls and parodies of gospel-centred ministry. Edwards reminds us that time is winding down. He writes, "Since Christ appeared we have been living in the last days". Edwards states that there will be troublesome people and difficult days to come. He says, "According to the text the last days will include seasons that will be difficult, troublesome, and hard to bear. . . . In the last days the center of all existence will be self instead of God. . . . They will love self to the point of deification" (pp. 92-93). Certainly, we see self-love to the point of deification in Canada.

Copeland exhorts us to get the facts of the gospel straight. He explains, "We have people giving opinions about what they think the news is. We have television personalities posing as reporters who twist, spin, interpret, and omit facts to further their own ideological agendas" (p. 97). He warns that we must not allow this type of mindset to infiltrate the church.

I really liked one of his last exhortations. He writes, "If you are a proclaimer of the gospel, you are on the winning side. Act like it. Why are you so distressed about who is in office? God is on the throne, and he is not up for reelection. Why are you so distressed about the lies propagated by evil men when you have the truth? Preach the truth. That's where the power to make a difference is" (pp. 101). I think that this is something we all need to take to heart!

While Copeland makes some good points, I thought this was the weakest chapter in the book. In my opinion, he goes overboard by using so many metaphors and illustrations that the power of the Word of God is lost. I found this extremely annoying.

Bryan Chapell's chapter deals with 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5, and his heading is "Preach The Word". Chapell contends that in order to preach the Word of God we must hear the voice of God. He says that God speaks to us in His Word and His Word is the Scriptures. He explains, "Because it is God-breathed, Scripture is God's very Word to us" (p. 109). Chapell mentions something that all pastors need to remember when he says that "the power is not in our eloquence or zeal but in the Word itself" (pp. 115).

Chapell also says that we should see the hand of God as we preach. He says that the Word releases us from the idolatry of self. He explains, "Whenever we become the judge of what the Bible should say. . . then we substitute our wisdom for God's" (p. 119). The Word also releases us from the isolation of self. Thus, the Word is transforming.

Chapell further explains that we will know the heart of God as we prepare to preach the Word. He writes, "If we will simply ask two questions of any passage – what does this text tell me about God and what does this text tell me about humanity – we will always discover redemptive truth glimmer-

² The numbers in this section correspond to the points that Driscoll made.

ing” (p. 122). How true! He makes another excellent statement in this section, “*All Scripture is always revealing the voice, hand, and heart of God. And when you have the voice, hand, and heart of God, you have Jesus*” (p. 122). Wonderful!

The last contributor is J. Ligon Duncan, and he looks at 2 Timothy 4:6-22 with the theme “Finishing Well”. In his introduction, he exhorts pastors to “determine and commit yourself to read, re-read, live in, and pray the Pastoral Epistles of Paul. This is so important because the Pastorals give us apostolic instruction for life and ministry” (p. 125). This is very wise advice for pastors.

Duncan warns us about two errors that prevent the church from finishing well. He writes, “The first error claims that *if the church is going to be an effective witness to the world in its own time, then its message must change.*” And again, he says, “The second error . . . says we don’t need an updated message, . . . but *what we do need if we’re going to be really successful, if we’re really going to reach our world and our culture, are new methods*” (p. 126). The first error is committed by liberalism and the second by many evangelicals. This section is very thought provoking, especially concerning the methodology of evangelicals. Duncan says:

If we are calling people to come to Christ, deny themselves, take up their cross, and die daily and we adopt a methodology to “bring them in” that says “have it your way,” then our methods will utterly contradict our message. . . . James Montgomery Boice used to say, “What you win them by, you win them to.” (p. 129)

I found this very insightful and challenging!

Duncan exhorts us to cross the finish line. He says Paul is telling Timothy, “Do ministry with your eye on the finish line” (p. 137). He also states that if we are to finish well, we need to read good books. He quotes Spurgeon’s famous sermon, when he said:

The apostle says to Timothy . . . “Give thyself unto reading.” The man who never reads will never be read; he who never quotes will never be quoted. He who will not use the thoughts of other men’s brains, proves that he has no brains of his own. . . . We are quite persuaded that the very best way for you to be spending your leisure, is to be either reading or praying. (p. 139)

This is solid advice!

Duncan warns us that we may have to stand alone if we are to finish well. He explains, “Faithfulness in gospel-ministry is no guarantee that people will not oppose you and that fellow Christian workers won’t abandon you” (pp. 144-145). Duncan finishes his message by asking how Timothy [and pastors] could finish well. He answers by saying, “Not with his own resources but

with the grace of God. Grace. His favor” (p. 148). I quite enjoyed Ligon Duncan’s chapter as he demonstrates a deep understanding of the Word and of the church of Jesus Christ and what we must do to finish well.

Entrusted With The Gospel ends with a General Index and a Scripture Index, which I greatly appreciated. I would highly recommend this book for all pastors to read. There is much wisdom, sound instruction, encouragement and warning in it to enable us to fight the good fight of the faith to the glory of God!

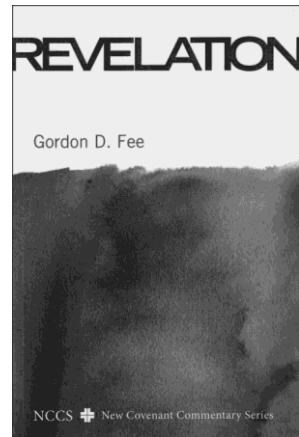
Reviewed by Ross Morrison

Revelation. Gordon D. Fee. New Covenant Commentary Series. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011, 332 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-60899-431-1

Any post-Enlightenment commentary on the Book of Revelation has the hard task of engaging a genre of literature that is more or less alien to the majority of contemporary society. Dr. Gordon Fee has made a notable contribution in this regard. His exegetical commentary is one in the New Covenant Commentary Series, edited by M. F. Bird and C. Keener, and is designed specifically to elucidate “the impact of the text upon the faith and praxis of contemporary faith communities”. Fee in his preface, invaluable to understanding his purpose, states that his intention is to help readers hear the Word of God and gain a sound theological understanding (p. ix). Specifically regarding the Book of Revelation, the reader should begin to comprehend the sovereignty of God and of His Christ in the universe and that this necessarily leads to worship. “John recognizes that truly Christian theology should lead to doxology” (p. x). Fee makes it clear from the outset that he will not document his interaction with other scholarly approaches (p. ix).

After a brief introduction, the book follows a regular commentary style. The material is arranged logically according to Fee’s “Outline of Revelation” (pp. vi-vii). The main work is annexed with a select bibliography and an index. The exegesis is astute yet non-technical and is highly readable, with a good comprehensibility provided by a notable balance of synthesis.

When introducing the material, Fee correctly states that Revelation, John’s Apocalypse, is the blending of “three kinds of literature – apocalypse, prophecy and letter – into a single whole piece” (p. xii). The Book of Revelation is characteristically apocalyptic yet differs on the two points of pseudo-



nymity and concealment. John is clearly identified as the author of the work and its contents are not to be sealed up for a later time. The reason for this is the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit on earth with the body of believers. John is conveying the prophetic message of God as revealed in eschatological fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy for the edification of believers on the brink of persecution by the Roman Empire. Hence, reports Fee, Revelation is not only apocalyptic but also prophetic in genre. In addition, John's Apocalypse, according to Fee, is also a letter, and therefore it relates two important historically contextualizing matters. There exists an age-long Holy War in which believers are called to participate, one that will lead to their suffering prior to God's judgment. Fee states that these two themes, Holy War and suffering, are central and run throughout the book as keys to its understanding (pp. xv-xvi). In the introduction, Fee also deals with authorship as well as provenance. Since many popular writings have imposed fabricated eschatological schemes upon the Book of Revelation, he ends with an appropriate plea for "the necessity" of exegesis to undo misconceptions in exchange for a healthy interpretation of Revelation's contents.

As mentioned, Fee's exegesis is consistently well-balanced (keeping in view its purpose) and is not diverted by the speculative aspect of symbolism and representation as Fee recognizes that "the apocalyptic genre allows for a more fluid use of images" (p. 70).

A striking and welcome characteristic of Fee's commentary is the value and role of the Old Testament in John's Apocalypse for the purpose of interpretation. This is highlighted throughout as specific features in the text echo quotations, allude to stories and reflect typologies and symbols. Fee only suggests, however, what that text allows and does not force any connections. These then are related to immediate themes and the key themes of the book. For instance, John's vision of the throne in heaven (Rev. 4:1-6a) described as the source of thunder and lightning echoes Exodus 19:16-19 and so relates the two covenants to each other, unifies God's people and adds further substance to the theme of worship around the throne (p. 70). Another example is the first four angelic trumpets of seven at 8:6-13, which clearly echo Exodus 7:14-12:30 and the plagues sent upon Egypt and support the theme of God's judgment of the Empire and the salvation of His own people (pp. 121-126). These judgments are paralleled by the seven bowls of God's wrath contained in chapters fifteen to sixteen with the same Old Testament allusions to the plagues on Egypt (pp. 207-227). John describes Christ at 1:12-16 and 19:11-16 using allusions to Daniel 7 and 10, which fully exalts Jesus as Lord (pp. 15-18, 274-276). Importantly, the allusion to Leviticus 26:11-12 is a vital echo for Revelation chapter 21:1-8, the vision of the new heaven and new earth, for it brings into perspective the enduring purpose of the covenant: that God Himself will dwell with His believing people (p. 293).

Dr. Fee's synthesis of the material provides a helpful grid of interpretation. For instance, he states that the simultaneous visions of heaven and of

earth are key to understanding the full import of chapters four to six (p. 66). Also, the seven seals, 6:1-8:5, Fee understands as the way John chose to convey the reason for God's later intervention (p. 91). Furthermore, Fee sees the opening of the seals as an overture to "all the major themes that will appear" (p. 91), that is, "all the major themes of the 'divine drama' are here presented in a sequential way through the four horsemen, the martyrs, and finally the earthquake. The rest of the book will provide the actual drama that spells out the story" (p. 91). At the more "puzzling point" of the two agricultural harvest metaphors, chapter fourteen in John's Apocalypse, Fee again offers a synthesis of the material and draws the chapter into relation with the salient elements of the rest of the book for the purpose of clarification. Fee recognizes that "contextually one can make very good sense of the overall structure of the book by seeing these two corresponding visions as a deliberate prelude" (p. 200) to the judgment on Rome and the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem. Read in this way, Fee points out that a chiasmic ABBA structure governs the material, initially the negative element, AB (demise of Rome and last battle/end of evil), followed by the positive element, BA (new Jerusalem and renewal of all things) (pp. 200-201, 207-306). This reading provides a meaning that is based on the structural integrity of the material. This is a good indication of solid exegesis. Again this highlights the main themes touched on throughout, that is, the sovereignty of God and His Christ, God's inescapable and righteous judgment, and the promise of salvation long awaited.

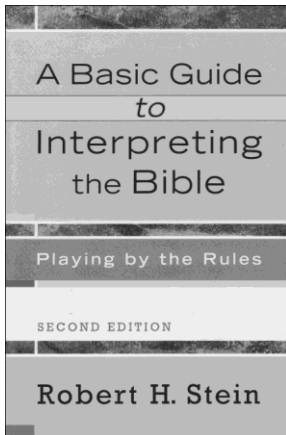
The approach taken in this commentary on John's Apocalypse has invested exegetical effort in particularly inner-biblical and literary-structural areas and has thereby yielded very astute hermeneutical results. Fee's commentary provides a valuable bridge between a distillation of ongoing academic discussion and the community of faith. He is rightly called by Prof. D. A. deSilva a "master exegete". Without a doubt, pastors, teachers and the laity alike should utilize this volume.

Reviewed by Frank Z. Kovács

***A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules*, second ed. Robert H. Stein. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011, 228 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-3373-5**

In the preface to the first edition, included in the second, Stein indicates his chief aim is to provide "in a nontechnical way a text that will help the reader understand what the goal of reading the Bible should be and how this goal can be achieved" (p. ix). Although academic density has been removed, this does not diminish the value of Stein's work, which serves as the hermeneutic text for several graduate and undergraduate programs (p. viii) and provides guidance for biblical interpretation for God's Church.

Stein follows the traditional pattern of describing the accepted rules for biblical interpretation before presenting genre specific guidelines via case studies in the book's later chapters. Interestingly, he does not use the term "historical-grammatical" (even though this is the method he advocates) to describe the preferred method of interpreting the Bible; instead, he opts to



concentrate on terms such as author-centred, text-centred and reader-centred. Stein's choice of vocabulary is perfectly acceptable. However, it may cause readers familiar with more advanced academic works a bit of time to adjust to his orientation. Where the book shines is in the second chapter, where he gives detailed definitions to words like meaning, implication, significance, understanding and interpretation (pp. 30-55). Stein presents the well-known Bible study scenario in which discussion degenerates with people saying, "What does this passage mean to me?" (p. 1) He indicates that the biblical author had one intended meaning, but there are multiple implications to the

passage. This principle is well explained, and the book's second chapter alone is of value for setting the ground rules of biblical interpretation encountered in any seminary or Bible study.

The book's second part provides explanations and scriptural examples to help readers to gain experience in reading and identifying the Bible's one meaning and multiple implications. Stein calls biblical genres "games" and outlines rules of interpretation for ten styles of biblical writing. It is at this point that the book's brevity (only 208 pages) and the conscious avoidance of non-technical language limits the depth with which the book can be used. For example, the chapter on Hebrew poetry totals fourteen pages, which can only serve as an introduction to the parallelism.

Robert H. Stein, retired professor of New Testament Interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has spent his entire career teaching students to read, study and interpret the Bible with honesty and integrity to the author's intended meaning. This book is an excellent update of his earlier edition. It will work well as an introduction to biblical interpretation at the lay level and can be used as an introductory text to hermeneutics at the college level with the addition of suitable practice and explanatory material.

Reviewed by Steven C. Adamson, adjunct professor of church history at Ligonier Academy, Orlando, Florida as well as its dean of distance learning. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in historical apologetics at Highland Theological College, Scotland.



***Biblical Greek: A Compact Guide.* William D. Mounce. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011, 212 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-310-32606-9**

William Mounce is perhaps the best recognized name in biblical Greek studies today. He has generated several Greek language introductions and workbooks, all with a distinctively student-friendly character. His latest contribution to the field is his diminutive, yet thorough, “mini-grammar”.

Mounce’s intention is to place a helpful tool into the hands of Greek students, in particular, those who have finished their first year of *koine* Greek. He has sensed, correctly, I think, the need for a handy review grammar for those who are now embarking upon more advanced study. Surprisingly complete in its scope (even boasting a lexicon!), the grammar can serve as an on-the-go resource for translation work and personal study. Although primarily designed for student use, the concise, well-organized volume also fills a pedagogical gap for teachers who include a summary review at the onset of the second-year studies.

The *Guide* delivers, first of all, good value to the student. In a day when even the flimsiest paperback (especially in biblical studies!) may tickle the \$30 mark, this little volume represents a welcome bargain at \$9.99 (US). It is well bound and sharply printed on quality paper. It comes complete with a heavy vinyl slipcover, which will protect it from the real-life tumble of rucksack/computer bag transport. Its small size makes it a svelte passenger, even in a top shirt pocket. The marketing department did their homework.

The book’s organization is intuitive. It begins with brief discussions of the many particles of the Greek language, those small building blocks that surround the larger clusters of noun and verb use and morphology. Here Mounce gives complete charts and lists to aid the student. The next main section discusses the Greek noun, highlighting the logic of case usage. Once again, the treatment is brief yet complete with easy-to-decipher charts. Verbal systems and syntax are left for the end and account for the lion’s share of material. The *Guide* is organized, then, not only in terms of logical clusters of information but also in terms of complexity. The organization makes sense for both simple reference and teaching sequence, reflecting Mounce’s acquaintance with both classroom and subject matter. Well done.

In sum, Mounce’s *Compact Guide* is a tidy piece of work, representing value and functionality for students, pastors and teachers. Good things do indeed come in small packages!

Reviewed by James P. Hering

Systematic Theology

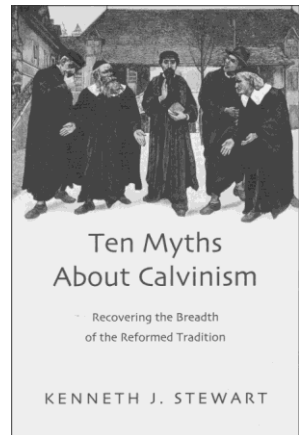
***Ten Myths About Calvinism: Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition.* Kenneth J. Stewart. Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011, 300 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-3898-1**

"Who speaks for John Calvin?" was a question I raised in my biography of Stanford Reid, that evangelical Calvinist in the academy. Seven years later, having recently celebrated the five-hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Reformer, the real John Calvin is being cited by a wide swath of interpreters. All this buzz as the so-called "young, restless, and Reformed" crowd remind us that John Calvin is still a figure to conjure with, his influence and impact greater than ever.

Enter the debate Ken Stewart, a professor at Covenant College, Chattanooga, and a former minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. His recently published (by InterVarsity Press, no less)

Ten Myths About Calvinism responds to a widespread concern as to what John Calvin really taught. The subtitle tells it all: "Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition." Stewart has little truck with doctrinaire Calvinists of a narrow variety, any more than he can tolerate the broadening of Calvin wannabees who make him into a twenty-first century guru for their favourite foibles.

He starts with "Four Myths Calvinists Should Not Be Circulating (But Are)." The four are basic to Calvin mythology, aided and abetted by his so-called followers. From his knowledge of subsequent developments in Geneva (in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), where Stewart is an expert, he extrapolates a scenario that is balanced and realistic. He places Calvin in the context of the other Reformers, as he also spells out the realities of a conflicted Geneva that took a long time even to make Calvin a citizen. A balanced chapter on the place of predestination in Calvin's thinking is a convincing riposte to those who, like the political economists Weber and Tawney, think predestination is the sum and substance of Calvinism. He convincingly demonstrates that the acronym "T-U-L-I-P" is a late (and inadequate)



summary of Reformed doctrine. And a trenchant chapter on Calvinism and revivals is one of the best things I have read on the subject.

Throughout the book Stewart uses a wide range of material. The footnotes – mercifully immediately below – are almost as valuable as the main body of the text. He does not adhere to a “True Reformed canon.” Boettner’s *Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* and the writings of David Steele and Curtis Thomas are critically (but appreciatively) examined, while recent writers such as Graeme Murdock, Elsie Anne McKee and Jane Dempsey Douglass make a contribution to the dialogue. Stewart is phenomenally well-read and provides many fascinating details as he gives the Calvin story a broad-brush treatment.

The “Six Myths Non-Calvinists Should Not Be Circulating (But Are)” are, predictably, that Calvinism is anti-missionary, antinomian, leads to fascism, deadens the creative arts, resists gender equality, and (as in South Africa) fosters racial inequality. In all of these misrepresentations, Stewart is fair in representing two sides of the issue – sometimes almost overstating the anti-Calvinist position for the sake of argument – and irenic, admitting sometimes that Calvinists have not always been the best representatives of their own position and have done considerable harm to their position by extremism.

A final summary chapter, “Recovering Our Bearings: Calvinism in the Twenty-First Century,” a paper that Stewart gave at Dordt College, might perhaps have been saved for a whole volume on its own, though its inclusion here has obvious benefits. It is an unusual backward view of the interpretation of Calvin from the twenty-first century, in stages, to the French Revolution. By starting with the current Calvin renaissance among twenty-somethings and working through the past two hundred years, it traces the genealogy of Calvin’s groupies in a way that makes each generation responsive to the previous one, history turned on its head.

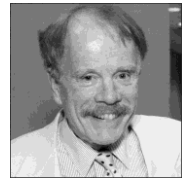
This book would be useful for a college-age or university educated study group. The questions and the suggested readings at the end of each chapter stimulate reflection and raise serious issues. The book assumes a degree of historical sophistication and theological acumen which is perhaps more common in the UK and the United States, particularly in the south. Canadian students in secondary schools, with a deplorable lack of gripping history instruction usually coloured by political correctness, might be at a loss to grasp some of the majestic sweep of Stewart’s quick summary statements of major historical issues over the centuries.

But for anyone who recognizes the importance of the historical as a way of discerning the issues that confront the church today, this is invaluable reading. And much of it represents a call to recover in our churches today – and particularly those in the Reformed tradition – the stupendous but balanced achievement of John Calvin. So much of what Stewart writes is beautifully crafted and nuanced. The chapter about Calvinism and revivals should be on the agenda of every Christian community today, as should his state-

ment on the place of law in the life of the believer. His balanced comments about gender equality may cause some ripples, but it is eminently fair to all sides of a controverted issue and represents Calvin well.

It is gratifying to know that since the book appeared in early 2011 sales have been brisk. It has been an offering of InterVarsity Press' "Book-of-the-Month" club, which encourages one about the recent state (and depth) of that publisher's book list. Theological seminaries could do worse than use it as an introductory text in either church history or systematics courses. It is hoped other theological schools will follow their example. These are all grounds for encouragement. Perhaps even in Canada Christians will address some of these concerns – which are not limited to Calvinists alone – and in doing so, provide ballast for a church that too often has lost its historical moorings and has found itself sinking in a morass of subjectivity and "feel good" religion.

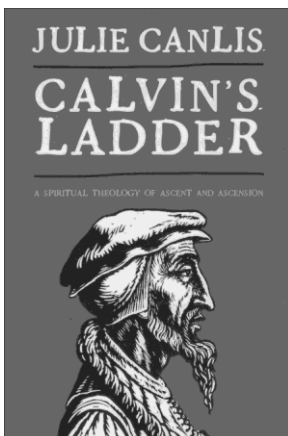
Reviewed by A. Donald MacLeod. Don MacLeod is research professor of Church History at Tyndale Seminary. He recently was the recipient of a D.D., this time from Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia. He is a widely published writer and biographer, including W. Stanford Reid: An Evangelical Calvinist in the Academy.



***Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension.*
Julie Canlis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, 286 pp., paper.
ISBN 978-0-8028-6449-9**

Those who have read and studied Calvin's thought have long wondered if there is a central doctrine at the heart of his Christian theology. While many Christians hold to the popularly-accepted view that predestination lies at the centre of his theology, no serious Calvin scholar today accepts this. The more likely candidate for a central doctrine in Calvin's theology is the person and work of Jesus Christ. Calvin scholars such as Alister E. McGrath, Ronald S. Wallace, and Charles Partee have argued that this lies at the heart of his systematic and practical theology.

The recent book by Julie Canlis confirms the centrality of Christology for Calvin by focusing on his spiritual theology and praxis. Her thesis is that fellowship with the triune God through our participation in Christ by the power of the Spirit is at the centre of the Christian faith for Calvin. This is because it is at the centre of



the biblical teaching on the Christian life. This doctrine is found throughout church history, from early church fathers, such as Irenaeus and Augustine, to later theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas.

The title of this book highlights the fact that for Calvin the Christian life consists of believers' union with the Son via His participation in our humanity through His incarnation, and our participation in the benefits of His redemptive work culminating in His ascension. Canlis notes that Calvin synthesizes the two movements of descent and ascent into one activity. As God, the Son, has come as a man (in His descent) to take our place, so He also leads us back to the Father (in His ascent) so that we may have communion with God. This participatory communion is not merely the goal of the Christian life, but also the means of living this life in the present age.

Canlis argues that Calvin's use of the concept of participation [*koinonia*] is "biblical, rigorous, coherent, and has a surprising amount of muscular flex" (p. 11). In order to enjoy the life of Christ, believers must be engrafted into Him. This is not accomplished through human effort but by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit. Human life as God meant it to be is thoroughly pneumatological, and thus relational, in that it requires the work of the Spirit to draw us into the Trinitarian fellowship in Christ. Yet, in his exposition Calvin maintains the distinction between the divine and the human. It is in Christ, Who has descended to our humanity and ascended back to the Father, that we receive fellowship with the divine life without embracing human deification. We remain creatures and God remains God, but we find our true identities in our communion with Him.

In chapter one, Canlis gives a brief historical overview of the concept of ascent and participation from classical Greek philosophy to medieval scholasticism. She notes that the Platonic view of participation involves ontological monism and the soul's flight from the material world to the divine realm. Although the early church fathers, such as Origen and Augustine, attempt to break with this pagan thought, they incorporate some aspects of this into their theology. Even Aquinas views the soul's ascent to God as an innate capacity, not necessarily requiring Christ.

Calvin broke with the medieval synthesis of pagan and Christian thought by making Christ central and necessary for our restoration to God. Rather than viewing Christ as One Who strengthens our innate abilities to rise to God, Calvin understands Christ as the necessary mediator between us and God. He does what we cannot, so that through our participation in Him by the power of the Spirit, we might join in Christ's ascent to fellowship with the Father.

Chapter two deals with creation and participation. For Calvin communion with God is the foundation of creaturely existence. All creation is related to God through the mediation of the Son by the power of the Spirit. Since the world is made by God and dependent on Him for its existence, the notion of participation denies any notion of absolute independence for creatures. The biblical teaching that Christ is the firstborn over all creation (Col. 1:15) es-

establishes Him as both the foundation and orientation of creation. The meaning of all things, including human identity (*imago Dei*) and life, is found only by participation in Christ. Specifically, the notion of the image of God in humans cannot be seen as merely as endowment of humanity, but must also be understood as a relationship. Given this notion of creaturely participation, Canlis shows that for Calvin the fall into sin breaks the communion with God. This results in a loss of our proper identity and orientation and that of all of creation.

In chapter three Canlis presents Calvin's understanding of the Son's incarnation as opening up our participation in God by the power of the Spirit. The Trinitarian economy of salvation is focused on the person of Christ, which encompasses His life of obedience and His death on the cross. His ascension into heaven reaffirms both His rule over creation and His intercession for His people. We are united to Christ, not by our own efforts, but by the power of the Spirit so that we might once again experience the fullness of delight that God intended for us in creation. For Calvin the goal of our salvation is "our *koinonia* with the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit" (p. 118).

Chapter four deals with various aspects of the Christian life as a life of communion with God. First, it is a life of discipleship in which we live in communion with God, and we are given the mission of calling others back into this communion. Second, it is a life of adoption, where our participation in the communion of the Father and the Son prompts us to call out to God as "Father." Canlis notes the centrality of adoption for Calvin's theology. Adoption ties the benefits of salvation to believers' union with Christ via participation in the Spirit. When adoption is diminished (as has been the case in some articulations of Reformed theology), the Spirit tends to be depersonalized, becoming merely a bridge to receiving the redemptive merits of Christ. Calvin keeps the benefits of Christ bound to His person, so that the work of the Spirit consists of bringing the church to live in Christ.

Canlis claims that Calvin's emphasis on ascent and participation are most celebrated in his theology of the Lord's Supper (p. 159). God comes to us so that we might have communion with Him as we participate in Christ. The Eucharist does not create a new reality, and certainly does not bring Christ's body down to us, but it seals all the benefits of salvation which we have in Christ.

In chapter five Canlis presents Irenaeus' theology of ascent. She is not arguing for a relationship between his and Calvin's understanding of participation, but she wants to establish that there is a similarity in the way that they develop a distinctively biblical theology of human participation in the Trinitarian life. Irenaeus forges his doctrine over against both the Gnostic denial of the goodness of creation and the Stoic claim of secular self-sufficiency. Although his theology has different opponents than Calvin, his affirmation is the same: that human fulfillment is found in union with the triune God by

means of participation in Christ by the power of the Spirit. Our ascent to God is made possible by God's descent to us in the incarnation of the Word.

Canlis' concluding chapter draws upon the theological insights of both Irenaeus and Calvin to emphasize the central importance of the doctrine of participation in Christ. No matter which cultural pressures the church faces nor which heresies it confronts, this doctrine is at the heart of all systematic theology. Canlis recapitulates this by noting the common moves made by both Calvin and Irenaeus in the three key doctrines: the goodness of creation and of human creatures when viewed as participating in God, Christ as the mediator for this participation both in creation and in the re-creation His redemption accomplished, and the church as the institution created by God to disciple believers into their creaturely life of communion with God as directed toward the eschatological reality found in the ascended Christ.

In my view, this is the best exposition yet on the centrality of Christ for Calvin's theology and for all Christian theology. Canlis has done a careful and thorough job of showing the Trinitarian and Christocentric nature of Calvin's thought. These themes are both brought together in the doctrine of participation – communion with the Father, by participation in the Son, through the power of the Spirit. Since I consider so much of Calvin's theology thoroughly biblical, this book also unfolds the central place of both doctrines in Christian thought and spiritual life. I find Canlis' exposition especially helpful in the following areas: the importance of Christ's mediation to understand correctly the nature and goal of creation and humanity, the importance of our adoption in Christ as central for understanding all facets of salvation, and the nature of the Lord's Supper as sealing our participation in Christ by the Spirit.

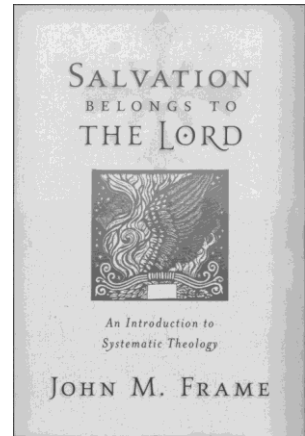
While I have some quibbles with some details of the book, overall it is a feast for those wanting to learn from the theology of our Reformed forefather but also for those seeking enrichment in the theology of Christian life in general. The book is a challenging read, but for students, pastors and teachers who persevere, it will yield a rich harvest of great value for theological insight and spiritual formation.

Reviewed by Guenther ("Gene") H. Haas, professor of Religion and Theology, Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario and the author of The Concept of Equity in Calvin's Ethics (1997). Dr. Haas is a minister of the Presbyterian Church in America.



***Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology.* John M. Frame. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006, 382 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-59638-018-9¹**

John Frame has certainly been one of America's prolific authors in the field of systematic theology. His *The Doctrine of God* garnered the Gold Medallion Award from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association and belongs to his series of four volumes in his Theology of Lordship series. Frame has also written on apologetics, Cornelius Van Til and worship. Generally speaking, as a writer Frame endeavours to interact with Scripture, traditional Reformed formulations of theology and the world of today. His effort to take seriously our time and place in history is evidenced by what and how he writes and interacts with subjects.



Salvation Belongs to the Lord has emerged as the expanded print form from the Institute of Theological Studies (ITS) course “Foundations of Systematic Theology” produced in 2004 by John Frame. This is an excellent course and certainly one of the finest theological courses made available by ITS, Grand Rapids, now Christiancourses.com. Frame tells us in the preface (p. ix) that this particular book is not actually part of the volumes in his Theology of Lordship series, which are aimed at treating some of the *loci* of theology at an in-depth level. Nonetheless, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord* operates thematically under Frame’s organizational centre of lordship and has similar stylistic elements of approach – “exegetical, Reformed and focused on the lordship of God and of Jesus Christ. As in the Lordship books, three-fold distinctions abound here [normative, existential and situational], some that you won’t find elsewhere” (pp. ix-x).

The book is aimed for “college or seminary level” study and is to be for “beginners in theology, people who are seeking a basic introduction” (p. x). My own assessment is that, yes, it could be used at select seminaries, but as for “college”, I think it depends on what one means by “college”, some yes and some no. Personally I do not consider it as easy going as J. I. Packer’s *Concise Theology*² or now an older work, Bruce Milne’s *Know the Truth*³ or

¹ I am grateful to William Dunlop of Westminster Theological College, Uganda for first exposing me to this new text and kindly giving a copy to me.

² J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1993).

³ Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth: A handbook of Christian belief* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1982).

T. C. Hammond's *In Understanding Be Men*⁴. True, Frame has used a much more conversational style – it is unique to find the first person singular used in a work of systematic theology.

Frame has chosen to begin his first chapter with “God, the Lord” rather than with Scripture. The chapter does have a Van Tillian ring about it for sure, and it clearly develops the author’s theme of Lordship Theology. From there he proceeds to “God as Three in One”, then in chapters four and five to the subject of Scripture. I did find it curious that the subject of “infallibility” is not discussed but only the concept of “inerrancy” (pp. 67-68). Here I would make one suggestion for a future edition of this work. A brief glossary of terms at the back of the book would help beginners with some language and terminology and perhaps allow the author not to “clutter” his text unnecessarily if that were his choice. I do not believe this would have added significantly to the work’s overall size. Chapter six, “What is Theology?”, comes at a very unusual juncture. Frame clearly addresses this placement order and provides his rationale (pp. 72-73). As a professor, I am not convinced and would likely have my students begin with chapter six if this were a class text. I completely concur with Frame, “You have to be a good exegete to be a good biblical and systematic theologian, but the opposite is also the case: you must be a good systematic theologian to be a good exegete or biblical theologian” (p. 82). Amen!

Chapters seven through twelve cover familiar *loci* of theology: “Man, the Image of God”, “Sin and Evil”, “God’s Covenants”, “Who Is Jesus Christ?”, “What did Jesus Do?” and “The Holy Spirit”. They are helpful and very engaging. I think it was particularly helpful to title chapters ten and eleven as questions and then answer them. The chapter on the Holy Spirit (pp. 159-171) is written in a most irenic manner and actually shows honesty and relevance to the realities of studying theology in the twenty-first century, unlike many of the older works which appear “time bound”.

Part two of *Salvation Belongs to the Lord* contains thirteen chapters, beginning with “Election, Calling, and Regeneration”. Here Frame tackles the theme of *ordo salutis* or “subjective soteriology” in an even-handed “senior level” theological text. There is a great clarity in his writing here in a short compass. He concludes the section on “regeneration” with a beautiful statement: “When people’s lives are changed from disobeying God, we can know, though not infallibly, that the Spirit has been at work, giving new birth” (p. 187).

Mention should be made of the chief confessional and catechetical sources which Frame incorporates into his chapters. The largest number of

⁴ T. C. Hammond, *In Understanding Be Men: A Handbook on Christian Doctrine for Non-Theological Students*, orig. 1936 (London: Inter-Varsity, 1952, 4th ed.). See also Louis Berkhof’s *Systematic Theology*, 1932, 1938, 1996, which in its many editions has served numerous theological colleges and seminaries around the world as a primary theological textbook. Also the briefer work by Berkhof, *Summary of Christian Doctrine*, 1938.

such citations are to the Westminster Confession and Catechisms (almost twenty such references), then a few references to Chalcedon, Nicaea, Dordt, Heidelberg and the Second Helvetic. Clearly Frame sees value in using Westminster to illumine the *loci* he is writing about. Under chapter fifteen, “Justification and Adoption”, Frame incorporates the brilliant Westminster Larger Catechism definition of justification and the same for adoption (pp. 201, 205). He then proceeds to explain such and incorporates judicious biblical reference and support. On occasion he also makes reference to theological writers, generally referring to conservative Reformed writers, with obvious appreciation to John Murray but also others on occasion, such as Roger Nicole. Frame will also interact negatively with others for teaching purposes, such as Friedrich Schleiermacher. The pages are not covered with endless quotations or references to theologians; rather, he practises great restraint and selectivity.

Of particular interest to me were chapters eighteen through twenty-one, which deal with ecclesiology or the doctrine of the church. Frame is willing to develop theological writing with a certain perceptive, creative edge, yet he is ever respectful of the classical world of Reformed systematic theology. I believe he helps to develop very positively the whole discussion of the marks of the church in a very wholistic manner. Readers will find that he incorporates missional vocabulary (p. 253) and explores the subject of the means of grace with a very broad perspective (perhaps a slight indebtedness here to Wayne Grudem). His selection on prayer under the means of grace is very powerful (pp. 267-273) and surely worthy of specific study and reflection; I believe it is one of the finest brief theological treatments I have read on prayer. Under the mode and subjects of baptism, Frame presents the various perspectives and states his own personal positions. Yet at the same time, he offers a new Reformed and ecumenical conclusion that is in keeping with his book *Evangelical Reunion*⁵.

Frame’s second to last chapter, “How Then Shall We Live?”, is an attempt to return ethics and theology to be studied together. He sees this was done by Calvin in the *Institutes* and in many of the great Reformed catechisms. Frame asserts, “All theology *is* ethics” (p. 315). This chapter is not a specific ethical study list, for example, capital punishment, abortion, etc., but rather points to the large theological framework. Surely this approach is in order in an introductory text.

Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology is a most helpful introductory text to use in teaching systematic theology within the conservative and evangelical community. If used in colleges, it will need to be carefully assessed as to the specific college setting and college-level training being undertaken. The book has an irenic tone throughout. It has an abundance of Scriptures to study, and it will introduce the readers to some

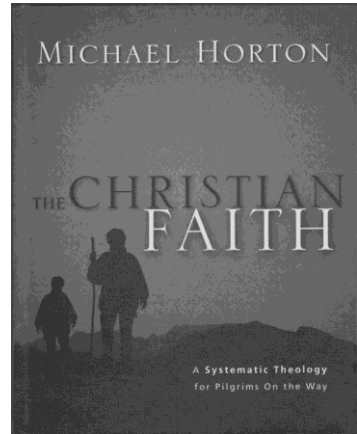
⁵ John M. Frame, *Evangelical Reunion* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991).

classical theological formulations. The Scripture, subject and name indices are helpful as are the suggestions for “Further Reading”. A user-friendly glossary, as I have already noted, would be appreciated. The writing style is engaging and shows depth of reflection.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

***The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way.* Michael Horton. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011, 1052 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-310-28604-2**

Michael Horton is a talented theologian and communicator, able to write for those with delicate digestive systems, as well as for the more robustly constituted. This one-volume, one thousand-odd paged systematic theology is somewhere in the middle of the field. Effort had been made to make it accessible – tables, snappy headlines, a buoyant, cheerful style, the inclusion of questions for discussion – but the treatment of some of the issues will on occasion provoke puzzlement, and appreciation of nearly all of them requires a good bit of prior knowledge and understanding. This is hardly avoidable.



Horton emphasises, as many do at present, the importance of not neglecting narrative, salvation history and theodrama. Reading this, I rather feared for the worst. But I needn't have. There is a five-chapter introduction, having to do with method and approach. Here Horton makes it clear that he is wedded to the biblical category of the covenant as the fundamental theological theme, together with the Calvinian theme of the knowledge of God. Scripture is “covenant canon”. This, at least, serves to anchor his material in an overarching biblical idea.

In Reformed theology there has been and still is some tension between covenant theology and a more logical and metaphysical approach, between Cocceius and Voetius, say. I reckon that Horton does a fair job in mediating between these approaches, or at least masking where each leads to if left untethered to the other. It's hard to tell whether his heart is with Cocceius and his head with Voetius, or the other way around. The general outlook of the book, in which the proposal is that the several *loci* of systematic theology be treated covenantally, suggests Cocceius, but the way the *loci* come together, a fairly conventional way it has to be said, one in which we soon find ourselves discussing divine simplicity and the communicable and incommunica-

ble attributes of God, suggests Voetius. Maybe the voice is Cocceius's voice, but the hands are of Voetius.

Nevertheless, this emphasis on covenant, and its consequences for systematic theology, requires a more thorough treatment than Horton gives it. The link section, "The Nature of Doctrine: from Scripture to System", is disappointing, because the author considers not that but "From Scripture to Doctrine", and the question of what makes a set of doctrines systematic is left dangling in the air. Obviously the idea of the covenant does not do the trick here. For systematic theology differs from redemptive history, but Horton does not allow himself to tell us how. Is what makes systematic theology systematic simply the intelligibility and coherence of that history? Or is it some deeper coherence, something stronger than logical consistency but weaker than logical deducibility or mutual entailment, an organic connectedness? I do not think that Horton gives us an answer. Odd that, writing a book with "systematic theology" in the title and not telling the reader what the title means.

The covenantal impetus that the treatment of the doctrinal topics receives obviously works better in some cases than others. In the case of the doctrine of God it hardly works at all, nor ought we to expect it to, given Horton's emphatic endorsement of the divine freedom. The same may be said of the treatment of the lineaments of the God-man, or the ordering of the divine decrees. But of course it works well with the incarnation, the *ordo salutis*, and the church and sacraments.

So after the first five chapters, the other twenty-four of the work are so many doctrinal essays, arranged in a fairly conventional way, frequently employing the covenant motif, but with no underlying rationale for the whole. Horton's style is to work from the exegetical foundations of a doctrine, keeping his eye on the history of theology, weighted in favour of Calvin and the Reformed Orthodox, and more of Hodge than of Shedd, and on contemporary theologians from Kline and Vos through Gunton to such as Jenson, Moltmann and Pinnock. He weaves together numerous quotes from these and a wider variety of other present-day sources in both illustrative and authority-conferring ways, in the familiar North American manner. One cannot but admire the industry and determination evident in all of this.

I'd say that the result is a pretty reliable and an appealing treatment of Reformed theology. There are things that occasionally cause the eyebrow to rise, but I'm certainly not going to bare the teeth of any toothcomb in order to nit pick over what is here, or to pontificate about and lament over what might have been but isn't. Instead I thought it might be worth reflecting on two or three general questions which considering Horton's work have prompted.

Horton's habit of citing from a wide range of contemporary theological authors has been mentioned. Many other conservative writers do the same. The practice has strengths and weaknesses. Horton makes clear, in some cas-

es, points of disagreement as well as of agreement. I suspect that the practice is not reciprocated, though I've done no research on this. His procedure shows generosity and catholicity of spirit, and echoes the important Reformed theme that truth is God's truth wherever it may be found. But the dangers for the unwary or untutored are obvious. And there's a connected consequence. I suspect that the number of Horton's very contemporary citations will date the book sooner than if he had concentrated more exclusively on the classic, primary theological texts, catholic and reformed, those that are formative and have stood the test of time.

There is a further linked point that is also of interest. I think that it is fair to say that Horton writes in the same voice, in the same key and register, no matter what he is discussing. There is never a suggestion that he might be surer of the grounding and intelligibility of some doctrines rather than others, that some are clearer than others, more difficult than others, more puzzling, more speculative, harder to swallow, more inherently mysterious than others. But to adopt this uniform approach seems to depart from the normal patterns of human belief, in which some beliefs are more confidently held than others, some more central in the web of belief, some more peripheral. On this matter, Horton's mentor John Calvin seems to have a rather different, somewhat mixed approach, though I am not suggesting that it was intentional. In the *Institutes* and many of his doctrinal and polemical works he seems utterly confident, a kind of one man Reformed magisterium, (frankly, a know-all), while in his exegetical remarks in the commentaries he frequently offers alternative readings, expresses doubts about what a passage may mean, marginally preferring one interpretation over another, and so on. If systematic theologians like Calvin and Horton are human too, ought not their products to be contoured in a more human way? If some doctrines are hard to be understood, and some hard to take, why not say this and say why?

A final general comment. Horton's systematic theology, like many another's, is very much an intramural product, consisting of lots of conversations among exclusively Christian theologians. The general features or movements of current culture only merit discussion insofar as they have been taken up by or unconsciously reflected in the published work of members of the guild. As far as I can see the numerous works in systematic theology recently produced among conservative theologians (Grudem, Frame, Reymond, Kelly and now Horton) all seem to play on the same field and in more or less the same way, so that while we all may have our favourite, there is, frankly, little to choose between them, except depth of pocket or size of shelf. Is this, a kind of Theological Correctness, what contributes to the feeling of many that systematic theology is inherently dull? I hazard the hope that when the present cycle of systematic theology writing has run its course, the next cycle, while thoroughly conservative in orientation, will be wider, broader, more expansive, allowing some genuine, substantive differences of opinion and so, if nothing else, widening consumer choice.

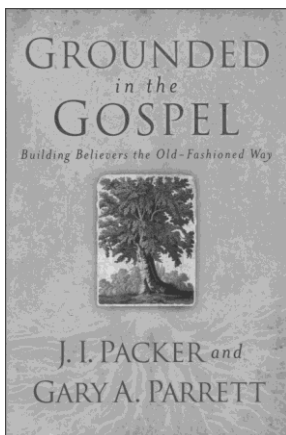
Perhaps such a change will be forced on new authors whether they like it or not. Ought not a modern systematic theology to engage with Islam? (The word is not in the index of Horton's book.) "Do Christians and Muslims worship the same God?" "Christian providence or Muslim fate?" I wonder how Michael Horton's overarching theme, the theme of covenant, would work when considered in the company of the other "Abrahamic religions"?

Reviewed by Paul Helm and reprinted by permission of the author and also the editor for www.reformation21.org. Helm is a teaching fellow at Regent College, British Columbia and resides in the United Kingdom.



***Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way.* J. I. Packer and Gary A. Parrett. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010, 238 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-6838-6**

J. I. Packer of Regent College and one of his former students Gary Parrett, professor of educational ministries and worship at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, have joined forces to produce a rationale or manual for implementing a comprehensive program of catechesis in the local church. They



define catechesis as "the church's ministry of grounding and growing God's people in the Gospel and its implications for doctrine, devotion, duty, and delight" (p.182). *Grounded in the Gospel* is a call for renewed commitment to catechesis, for, "Where wise catechesis has flourished, the church has flourished. Where it has been neglected, the church has floundered" (p. 184).

They begin with a survey of the biblical basis for catechesis and go on to discuss various aspects of catechetical instruction. Packer and Parrett value input from church history and thus survey catechetical practices in the Ancient, Reformation and Puritan periods. The authors are particularly concerned with what is taught and provide a thorough discussion of the content and structure of a catechesis programme – the goal being to proclaim Christ. They also provide a helpful perspective on various aspects of the "how" of effective catechizing.

The book does an excellent job of making clear the gospel is the beginning and the end of catechesis. It also makes clear that instruction involves the implications and applications of the gospel for sound doctrine, a Christ-like lifestyle and a vital relationship with the living God. They are concerned

with content and process. They write, “Being really and truly serious, and tenacious, about substantive content must be matched by equal concern and endeavor for sound educational process, the stimulating of critical thought and the formation of discerning powers of judgment” (pp. 76-77). They consider it wise to learn from past catechetical practice but insist that it must have a contemporary relevance. Catechesis must discern and relate to the competing counter-catechesis of the culture that is at work in the lives of congregants.

The authors summarize the issues and insights discussed throughout the book in a proposal for structuring and implementing ministries of catechesis in local evangelical churches. In overview the model consists of three stages. “Procatechesis” is an introduction to Christianity for inquirers or seekers. “Catechesis Proper” is concerned with formal grounding in the gospel and is focused on the Apostles’ Creed, the Decalogue and the Lord’s Prayer. “On-going Catechesis” is concerned with further growth in the gospel. Their desire is not so much that readers will adopt their insights and implement their model, but that they will stir up interest in and implementation of catechetical ministries as a vital component in renewing and strengthening today’s church.

Grounded in the Gospel stimulates thoughtful reflection on the various aspects of the church’s educational ministry and thus serves as a helpful resource for anyone developing a comprehensive programme to train and equip followers of Christ.

Reviewed by Howard M. McPhee, the former pastor of the Springdale Christian Reformed Church, Bradford, Ontario, where he served for seventeen years.



***Don’t Call It a Comeback: The Old Faith for a New Day.* Ed., Kevin DeYoung. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, 252 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2169-0**

I was always looking for a book that tackled the basic articles of the faith, such as justification and sanctification, but also the ethical and practical issues, such as vocation, homosexuality and worship; a book that communicated in a way that resonated with contemporary Christians, especially young adults; a book that was alive, unapologetically theological and from an evangelical and Reformed perspective; a book I could give to young people heading off to university or the workplace. *Don’t Call It a Comeback* is the resource I needed.

The book is the work of eighteen contributors, all involved in some form of evangelical and Reformed ministry. The lone Canadian contributor is author/blogger Tim Challies based in Oakville, Ontario. The authors were all in

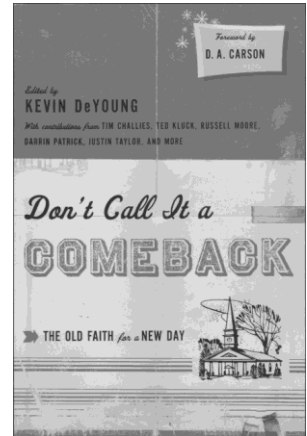
their twenties or thirties when the project began. The goal is not to be original but to outline the scriptural teaching on the Christian faith and life in a clear and engaging style that relates to contemporary readers. Some of the other authors include Jonathan Leeman, Ted Kluck, Justin Taylor, Thabiti Anyabwile and Tullian Tchividjian.

The first section, “Evangelical History: Looking Forward and Looking Back”, contains two chapters. Kevin DeYoung in a chapter entitled “The Secret Of Reaching The Next Generation” reveals the secret as walking with God and with people. Unpacked this means that those “who want to pass the faith to the next generation will: Grab them with passion. Win them with love. Hold them with holiness. Challenge them with truth. Amaze them with God” (p. 22). This is excellent advice and often overlooked. I would add that those who are wholeheartedly committed to this secret will at the same time be passionate about how we relate to contemporary culture (compare 1 Cor. 9:19-23). The second chapter is a helpful historical survey of evangelicalism.

The second section, “Evangelical Theology: Thinking, Feeling, and Believing the Truths That Matter Most”, outlines some of the essential doctrinal articles of the faith in chapters on the following topics: God, Scripture, the gospel, new birth, justification, sanctification, kingdom and Jesus Christ. The third section, “Evangelical Practice: Learning to Live Life God’s Way”, covers some key ethical and practical issues such as: vocation, social justice, homosexuality, abortion, gender confusion, the local church, worship and missions. The authors are aware of and informed by the best of evangelical and Reformed theology that has gone before them and provide sound and winsome formulations. Each chapter is not intended to be an exhaustive treatment of the subject. Those looking for a more detailed or nuanced treatment are referred to the first-rate suggested readings at the end of each chapter.

Don’t Call It a Comeback is a good book. I would echo Donald Carson’s suggestion, “I hope and pray that many Christians will buy multiple copies of the book so as to distribute it with generous abandon” (p. 14).

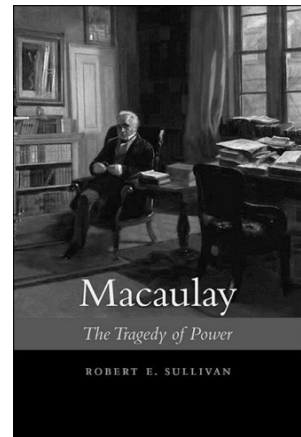
Reviewed by Howard McPhee



Historical Theology

***Macaulay: The Tragedy of Power.* Robert E. Sullivan. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 2009, 624 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-674-03624-6**

Four years ago the celebration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire highlighted a group of so-called “Saints” who were the driving force behind the legislation. “The Clapham sect” – named after the village south of London where many of them lived – were evangelical Christians committed to a bold and moral political agenda. Henry Venn, their founder and father of the rector of the local church, gathered around himself a galaxy of socially prominent and religiously committed individuals: William Wilberforce, Henry Thornton, James Stephen, Hannah Moore, and Zachary Macaulay. They had come under the influence of Charles Simeon, the Cambridge vicar who brought renewal to the Church of England at the end of the rationalistic and aggressively pagan eighteenth century.



The next generation of the Clapham sect veered off into different territory. Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster: these were grandchildren of the Clapham sect. The road from Clapham led inexorably to Bloomsbury, it would appear, and the brilliant intellect and moral suasion of the first generation became strikingly altered in the next (and beyond). One of the best known of the following generation of the Clapham sect was Thomas Babington Macaulay, son of Zachary. And a 2009 biography, written by Father Robert Sullivan of Notre Dame University, has attempted to place the famous historian in the context of his father and family, noting the interaction between the generations, father and son acting and reacting on each other. It makes fascinating reading for Evangelicals and particularly parents dealing with the handing on of their faith to the next generation.

As Sullivan tells it, Zachary Macaulay was determined to shape his son “into a prodigy who would grow up to lead the conversion of England into a godly nation” (p. 20). In spite of the mother’s wish the child be sent to a local private (“public” in British parlance) school, the father insisted that he be

shipped off, at the age of twelve, to a small academy outside Cambridge taught by an apostle of Simeon. As Tom went up to Cambridge, the distance between father and son became greater. Naturally gifted, with powers of expression that were the envy of his father, Thomas began to live a life, at least according to Sullivan, on two levels, maintaining what he describes as “a double game.” His father watched anxiously and powerlessly from the sidelines his son’s meteoric rise to influence, wealth, and power. But he had long since left the simple faith in which he was raised. Hence the subtitle: “The Tragedy of Power.”

Power is indeed what, according to Sullivan, it was all about. Having privately renounced his birthright of faith, Macaulay sought authority through his own soaring ambition. He went to India as a civil servant, and the common use of English in the subcontinent is directly a result of his insistence. He came out in favour of genocide as he dealt with the unrest in both south Asia and Ireland. He was profoundly racist and as his fame grew, and his income grew to levels unheard of by others who also made their living writing books (with an eventual peerage as the final reward), Macaulay became increasingly withdrawn from closer attachments, preferring his two sisters as confidants, to the point that Sullivan hints at a possible impropriety in their relationship.

The electors of Edinburgh were not so blind to his duplicities. After seventeen years in Parliament, at an election in 1847, Macaulay was roundly defeated by a businessman who had played a prominent part in the Disruption of the Church of Scotland three years earlier. Charles Cowan (whom Sullivan describes simply as “an ornament of the Free Church of Scotland” [page 269]) trumped Macaulay in the polls because, it was stated, “Christian men ought to send Christian men to represent them.” The final tally was a demonstration of the rage of Lowland Scots against not only Macaulay’s imperious ways but the tin-eared legislators of London who were incapable to understand their struggle over a decade to establish the spiritual independence of the Kirk. In my forthcoming biography of Cowan, titled *The Man Who Beat Macaulay*, I demonstrate the opposing, consistently Reformed, ethic that brought Charles Cowan (a cousin of Thomas Chalmers) to the House of Commons as a founder of the Free Church of Scotland. For the next twelve years he provided a Christian voice in the House of Commons, defending the honour of his father’s first cousin Thomas Chalmers, and espousing, amid the ridicule of the House, a strict sabbatarianism.

Reviews of Sullivan’s book have been, as always with reviews, widely diverse as they assess how credible is his denouement of a Victorian idol. Macaulay’s image had been carefully burnished by his nephew, George Macaulay Trevelyan, in one of the great biographies of a Victorian worthy. David Bebbington, in the March-April 2011 issue of *Books and Culture* (pp. 34-5), stoutly defends Macaulay and sees Sullivan’s assessment as a denigration of Macaulay’s Evangelical heritage. I would rather see Sullivan’s exposé, if

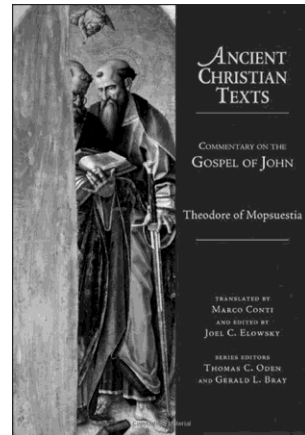
it can be called that, as a recognition of the difficulty yes, of parenting, but more the failure of the Clapham sect to pass on to their brilliant and articulate progeny a strong commitment to the same Christian values for which they stood and powerfully articulated. What all the talent of Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster – to name only three of their gifted but godless descendents – could have done in establishing a truly Christian Britain can only be guessed. What we have today is the ultimate result of their defection, a stridently secular and anti-religious Britain. More's the tragedy.

Reviewed by A. Donald MacLeod

***Commentary on the Gospel of John.* Theodore of Mopsuestia. Translated by Marco Conti. Ancient Christian Texts. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010, 172 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8308-2906-4**

Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428) was a proto-Nestorian; as such he tended to emphasize Christ's humanity though without denying His deity. He was a close friend of John Chrysostom, who bullied him into dropping his engagement with a young woman. The two were disciples of another proto-Nestorian, Diodore of Tarsus. Theodore is best known for his literal interpretation of Scripture, somewhat of an anachronism in his day, though he occasionally employed allegorical interpretation, just as allegorical interpreters occasionally employed literal interpretation. His commentary on the Song of Solomon was condemned by his disciple Theodoret of Cyrrhus as unfit even for the mouth of a crazy woman, but for the Nestorian mystic Isaac of Nineveh he was "the Blessed Interpreter." Theodore was posthumously condemned as a Nestorian at the Second Council of Constantinople (553), a council that was meant to appease the Monophysites in the Eastern half of the empire, and many of his writings were subsequently destroyed. No one should doubt the resolution of Justinian I, the emperor who convened the council.

Theodore's commentary on the Gospel of John is of major interest because the Gospel dwells so strongly on the deity of Christ and Theodore has been seen as minimizing this aspect of Christ's person. The Antiochene school, of which he was a member, was certainly inclined to draw too much of a wedge between the Son of God and the Son of David; this was their reaction to the heresy of Apollinarius, who mingled the Son of God and the



Son of David into a third entity. The present translation is by Marco Conti, a professor at the Ateneo Salesiano and the Richmond University, both in Rome. He translates from the Syriac translation of the no longer extant Greek original, correctly believing the surviving Greek fragments of Theodore's commentary are a translation from the Syriac translation. His scriptural translations are from the Syriac translation of the commentary which employs the Peshitta. The commentary must have been widely read in the Nestorian monasteries of the Christian East.

Theodore approaches his task with due seriousness. Right at the outset he sets himself against the Arian Asterius, who wrote a now lost exposition of John and who denied the deity of Christ. It is hard to escape the conclusion that Asterius is the subconscious agonist of the commentary, as the Gnostic Heracleon was of Origen's commentary on the Gospel. He is in frequent dialogue with the Arians, for instance in his comments on 5:19; 6:57; 10:18.

The author of the Gospel is for Theodore clearly the apostle John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He preserves a tradition about John, found nowhere else to my knowledge, wherein the apostle approved the writings of the other Evangelists but criticized them as ignoring to some extent Christ's deity and omitting important miracles like the turning of water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana. At the request of his disciples John immediately undertook the writing of his Gospel. Theodore finds him to be the most precise Evangelist – "this took place in Bethany across the Jordan" (1:28) – and the only thoroughly chronological one.

Theodore's is a fast-paced commentary which does not spend much time with John's prologue, but his remarks on it are fully orthodox. The Son was begotten by the Father but not in such a way that we can say He came after Him or that He is less divine than the Father. His comments on the Holy Spirit's manifestation as a dove at Christ's baptism show that he regarded the Spirit as equally divine with the Father and the Son. In general his interpretations of the abstract teachings of the Gospel are tedious, and he additionally seems impervious to John's contrast between light and darkness. He has frequent recourse to Paul's epistles, especially Romans, producing a curious blend of Pauline and Johannine theology.

Theodore is sensitive to the eschatological ideals and confusions of Jesus' day. Learning that John the Baptist was not the Messiah the Jews asked him if he was the Prophet, the selfsame entity. When Nathanael called Jesus the Son of God he meant He was the Messiah, not yet realizing the Messiah would be God Himself. Nathanael was impressed that Jesus had seen him under the fig tree before He saw him in the flesh, but he would soon see the angels ascending and descending upon Him. This, Theodore tells us, was so he would understand that Jesus was the creator of the angels.

Theodore's exegesis is marked by a common sense lacking in many contemporary commentaries. The paralytic who was healed by Jesus, who was warned not to sin again, and who subsequently revealed to the Pharisees that

it was Jesus who had healed him, was not moved by a thankful desire to make Jesus known but was a betrayer of his own benefactor. Theodore is refreshingly non-contemporary in another sense as well. After the miracle of the loaves and the fishes Jesus instructs His disciples to gather up the remaining food so that nothing will be lost. This was so they could enjoy it for a few days longer and also witness to Christ, not because He was afraid of food going to waste. He contrasts the lavishness of Jesus' miracle with the Old Testament miracles of the manna and the widow's oil in which the recipients were given no more than they needed.

Theodore often resorts to paraphrase and amplification. When the Jews gathered around Jesus he states that "they surrounded him and kept him in the middle" (p. 97). Not infrequently he divulges unusual insights. The curious Jews who wanted to see the resurrected Lazarus "expected to hear something extraordinary from him, like someone who comes back to civilization from a strange and remote land" (p. 108). He focuses on the reclusiveness of the Saviour, an essentially public figure. Throughout His career He was not interested in looking for glory or desiring exposure. He did not run after the crowd; the crowd ran after Him. He consistently regards Galilee as pagan and as therefore despised by the Jews. Christ introduced a third world religion after paganism and Judaism. Paganism was false because it had many gods, and Judaism was false because it had no knowledge of the Trinity. The definition of Christianity is given in John 17:3: the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He sent.

The Lord's prayer, recorded in chapter 17, is viewed by Theodore as a continuation of the Upper Room discourse, disguised in the form of a prayer. When Jesus replied to the soldiers who came to arrest Him and they fell to the ground, they did so because the Savior was supernaturally forcing them to fall. After the Resurrection Thomas was the most open in his resistance to the miracle, but none of the disciples believed it until they had proof. In his comments on John 21:18-19, Theodore includes the tradition of Peter being crucified with the head downward.

As to the much vexed question of his Christology, Theodore certainly makes use of the phrase "the man assumed" (*analēphthenta* in the Greek) to describe Jesus of Nazareth. This was an unguarded phrase and can give the impression that Jesus was possessed by God just as Judas was said to be temporarily possessed by Satan. Yet at one point he envisions a mixture of God and the man assumed, an unusual accomplishment in an Antiochene, and his piety is never in doubt.

Theodore's book is a valuable commentary on John's Gospel but an even more valuable window into certain aspects of late antiquity. In his discussion of John 10:17 he reveals himself a believer in only the soul and the body, as against the once popular Christian (and Platonic) designation of man as spirit, soul, and body. He subscribes to the late antique deprecation of the body in his statement that Jesus, wearing a towel about His waist during His washing of the disciples' feet, was unashamed of His "immodest attire" (p. 117).

Conti's translation is an adequate one, and he is not to be blamed for certain disquieting typos in the text. He includes many helpful footnotes but does not interact sufficiently with the Syriac original. When he does so it is always edifying: Theodore intends Jesus' words to Peter in John 18:11 – "Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" – as declarative rather than interrogative, a possibility that is not followed in the Syriac translation itself.

The present commentary on John is one of several volumes in IVP's Ancient Christian Texts, a sequel to the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. One small drawback to both series is the use of double columns to include more words on the page so that when the book is open one is looking at, in reality, four pages. The new series, which will be shorter, is in many respects the better of the two, mainly in that it allows the ancient commentator to speak at length and without interruption. The forthcoming translation of Cyril of Alexandria's commentary on the Gospel of John, positing a Christology at the opposite end of the spectrum from Theodore's, will be especially instructive.

Reviewed by Theodore Sabo, an assistant pastor in Washington State, USA, and a Ph.D. candidate with North-West University of South Africa. His thesis is on the origins of Eastern Christian mysticism. Mr. Sabo is a member of both the North American Patristics Society and the Canadian Society of Patristic Studies.



***The Westminster Assembly: Reading Its Theology in Historical Context.* Robert Letham. The Westminster Assembly and the Reformed Faith Series. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009, 399 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-87552-612-6**

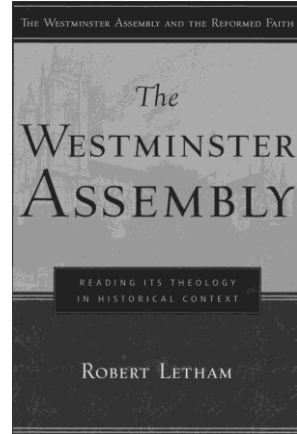
For anybody studying the Westminster Assembly, its documents or elements of its theology, Letham's book will prove an invaluable resource in two ways. The first is that it sets the Assembly in its context, showing what concerns were important to it and why. The second is that it will be a useful bibliographic source. I expect the book will be even more useful to students for its introduction to other Reformed writers and to the history of the Assembly than for Letham's own penetrating insights. The author teaches at the Wales Evangelical School of Theology and authored the award-winning work, *The Holy Trinity* (P&R, 2004).

This book is unlikely to become popular reading. It is not filled with bright new ideas to catch people's imaginations and stir their zeal in the

Lord's service. It is a detailed, carefully referenced academic study, which should be on the shelves of every school's theological library.

Underlying Letham's *Westminster Assembly*, and referred to throughout, is Van Dixhoorn's recent doctoral dissertation, "Reforming the Reformation"¹. Van Dixhoorn gathered and set into readable form a more complete set of the minutes of the Assembly than has been available. This gives Letham a base for a more rigorous analysis of the Assembly and its actions than has been possible previously.

One point is key – and usually neglected – the Westminster Assembly was a seventeenth century English assembly (pp. 2-3, 11). The main issues which shaped its thinking were English. Letham points out that the Westminster documents were adopted in Scotland and North America and largely ignored in England. Consequently, most theologians approached the confessional documents from North American or Scottish Presbyterian perspectives, not from the perspective of seventeenth century England. However, to understand the Westminster documents correctly you need to see them in their own English seventeenth century context.



He begins with a survey of the historical context in England, from Henry VIII to the establishment of the Assembly, which shaped the concerns of the Assembly. As Letham points out, they are often not the concerns of later interpreters.

Letham then gives a summary of the theological context, beginning with English thought. He goes on to consider the sources of the Assembly's doctrine, highlighting James Ussher and the Irish Articles of Religion (1615) and the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. He quotes with approval Warfield's conclusion that the Assembly took from the Irish Articles the general arrangement of their Confession and much of the treatment of subjects such as the Holy Scripture, God's Eternal Decree, Christ the Mediator, the Covenant of Grace, and the Lord's Supper. "These chapters might almost be spoken of as only greatly enriched revisions of the corresponding sections of the Irish Articles."²

Defence of the Thirty-Nine Articles was the first task assigned the Assembly. Only after Parliament's alliance with the Presbyterians in Scotland

¹ Chad B. Van Dixhoorn, "Reforming the Reformation" (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Cambridge University, 2004). Letham notes that "this will soon be superseded by the publication of a multivolume work containing the minutes and all extant papers and correspondence of the Assembly and its members", p. xvi. Publication will commence in 2012.

² B. B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 59, as cited in Letham, p. 63.

was the Assembly directed to produce a new confessional document. Letham concludes this section by going through the Thirty-Nine Articles, showing that almost every article was reflected in the Westminster Confession (pp. 71-83). Of the articles which were omitted, often it was because they were simply no longer an issue. He also traces and stresses connections with Reformed thought on the Continent and conscious and abundant reference to earlier writers back to the church fathers (pp. 84-98).

Turning to look at the work of the Assembly itself, Letham makes a critical point: the Assembly was not a monolithic group with a strong consensus on everything discussed. "The Assembly documents need to be understood as compromise documents. Compromise is inevitable in a group of 150 people" (p. 111). Far from casting out the dissidents, they tried to allow varying views in many areas. For example,

. . . vivid differences surfaced in the extensive debate on justification when revisions to the Thirty-Nine Articles were being considered. Many divines (roughly one-third of the recorded speakers) argued that it is improper to say that Christ's active obedience is imputed to us in justification. . . . Eventually the approved revision referred to Christ's "whole obedience and satisfaction being by God imputed unto us." This statement satisfied the majority, who held to the imputation of Christ's active obedience. However, it was couched so as to avoid any idea that Christ's obedience is divided, an idea unacceptable to those who opposed the imputation of his active obedience. It also allowed Christ's obedience to be equated with his satisfaction of divine justice on the cross. It was a compromise enabling both sides to claim it as their own. . . . The Assembly clearly committed itself to regard the active obedience as imputed in justification, but the minority who disagreed were not run out of the Assembly. They continued to participate actively and productively. (p. 113)

"In short, the Assembly, within limits, was inclusive rather than exclusive. It sought to reach the widest measure of agreement possible, within acceptable limits of doctrine and practice" (p. 117). In this it adhered to the beliefs and practices of the Reformers who, at least for the most part, did not voluntarily separate from the Roman Catholic Church but worked within it until they were driven out. They understood that the unity of the church is a critical part of faithfulness in doctrine. Though that stress on unity has almost vanished today in evangelical circles, the Westminster Assembly still understood this and worked very hard to avoid dividing the church.

On the other hand, there were lines that could not be crossed. Letham mentions the distinctive teachings of the Church of Rome, the deviations which had led to the Reformation (pp. 117-118). Again, though Luther and Melancthon are cited with approval as authorities, "The Assembly distanced

itself here and there from some aspects of Lutheranism. This is particularly evident in the Confession's chapters on the sacraments" (p. 118). Then, "The Assembly is stronger in its opposition to Anabaptism. This is especially notable in the sections on the church and the sacraments, but it also surfaces in connection with lawful oaths and vows . . . and on the right of private property" (p. 118).

The most important opposition, though, will surprise most of us.

Fourth, and most vehemently of all, is the immense concern expressed in the Assembly against antinomianism, the belief that Christ had fulfilled the law in its entirety on behalf of his people, so that it no longer had any significance for them. This was the real perceived threat, not only to the church, but also to civil society . . . A standing committee on the antinomians was set up, and it was constantly reporting to the Assembly, questioning prominent antinomians, arranging for their books to be burned, and sending them to Parliament for penal sanctions to be enforced. These were the main opponents the Assembly had in mind throughout its work. (p. 119)

The Assembly also took a stand against Arminian and Amyraldian teaching, though Letham notes that the Assembly included hypothetical universalists who were evidently regarded differently than the Amyraldians and were accepted (p. 119).

The latter two-thirds of Letham's book is devoted to examination of the various areas of doctrine set out in the Confession and Catechisms. While it is a useful commentary on these documents, the primary value of this section continues to be its exposure of the context of the Assembly, as Letham discusses some of the debates and the sources of the teaching of the various members. At times he adds an "excursis" on some portion. For me, some of these were among the most interesting parts of the book. Excursis 2, for example, traces the development of the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin from Calvin to Westminster (p. 206 ff.). Excursis 3 looks in some detail at the early debates on justification (p. 250 ff.).

While Letham actively defends the Assembly against its modern critics, he is not a slavish admirer. He does not hesitate to point out statements or sections in which he believes a different emphasis would have been better. Readers will differ in their assessment of these friendly criticisms.

I noted two typographical errors. On page 159, at the beginning of the third sentence, WCF 3.1 should be WCF 2.1. On page 287 Letham wrote, "In 18.3, the Confession asserts that assurance is not so of the essence of faith that a true believer may wait long for it." Actually, the Confession asserts "that assurance is not so of the essence of faith *but* that a true believer may wait long for it" [emphasis added]. Omitting the "but" reverses the sense.

It would have been helpful if the author had regularly included cross references to the Shorter Catechism with those he makes to the Confession and Larger Catechism.

These are minor defects in a wonderfully helpful book. It would be invaluable if it only reminded lovers of the Confession that it is not meant to be interpreted rigorously to exclude others who differ in small ways. However, it offers much more. It's my pleasure to recommend it to your attention.

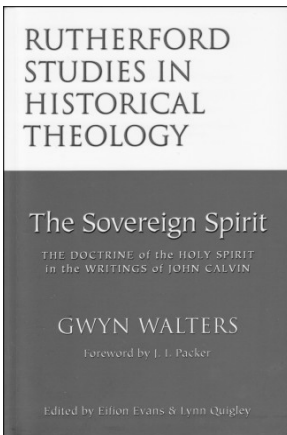
Reviewed by Donald A. Codling of Bedford, Nova Scotia. He is the Stated Clerk of the Eastern Canada Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America.



***The Sovereign Spirit: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Writings of John Calvin.* Gwyn Walters. Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology. Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2009, 253 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-946068-89-0**

This book is substantially the Ph.D. thesis presented to Edinburgh University by the author in 1949. However, the fact that over half a century has since passed ought not to diminish its value. Eifion Evans points out in the editorial preface that in the intervening period studies in Calvin's teaching on the Holy Spirit are few.

The work is thoroughly researched and is replete with primary quotations from Calvin's *Institutes*, commentaries, sermons, letters and tracts. These quotations help to provide an excellent picture of Calvin's teaching and show that the Holy Spirit is prominent in all aspects of his theology. Authors such as Owen, Warfield and Smeaton are referred to with due respect. There is a good table of contents and an extensive bibliography but unfortunately there is no index.



Calvin was sometimes challenged by certain contemporaries regarding the doctrine of the Trinity. His reluctance to satisfy strident critics was mainly due to the fact that he did not regard the creeds of the church as having primary authority. However, he was thoroughly Trinitarian. He de-

sired that people should not rest in mere doctrinal statements but that they should know a vital relationship with the Father, the Son and the Spirit through the Word. Walters says, "It could be claimed that Calvin excelled his predecessors in his refusal to hesitate in attributing complete aseity to the Holy Spirit as well as to the Son . . ." (p. 10).

The author observes that “the secret testimony of the Spirit is acknowledged as one of Calvin’s distinct contributions to the problem of authority in religion”. He says that it is the Holy Spirit Who enables the believer to recognize the authority of Scripture, and he quotes from the *Institutes*, showing the teaching that the Word “bears upon the face of it as clear evidence of its truth, as white and black do of their colour, sweet and bitter of their taste” (p. 40). Walters admits that others, including the Fathers such as Augustine and Reformers such as Luther and Zwingli, speak of the testimony of the Spirit to the truth of Scripture. He says that in Calvin’s case it came to take “a cardinal place in his system and is integral to his whole thought”. This did not mean, however, that Calvin lacked an emphasis on external factors as well.

On page forty-five we are provided with a good quotation from Calvin on hearing a sermon or a reading from the Scripture: “When we come to hear the sermon or take up the Bible, we must not have the foolish arrogance of thinking that we shall easily understand everything. But we must come with reverence, we must wait entirely upon God, knowing that we need to be taught by his Holy Spirit, and that without him we cannot understand anything that is shown us in his Word.”

Calvin of course emphasized the work of the Spirit in all aspects of the application of redemption. Walters speaks of his teaching, that repentance not only follows faith but is produced by it, as being, in the view of many, a Copernican revolution in the sphere of experience (p. 74). We are reminded, however, that this teaching is not without precedent. Augustine had expressed a similar sentiment in the words, “I would not seek thee had I not already found thee” (p. 77).

Walters asserts Calvin’s emphasis on faith as a gift of the Holy Spirit. He points out the Reformer’s acute awareness of the opposition of a sinner to pure grace. With regard to experience, the sinner stumbles over the word *sola* in *sola fide*. It is thus one of the greatest works of the Spirit “to break down the antagonism to sheer grace which is found in man’s pride”. With regard to sanctification as well as justification, the believer is indebted to the Spirit of God. In Calvin’s words, “Christ is never where the Spirit is not.”

Calvin ascribes full place to the work of the Holy Spirit in all aspects of the believer’s life, and he would not support the view that a Christian lives a defeated life until a certain moment when he becomes suddenly victorious. There is a good discussion on prayer. In this context the author observes that “the principal work of the Spirit is faith; and the principal exercise of faith is prayer” (p. 126).

When he comes to the discussion of predestination, Walters notes that this subject is not developed until late in the *Institutes*, following a comprehensive examination of the experimental aspects of the Christian faith; the author notes, “He does not deal with it in a cold calculating manner.” In other words, the subject is dealt with in the context of the Holy Spirit’s saving work.

There is an important section on the subject of Calvin's doctrine of the Spirit in relation to subsequent teaching on the Spirit, notably among Puritans and Quakers (pp. 177-199). Calvin was a theologian of the Spirit, but at the same time he was a theologian of the Word. It is the Word of God which is the touchstone of the Spirit. Fox and the Quakers would reverse this order. Puritans such as Owen, Goodwin and Sibbes were one with Calvin on this matter. The volume would serve as a corrective of many extravagant views of later times.

The final chapter discusses the relevance of Calvin's teaching on this subject for the present. This Reformer's emphasis on the authority of the Word and the Holy Spirit's sovereign work are indeed of paramount importance. There is need for an emphasis on the Word of God and the application of it to the heart by the Spirit. Calvin provides a great example of a Reformed Charismatic.

This book is very suitable for pastors but also for anyone able to read serious literature on biblical matters. The style is very readable and one can dip into the book at any point. It would be very worthwhile to have on any five-foot bookshelf.

There is considerable literary interest in Calvin and the Reformed faith today. Walter's book deserves to have a place among the best of such works. The description of Calvin as a theologian of cold and unflinching logic is quite wrong. This book effectively shows that the Reformer was truly a theologian of the Spirit.

Reviewed by William R. Underhay, a retired minister of the Free Church of Scotland, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. He now makes his home in Montague, PEI. Rev. Underhay has been a regular reviewer for the Haddington House Journal.



***The Legacy of the King James Bible: Celebrating 400 Years of the Most Influential English Translation.* Leland Ryken. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, 265 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-1388-6**

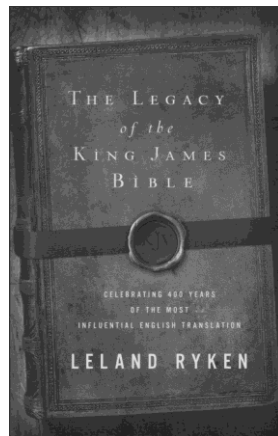
Leland Ryken is eminently qualified to write this celebratory work on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the first publication of the Authorized Version or King James Version of the English Bible. Ryken is professor of English at Wheaton College but also a very noted author in the field of the Bible, being an editor of the major reference work *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*.

His latest book, *The Legacy of the King James Bible*, is arranged into four well-defined parts. The author is a master of organization in his writing. Part one is "The King James Bible in Its Own Day" (pp. 21-67). This section

could have become very tedious, but the author writes with a style accessible for the non-historian. Ryken concludes (and I believe correctly), “Some of the famous phrases that found their way into the KJV first appeared in the Wycliffite Bible. Nonetheless, William Tyndale is the forerunner to whom the King James Bible owes the most” (p. 29).

Part one includes an adequate survey of the “many good” translations which the King James translators used and also an excellent chapter (three) on “The Making of the King James Bible”. I found myself wanting to know more on this latter subject so went to some of the other books being published on the subject which provided more background here. This was not Ryken’s primary focus.

Part two, “The King James Bible in History”, is a tremendous survey of the vast impact this English Bible has had on the history of Bible translation, language, education, religion and culture. This part should be mandatory reading in liberal arts classes today because I have a strong suspicion this influence has been almost forgotten and is not being taught today. I rejoice that Ryken has articulated it so well:



Claims that the King James Bible was the most important influence on English and American culture for over three centuries are accurate. This is partly camouflaged because discussions of the influence of the Bible on culture are couched in terms of the generic “Bible,” without recourse to what Bible is in view. But between 1700 and 1975, any consideration of biblical influence on public life, politics, education, music, and art is actually a consideration of the King James Bible. (p. 114)

Ryken is a teacher of English literature. Chapters eight to eleven show his literary knowledge of the English text of this Bible. He begins chapter eight by quoting Alister McGrath, who wrote that “later generations recognized as beauty and elegance” the final product produced by the King James translators (p. 117). Ryken deals with the literary contradictions which scholars have spoken about for generations, some arguing for simple vocabulary of the Anglo-Saxon fold, others for the Latinate and the abstract. The reality is both are there. The author throws out stylistic traits, and if one has been a reader of the KJV one will immediately say, “Yes, I did see that.” For example, the conjunction “and” is often very heavily used and used effectively. The best of all here is that Ryken speaks of the “orality” of the King James Bible, something virtually forgotten today – it was the Bible “appointed to be read in Churches”.

English teachers will relish part four, “The Literary Influence of the King James Bible”. Here the author takes up the KJV as a literary source and in-

fluence. He also looks at those who were influenced in the early stages by the KJV, for example Milton, Herbert and Bunyan; then latterly some of the great names of English literature – Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge, plus others. The modern era is also included. Ryken is not exhaustive, but he takes select case studies and builds his argument from there.

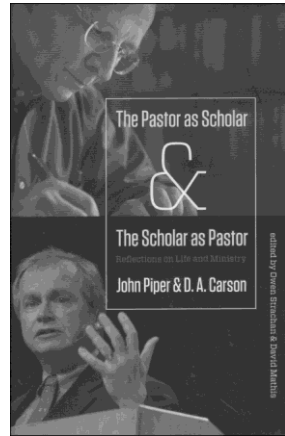
Ryken has produced an excellent commemorative resource on this occasion of the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. I only had a couple of small quibbles, one being an inaccurate place name. Ryken's *Legacy* is highly recommended.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

Applied Theology

***The Pastor as Scholar & The Scholar as Pastor: Reflections on Life and Ministry.* John Piper and D. A. Carson. Edited by Owen Strachan and David Mathis. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, 124 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2647-3**

This little volume grew out of a series of two addresses by Dr. John Piper, pastor for preaching and vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, and Dr. D. A. Carson, research professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. The addresses were given at Park Community Church in April of 2009 in Chicago as part of the Gospel Coalition and sponsored by the Carl F. Henry Center for Theological Understanding based at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago. They were then edited by Owen Strachan and David Mathis. It is a book that has already been widely reviewed and warmly welcomed.



The concept is a unique one and yet seems to be striking positive a chord with many as something that needs to be recovered. Piper and Carson, two men whose lives and gifts have shaped modern evangelicalism in a profound way over the last number of years, bring their years of experience, both in the church and the academy, to a wider audience to show what a blessing there is in a healthy marriage between a serious scholarship and the work of pastoral ministry. Piper had gone from teaching New Testament at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he was nurtured under the writings of Jonathan Edwards, arguably one of the greatest minds in the history of the Evangelical church, into the pastoral ministry at Bethlehem Baptist in Minneapolis. Don Carson, a son of a minister himself, went the opposite route as he began in the pastoral ministry in British Columbia and ended up in Christian academia at Trinity Evangelical in Chicago.

Regardless of where God is using them, they have both retained a deep passion for the occupation they left as is reflected in Piper's latest work *Think*, where he urges Christians to engage the mind to the glory of God, and Carson's *The Cross and Christian Ministry*, where his New Testament scholarship is brought to bear on pastoral ministry.

Piper begins by looking at the pastor as scholar. His college work left him with a strong passion for learning, yet he says himself, the call to pastoral ministry came just after the publication of his book on Romans 9 called *The Justification of God*. In a one-sentence summary of the pastor-scholar relationship, Piper recalls the powerful feeling of God saying to him, “I, the God of Romans 9, will be *proclaimed* and not just analyzed or explained” (p. 44). For him, thinking and analyzing were no longer sufficient; he had to preach! For others, that passion may be used in another direction as they pass on the fruit and delight of pastoral ministry to a body of students. Yet both are working in concert for the greater need of the Kingdom.

This was a point that came across powerfully in the book. So often young men who have a passion for communicating the Word of God are at a loss to know where their true gifts lie. Is it at an academic or pastoral level? Piper’s journey demonstrates that it may not always be an either-or career choice; where you start in Christian ministry is not always where you end up. One has not made a mistake if they begin in academia or the church and then decide it is no longer for them.

Piper shows, via Jonathan Edwards and C. S. Lewis, that a vigorous Christian mind is no enemy of experimental religion, but encourages readers to always remember that for God to be glorified there has to be the balance. Piper reminds us, “The Devil himself has many right thoughts about God.” And yet, “If God is going to be glorified in our being satisfied in him, then our satisfaction in him must be based on truth. And that is what we find by the right use of the mind – by scholarly effort” (p. 50).

Piper best illustrates the need for the pastor to be a scholar as he asks us to imagine a man whom you don’t know coming to you and entrusting you with \$10,000 of his own money. “Why” you ask the man. He responds, “I just feel this warm feeling in my heart that you are a trustworthy person.” Piper asks, “Do you feel honoured by that warm feeling in his heart?” But suppose, says Piper, that the man replies by saying, “I have been watching you at work for over a year . . . and I have found you to be a reliable person. . . . You are a person of character, and I have reasons for believing that.” Piper adds, “Now, do you feel honoured by the joyful feeling in that man’s heart? Yes, you do. Because his emotions toward you are well grounded” (p. 51).

Piper sums up his argument for a scholarly pastor:

So good scholarship – good use of the mind in seeking and finding truth – stands in the service of honest, courageous ministry. And the goal of that ministry, whether it succeeds or not, is to put people’s souls on a solid footing. The aim is that great affections for God would be awakened by clearly seen and courageously spoken truth. (p. 59)

Carson’s contribution is less biographical and yet equally as valuable. Where Piper sees the need for pastors to practise a rigorous scholarship, Car-

son wants to see the academy as handmaiden of the church with its end to have scholarship bear fruit in the lives of the worshipping community. Having spent most of his career in academia, Carson sees the danger of a knowledge that only puffs up. “Nothing is quite as deceitful as an evangelical scholarly mind that thinks it is especially close to God *because* of its scholarship rather than because of Jesus” (p. 76).

Dr. Carson lays out a twelve-step approach to ensuring the academic keeps the telos of his work in view. I will highlight only a few for space. He stresses that the scholar is always moving in the orbit of the local church. Let your student know that you love the local church! As Carson says, “Avoid becoming a *mere* quartermaster . . . ones who provide supplies to the frontlines. . . . This means engaging the outside world at a personal level, at an intellectual and cultural level; it means working and serving in the local church; it means engaging in local evangelism” (p. 82). It means avoiding the temptation for peer acceptance rather than faithful biblical scholarship. Related to this is to avoid making “new discoveries” the ultimate rather than expounding the faith once delivered to the saints (p. 101). Moreover, for the scholar it means treating those in front of you as not just absorbers of information but “. . . blood-bought children of the living God . . . organically members of the church of the living God, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit” (p. 92).

The editors bring the book to a conclusion with an overview of why such a book as this is so timely. Many of the leading lights in modern evangelicalism are themselves pastor-scholars. People like Tim Keller, Ligon Duncan and Mark Dever have not only been successful preachers of the Word but have pursued a vibrant scholarship in the churches they serve – if not beginning theological schools of their own, certainly actively participating and teaching. They, too, follow in the footsteps of other pastor-scholars like Edwards (whom Piper has popularised), Calvin and the Puritans. Yet it is a passion that can be traced back, says David Mathis, to the Apostle Paul, who, though being a towering intellect and scholar in his day, also knew of the daily pressure on himself of his anxiety for all the churches (p. 109).

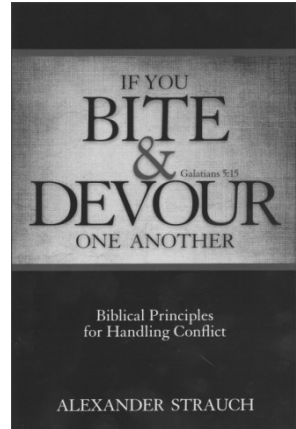
While Albert Mohler might be over-stating it in his endorsement saying, “Few books are as needed as this”, I would agree with Gerald Hiestand when he says, “These are important chapters by two of evangelicalism’s most important thinkers. In an age that has largely forgotten the native connection between theology and the church, Piper and Carson remind us that these two worlds belong together.”

The integrity, experience and influence of these men show they deserve to be heard and that this is an emphasis the church cannot afford to ignore. Warmly recommended!

Reviewed by Kent Compton

***If You Bite & Devour One Another: Biblical Principles for Handling Conflict.* Alexander Strauch. Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 2011, 177 pp., paper. ISBN 978-093608331-5**

Alexander Strauch has authored numerous books in the area of ecclesiology ranging from the eldership to the deaconate to various other works on leadership within the church. Strauch served as a teaching elder at Littleton Bible Church in Littleton, Colorado and taught philosophy and New Testament literature at Colorado Christian University. His most significant work, entitled *Biblical Eldership* (which sold 250,000 copies and translated into over twenty languages since publication), has been an essential work for years in the study of eldership.



The importance of this book can be seen in the title, which Strauch takes from Paul's letter to the Galatians where Paul says, "But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another" (Gal 5:15 ESV). What could better express the urgency of putting such principles into practice than the possibility of biting and devouring? Nothing less than the health and witness of the church is at stake.

In introducing the book, Strauch makes a needed qualification saying, "It is helpful to keep in mind that there is nothing wrong with Christians disagreeing with one another or passionately defending our beliefs. . . . What is wrong is for believers to behave in an ungodly, unbiblical manner in the midst of their disagreements" (p. 3).

He says further,

My aim for this book is to provide a better understanding of what the Bible teaches about conflict and to help believers learn how to respond to conflict according to biblical principles. In order not to present an overwhelming amount of information, the book focuses strictly on the presentation and exposition of scriptural passages that address conflict in the New Testament churches. (p. 5)

This is exactly what we find in this very helpful volume. The book is given in ten chapters. In the first three, Strauch shows how we are to act in the Spirit, in love and in humility. This is followed by three chapters on controlling anger, the tongue and criticism. The next two chapters are devoted to the New Testament model for pursuing peace and reconciliation. The final two chapters deal with false teachers and controversy.

One of the emphases in Strauch's book is showing Christians who they are in Christ and therefore what a wide range of recourses the Lord of the Church has made available to them to deal with conflict. He points out firstly that conflict resolution is not just something that Christians are to pull out of the closet in times of trouble. We are to be proactive. It means actively walking in the Spirit by using the means the Spirit has given for such times: prayer, Spirit-led self-examination, walking with other Spirit-filled believers, exercising humility, goodness and gentleness. All of these are ways to not only quickly defuse an otherwise unseemly situation but to embrace an opportunity for real Christ-like growth among believers.

Conflict resolution means cultivating biblical notions of love; when we are deeply rooted and grounded in love, we are not caught off guard when conflict arises. He says, "Remember that love is the first fruit of the Holy Spirit, so choose to 'walk in love'. . . . *Decide beforehand how you should respond toward those with whom you disagree*" (p. 26). How often it is that we are simply "caught off guard" because we are not sufficiently constrained by the love of Christ. In chapter two he unpacks 1 Corinthians 13 by taking each proposition in turn and applying it to conflict resolution.

Not only does the author use biblical propositions to bolster his case, he also provides concrete biblical examples of just how people like Paul applied these principles. Strauch recounts the conflict between Paul and Barnabas and concludes: "Luke's account leaves the dispute between Paul and Barnabas unresolved." But he says they "didn't carry on years of personal warfare against each other. . . . Instead, they refused to speak evil of one another or to keep records of frustrations and wrongs. In fact, Paul later spoke well of Barnabas as his partner in the gospel" (p. 28). Strauch stresses that Christians are to use every opportunity to exalt the love of Christ in their relationships, especially in times of conflict. His quote about Thomas Cranmer is worth noting in this regard, "To do him any wrong was to beget a kindness from him" (p. 31).

The now famous account of the doctrinal differences between Whitefield and Wesley furnishes us with a great example from church history of how this gospel spirit comes to bear in our lives. Strauch quotes Iain Murray saying, "Error must be opposed even when held by fellow members of Christ, but if that opposition cannot co-exist with a true love for all the saints and a longing for their spiritual prosperity then it does not glorify God nor promote the edification of the church" (p. 140).

This is one of the by-products of this book in that it brings out the glory, power and testimony of the gospel, which ultimately is the only antidote for sin among believers. The spirit of Strauch's work is to exalt the reconciliation God has effected through the Cross which now flows through His people. Furthermore, it is to ensure that this spirit is being brought to bear upon whatever conflicts may arise. "*Only when we are properly dressed in Christlike character can we handle conflict properly or discuss reasonably and profitably our doctrinal differences or policy issues*" (p. 61).

Strauch gives guidelines concerning how to do it effectively and constructively if we must criticize. This might include checking our own attitudes and motives beforehand, speaking gently, balancing our criticism with words of encouragement and indeed welcoming criticism if it is directed toward us.

Though there tends to be a bit of repetition and overlap, this arises out of some of the solutions moving from personal to group examples; yet, one would be hard pressed to find a better more gospel-centred and Christ exalting manual on church conflict. The reader is challenged to personal self-examination as to whether he or she is always walking in love and to think more deeply about the far-reaching effect of the ministry of the gospel in all relationships.

Each chapter concludes with a helpful summary and reminders while a generous index at the back allows for ready access to relevant scriptures. Strauch has done us a service in giving us this study. At the risk of sounding cliché, I would recommend this work and believe it belongs on the shelf of every pastor, elder and church member.

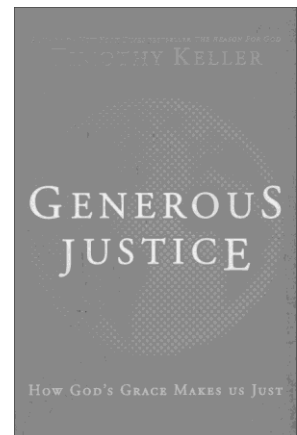
Reviewed by Kent Compton

***Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just.* Timothy Keller. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2010, 230 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-444-70210-1**

Is there a connection between following Jesus Christ and a concern for justice in society? In *Generous Justice*, New York City pastor and church planter Tim Keller argues that “a true experience of the grace of Jesus Christ inevitably motivates a man or woman to seek justice in the world” (p. ix).

Generous Justice is divided into two major sections. In the first section, Keller outlines from the Scriptures the relationship between justice and the way God wants His people to live. Starting with the Old Testament and then working through the words of Jesus, Keller makes a case for the importance of “doing justice.” Keller defines justice as giving “all human beings their due as creations of God” (p. 18).

Though justice is defined generally as “treating people equitably” (p. 3), Keller argues that the Bible’s discussion of justice typically focuses on the way a society cares for and takes up the cause of the “widows, orphans, immigrants, and the poor” (p. 4). He makes this case by exploring the way



God's laws protected those most vulnerable in society and by exploring the accusations that the prophets and Jesus made against Israel. Keller writes, "Doing justice includes not only the righting of wrongs, but generosity and social concern, especially toward the poor and vulnerable" (p. 18).

The second section of the book deals with practical applications of doing justice in modern society. Keller not only deals with how Christians should do justice in their personal private lives, but he also deals with how Christians are to do justice in the public square.

Keller's practical suggestions for doing justice are not geared simply to Christians in major cities like New York. He stimulates the reader's imagination at times by asking questions like, "In your locale . . . are there elderly, disabled, single parents, chronically ill, or new immigrants who need aid?" (p. 133) His challenge is for Christians to begin listening to their community's needs, wherever they may find themselves.

Keller does not shy away from the difficult questions related to the church's role in doing justice. He makes clear that the church's primary responsibility is evangelism and discipleship, but he also believes evangelism and social justice "exist in an asymmetrical, inseparable relationship" (p. 139). He writes, "We must neither confuse evangelism with doing justice, nor separate them from one another" (p. 143).

So what is the church's role? Keller believes that congregations should try to meet the immediate physical and economic needs of their people and their community. However, he believes the local church should leave the more ambitious work of social reform to cooperative associations and organizations – in the tradition of Abraham Kuyper (p. 146). While churches should seek to become "healing communities", they should encourage their parishioners to be "healers of communities" and "to be organizers for just communities" (p. 132).

Throughout both sections of this work, Keller never allows his call for justice to be disconnected from experiencing God's grace. He concludes his work with a reflection on the incarnation. Not only did God become man, but also He "knows what it's like to be the victim of injustice, to stand up to power, to face a corrupt system and be killed for it" (p. 187). Keller continues, "He not only became one of the actually poor and marginalized, he stood in the place of all those of us in spiritual poverty and bankruptcy . . . and paid our debt" (p. 188). It is only when Christians firmly grasp this that they will be able to truly give help to the vulnerable.

Though the book is full of deep exegetical reflections, it is quite readable. The average reader, whether Christian or not, could pick up this work and clearly follow Keller's arguments. Pastors and students of theology will spend the majority of their time engaging Keller's lengthy thirty-eight pages of endnotes where he interacts with major biblical commentators and theologians.

Keller is at his best when he is analyzing and engaging cultural trends and issues as they relate to doing justice today. He quotes from a tremendous

number of thinkers, from Aristotle to Barack Obama. He also engages a variety of sources, from the *Harvard Law Review* to the *Northwestern Journal of Human Rights*. Keller interacts with and engages contemporary struggles to promote justice in society, especially in the United States. He helps the reader to see the ways in which everybody brings their faith to the public square, and he then encourages Christians not to be “silent about the Biblical roots of their passion for justice” (p. 169).

Admittedly, Keller’s intended audience is the West. Many international readers may struggle to understand the significance of Keller’s critique of contemporary American approaches to justice. Also, many international readers may have a difficult time fully comprehending Keller’s illustrations as the majority of them deal with racial tensions and social injustices that have a history in the American Civil Rights Movement.

Some readers may find themselves frustrated with the way Keller only associates the Bible’s call for justice with watching out for the disadvantaged. In the beginning of the work, Keller argues that justice “means more than just punishment of wrongdoing,” but it also means, “to give people their rights” (p. 3). Keller does not engage with how or if “doing justice” includes encouraging the punishment of wrongdoing. He also never engages with whether or not the Christian community ought to work hard to bring justice to people like the unborn. Some readers may be left wondering if God’s understanding of justice means more than watching out for the needs of the vulnerable.

Keller is working from the perspective of the theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith, which affirms the general equity principle of the law and the understanding that Israel was a unique theocratic state. Such underpinnings Keller does not explore extensively in this book. No doubt some readers would like these topics explored in depth, but that does not appear to be the author’s intended purpose. Furthermore, Keller does not extensively enter into the issues of the kingdom and eschatology nor does he enter into depth on the modern debate that is currently raging in some Reformed circles known as the Two Kingdom Debate. He appears to be writing with a passionate theme that if a believer knows grace, the pursuit of justice will be a fruit of that grace. Keller also presents a very carefully nuanced understanding of Word and deed. He sees these as “intermingled” and very much in the tradition of the Lausanne Covenant.

In conclusion, Keller has written a very provocative book, and it is impossible to read the work without seeing a connection between experiencing God’s grace and having a concern for justice. Though this book will certainly put the reader on a quest to practise justice, it may also leave many questions about justice unanswered in the reader’s mind. Perhaps these latter points raise the question overall, “Did the author attempt to do too much in this book and thus miss some significant points which could have clarified many issues?” Maybe the topic demanded two books so that possible misunderstand-

tandings would not arise. Then again, how many conservative evangelical and Reformed authors do you know that are writing on this subject? Keller is to be commended for taking the bold step to write about the subject, and this will certainly stimulate much needed discussion in the evangelical community.

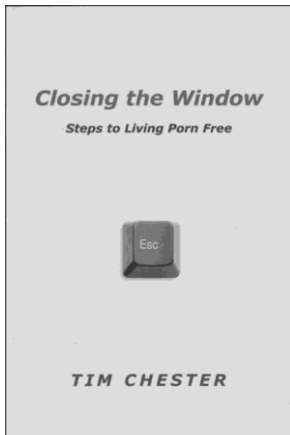
Kyle A. Hackmann is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in America and is currently the assistant pastor of Grace Toronto Church. He is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute, Chicago and of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.



***Closing the Window: Steps to Living Porn Free.* Tim Chester. Downers Groves, IL: IVP, 2010, 151 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-3842-4**

Few things have blind-sided the church in the last generation like the mainstreaming and accessibility of pornography. Tim Chester says that, “In our culture sex is everything and sex is nothing” (p.120). And while this has generally been the case for the last couple of generations, yet it has been significantly accelerated by the Internet and has left the church scrambling to cope.

Tim Chester is a church planter, Bible teacher and co-leader of the Crowded House, a group of church planting networks. He has authored books entitled *Good News to the Poor*, *The Message of Prayer* and *You Can Change*.



Chester has given the church a very important and useful book in *Closing the Window*. The author begins by showing the catastrophic consequences that internet porn, in particular, is having on the church (not only with men, but women also). He found, through his own online survey and those of others, that 60% of men have looked at porn within the last year and, bringing it closer to home, that 33% of church leaders have visited sexually explicit sites in the last year (p. 9). This

all begs the question, “What is all of this doing to the spiritual vitality and holiness of Christ’s church?”

Chester brings the fruit of years of conversations with Christian men to these pages and wisely relates the problems and solution in the lives of the victims themselves. He is able to deal upfront and honestly with the problem, without being overly descriptive about what people are watching, while providing a safe atmosphere for discussing a very sensitive and provocative top-

ic. People struggling with it are already painfully aware of the content, so he does not pursue it further here. What he does explore are some of the reasons why people gravitate toward pornography; he then offers compelling and indeed exciting reasons for repenting.

In chapter one, Chester looks at the lies behind the promises of the fulfillment porn offers people, the excuses people give for indulging in it and the reality of the devastation it leaves. He outlines twelve reasons to leave porn; these include the fact that it wrecks one's view of sex and of women and consequently women's views of themselves. Furthermore, he shows that the people involved in the porn industry are real imaging-bearing men and women, sons and daughters who are often victims themselves and are being exploited through violence and drugs. Those who indulge in pornography are abetting such victimization. Closer to home, porn wrecks families and marriage covenants. It is nothing short of adultery against one's spouse. It enslaves people as much as it deceives them; it promises satisfaction while leaving people wanting to satisfy an appetite that has become increasing insatiable (p. 27). The wake of destruction widens as Chester reveals how pornography erodes character and conscience while at the same time wastes precious time, energy and, for many, money. Chester gives a staggering fact and shows that the pornography industry is economically bigger than Amazon, Microsoft, Google, eBay and Yahoo *combined* (p. 30). Lastly, the author shows how porn ruins service and leaves people open to the wrath of God (pp. 33-35). All of these topics he opens up in a way that not only leaves the reader with a clearer and more abhorrent view of the industry but also appreciative of the grace of God that is held out to all who struggle.

This is where Chester gives most of his attention. While it is one thing to outline the problem and its destructive aspects and offer suggestions for dealing with it, Chester shows convincingly that ultimately only the grace of God is the victor in the war on porn. (See chapter three, "Freed by the Grace of God".) Only as the Christian has a full appreciation of the grace of God in Christ is he prevented from not only sinking beneath the flood of guilt pornography brings but also enabled to ultimately win the battle. Chester shows that the battle for the Christian lies in seeing that the promises and attractiveness of God are infinitely greater than the lie of porn. The call is to a God-centred approach rather than self-worship. The porn addict has to see that he or she is guilty of idolatry and self-worship. Conversely, Chester says, "Consider his merits, his worth, his glory, his beauty, his kindness, his grace, his holiness, his power" (p. 63). Quoting a French writer he says, "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea" (p. 115). This sums up for me the gracious spirit of this book.

The author says that the fight against pornography will not be won alone, but it is in relationships, accountability partners and couples being painfully open and honest with one another about what they are going through that

progress will be made. It means accepting one another as sinners but offering the hope of God's mercy to one another in the transformation process.

Though it is not a large work, Tim Chester has left no stone unturned in exploring the many ways and examining the many reasons why one ought to turn his or her back on pornography.

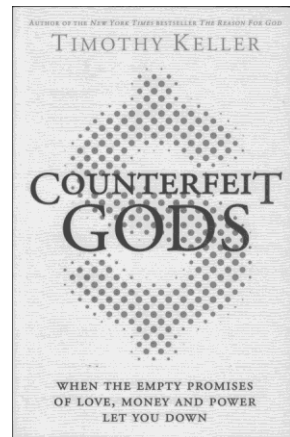
This may not be a book that will break the habit in someone's life immediately, for, as Chester says, the battle is rarely won overnight. However, I cannot think of a better starting place than this. Warmly recommended.

Reviewed by Kent Compton

***Counterfeit Gods: When the Empty Promises of Love, Money and Power Let You Down.* Timothy Keller. London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 2009, 210 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-340-99508-2**

In one of his most recent books, Dr. Timothy Keller, author of *The Reason for God* and *The Prodigal God*, brings to bear his years of pastoral and exegetical experience to tackle the extremely relevant issue of idolatry. Particularly noticeable from the onset is the immense personal challenge set to the background of the redemptive history of idolatry. In the introduction Tim Keller introduces the important guiding question, "What is an idol?" This is potentially a profound question for a modern audience whose conception of idolatry might terminate on wooden statues and graven images, and yet Keller is quick to develop this in line with David Powlison and even C.S. Lewis saying¹, "It is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give" (p. xvii). This means that idols are everywhere, that humanity is one big idol factory in its truest sense: trusting, loving, obeying and being fulfilled by idols.

Even from the introduction and first chapter, Keller subtly prods the reader to ask the question, "What are you most satisfied with – the Creator or his creation?" Throughout the bulk of the book, he develops this theme to engage three relevant idols: love, money and power. By carefully illustrating



¹ Lewis, C.S. "First and Second Things", in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 278-280; and David Powlison, "Idols of the Heart and 'Vanity Fair'", *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 13.2 (Winter 1995): 35-50.

each topic with a biblical narrative, Keller leaves one not only with a biblical account of each particular idol but also provides a framework by which to practically understand them. Keller helpfully acknowledges the multifaceted nature of sin and defines it as coming in clusters, an “idolatry structure”; these he calls the “‘deep idols’ within the heart beneath the more concrete and visible ‘surface idols’ that we serve” (p. 64). This proves to be an important contribution because it does not allow sin to be truncated to merely failure to obey the moral law or external behavior. Keller’s “idolatry structure” confronts not only law-breaking but also the conditions of law-keeping and thus exposes the more hidden idols of religion and culture. This is yet again an important contribution which broadens the definition of sin to encompass every area of life, every action, every motivation and everything a person does; each time the reader is confronted with the question, “Do I feel that I must have this thing to be fulfilled and satisfied?” (p. 170)

As Keller develops this concept throughout the book, one quickly realizes that his or her idols are usually good things that have been allowed to take primacy in the heart as ultimately fulfilling. But in typical Keller fashion, he does not leave the reader in a condition of despair nor does he give a watered-down, therapeutic answer that merely provides principles and practicalities divorced from the gospel. True to the biblical account, he points the reader to the gospel, to God as revealed in Jesus Christ – the ultimate fulfillment of humanity’s deepest desires.

This is an excellent addition to the impressive catalogue of books Tim Keller has already produced. It comes highly recommended as a guide for discerning modern idolatry and for providing practical ways to bring the gospel to bear against our own personal, cultural and religious idols. This book is guaranteed to unearth some form of idolatry in everyone while providing the gospel as the answer in clear and defined terms.

Ryan Mark Barnhart is the associate pastor at Faith Bible Church, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island and a graduate of Moody Bible Institute. His theological interests include J. G. Hamann and Hans Urs von Balthasar.



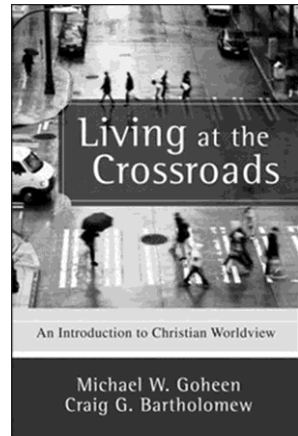
***Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian World View.* Michael W. Goheen and Craig G. Bartholomew. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008, 205 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-3140-3**

When I was first asked to review this introduction to a Christian worldview by Michael Goheen and Craig Bartholomew, I immediately mused over whether or not there was really a need for another book on

worldviews for the sake of the Christian community. Have we not been adequately inundated with works explaining to us the necessity of a theistic worldview and the rationality of a Trinitarian God as the only plausible explanation for the unity and diversity we see in nature? However, I had been reading an article addressing youth culture by Allison Thomas in Ravi Zacharias' *Beyond Opinion*. She laments over the anti-intellectual state of many of today's Christian young people who find in church a recreation room for social events rather than an arena preparing them to meet the hostile forces of our world's anti-religious mind.¹

Moreover, current statistics tell us that children from Christian families are leaving the faith at alarming numbers.² In my interaction with college students, I have found that this is often not primarily because they have encountered an intellectual argument that persuasively describes a worldview or system of thought that seems more intellectually tenable than the one that had been inculcated to them by their church. Rather, they are confronted by the first intellectual proposal for a system of belief that they have ever encountered. Consequently, they are seduced, not because it is a superior argument but because, to their ears, it sounds like the first rational argument, either for or against the idea of a theistic universe, that they have ever heard. Lacking skills in critical thinking, they are then faced with the Christophobic hostility which is prevalent on college campuses across our country. It follows then that another book exploring the conflict of worldviews has value only insofar as it implores lessons from the historical trajectory of past worldviews and creatively engages the current manifestation of these worldviews in a relevant manner.

Goheen and Bartholomew do precisely that for they recognize that a "world view is not first of all a rational system of beliefs but rather a story about the world" (p. 5). As the struggling sage of the Scriptures puts it, God has placed eternity in our hearts. The authors correctly understand this to mean that God has given us an organic sense of being part of a larger story. As image bearers we have an innate awareness of our own finitude within the context of eternity. Consequently, understanding worldviews begins with recognizing that God created us to require some kind of larger story within which we must situate our lives. Since we are story-shaped people with a



¹ Ravi Zacharias, gen. ed., *Beyond Opinion: Living the Faith We Defend* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 40-59.

² A few years ago George Barna conducted a study revealing that "65 percent of high school students stop attending church after they graduate". Derek Melleby, "Why students abandon their faith: Lessons from William Wilberforce", from the Centre for Parent/Youth Understanding.

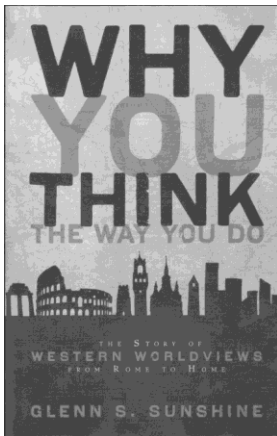
beginning and an end, a point of view and a setting, plot and resolution, protagonists and antagonists, it follows that narrative is the most organic way in which we may understand our Creator, ourselves and the world. The insight of this book is its recognition of the need for us to understand the idea of a worldview within the context of a narrative and story. Within the current evangelical milieu where we are losing the battle for the mind of our children, we need to engage the narratives of the world with the biblical narrative and present the gospel story as story rather than a list of propositional assertions so that we might begin to reclaim this world for its Lord and Creator.

Reviewed by Al Breitreuz. He is the lead pastor at Bedford Presbyterian Church, Nova Scotia and is currently undertaking post-graduate studies in art and theology at St. Andrews University, Scotland.



***Why You Think the Way You Do: The Story of Western Worldviews from Rome to Home.* Glenn S. Sunshine. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009, 240 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-310-29230-2**

Sunshine's aim in this book is to explain "the development of Western civilization from the perspective of the changes in worldview from the Roman Empire to the early years of the twenty-first century." Since the book is two hundred and fifteen pages plus notes, the view is bound to be from a vantage



point 35,000 feet in the air – and so it proves. Sunshine provides not an exhaustive summary but snapshots of main eras in Western history by highlighting selected themes and underlining the beliefs that influenced each era's characteristic ways of being and doing. The author is professor of history at Central Connecticut State University and also works with the Wilberforce Forum and Prison Fellowship's BreakPoint; he formerly taught at Cal-Calvin College and Universität der Bundeswehr-Hamburg.

Why You Think the Way You Do commences with brief definitions of worldview, the most important of which is worldview as a set of beliefs about the world, truth, and morality, which enables any society to function effectively (p. 15). This remains the book's normal, but not only, usage of

“worldview.” Sometimes “worldview” also is used for individual views or, in the final two chapters, for New Age notions lacking wide consensus.

In successive chapters, Sunshine provides a theologically informed history of ancient Rome, its transformation by Christianity, and Rome’s end leading to the medieval worldview. He especially underlines medieval politics and economics. Following this the reader is then led into the breakdown of medievalism with the rise of scientific reason, the modern era, and modernity’s decay into postmodernism. The author provides colourful details which enliven the exposition, for example, astronomer Tycho Brahe’s multiple noses (prostheses needed after a sword duel). In his theological history writing, Sunshine follows the pattern of Andrew Hoffer’s edited volume *Revolutions in Worldview* (2007) as well as Francis Schaeffer’s “How Then Shall We Live?” film series (1976), whose insights he seems to echo at certain points.

Sunshine’s conclusion is that Western, especially American, societies have arrived at a situation much like that of ancient Rome. As did the early church, evangelical Christians should strive to present an alternative to majority culture. The last chapters support key positions of the culture war including creationism, opposition to abortion, and resistance to politically correct speech. Themes in medievalism and modernity turn out to have been selected to set up the biblical status of American constitutional arrangements, such as divided powers of government (pp. 151-154), or to justify free enterprise.

Sunshine does not emphasize that the modern world is founded on Christian suppositions gone wrong. He apparently missed the changed philosophical commitments that led from medievalism’s controlled economies to unfettered markets, as profiled by Bob Goudzwaard in *Capitalism and Progress* (1979) or the way that the development of modern science depended on new understandings of the Bible, from Peter Harrison’s many books. It is not true that empirical science does not depend on significant philosophical commitments (p. 165). Charles Taylor’s works, such as *Sources of the Self* (1989) or *A Secular Age* (2007), make modernity seem as much a Protestant heresy as anything. For example, the American stress on the freedom of the individual conscience arose from the Baptist movement, so that pluralistic society can reasonably be said to be a Baptist contribution. William Rowe even showed that the concept of a “worldview” was minted when humanity came to see itself as central after the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment era. Developing a genuinely Christian counter-culture is more tricky and contentious due to the close kinship of Christianity to modernity. Many Christians will tend to see economic freedom, for instance, as part of the Christian heritage, as Sunshine does. Others will emphasize Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” as a corruption of the doctrine of providence. Defending isolated positions – undeniably important – is only one aspect of relevant Christian witness in contemporary western societies.

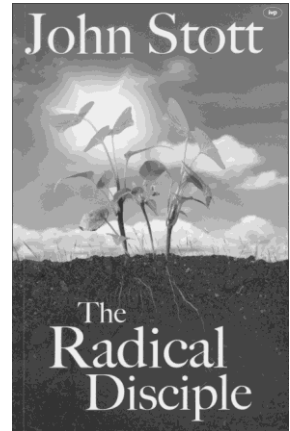
While the title claims to tell readers why they think as they do, a more accurate title would be “A Celebration of Christian Contributions to Western Society.” For such a celebration, Jonathan Hill’s *What has Christianity Ever Done For Us?* (IVP, 2005) is more far-sighted and as entertaining a volume, without the American culture-warrior edginess.

Ted Newell is a professor of worldview and educational foundations at Crandall University, Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada.



***The Radical Disciple: Wholehearted Christian Living.* John Stott. Nottingham, England: IVP, 2010, 144 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-84474-421-3**

It is a fairly common practice to give a card to friends who are leaving or even throw them a farewell party. What is not so common is for the one who is leaving to give a gift to those who are staying. This is precisely the purpose of John Stott’s latest and final book, *The Radical Disciple*. Until his death in July 2011, Stott was Rector Emeritus of All Souls Church, Langham Place, London and Founder-President of the Langham Partnership International. This book was his farewell to believers around the world who had benefited from his ministry and testimony.



Stott uses the preface to the book to explain the words of his book title: “radical” and “disciples”. Concerning “disciples”, he points out that the word simply means “under discipline”. Stott says, “My concern in this book is that we who claim to be disciples of the Lord Jesus will not provoke him to say again: ‘Why do you call me, “Lord, Lord,” and do not do what I say?’ (Luke 6:46)” (p. 16).

The second word, “radical”, is used as an adjective to modify “disciple” in order to show that every aspect of our lives as Christians must be under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

With these introductory thoughts in mind, the book then goes on to discuss eight characteristics of Christian discipleship. Each characteristic is given one chapter: non-conformity, Christlikeness, maturity, creation-care, simplicity, balance, dependence, and death. The chapters are fairly short (most are under fifteen pages), yet there is a depth of writing that leaves the reader with the impression that Stott has been reading, meditating and synthesizing for many, many years. The simplicity of style is by no means simplistic and

is very helpful in a generation when many are not accustomed to extensive reading.

This book could easily be used in a group study over an eight to ten week period. The chapters are even short enough that they could be read together at the study followed by a time of discussion and prayer. There are Scripture references throughout but not as many as one might expect. The reader definitely has the impression that Stott has written his work to express his thoughts at the close of his life rather than as a carefully prepared study of the Word on various topics.

Throughout the book, there appears to be another, unstated purpose: to promote the work of the Lausanne Movement as well as the Langham Partnership Trust. These two organizations (with which Stott was intimately involved) are used as examples throughout and the name Chris Wright appears frequently. Chris Wright, successor to Stott in Langham and also Chairman of the Theology Working Group for Lausanne III, was mentored by Stott over many years. One wonders if a strong second purpose of the book is to publically “pass the baton” and thereby encourage readers to remain involved in these two movements that were so obviously dear to the heart of Stott.

Those who have appreciated Stott’s life and ministry will once again be challenged and blessed by this, his last, book. Those who are not familiar with Stott will sense a depth of spiritual maturity and will want to learn more from this dear brother in the Lord who befriended and served so many worldwide.

Reviewed by Nancy J. Whytock

***The Lord of Glory: Day by Day Devotions with Your Children.*
Jim Cromarty. Darlington, England/Carlisle, PA: EP Publishing,
2010, 767 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-85234-684-6**

Jim Cromarty wrote this devotional out of a deep desire for Christian families to return to the practice of family worship. *The Lord of Glory* contains a year’s worth of devotions centred around the life and teaching of Jesus in the four gospels.

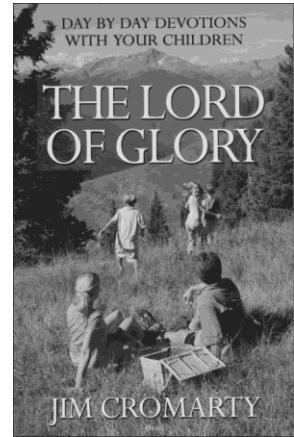
Each dated devotion neatly covers two pages and begins with a Scripture verse and a reference for the passage of Scripture to be read that day (anywhere between five verses and an entire chapter). The devotion provides commentary on the Scripture passage. Then there are three thought-provoking questions for family discussion. There are also a few sentences for meditating on throughout the day. Finally, each day ends with “Wise Words”, usually a pertinent quote by a Christian author. J. C. Ryle is the most often quoted, but there are a great variety of others, including Refor-

mers and Puritans and even a few present-day authors such as Jerry Bridges and Gordon Keddie.

I especially appreciated the items for meditation each day. I found them very heart-oriented as they sought to lead each individual to apply something of the day's lesson to his or her own life. Sometimes I was prompted to examine my heart and actions. At other times I was gently led to a response of worship and praise to God for an aspect of what He has done as highlighted in the day's lesson.

While the cover of this devotional boasts a beautiful family with young children probably between the ages of six and ten, I think this devotional is more suited to families with slightly older children. Unlike some of Cromarty's previous books for family worship,¹ this devotional has very little illustration. Even the occasional story is limited to one or two sentences at the beginning of the devotion and is designed to draw you directly in to a serious commentary on the Scripture passage of the day. While the devotions are not dry or boring, I do not think they will draw the attention of younger children. I thought that a few illustrations could have added some clarity of understanding without taking away from the depth of the study. Second, the language is not particularly simple. Flipping through a few pages again, I see the words "derogatory", "neutrality", and "acknowledgement" used as a matter of course. These issues need not be insurmountable, of course. How useful this devotional will be for younger families will depend largely on how well parents are able to engage their children at their own level during the discussion time.

For families with teenaged children, this devotional is ideal. The lack of fluff is a benefit for those looking to delve deeply into the Scripture with their families. The questions for discussion are thought-provoking and would have interested me as a teenager (as they do now). The daily item for meditation will help every member of the family cultivate a habit of applying the Word to their hearts. Despite the subtitle, I would also recommend this devotional to couples without children. There is nothing in the devotional itself to suggest that it is aimed particularly at children. This could even be used as a personal devotional for an older teen or adult. Even though the questions for discussion may not be fully utilized when going through this devotional alone, everything else it contains will be a blessing. I believe *The Lord of Glory: Day by Day Devotions with your Children* could be helpful to a wider



¹ See Jim Cromarty's series, Books for Family Reading, *Take Care in the Bath* (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 1999), and *A Sad Little Dog!* (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2000).

audience than its title suggests, and I hope it will be picked up by many seeking to build a habit of daily Bible study and meditation.

For durability, perhaps the publishers should have released this book in hardback form rather than paperback.

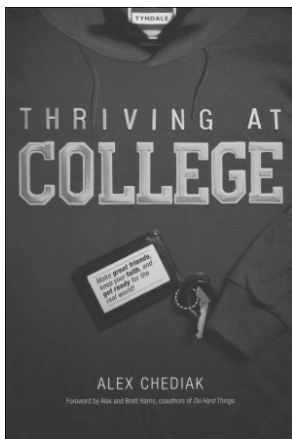
Reviewed by Nelleke Plouffe. Nelleke and her husband, Stephen, are the parents of two young sons, Seth and Josiah. They live in Donagh, Prince Edward Island.



***Thriving at College: Make Great Friends, Keep Your Faith, and Get Ready for the Real World!* Alex Chediak. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2011, 327 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4143-3963-4**

Professor and author Alex Chediak's new book, *Thriving at College*, is a helpful preparatory guide for high school students preparing to enter into their next stage of education. It also offers insightful advice for those who may already be attending a college or university.

Chediak's approach to the topic is structured around several core areas of a student's life: relationships, academics and spirituality. Using this well-defined approach, he then breaks each area into sub-categories. The intended



audience is not limited to students choosing to attend specific institutions. Chediak addresses those in Christian centres of higher learning as well as those in secular schools. With a conscious recognition of the difference between these two environments, he then lays out the challenges and benefits which are unique to each. For example, he notes that while in a secular learning environment, Christian students will face much opposition towards their faith and will be presented with lifestyles very different from their own. For this reason it is essential that students know what they believe and why they believe it. Chediak does not shy away from the disturbing truth that many

Christian youth fall away from the faith when they reach a secular setting. Instead, he confronts the real issue and provides wise advice to ensure growth rather than regression.

As Chediak is realistic in his view of the secular university, he is equally as realistic in his discussion of the Christian university. He acknowledges the obvious benefits of being at a Christian institution which builds up your faith, but he also warns against becoming absorbed into the bubble of a Christian community. It is possible for students to use the strong Christian environ-

ment around them as a crutch for their spiritual life rather than a catalyst for their own personal relationship with God.

The author's advice as it relates to practical matters is also very helpful. As someone who has spent years in higher education both as a student and a professor (presently as a professor of engineering and physics at California Baptist University), Chediak understands what is required of a student and what methods will ensure that they thrive. With insight on everything from class scheduling, sleeping patterns, roommate issues and social time, he realizes the many ingredients that compose a successful student.

The book would be incomplete without an explanation as to why it is important to thrive at college. This explanation is not ignored as Chediak discusses the human mind and its ability to glorify God. Those blessed with the opportunity of a college or university experience ought to make the most of it by doing their absolute best as an act of worship.

I would personally recommend this book to anyone grappling with questions about their future in college. Whether you are a student preparing for higher education or you are already attending college and you need advice, this book is for you. It is well grounded in biblical truth and does not neglect the practical issues of life. Another book which may be a helpful resource is Rick Ostrander's *Why College Matters to God*.

Reviewed by Andrew Whytock, an English major at Cornerstone University, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



Book Briefs

In this section we acknowledge new books we have received over the last year for which we have not provided full book reviews. We have organized these into topical categories to help readers become aware of new books in specific areas. Unless otherwise stated, all book briefs are by the editor.

Pastoral Theology

***Portraits of a Radical Disciple: Recollections of John Stott's Life and Ministry.* Ed., Christopher J. H. Wright. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2011, 241 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-3810-3**

The publishers certainly did a record job in getting this work out in late 2011 following John Stott's death on July 27, 2011. It contains thirty-five essays from colleagues and friends of John Stott, and that this could be accomplished in 2011 is quite astounding. However, then we learn in the preface that the origins of the book go back to 2005. This book is to serve as a much more personal portrait than the official two-volume biography by Timothy Dudley-Smith or the later work by Roger Steer. The divisions of the book are: "Early and Formative Years", "All Souls and the Wider Church of England", "International Influence", "Wider Interests", "The Study Assistants" and "The Final Lap". Readers will discover many fascinating details about Stott's life, personality and warmth as a Christian. This is a necessary read for all who want to know about this very significant leader within evangelicalism and written at a very accessible level. It is most instructive and edifying to read such a unique biographical work. Highly recommended.

***Funeral Training: Visiting the Bereaved, Organising and Conducting a Funeral.* [Nigel Barge and Philip Malloch]. Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2010, 58 pp., paper. No ISBN**

There are very few resources available for evangelical ministry concerning funerals. *Funeral Training*, published under the auspices of Rutherford House, is a helpful resource. This small book is divided into two parts, "Visiting the Bereaved" and "Organising and Conducting a Funeral"; under each part there are three chapters. Part I: Preparing for your visit, Understanding Bereavement, and Pastoral Experience; and Part II: *Before* the Funeral Day, *On* the Funeral Day, and *After* the Funeral Day. There are also appendices

about psalm and hymn ideas, Bible readings and an annotated book list. The book's context is Scotland, but the majority of the material will be helpful in most western based pastoral training courses and will certainly fill a real need.

***When the Word Leads Your Pastoral Search: Biblical Principles & Practices to Guide Your Search.* Chris Brauns. Chicago: Moody, 2011, 192 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8024-4984-9**

Here is another subject within pastoral theology which is virtually never addressed, nor will you find many resources on the subject, so Chris Brauns' book is a most welcome work. The author is a seasoned pastor in a Congregational church in Illinois. The work is clearly evangelical and Word-based. His introduction begins with the "dating" illustration paralleling a pastoral call, followed by eleven short chapters plus a short conclusion, then ten "Frequently Asked Questions". The chapters are aimed to help pastoral search committees understand what preaching is and what to consider in a candidate in this regard. Instinctively I could hear some saying, "We could skip that." Realism tells me that this must not be skipped over. His "unity building exercises" (p. 48) are most helpful to the search process and are often missed. Brauns is very clear in chapter five, "Look for a Shepherd", and lays out his answer in seven sub-points. (The chapter is worth the book.) Part three of the book, "Make Those Dates (Interviews) Count", is very practical advice for any search committee. His suggested questions are the ones that too many times are missed by committees, yet if they are asked future difficulties may be avoided for all parties. He urges a search committee to learn to evaluate such things as whether or not the candidate has both the tools and experience to preach "week in and week out" and how he plans to organize for ministry. Warmly recommended.

***God Is Always Good: Cassidy's Story.* J. Cameron Fraser and Sonya M. Taekema. Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2011, 125 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-55452-607-9**

This small book is both story/diary and observation of two individuals dealing with life-threatening cancer, namely the one author, J. Cameron Fraser, and Cassidy Taekema, the daughter of the other author, Sonya M. Taekema. The book's title roots this work in the doctrine of God's providence in application to the sufferings of a believer. Bob De Moor described the content very succinctly: "Cameron Fraser and Sonya Taekema favour us with two such intimate conversations, one nestled inside the other." That last phrase describes this book extremely well – "one nestled inside the other". This book is reality, but reality through the eyes of believers. A glossary of medical terms is included. References to relevant materials by authors Joni

Eareckson Tada, John Piper and C. John (Jack) Miller are made. The work is a testimony to the goodness of the Lord amidst suffering.

***Real Marriage: The Truth About Sex, Friendship, and Life Together.* Mark and Grace Driscoll. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2012, 272 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4002-0383-3**

This book is divided into three parts: “Marriage”, “Sex”, and “The Last Day”, with five chapters each to parts one and two and only one chapter to part three. The chapters on marriage are not an exposition of the reasons for marriage but rather concentrate on friendship in marriage, submission and forgiveness and include much illustration, both from the authors’ lives and cultural examples. Part two will be the part which will no doubt be read first by many, will create some hard-hitting critique by many, and also will be applauded by many because it tackles sexual issues not generally discussed so openly. “Mark and Grace don’t pull punches or gloss over difficult issues . . . and that’s what’s going to make this book unlike any that’s come before it”, writes Brian Hampton of Thomas Nelson. I anticipate that this book will be the most discussed book on marriage for the years 2012 and 2013, but that alone does not necessarily qualify it as having lasting value. There are better books available than this for a catholic or universal market or readership as this one appears to be very contextual.

400th Anniversary of the King James Version Bible

***The Holy Bible 1611 Edition King James Version 400th Anniversary.* Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010, no page count. hc, ISBN 978-1-56563-808-2; genuine leather, ISBN 978-56563-162-5**

This is a brilliant facsimile edition of the original 1611 Authorized Version of the Bible, or the King James Version. This edition by Hendrickson has several selling features: it is a true facsimile “word for word and page for page”; it includes the original preface and translators’ notes, the Apocrypha just as the 1611 did, plus liturgical tables as in the original, and additional essays which the publishers have selected. These essays include John R. Kohlenberger III’s “Publisher’s Preface, The Version of 1611: From 1911 to 2011” and Alfred W. Pollard’s “Bibliographical Introduction”, an absolutely invaluable essay of almost fifty pages. The facsimile is available as a hard-back and also in genuine leather; both bindings include the ribbon marker. This facsimile is printed in China.

***A Visual History of the King James Bible: The Dramatic Story of the World's Best-Known Translation.* Donald L. Brake with Shelly Beach. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011, 283 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8010-1347-8**

Here is the essential work about the King James Version of the Bible to possess or have in a college library. It is full of details about the fifty-four translators, yet it is also full of visuals to complement the text (eighty-five illustrations) and has a beautiful jacket cover. Brake is a world-class authority on his subject and writes with respect, with ease and for the non-specialist. The author helps us understand the development of the English language, early English Bibles, the parties of Protestants of the KJV time and the translation/revision process. He also examines matters of the actual printing of the KJV. Included also is a list of descendants of the King James Version Bible. This work contains two excellent appendices, one which compares the KJV with other sixteenth century translations and modern versions and the other a chronology of the KJV. Full notes are included and a selected bibliography plus indices. A must-have book on the King James Version.

***The People's Bible: The Remarkable History of the King James Version.* Derek Wilson. Oxford: Lion, 2010, 222 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-7459-5550-6**

Unlike Brake's work mentioned above, this book is chiefly a written text with only eleven illustrations. It has a warm endorsement in the foreword by the noted biblical scholar Alec Motyer, who correctly commends the author for pointing us to the vivid orality of the KJV. "Therefore they studied the impact of their work on the ear as much as upon the mind. I, for one, would wish that a similar concern was evident in today's versions" (Motyer, p. 7). Wilson's ten chapters have wonderfully engaging titles, such as chapter seven, "A Mass of Strange Delights", and chapter ten, "Inspiration and Idolatry"; he is a good word-smith. Context of the Bible in English in chapter two, "The English Heresy", is very well done, as are all the other chapters. You do walk away with knowledge about the parties, the translators, their philosophies and their impositions. The focus is not to compare the latter with modern translations. Thus it is not a sales pitch for a particular recent translation, which I have found in some other books supposedly devoted to a celebration of the KJV. Once or twice I found the author slipped into "caricature", but overall the work is well researched and quite accessible (endnotes, not footnotes).

Church History

***With Axe and Bible: The Scottish Pioneers of New Brunswick, 1784-1874.* Lucille H. Campey. Toronto: Natural Heritage Books (Dundurn Group), 2007, 206 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-897045-22-0**

This is a regional study of a particular people group, Scottish immigrants, and their Presbyterian church in New Brunswick, Canada over a hundred-year period. It is replete with much data concerning many of the key leaders and also contains regimental and ship lists of Scots who settled in the province of New Brunswick. The book sets a context with the Acadian period, the Loyalist arrivals and the separation of New Brunswick from Nova Scotia in 1784. Then the author surveys various regions of New Brunswick where Scots settled. It is highly interesting to read. The book appears to be more heavily weighted on “the axe” than on “the Bible”. The references to the Presbyterian leaders and churches are there but not developed to any extent whereby varieties or local revivals receive any significant attention. Chapter six, “The Timber Trade Moves North: The Restigouche County Scots”, is most fascinating and poses many contemporary questions as to where the descendents of those Scottish Presbyterians are today. This book adds to regional studies in Canadian immigrant and church history for this specific demographic period and people group.

Missiology

***The Meeting of the Waters: 7 Global Currents That Will Propel the Future Church.* Fritz Kling. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010, 240 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4347-6484-3**

What an engaging introduction by Kling in *The Meeting of the Waters*! By combining mainly narrative with didactic elements, Kling tells a story that revolves around two missionaries, Mission Marm and Apple Guy, and the meeting of two rivers in Brazil. A fine metaphor – the meeting of two rivers is linked with the modern reality in missions – the traditional “Mission Marm” type and the new “Apple Guy” type. Anyone involved in missions should by now have observed both, but Kling helps to take one’s unwritten observations and brings out the tremendous global changes taking place in the church and in missions today. This is a warning that if you do not read the introduction but dive into the chapters, the book will lose much of its impact. The introduction is followed by eight chapters. The first tells how Kling arrived at the “7 Global Currents”; then follow seven chapters and a conclu-

sion. The seven are: mercy, mutuality, migration, monoculture, machines, mediation and memory; each is well defined and developed. This book will be a must read for any missiologist, missionary or church or denominational leader who must wrestle with global outreach. One of the best books in the broad field of missions and leadership I have read in the past year. Unfortunately a couple of factual errors crept into the “Notes”, but they do not mar the work. A good follow-up to Stan Guthrie’s *Missions in the Third Millennium*.

Worldview

***The age of consent: a warning from history: The work of Josephine Butler.* Jennifer Davis. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: The Christian Institute, 2009, paper, 27 pp. ISBN 978-1-901086-42-3. Available as a free download booklet from www.christian.org.uk by typing in the book title on the site’s search bar.**

Today there is much discussion about sex-trafficking in many countries of the world. However, there appears to be little historical perspective on the subject. Jennifer Davis’ opening sentence will surely garner interest: “It is almost unbelievable that the UK was once a haven for European sex tourists, home to a thriving trade in child prostitutes comparable to the notorious industries of modern-day Thailand or Cambodia” (p. 8). Hence there is tremendous value in this little booklet about the virtually forgotten Josephine Butler and her campaign against sexual exploitation in the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century. The author reminds us of Josephine’s father’s connection to William Wilberforce and slavery, and this little work takes us to the next generation and another social issue. Readers will be fascinated to learn about the once infamous Contagious Diseases Act, which was only repealed in 1883. A longer biographical section would help the work, but it’s an excellent primer to read and it’s free!

Academic Articles

Developments in Biblical Counseling

J. Cameron Fraser*

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Introduction

In his landmark work, *Competent to Counsel* (copyright 1970), Jay E. Adams challenged the dependence of contemporary Christian counseling on clinical psychology and psychiatry with their secular assumptions. He argued that counseling is fundamentally the work of the Holy Spirit Who uses the Bible, sacraments, prayer and the fellowship of God's people to affect personality and behavioral change. It follows that only Christian believers, and specifically pastors who are equipped to teach God's Word, are "competent to counsel." This book set the stage for what Adams perceived to be a counseling revolution to which he gave the name "nouthetic counseling," a term which will be more fully explained later.

Competent to Counsel rapidly became a best-seller and was translated into several languages. It was followed by a number of other works and gave rise to what came to be known as the nouthetic counseling movement. The Christian Counseling and Education Foundation (CCEF) had already been established in suburban Philadelphia in 1968, two years before the publication of *Competent to Counsel*. It was followed in 1976 by the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (NANC), with headquarters in Lafayette, Indiana. The former serves as a counseling and training centre, in association with neighbouring Westminster Theological Seminary (where Adams was teaching at the time); the latter accredits counselors, counseling centres and counseling training centres.

This article will attempt to outline some principal views of the movement thus begun, take note of some criticisms from within as well as outside of the movement, and show how at least some present-day leaders have developed what they prefer to call by the more generic term of biblical counseling.

Some Foundational Views of Nouthetic Counseling

A: The Sufficiency of Scripture

A central biblical passage in Adams' overall approach is 2 Timothy 3: 14-17. An entire book, *How to Help People Change*,¹ is devoted to this text and it occurs frequently in Adams' other writings. *The Christian Counselor's Manual* notes that the passage contains four steps which "set forth plainly the four basic activities involved in biblical counseling." There is a *judging activity* based on biblical standards; a *convicting activity* by the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16: 8); a *changing activity* and a *structuring activity*, providing the godly discipline necessary for effective change and growth.² In *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, Adams says that "according to this passage the Word was designed to transform behavior." This transformation has two phases: an *instantaneous one* in which a sinner is regenerated and justified, and a *gradual one* in which the process of sanctification takes place.³

It is an implication of nouthetic counseling that an unbeliever cannot be counseled in the proper sense of the term, since counseling by definition involves the process of sanctification. Thus, an unbeliever should be evangelized first. Only if and when he responds positively to the gospel can he be counseled according to biblical principles on the assumption that the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit has begun.⁴

1 Corinthians 10: 13, which reads in part "no test has overtaken you, but such as is common to man," is taken by Adams as a proof of the sufficiency of Scripture for counseling:

If no Christian faces unique tests in life, and if Paul can say to the church at Corinth (living in an entirely different age and culture) that what happened to the Israelites is pertinent also to them (cf. vss. 6, 11), a counselor may be assured that he will face no truly unique problems in counseling. There are just so many basic common themes of sin and no more.⁵

The biblical counseling so described contrasts with "the counsel of the ungodly" as described in Psalm 1:

¹ Jay E. Adams, *How to Help People Change: The Four-Step Biblical Process* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986).

² Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1973), 95-97.

³ Jay E. Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* [originally *More Than Redemption: A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1979)], 36.

⁴ Jay E. Adams, *Essays on Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 95ff.

⁵ Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 22.

Both the counsel and those who give it are ungodly. It is ungodly (1) because it competes with and tries to overthrow God's counsel, (2) because it is inspired by Satan and (3) because (intentionally or otherwise) it is given by those who rebelliously side with the devil. Over against such counsel (and in direct opposition to it) the psalm places God's Word (vs. 2).⁶

B: The Definition of Biblical Counseling

The sufficiency of Scripture for counseling implies the sufficiency of Adams' definition of biblical counseling by the term "nouthetic." Based on the Greek *nouthesis* and its cognates, as used in such passages as Acts 20: 31, Romans 15: 14, Colossians 1: 28 and 3: 16, nouthetic counseling consists of at least three basic elements.

First, the word is frequently used in conjunction with *didasko* (to teach), but whereas *didasko* simply suggests the communication of information, *nouthesis* presupposes the need for change:

the idea of something wrong, some sin, some obstruction, some problem, some difficulty, some need that has to be acknowledged and dealt with, is central. In short, nouthetic confrontation arises out of a condition in the counselee that God wants changed. The fundamental purpose of nouthetic confrontation is to *effect personality and behavioral change*.⁷

The second element in the concept of nouthetic counseling is that problems are solved by verbal means. Trench is quoted as saying:

It is training by word – by the word of encouragement, when this is sufficient, but also by that of remonstrance, of reproof, of blame, where these may be required; as set over against the training by act and by discipline which is *paideia*...The distinctive feature of *nouthesia* is the training by word of mouth.⁸

The third element in *nouthesis*:

has in view the purpose or motive behind nouthetic activity. The thought is always that the verbal correction is intended to benefit

⁶ Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 4.

⁷ Ibid. Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1970), 45.

⁸ Ibid.

the counselee. This beneficent motive never seems to be lost, and is often quite prominent. . .⁹

Adams rejects the idea that “confrontation” has a negative implication. “Nothing could be further from my mind as I use it.” The word implies authority, but not belligerence. It might have been as well to speak of “nouthetic consultation” except that:

Consultation . . . is too neutral. The positive aggressiveness and willingness to put one’s self on the line in reaching out to help another in a face to face encounter that is inherent in *nouthesia* is better expressed by the word confrontation. For me it is a good and more positive term than consultation.¹⁰

C: Relationship to Psychology and Psychiatry

Adams claims that he is open to the insights of psychology to the extent that they support and “fill out” the basic commitment of nouthetic counseling. He frequently expresses frustration at the perception that he is anti-psychology.¹¹

Adams’ relationship to psychology and psychiatry is clarified in his inaugural address as Professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Seminary in 1975. “Counseling and the Sovereignty of God” asserts that because God is sovereign over all of life and His Word applies to all of life and since God in His Word assigns to pastors the task of shepherding His sheep, the work of counseling necessarily falls to those (pastors) whom God in His sovereignty has so ordained. It is their task to help people learn to love God and their neighbors. Since all personal and interpersonal difficulties involve a violation of these two great commandments, it is the pastor’s responsibility to help persons relate to other persons and to God the Person. But when he attempts to do so, he finds other persons (psychologists and psychiatrists) competing with him. “I contend, therefore,” says Adams:

that it is not the pastor who is responsible for the overlap; it is the psychologist on the one side, who has moved his fence over on to the pastor’s territory, and the psychiatrist on the other, who has also encroached upon his property.

Unfortunately, until recently, pastors have been all too willing to allow others to cut their grass.¹²

Does this mean that there is no legitimate role for psychologists and psychiatrists?

⁹ Ibid., 45-46.

¹⁰ Jay E. Adams, *What About Nouthetic Counseling?* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 33.

¹¹ See Ibid., 31.

¹² Ibid., 18.

No, you misunderstand me. It is exactly not that. Remember, I said clearly that they live next door to the pastor. My problem with them is that they refuse to stay on their own property. I have been trying to get the pastor to mow his lawn to the very borders of his plot . . .¹³

After discussing the role and value of experimental psychology, Adams turns his attention to psychiatrists, noting that:

In the United States psychiatrists are physicians, who (for the most part) use their medical training to do little else than prescribe pills...

The pastor recognizes the effects of Adam's sin upon the body; he, therefore, has no problem working side-by-side with a physician who treats the counselee's body as he counsels him about its proper use. From the days of Paul and Luke, pastors have found kinship with medical personnel.

Why, then, does the psychiatrist present a problem? Certainly it is not because of his medical background. The problem is that he will not stay in his own backyard. He keeps setting up his lawn chairs and moving his picnic table onto the pastor's property.¹⁴

Although Adams has little if any sympathy for psychiatry as currently practised, he does see experimental psychology as a useful source of scientific research, while rejecting the humanistic approach of most clinical psychology. Adams is highly critical of those who seek to integrate humanistic psychology with Scripture. He believes that "the study of psychology in depth coupled with a smattering of scriptural data can lead only to the grossest misstatements regarding man and the solutions to his problems."¹⁵

D: Means and Methods of Behavioral Change

An early chapter in *The Christian Counselor's Manual* establishes that "the Holy Spirit is the Principal Person" in the counseling procedure. As such He is not only to be distinguished from unclean spirits, but identified as the Source of all holiness. The "fruit" of the Spirit is the result of His work. "Christians may not counsel apart from the Holy Spirit and His Word without grievously sinning against Him and the counselee."¹⁶ Adams stresses the Holy Spirit's role in effecting attitudinal and behavioral change.

Counselors may take it for granted that any quality of life or attitude mandated in Scripture is possible and may be acquired through Christ by the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 18-19.

¹⁵ Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, xi-xii. cf. *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 71-91.

¹⁶ Ibid., 6-7.

work of His Spirit. While not all gifts of the Spirit may be acquired by all Christians, His fruit are available to every believer.¹⁷

The way in which the Spirit effects biblical change is through the patterns of “Dehabitation and Rehabilitation.” Not just behavioral changes, but a change in the “manner of life” (Ephes. 4: 22) is called for. Change is a two-fold process. It involves both putting off the old manner of life and putting on the new. Thus, it is not sufficient to stop telling lies; one must become a “truth teller” (v. 25). It is not enough to stop stealing; the thief must instead become a hard-working person who shares with others (v. 28). The works of the flesh must be replaced by the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5). The way of the ungodly must give way to the fruit of righteousness (Psalm 1). The disciple of Christ must die to self by taking up his cross (put off) and follow Jesus (put on). The Christian life begins by turning from idols to the living and true God. It continues as the believer habitually turns from sin to righteousness.¹⁸

How does this happen? By the “practice of godliness” leading to “the life of godliness.” “If you practice what God tells you to do, the obedient life will become a part of you.”¹⁹ Habit is a part of life whether it is learning how to drive or putting toothpaste on a brush. But habits can be evil as when our hearts are “trained in greed” (2 Peter 2: 14). Thus, since God made us with the capacity for living according to habit, counselors must help counselees to develop godly habits and lifestyles.²⁰

All this talk of human effort must not be misunderstood. We are talking about “grace-motivated effort,” not the work of the flesh. It is not effort apart from the Holy Spirit that produces godliness. Rather, it is through the power of the Holy Spirit alone that one can endure. By his own effort, a man may persist in learning to skate, but he will not persist in the pursuit of godliness. A Christian does good works because the Spirit first works in him.²¹

Whereas Satan prompts feeling-oriented living, the Holy Spirit prompts obedience toward God. How, then, is the counselee to be motivated to choose commandment-oriented living over feeling-oriented living? First, he must choose to become in practice what he already is in principle. He must consider himself to be “dead to sin but alive to God in Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6: 1). This involves the painful task of crucifying the flesh, taking it to the cross. It is hard as Paul’s struggle in Romans 7: 14-25 testifies, but victory is possible through Christ (v. 25). Then there is the motivation of reward and punishment. God himself motivates by rewards (1 Cor. 3: 8, 14; Ephes. 6: 2; Heb. 11: 6) and this together with Proverbs’ instructions on such matters as the beneficial use of the “rod” in discipline should alert us to this biblical principle. Other biblical motivations include the following:

¹⁷ Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual*, 172.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 167 ff.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 181.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 182.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 186.

“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake . . .” (1 Peter 2: 13)

“ . . . for the sake of conscience toward God . . .” (1 Peter 2: 19)

“for the sake of righteousness . . .” (1 Peter 3: 14)

The choice of motive or motives to be used in any given case depends on the circumstances and individuals involved, with the provision that it/they be biblical and other-oriented rather than self-oriented.²²

The emphasis is on external behavior, the result rather than the process of the Holy Spirit’s work. This is illustrated in a number of ways. Those suffering from problems of fear, anger, anxiety and depression must simply come to terms with the relevant biblical directives and act on them. Husbands who find themselves incapable of loving their wives as Christ loved the church, or even as their neighbor, must learn to love them as their enemies. Those divorced on unbiblical grounds (i.e. other than adultery or desertion by an unbelieving spouse) must repent and seek reconciliation following the “reconciliation/discipline” dynamic of Matthew 18: 15-18. If need be, this can lead to the excommunication of the non-compliant spouse (and even of the church of which he/she is a member!), followed by the declaration that he/she is now an unbeliever and has abandoned his/her spouse, who is now free to remarry. Ex-homosexuals who have difficulty engaging in sexual relations with their spouses must realize that sexual relations within marriage are a duty and when they give themselves to their spouses in this way, their own sexual difficulties can be overcome.²³

Adams briefly discusses the fact that believers will persevere to the extent that they “abide” in Christ (cf. John 15: 5-6). Also, as we have seen, one of the motivations for change is coming to terms with who we are in Christ, seeing ourselves as God sees us, freed from the slavery of sin and risen to newness of life in Christ. Indeed, Adams might argue that his whole methodology arises out of the implications of union with Christ; but when he talks about stressing “the whole relationship to Christ,” he focuses almost entirely on the behavior that arises out of the believer’s relationship with Christ rather than on the relationship itself and the corresponding motivation that arises not out of duty but devotion, motivation from the love of Christ as well as fear of judgement (2 Cor. 5).²⁴

²² Ibid., 170.

²³ Ibid., 348 ff.; cf. Jay E. Adams, *What Do You Do When Fear Overcomes You?, What Do You Do When Anger Gets the Upper Hand?, What Do You Do When You Become Depressed?* (all Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1975); *What to Do About Worry* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980); *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980).

²⁴ Ibid., 204-205.

Some Criticisms of Nouthetic Counseling

A: The Sufficiency of Scripture

We have seen that nouthetic counseling's most basic claim is that the Scriptures provide a sufficient basis for counseling. This claim has been controversial, even among critics most closely identified with Adams' overall theological position.

For instance, a critique from the continental branch of Reformed orthodoxy comes in the form of a 1975 doctoral dissertation by J. S. Hielema, published in the Netherlands, in which he compares Adams with his Princeton contemporary Seward Hiltner. Regarding Adams, Hielema notes the influence of Reformed apologist Cornelius Van Til, as well as biblical theologian Geerhardus Vos. Adams' dependence on covenant theology, particularly in his treatment of the family and of Christian education, is also stressed.²⁵ Beyond this, however, Hielema questions Adams' claim that "It is those views commonly held by Reformed theologians . . . that I have assumed throughout."²⁶

Hielema was writing before the publication of *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, which does indeed cover the major *loci* of Reformed theology applied to counseling, but I suspect he would still want to ask, "Does an emphasis on 'scriptural counseling . . . that is wholly scriptural' really appreciate the nature and character of Reformed theology . . . ?"²⁷

Hielema wonders if a counseling approach that stresses that the Bible and the Bible only can be the counselor's textbook does not move in the direction of "the theology of Anabaptism" and "biblicism."²⁸ Does Adams, he asks, adequately appreciate that the "multiform wisdom" of Scripture – a phrase used by John Murray – implies (quoting John Frame) "that a study of nature and the human situation may be necessary in order to determine the proper application of a Scriptural command?"²⁹ Does nouthetic counseling "(u)se all the results of the sciences in its interpretation of the Christian Life – these results interpreted, of course, in the light of Scripture?" According to Hielema, "In Adams' plea to use the Bible as a textbook for counseling we find a serious misunderstanding of the Holy Spirit's work in both the history of Christianity (*corpus christiani*) and the life of the believer."³⁰

Another critic, Larry Crabb, in discussing the view that the Bible directly answers every legitimate question about life and is therefore a sufficient guide for counseling, makes the point that one who takes this position must

²⁵ J. S. Hielema, *Pastoral or Christian Counseling: A Confrontation with American Pastoral Theology*, in *Particular Seward Hiltner and Jay E. Adams* (Utrecht: Elinkwijk, 1975), 158-159.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 223; cf. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 34.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 224.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 225.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 223.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 223-234.

necessarily limit the questions he asks to ones specifically answered in the Bible. "The effect of this viewpoint is to disregard important questions by calling them illegitimate." This is because "it is possible to give the literal meaning of the text a comprehensive relevance that it simply does not have."³¹

Crabb argues for another way of seeing the sufficiency of Scripture – as a framework for thinking through every important question about people, drawing out the implications of biblical data and always remaining within the boundaries which Scripture imposes.³²

A related point, made by several critics, has to do with Adams' perceived minimizing of natural revelation (e.g. psychology) in relation to special revelation (Scripture). This comes in various forms, but one of the most telling is that:

Adams fail(s) to replicate the Bible's own attitude. For example, many of the Solomonic proverbs (evidence) a wide-ranging curiosity about the natural world not dependent on divine revelation: "much of the wisdom contained in Proverbs could have been discovered by a secular sage of the Ancient Near East or of contemporary America."³³

B: The Definition of Biblical Counseling

Regarding the narrower question of how to define counseling biblically, John D. Carter questions the choice of *nouthesis* as the biblical term for counseling. Noting that *nouthesis* and its cognates occur only thirteen times in the New Testament, Carter offers the suggestion that:

parakaleo and its cognate *paraklesis* make a much more adequate model of counseling from a biblical perspective. These words and concepts are much more central biblically. Together they are translated in the King James Version 29 times as "comfort," 27 times as "exhort," 14 times as "consolation" and 43 times as "beseech" and infrequently as "desire, entreat, and pray." Furthermore and perhaps of greater import, *paraklesis* is listed as a gift to the church (Romans 12: 8) . . .

³¹ Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr., *Understanding People: Deep Longings for Relationship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 54-55.

³² *Ibid.*, 57-58.

³³ John H. Coe, "Educating the Church for Wisdom's Sake or Why Biblical Counseling is Unbiblical" (1991), 30; quoted in David Powlison, "Competent to Counsel? The History of a Conservative Protestant Anti-Psychiatry Movement: A Dissertation in History and Sociology of Science" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996), 308.

The concept is broad enough to support a variety of therapeutic techniques from crisis intervention to depth therapy and it is a gift given to the church which is clearly different than the gift of prophet or teacher. On the other hand, *nouthesia* represents a rather narrow range of functioning which Christians are to engage in, but does not have the status of a gift to the church and does not have the centrality that Adams wants to give it.³⁴

Although Adams makes only limited use of *paraklesis*, he does refer to it. For instance, he notes that:

The guiding and teaching function of the biblical counselor is seen clearly in John 14: 26, 16: 13. His methods as Counselor are described in John 16: 7-15. The Spirit as Counselor is so concerned with counseling by teaching and leading into truth that He is specifically designated “the Spirit of truth” John 14: 17.³⁵

Elsewhere, Adams has in fact acknowledged that he dislikes the word “nouthetic” and uses it reluctantly, because *nouthesis* appears almost exclusively in Paul and is not universal; other terms are used by other biblical writers.³⁶ However, he is insistent that the elements of nouthetic counseling as defined earlier encompass the content of biblically defined counseling. Several of his critics, on the other hand, suggest that nouthetic counseling is part of the biblical approach, but needs supplementing. David Carlson, for instance, proposes a three-fold model of counseling styles corresponding to different biblical approaches: “prophetic-confrontational, pastoral-conversational, and priestly-confessional,” with Adams fitting exclusively in the first category.³⁷ As we shall see, some of Adams’ colleagues have also seen the need to fill out the biblical picture.

C: Relationship to Psychology and Psychiatry

In his critique of nouthetic counseling, John Carter takes note of the fact that Adams’ Ph.D. is in speech, not psychology, and that he had only experienced a summer internship with O. Hobart Mowrer, a psychologist known for his research on behavior therapy and his emphasis on taking personal responsibility.³⁸ This is related to two areas of criticisms – that Adams has inadequate training in psychology and that he reflects the influence of Mowrer. To take up the second point first, nouthetic counseling, according to Carter,

³⁴ John D. Carter, “Adams’ Theory of Nouthetic Counseling,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 1975, Vol. 3, No. 3, 143-145.

³⁵ Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual*, 5.

³⁶ Adams, *What About Nouthetic Counseling?*, 1.

³⁷ David E. Carlson, “Jesus’ Style of Relating: The Search for a Biblical View of Counseling,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 1976, Vol. 4, No. 3, 181-192.

³⁸ Adams also studied with a Freudian psychiatrist at Temple University.

“has all the assets and liabilities of a confrontational-behavioral-responsibility approach (e.g. Mowrer).” The focus is on observable external change rather than internal processes. His “strong emphasis on behavior and confrontation appears to have come directly from Mowrer and to have blinded Adams to the Scriptures’ emphasis on the inner aspects of man in sin.” Adams’ claims to greater and more rapid success for his approach are difficult to substantiate, but “one of the reasons for his apparent success is its surface character.”³⁹

As to Adams’ perceived inadequacies in psychology, he “fails to understand the psychologists he most severely criticized, namely Rogers and Freud.” His “psychological naïveté” is evidenced by his reference to the Freudian concept of transference as attributable to “Rogerians and other Freudians.”⁴⁰ Neither Freud nor Rogers would recognize themselves in Adams’ critique. The reason for this, according to Carter, “appears to be that he has never read the original authors (or at least understood them) as indicated by his failure to cite their original works.” Apart from two references to Freud’s works and five to Rogers’ in Adams’ three major works under consideration⁴¹ – unless Carter has “overlooked a reference or two to either author” – Freud and Freudians and Rogers and Rogerian therapy “are repeatedly described from secondary sources.” Mowrer and Skinner “are both less frequently and less harshly criticized,” although they are also rejected as unbiblical.⁴²

The implication that Adams lacks psychological training and expertise is one which several other critics have made. David Powlison makes reference to several of them in his doctoral dissertation. He then observes that (according to the critics) Adams’ alleged “ignorance and unfairness” relative to the major theorists “arose from an identifiable source. He was indebted to Mowrer far more profoundly than he acknowledged.” Adams might “disclaim Mowrer’s influence as nothing more than clearing the ground of Freudian influences.” Yet, “to critics who read Mowrer and Adams side-by-side, it was evident that the entire structure of (his) theory was Mowrerian.”⁴³ Although Adams has repeatedly and vehemently denied being a disciple of Mowrer, some critics see this as evidence that he is in fact a crypto-disciple; he “brings secular principles through the back door.”⁴⁴

Adams has also been called a popularizer of the psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, author of *The Myth of Mental Illness* and other works (to which

³⁹ Carter, 152-154.

⁴⁰ Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual*, 101.

⁴¹ Adams, *Competent to Counsel, Essays on Christian Counseling, The Christian Counselor’s Manual*.

⁴² Carter, 154.

⁴³ Powlison, “Competent to Counsel?”, 340-341.

⁴⁴ Gary R. Collins, *The Rebuilding of Psychology: An Integration of Psychology and Christianity* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1977), 13.

Adams, however, does not make frequent reference). The late Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in the context of appreciation for the Puritan Richard Baxter's thirty-five point distinction between mental and spiritual depression, says, "I do hope that people who tend to follow Thomas Szasz and his popularizer Jay Adams will take all that to heart."⁴⁵ The Dutch pastoral theologian Prof. C. Trimp is also of the opinion that Adams has replaced Szasz's "social model" with a "religious model" and this leads to oversimplification.⁴⁶

Some of the above criticisms have found an echo among Adams' closest associates. Most notably, his friend and co-founder of nouthetic counseling, John Bettler, among other criticisms, argues that "many biblical counselors have been unfair to their enemies, the psychologists." He thinks that Adams has "often treated psychologists unfairly, setting up straw men easy to demolish."⁴⁷

D: Means and Methods of Behavioral Change

Richard Lovelace, in his *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, suggests that "The counseling approach which is most likely to help in congregational renewal is a tuned and adapted form of nouthetic counseling."⁴⁸ He goes on, however, to make some serious criticisms of the nouthetic approach including the charge that it:

simply operates with the Pelagian model of the Christian life common in modern Evangelicalism, assuming that sin problems are only habit patterns of disobedience which can be broken down by the application of will power in a process of dehabitation. This is a view of sanctification which will work in some instances, especially on persons who have been looking for easy victories through faith and neglecting the vigorous engagement of the will. But it does not penetrate the depth of the problem of indwelling sin and provide a dynamic to overcome it. Thus, at times it will amputate the surface manifestations of sin without disturbing the roots of the flesh and produce a pharisaical self-righteousness. In other cases it can lead almost to despair as the counselee attacks an iceberg of concealed sin with efforts at discipline and will power. This approach to counseling . . . is not sufficiently evangelical because it

⁴⁵ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, M.D., *Healing and the Scriptures* (Nashville, TN.: Oliver-Nelson Books. Copyright 1982, 1987, 1988 by Bethan Lloyd-Jones), 158; cf. Richard Baxter, *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter*, Vol. 1: *A Christian Directory* [19th century reprint by George Virtue, London, (Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1990)], 261 ff.

⁴⁶ Hielema, 244.

⁴⁷ Powlison, 387.

⁴⁸ Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 218.

fails to see that progress must be grounded in the appropriation by faith of the benefits of the union with Christ.⁴⁹

On the face of it, the charge of Pelagianism – surely the ultimate insult to a Reformed theologian! – seems extreme. *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, not to mention Adams' other writings, show him to be well within the orthodox Reformed understanding of the doctrine of man. Indeed, his chapter on the nature of man is among the most satisfying descriptions of human nature (including concepts of body, soul, mind etc.) available in print. However, Lovelace's perception is that nouthetic confrontation calls for change at the behavioral level which *appears* to be Pelagian in its inadequate attention to the motives of the heart. Others have made the same charge. John Carter goes so far as to say that Adams has "two theologies: one (Reformed) which he professes; the other (Pelagian) which he practices in his counseling model."⁵⁰

William T. Kirwin, formerly of Covenant Theological Seminary, offers similar criticisms of Adams' behavioristic use of Scripture, including the following:

Jay Adams advises depressed people to change their sinful behavior patterns: "Go ahead and do it... No matter how you feel. Ask God to help you" (Adams 1973, 379).⁵¹ That advice takes too mild a view of the fall and its effects on human functioning. The will, along with the cognitive and affective aspects of the heart, has been badly damaged; to a large extent human beings no longer have control over themselves.⁵²

The above is buttressed by a lengthy quote from Cornelius Van Til to the effect that "(b)efore the fall man's will controlled his subconscious life, while after the fall man's subconscious life controlled his will."⁵³ Adams might well counter that Van Til is referring to unregenerate man without the Holy Spirit's power, but the fact remains that the perception is widely held that Adams fails to account adequately for the prevailing effects of sin on the will and that his "biblical behaviorism" is theologically deficient.

A helpful corrective to Adams' emphasis on external behavior over internal processes of the heart is found in Hielema's critique, where he refers to H. Jonker's term "orthognosis" (cf. *orthognosis*):

⁴⁹ Ibid., 218-219.

⁵⁰ Powlison, 316.

⁵¹ Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, 379.

⁵² William T. Kirkwin, *Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling: A Case for Integrating Psychology and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984).

⁵³ Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Theistic Ethics*, Syllabus (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1947), 48-49.

He (Jonker) used this term to elaborate upon the thought that we are not only to be concerned about “ortho-doxo,” the right doctrine, but also “ortho-praxis,” the right deed. The jump from “doctrine” to “deed,” Jonker holds, cannot be made. The missing link between “ortho-doxo” and “ortho-praxis” is “ortho-gnosis.” Ortho-gnosis is the right knowledge of God, the inner attitude of faith. This is indeed a very useful term that should be employed in pastoral theology. If we expect too much from “methods” and “techniques” in the praxis of pastoral work we reduce the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a mere “object.” This would prove to be a fruitless and “legalistic” procedure.⁵⁴

Hielema’s overall critique, it should be pointed out, is not entirely negative. Among other positive evaluations of Adams throughout his work, he includes a useful and largely favourable comparison with Calvin on Scripture, discipline and holiness.⁵⁵ By implication and despite the strictures quoted earlier, this places Adams well within the Reformed tradition in terms of Scripture and its application. But what the quotation from Jonker in particular implies is that he (Hielema) shares a widespread impression that Adams moves too quickly from the biblical text to behavioral application without sufficient attention to the cultivation of “the inner attitude of faith.” Elsewhere, Hielema quotes C. Trim as saying that it is nothing but “Legalistic-methodistic” to view biblical change, as Adams does, to be effected by a “pattern” that is reversed by “(b)eginning an upward cycle of righteousness resulting in further righteousness.”⁵⁶

Some Developments in Nouthetic Counseling

A: The Sufficiency of Scripture

The main distinctive of those who insist on a biblical counseling methodology is that they self-consciously begin with the Scriptures. Their writings are filled with biblical references, and psychological insights are brought in only in a secondary and tentative manner, whereas often Christian psychologists tend to start with psychology and use the Scripture to back up their views. Thus, it comes down not so much to whether one is committed to the final authority of Scripture in principle, but to how well and how consistently one actually uses the Scriptures in counseling theory and practice. This is how David Powlison ends an article called “Which Presuppositions? Secular Psychology and the Categories of Biblical Thought”:

1. Does the momentum behind a particular idea come from Scripture or psychology?

⁵⁴ Hielema, 263.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 170-171.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 244.

2. Is the God-ward referent in immediate evidence when discussing human behavior, motives, norms, problems, solutions and so forth? Or is psychology the moving force in a system, and Scripture is employed essentially to window dress and proof text?
3. Do the observations of psychology illustrate and apply biblical categories of thought about human life? Or is Scripture used to provide illustrations, applications and parallels to secular categories of thought?⁵⁷

In another article, Powlison has described the difference between biblical counselors and Christian psychotherapists as follows:

Most Christian psychologists view the Bible as an inspirational resource, but their basic system of counseling, both theory and methods, is transferred unaltered from secular psychology

Some Christian psychotherapists use few Scriptures; others use many. But frequency of citation is much less important than the way passages are used – or misused – and in the vast majority of cases the passages cited are completely misused. There is a dearth of contextualized exegesis (a critical interpretation of a text) and an abundance of eisegesis (interpreting a text by reading one's own ideas into it). Biblical counseling is committed to letting God speak for Himself through His Word, and to handling the Word of Truth rightly (2 Tim. 2: 15).⁵⁸

Powlison has attempted to address the evangelical psychotherapeutic establishment, calling it to recognize the radical nature of biblical presuppositions in counseling theory, noting that:

a biblical view of presuppositions provides a sharply distinct alternative to any and all forms of secular thinking. It provides a truly coherent rationale for science. It provides a solid, biblical theoretical foundation for counseling people. It accounts for and appreciates the insights of psychology without losing sight of the pervasive distortion within each insight.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ David Powlison, "Which Presuppositions? Secular Psychology and the Categories of Biblical Thought," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 1984, Vol. 12, No 4, 277-278.

⁵⁸ David Powlison, "Biblical Counseling in the Twentieth Century," John MacArthur, Jr. and Wayne Mack, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling* (Dallas: Word, 1994), 44-61.

⁵⁹ Powlison, "Which Presuppositions?," 277-278.

In a lecture given at a counseling conference sponsored by the Christian Counseling and Education Foundation, John Bettler, who was then Director of the CCEF and a faculty member at Westminster Theological Seminary, urged that “one of the signs that the movement called biblical counseling has been a success is that we have disagreements!” Arguing that differences of style and emphasis should not be dismissed as less biblical than others, he asked, “To what irreducible commitments must you adhere in order to deserve the title ‘biblical’?” Bettler's answer is to follow the historical model of establishing confessions of faith to define the parameters of biblical orthodoxy. Taking the specific example of the place of the past in the life of a counselee, Bettler states:

I want us to do the dangerous job of drawing circles, drawing lines. Anybody within the circle is biblical, anybody outside the circle is not. That is a tough thing to do and there are dangers. Some of us might want to push the circles real wide; that tends towards liberalism. Others of us might want to narrow the circles as tightly as we can; that tends toward becoming cultic or sectarian. We want to be biblical in dealing with the past. We want to search the Scripture to find commonality in this and other crucial counseling areas. Confession making is dangerous, but I believe it is essential. We have to do it in complete dependence upon the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. We need God to give us wisdom to be a community of learning so that we can learn from one another and stimulate one another unto good works.⁶⁰

The Fall 2000 issue of *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* features a series of “Affirmations & Denials: A Proposed Definition of Biblical Counseling” by David Powlison. It is intended to be a draft of the type of confession making referred to by Bettler. The following affirmations and denials speak to the issue of Scriptural sufficiency:

We *affirm* that the Bible is God's self-revelation in relation to His creatures, and, as such, truly explains people and situations.

We *deny* that any other source of knowledge is authoritative for explaining people and situations.

We *affirm* that the Bible, as the revelation of Jesus Christ's redemptive activity, intends to specifically guide and inform counseling ministry.

We *deny* that any other source of knowledge is authoritative to equip us for the task of counseling people.

⁶⁰ John Bettler, “Counseling and the Problem of the Past,” *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 1994, Vol. XII, No. 2, 6-7.

We *affirm* that wise counseling requires ongoing practical theological labor in order to understand Scripture, people and situations. We must continually develop our personal character, case-wise understanding of persons, pastoral skills, and institutional structures.

We *deny* that the Bible intends to serve as an encyclopaedia of proof texts containing all facts about people and the diversity of problems in living . . .⁶¹

Few nouthetic counselors would have difficulty with such a statement. It upholds the sufficiency of Scripture and (although not explicitly stated as such) its superiority to general revelation, in contrast to many Christian psychologists who place them on an equal footing. It also seeks to avoid the charge of proof-texting. Differences arise not so much in the commitment to biblical counseling but in the application, including an avoidance of defining biblical counseling by the term “nouthetic.”

B: The Sufficiency of Nouthetic Counseling

In the early days of the CCEF, John Bettler edited a newsletter called *Nouthetic Confrontation*. Later he changed the name of the newsletter to *Momentum*, explaining that since nouthetic counseling was now gaining momentum, it was time to move beyond the necessarily confrontational image of the movement's beginning to develop a more positive approach. In a later publication, he expressed concern that nouthetic counselors had a “tendency to twist the Scriptures to substantiate (their) conclusions.” He accused his friend Jay Adams of sometimes “making the Scripture say something it never intended to say.” Bettler also echoes the common charge of illegitimate proof-texting and emphasizing some biblical themes to the neglect of others.⁶²

David Powlison uses the image of a fence surrounding the field of biblical counseling to describe the relationship between “the more authoritative, frankly remedial elements of counseling and the more mutual, ongoing encouraging elements.” He writes (with lay counseling particularly in mind):

Our goal is systematically biblical counseling, the ministry of God's truth in love. The ‘nouthetic part’ of biblical counseling is the ‘fence.’ It is the backup mode of biblical counseling. It is for when the sheep leave the green pastures to wander out into the desert. The ‘paracletic’ part of biblical counseling is the ‘field.’ It is the primary mode of biblical counseling, containing all the mutual

⁶¹ David Powlison, “Affirmations & Denials: A Proposed Definition of Biblical Counseling,” *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 2000, Vol. IX, No. 1, 19.

⁶² John Bettler, “Biblical Counseling: The Next Generation,” *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, Vol. VIII, No. 4, 6-10.

edifying, encouraging, one anothering, nourishing, praying and loving that is the normal Christian life. It is as much a two way street as possible. It is as egalitarian as possible. It is as biblically ‘nondirective and client-centered’ as possible. The truth content and goals of counseling are invariable, fixed by Scripture. This same Scripture tells us God uses many different forms of relationship to write His Word on our hearts.⁶³

Elsewhere, Powlison has noted the frequent criticism of Adams for choosing *noutheteo* rather than *parakaleo* as his defining term for biblical counseling. But he agrees with Adams that:

the choice of words is indifferent – they can cover the same semantic field. Both words involve God’s truth applied to lives, both words communicate love and concern, and both words communicate an appropriate directness and toughness.⁶⁴

Be that as it may, it is unmistakably the case that Powlison, like Bettler, prefers to speak of “biblical” counseling more generally, and tends to avoid the negative connotations which have (rightly or wrongly) come to be associated with “nouthetic.”

C: Relation to Psychology and Psychiatry

Bettler distinguishes between “recycling” and the “integration” of theology and psychology popular among psychotherapists. His view is reflected in a course description from a brochure produced by the CCEF:

The course avoids their wholesale acceptance (“integration”) which destroys Scripture’s authority. It also avoids outright rejection, which robs the Christian counselor of the stimulus of secular insights. Instead a “recycling” model is proposed to maintain the Bible sufficiency as well as sharpen your understanding of biblical teaching . . .

Powlison evidences some ambivalence over the question of integration. In an article “Critiquing Modern Integrationists” he discusses various types of integration. There follows some helpful material on how biblical Christians should view and use psychology and minister to the “psychologized.” Using Calvin’s analogy of the Scriptures as eyeglasses by which God corrects our sin-tainted vision, Powlison notes that:

⁶³ Powlison, “Crucial Issues in Contemporary Biblical Counseling,” *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, 1988, Vol. IX, No. 3, 8-9.

⁶⁴ Powlison, “Biblical Counseling in the Twentieth Century,” 51n.

The goal of biblically reinterpreting human experience – whether described by a counselee or a psychologist – is not “look how much we can learn from them.” The goal is the ministry of the Word that concerns the soul. On the one hand, integrationists do not see that the payoff of a valid biblical interaction with psychology must be the conversion of the psychologized. On the other hand, biblical counselors who do not do the hard work of reinterpreting error, standing it on its head, miss an opportunity for effective ministry...⁶⁵

But what is the alternative to integration? In his “Crucial Issues in Contemporary Biblical Counseling,” Powlison writes that:

The relationship of presuppositionally consistent Christianity to secular culture is not simply one of rejection. Half of what biblical presuppositions give us is a way to discern the lie that tries to make people think about themselves as autonomous from God.

But the other half of what biblical categories do is give us a way of appreciating, redeeming and reframing the culture of even the most godless men and women. We are, after all, even able to use the data gathered from godless counselees, reinterpreting their own perceptions back to them in biblical categories that turn their world inside out and upside down!⁶⁶

In his contributions to the book *Psychology & Christianity: Four Views*, Powlison defends biblical counseling and critiques three other approaches.⁶⁷ More recently, he has noted that, while Christian psychologists in general became more explicitly biblical in the 1990s:

the “biblical counselors” have also changed. Their writings now evidence a broader scope of concerns and concepts than they had in the early 1970s. They have supplemented, developed, or even altered aspects of Adams’s initial model. They are paying a great deal of attention to (1) intrapersonal dynamics such as motivation theory, self-evaluation, belief, and self-deception; (2) the impact of and response to varieties of suffering and socialization; (3) the compassionate, flexible, probing, and patient aspects of counseling methodology; (4) nuances in the interaction between Christian faith and the modern psychologies; (5) the practicalities of marital and

⁶⁵ David Powlison, “Critiquing Modern Integrationists,” *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 1993, Vol. XI, No. 3, 34.

⁶⁶ David Powlison, “Crucial Issues in Contemporary Biblical Counseling,” 13.

⁶⁷ Eric L. Johnson & Stanton L. Jones ed., *Psychology & Christianity: Four Views* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).

familial communication; and (6) the cause and treatment of so-called addictions. The model of biblical counseling is now more detailed and comprehensive about any number of “psychological” matters.⁶⁸

Still, while “the psychologists seem more biblical and the biblical counselors seem more psychological,” Powlison continues to believe that “*the two visions are still fundamentally incompatible*” (his italics). However, he also believes that “our current situation is ripe for a fresh articulation of the issues. . . . The core question turns on the intent and scope of Scripture, the nature of pastoral theological work, and the degree of significance attached to what the church can appropriate from the world.”⁶⁹

Edward Welch (like Powlison, a faculty member and counselor at CCEF) does not deal so much with the sufficiency of Scripture or the integration of Scripture and psychology at a theoretical level. Rather, as a licensed psychologist himself, his interests are more in application, especially the psychiatric study of the brain. His criticisms of secular psychology and Christianized versions of them are very much along the lines of nouthetic orthodoxy.⁷⁰ But because he is careful to discern what can be legitimately learned, his criticisms are all the more compelling. The subtitle of his book, *Blame It on the Brain?*, expresses well his approach: *Distinguishing Chemical Imbalances, Brain Disorders and Disobedience*. Following a biblical study of the mind-body relationship, Welch moves on to “Brain Problems Seen Through the Lens of Scripture.” Two chapters are devoted to dementia associated with Alzheimer’s disease and head injury from accidents respectively, under the heading “The Brain Did It.” Here the goal is to provide “a method for approaching physical problems and gaining experience in distinguishing issues of the heart from physical weakness.” Next come chapters on depression and attention deficit disorder titled “Maybe the Brain Did It.” Finally homosexuality and alcoholism are studied as examples of “The Brain Didn’t Do It.”⁷¹

A valuable insight which Welch offers is that the brain can reveal what is in the heart. Thus, for instance, in the case of a hitherto morally upright Alzheimer patient who begins to use crude and lustful language, he is no longer able to disguise the state of his heart as he once was.⁷² In each area of application, Welch stresses the need to first of all “get information,” then “distinguish between spiritual and physical symptoms.” This, in turn, leads to ad-

⁶⁸ David Powlison, “Cure of Souls & the Modern Psychotherapies,” in *Westminster Today*, Summer 2011, Vol. 4, Iss.1, 9.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Edward T. Welch, *When People Are Big and God Is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1997), 139 ff.

⁷¹ Edward Welch, *Blame It on the Brain?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1998).

⁷² Ibid., 125.

addressing heart issues on the one hand and maximizing remaining strengths, while correcting or minimizing weaknesses on the other. Thus, in his discussion of depression, Welch notes that:

If depression consisted solely of spiritual problems, there would be no reason to talk about medication and other physical treatments. But depression does have physical symptoms. Therefore, medical treatment might be helpful to ease or erase the physical symptoms of depression (and those of other psychiatric problems).⁷³

Welch's *Counselor's Guide to the Brain and Its Disorders: Knowing the Difference Between Disease and Sin* provides a somewhat more technical treatment of the uses and abuses of medication.⁷⁴ Elsewhere, contrary to Adams' approach, which encourages the counselor to assume a sin connection in the absence of clear evidence to the contrary, Welch cautions that to "reduce a person's suffering to the consequences of their own sin, especially when we don't have clear knowledge of the situation, is unbiblical and potentially destructive."⁷⁵

This leads to another caution in which Welch's approach differs from Adams':

To the degree that depression is, in fact, a form of suffering, then we have no biblical guarantee that it will be eradicated from our lives. We do have something close to a biblical promise that suffering, and therefore depression, will be lightened as we grow in Christ, but lightened does not mean depression-free.⁷⁶

No careful reader of Welch comes away with the impression that he is soft on sin. Rather, precisely because he is so careful to distinguish between heart and brain issues, his treatment of the heart is all the more thorough and penetrating. His treatment of homosexuality and alcoholism are especially helpful in this regard.

D: Means and Methods of Behavioral Change

When it comes to the actual process of helping people change behaviorally in a biblical manner, both Welch and Powlison make substantial use of

⁷³ Ibid., 125.

⁷⁴ Edward T. Welch, *Counselor's Guide to the Brain and Its Disorders: Knowing the Difference Between Disease and Sin* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991).

⁷⁵ Edward T. Welch, "Understanding Depression," *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 2000, Vol. 18, No. 2, 13. Welch has also written a book-length study of *Depression: A Stubborn Darkness* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2004).

⁷⁶ Edward T. Welch, "Helping Those Who Are Depressed," *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 2000, Vol. 18, No. 2, 27.

two important categories. The first, and most pervasive, is what they call “idols of the heart.” A second related insight is that we both sin and are sinned against. Both of these concepts go beyond simply identifying sinful behavior and calling for repentance.

Powlison develops his approach in an article, “Idols of the Heart and ‘Vanity Fair.’” It is a discussion of the relationship between the biblical emphasis on idolatry and the psychological question of how to “make sense of the myriad significant factors which shape and determine human behavior.”⁷⁷ While the notion of idolatry most often emerges as a polemic against worship of physical images and false gods, Scripture also internalizes the problem as in Ezekiel 14: 1-8. The First Great Commandment, to love God with heart, soul, mind and might, also demonstrates the essential “inwardness” of the law regarding idolatry. “The language of love, trust, fear, hope, seeking, serving – terms describing a relationship to the true God – is continually utilized in the Bible to describe our false loves, false trusts, false fears, false hopes, false pursuits, false masters.”⁷⁸

If “idolatry” is the characteristic Old Testament word for “our drift from God,” then “desires” is the New Testament counterpart. “The New Testament language of problematic ‘desires’ is a dramatic expansion of the tenth commandment, which forbids coveting . . . (and) internalizes the problem of sin, making it ‘psychodynamic.’” It:

lays bare the grasping and demanding nature of the human heart, as Paul powerfully describes it in Romans 7. Interestingly (and unsurprisingly) the New Testament merges the concept of idolatry and the concept of inordinate, life-ruling desires. Idolatry becomes a problem of the heart, a metaphor for human lust, craving, yearning and greedy demand.⁷⁹

The Bible also treats idolatry as “a central feature of the social context, ‘the world,’ which shapes and moulds us.” Like “Vanity Fair” in Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, it can be seen as “portraying the interaction of powerful, enticing and intimidating social shapers of behavior with the self-determining tendencies of Christian’s own heart.”⁸⁰

The fact that idols allure us from both within and without “has provocative implications for contemporary counseling questions.” For instance, “the life patterns often labelled ‘co-dependency’ are more precisely and penetratingly understood instances of ‘co-idolatry.’”⁸¹ The idolatry motif helps relate three factors which enter into counseling situations: people are responsible

⁷⁷ David Powlison, “Idols of the Heart and ‘Vanity Fair,’” *Areopagus*, 1991, Vol. II, No. 1, 2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

for their own problems, their problems are shaped by external influences including traumatic influences such as loss or victimization, and problem behavior is often driven by deep-seated motives of which a person may be “almost wholly unaware.”⁸²

Powlison asserts that “The Bible’s view of man – both individual and social life – alone holds these things together.” This is because human motivation is always “with respect to God.” The biblical theme of idolatry provides a “penetrating tool” for understanding both the “springs of and inducements to” sinful behavior.

The causes of particular sins, whether “biological drives,” “psychodynamic forces from within,” “socio-cultural conditioning from without,” or “demonic temptation and attack from without” can be truly comprehended through the lens of idolatry. Such comprehension plows the field for Christian counseling to become Christian in deed as well as name, to become ministry of the many-faceted good news of Jesus Christ.⁸³

“What happens to the Gospel when idolatry themes are not grasped?” Powlison asks:

When “the Gospel” is shared, it comes across something like this: “God accepts you just as you are. God has unconditional love for you.” This is not the biblical Gospel, however. God’s love is not Rogerian unconditional positive regard writ large. A need theory of motivation – rather than an idolatry theory – bends the Gospel solution into “another gospel” which is essentially a false gospel.

The Gospel is better than unconditional love. The Gospel says, God accepts you just as Christ is . . . God never accepts me as-I-am. He accepts me as-I-am-in-Christ. The centre of gravity is different. The true Gospel does not allow God’s love to be sucked into the vortex of my soul’s lust for acceptability and worth in and of myself. Rather, it radically decenters people – what the Bible calls “fear of the Lord” and “faith” – to look outside themselves.⁸⁴

Christian counselors with a “psychologizing drift” are susceptible to the above distortion of the gospel. However, Christian counselors with “moralistic tendencies” have a different set of problems. Christ’s forgiveness is “typically applied simply to behavioral sins.” The content of the gospel “is usually more orthodox than the content of the psychologized Gospel, but the scope of application is truncated.” Those with “psychologizing tendencies” at least

⁸² Ibid., 5.

⁸³ Ibid., 8-9.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 17-18.

notice our “inner complexities and outer sufferings, though they distort both systemically.” In some ways, “the moralizing tendency represents an inadequate grip on the kind of ‘bad news’ which this article has been exploring.”⁸⁵

Powlison’s examples of “moralistic tendencies” are of the “let go and let God” and “total yieldedness” approaches of “a single act of first-blessing or second-blessing housecleaning,” with little sense of the “patient process of inner renewal.”⁸⁶ These examples do not apply to Jay Adams or nouthetic counselors in general, who stress progressive sanctification, but Powlison has elsewhere conceded that the criticisms of “moralism” and “behaviorism” hit home there also.

Welch’s treatment of these themes is most thoroughly and helpfully developed in *When People Are Big and God Is Small*. However, while reference will be made to this work, it may be sufficient for our present purposes to summarize his use of these concepts in an article on “Codependency and the Cult of Self.” Here, after outlining the popular codependent movement, he asks, “If we are not to use the categories of ‘self-esteem,’ ‘unmet needs,’ ‘codependency,’ and the notion of the basically good ‘child within,’ what descriptions rise out of biblical categories?” The answer:

According to Scripture, we are sinners by birth (original sin) and sinners by choice. Sin is a condition arising from a fallen nature that is hostile to God, and this condition produces personal choices and actions that are sinful. But because we are all sinners, there is a third element: although we are sinners by birth and sinners by choice, we are also sinned against. There is a legitimate place in Scripture given to the idea that we both victimize others and are ourselves victims of the sinful actions of other people and institutions . . .⁸⁷

Next, we come to the concept of idolatry. “The characteristic strategy of idolatry is to take something that is fine in itself and exalt it so that it rules the person.” Thus, “being loved is a blessing. However, when it moves from godly desire to ruling passion or need, it is evidence of the sinful tendency to serve other gods, all ultimately in an effort to worship oneself.” It often “takes the mode of a quiet, unspoken conviction that because God does not meet all one’s needs, one can divide one’s allegiance and trust in idols in addition to God. Paradoxically, though, when we offer ourselves to idols we become their slaves. “That is idolatry: seeking to control, but being controlled.”⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ezekiel 37 is given as an example. See Edward T. Welch, “Codependency and the Cult of Self,” John W. Armstrong, ed., *Power Religion* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 233.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 234-236.

Welch and Powlison are both critical of all “needs” theories, including those of Larry Crabb, whom they nevertheless recognize as being closer to their own position than others (e.g. Minirth-Meier who adopt the codependency model). Although appreciative of Crabb in several respects, Powlison indicts him for “following the logic of Maslovian and object relations psychologies in absoluting a need or yearning for security in intimate relationships.”⁸⁹ Welch, likewise, finds Crabb’s change of terminology from “needs” to “deep longings” to be unsatisfactory. He is concerned that this means “we have a longings problem that is at least as deep as our sin problem.”⁹⁰ Welch believes that instead of finding the source of psychological needs in our creation in the image of God, we should look for it in the Fall where:

the direction of the human heart became oriented not toward God but toward self . . . Is it possible that the “I want” of Adam is the first expression of psychological needs? Is it that psychological yearnings come when we refuse to love God and receive his love?⁹¹

In an article titled “Is Biblical-Nouthetic Counseling Legalistic? Re-examination of a Biblical Theme,” Welch first defines legalism as “the prideful motives and purposes behind the legalistic tendency that is resident in everyone.” He shows how legalism and slavery are companions, then notes that, conversely, “faith is inseparable from freedom and sonship.” Sonship is Paul’s preferred contrast to the slavery of legalism. Slaves under the law have now received “the full rights of sons, so you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son God makes you an heir (Galatians 4: 5, 7).” The juxtaposition is dramatic. The experience of the adopted child includes:

An unfailing relationship characterized by love;
Acceptance based on the performance of Christ rather than our own;
Forgiveness rather than repayment;
Being known and understood;
The promise of even greater things (an eternal future);
Transformation into the image of the Father by the indwelling Spirit of sonship; therefore there is power to obey.

⁸⁹ David Powlison, “Larry Crabb and Biblical Counseling” (unpublished paper), 7.

⁹⁰ Welch, *When People Are Big and God Is Small*, 146.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 148.

Turning away from sin is undeniably part of obedience. But it is a response to the gospel (the death and resurrection of Jesus) not commensurate with it. . . .⁹²

In *When People Are Big and God Is Small*, Welch deals extensively with the biblical concept of the fear of God as an antidote to the fear of man. He ends the book with a chapter titled “The Conclusion of the Matter: Fear God and Keep His Commandments.” This is preceded by separate chapters on loving our enemies and neighbors and loving our brothers and sisters. These are familiar themes of nouthetic counseling. But before getting to them, Welch devotes a chapter to “Delight in the God Who Fills Us.” Here he spends time on the biblical story of Hosea’s love for his unfaithful bride, Gomer, as a model of God’s love for his unfaithful people, Israel, and Christ’s love for those for whom He gave His life:

Our God no longer calls us slaves. Through Jesus, he calls us friends, children, and his bride. Through his Spirit, he gives us the greatest gift we could ever have. He gives us himself. He says, “I am with you” (cf. John 14: 27-28). “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” So we can say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper: I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?” (Heb. 13: 5-6).⁹³

There can be little question that any nouthetic counselor, Adams included, would endorse the above. However, it is the seeming lack of attention to this powerful biblical motivation that creates the *impression* of an imbalance in need of redress.

Conclusion

I am grateful to the editor for the invitation to write on the subject of this article. In its present form, the article is a slightly updated digest of a considerably longer research paper originally written in 2003. It may have benefited from more updating, but the basic argument is not affected by more recent developments.

In the original paper, I offered more background on Jay Adams, including the influence of Mowrer and later of Cornelius Van Til. For this, I drew largely from David Powlison’s doctoral dissertation, now available in published form as *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context*.⁹⁴ I also discussed such things as Adams’ approach to specific forms of suffering and his views on the role of Satan in suffering. The most significant omission

⁹² Edward T. Welch, “Is Biblical-Nouthetic Counseling Legalistic? Reexamination of a Biblical Theme,” *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, 1992, Vol. XI, No. 1, 4-11.

⁹³ Welch, *When People Are Big and God Is Small*, 179.

⁹⁴ David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010).

in the present article is a lengthy section in which I suggest that the “idols of the heart” motif, besides being eminently biblical, shows some affinity with Puritan approaches to pastoral counseling. Some direct Puritan influence is noted, particularly in an article by Timothy Keller, written for the 20th anniversary of the *Journal of Pastoral Practice*.⁹⁵

It would be foolish to suggest that the nouthetic-biblical counseling movement as a whole is following a Puritan direction. Nor, I believe, would it be correct to suggest that Welch and Powlison (much less Bettler) reflect a great deal of direct Puritan influence. However, their emphasis on the heart, and their recognition of the implications of being sinned against as well as of sinning, are compatible with at least indirectly mediated Puritan influences. Their more positive engagement with secular psychology also finds some parallel in Puritan thought, especially that of Richard Baxter, whose *Christian Directory* Keller calls “the greatest manual on Biblical Counseling ever produced.”⁹⁶

I would like to suggest that such influences move at least one element of the nouthetic-biblical counseling movement in a direction which offers the kind of biblically corrective critique which Adams claims he enthusiastically welcomes.⁹⁷ Perhaps this is the kind of “tuned and adapted form of nouthetic counseling” which Richard Lovelace says “is most likely to help in congregational renewal.”⁹⁸ But that is another study.

⁹⁵ Timothy E. Keller, “Puritan Resources for Biblical Counseling,” *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, 1988, Vol. IX, No. 3, 11-44.

⁹⁶ Endorsement printed on the jacket of the Soli Deo Gloria reprint.

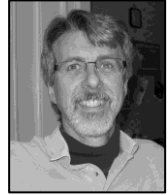
⁹⁷ Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 269.

⁹⁸ Lovelace, 218.

Deaconesses

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Introduction

The first time that I remember seeing a deaconess was over twenty years ago. My wife, Wendy, and I were visiting my brother Hugh at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton for the weekend. On Sunday morning and evening, we went with him to the Baptist Church that he was attending. The service was conducted very professionally and the message was positive to the extreme.

After the morning service was over, a woman came up to us who walked with an air of authority. We were introduced to her by a man who had invited Hugh to the church some weeks before. He told this woman that he had invited Hugh and now Hugh had brought two more with him! He was very pleased with what he had done and seemed to be seeking approval from this lady! I noticed that this lady had a tag on her dress that read “deaconess” and also included her name, I believe.

This was my first encounter with a deaconess that I can recall. In the Baptist Church that I grew up in I had never heard of a deaconess. We had a pastor and a board of deacons, which were all men. I had never heard of a woman being a deacon or a deaconess. I didn’t think much more about this until I went to Toronto Baptist Seminary and began to study the Scriptures in-depth both as a student and as a pastor.

In one of our courses, we had to write an essay and do research on both elders and deacons and their roles and qualifications. It was then that I began to realize further that the biblical model of church leadership was that of elders and deacons. In my exegesis, I was very surprised to discover that there was a case to be made for women to serve as deaconesses.¹ I also came to

¹ I realize that in many Baptist churches the deacons function as overseers rather than the biblical pattern that is laid down in Scripture. The lady at the Baptist Church in Fredericton was called a deaconess but was functioning as an elder. I am completely

realize that, historically, deaconesses served in the churches and that there were Confessions of Faith that included women as deaconesses. Furthermore, there are many conservative, evangelical churches today that have women functioning as deaconesses.

In this paper, I want to propose that qualified women may serve as deaconesses in local churches provided that the scriptural pattern of elders and deacons is followed.

I. Local Church Order – The Offices of Elder and Deacon

One of the important themes in 1 Timothy has to do with behavior or conduct in the church of the living God. We read in 1 Timothy 3:14-15, “(v. 14) I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, (v. 15) if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.”² An essential aspect of this conduct or behavior in the local church is the necessity of the offices of overseers³ and deacons along with scriptural qualifications (3:1-13).

The qualifications for overseers [*episkopos*]/elders [*presbuteros*] are given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. The office is a noble one and the standards are high. The quality of a man’s character is vital for this office. Too often Christians look first to a man’s outward attainments in education and financial success before they consider a man’s heart. The elder must have a good home life with his family. If he cannot manage his home, he has no right to attempt to

opposed to women functioning in this role when the deacons/deaconesses are functioning as the overseers of the church. This is not scriptural.

² Unless otherwise stated all Scripture quotations are taken from the *ESV Study Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV) Copyright © 2008 by Crossway. All rights reserved.

³ It is beyond the scope of this paper to show that the terms of overseer, elder, and pastor are used interchangeably in the New Testament to speak of the same office and the roles within that office. However, I will note a few thoughts. In Titus 1:5, Paul had instructed Titus to appoint elders in every town. However in verse 7, he calls the *elder* an *overseer*. There are two more sections of Scripture that prove this. We read in Acts 20:17, “*Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him.*” Here, we find that Paul sent for the elders of the church in Ephesus. However, we read later in Acts 20:28, “*Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.*” Again, we notice that the elders were the overseers. The last section of Scripture that we will consider is found in 1 Peter 5. We read in 1 Peter 5:1, “*So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed . . .*” Here we see that Peter is writing to the elders but notice what he says in 1 Peter 5:2. We read, “*Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly . . .*” Again, we see that the elders were serving as overseers and that these titles refer to the one office.

manage the church. He must also be able to teach the Word of God. It is very clear from the qualifications and the previous context (2:11-15) that overseers must be men.

Next, we find a list of qualifications for the office of deacon [*diakonos*]⁴ in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. There are similarities between the qualifications for overseers and deacons. Deacons must also be men of inward character and they must be able to manage their homes well. One qualification that is different is that there is no mention of the necessity of being able to teach, though deacons do have to hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience (3:9). At first glance, it would also seem that the office of deacon is for men only. However, when one begins to do exegesis, we see that there is a need for interpretation in the exegesis.

II. Difficulties in Translating *Gunaikas* in 1 Timothy 3:11

The difficulty begins when we consider 1 Timothy 3:11, which reads, “Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but soberminded, faithful in all things”. The difficulty lies in how to translate *gunh*.

1. The Greek Word *Gunh*

What must be realized is that translators struggle to know, with certainty, how to translate the Greek word *gunh* in this passage. The Greek transliteration reads, “*Gynaikas hosautos semnas me diabolous nephaliouis pistas en pasin.*” A literal translation of this text would be, “Women [or wives], likewise, are to be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.” *Gunh* is found 215 times in the New Testament and is translated woman or women 120 times and wife or wives 70 times in the New International Version. Walter Bauer breaks down the use of *gunh* in the New Testament in four ways, namely, “1. of an adult female . . . , 2. wife . . . , 3. . . . bride . . . , 4. on the women in heaven”⁵ Thus, in this instance, *gunh* may be translated as either “wives” or “women”. The translators have to make a choice in this matter because it is not explicitly clear whom Paul is addressing.

2. Differences in Translations Reveal That It Is a Matter of Interpretation

Some Bible versions have translated *gunh* as wives. We read in the English Standard Version, “Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things”; and we read in the NIV, “In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.” One will notice, how-

⁴ *Diakonos* is used three times in 1 Timothy (3:8, 12; 4:6).

⁵ Walter Bauer, second edition revised and augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1957, this edition, 1979), 168.

ever, that there is a footnote after the word wives in the NIV. The footnote shows an alternate translation that reads deaconesses rather than wives.

Other Bible versions have translated *gunh* as women. We read in the New American Standard Bible, “Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things”; and we read in *The Amplified Bible*, “[The] women likewise must be worthy of respect and serious, not gossipers, but temperate and self-controlled, [thoroughly] trustworthy in all things.” In both these translations, the translators opted for the English word women rather than wives. So, we see that there are differences of interpretations even among Greek New Testament evangelical scholars.

III. Why I Choose to Interpret *Gunh* As Women

There are a number of reasons why I choose to interpret *gunh* as “women” rather than “wives”. It has to do with the overall structure of the text of 1 Timothy 3, the addition of the word “their” to the English translations, the absence of qualifications for the wives of elders, the qualification for elders and deacons to have well managed homes would seem to cover godly wives, and finally there was a reason that Paul did not use the word deaconess.

1. Structure

I am most influenced in my present position because of the structure of 1 Timothy 3:1-13. In verse 3, we are introduced to the overseers [elders] and then qualifications follow. In verse 8, we are introduced to the deacons by the phrase “*Diakonous hosautos semnous*”, which translated says, “Deacons likewise are to be grave.” This makes it obvious that there is some connection with what was said in regards to the qualifications of overseers. The overseers must be and live a certain way and the deacons must be and live a certain way. What struck me was that the same structure is found in verse 11! Verse 11 reads in the Greek, “*Gynaikas hosautos semnas*”, which may be translated as “Women [wives] likewise are to be grave”.

The structure reveals that the apostle Paul is addressing an entirely different group! He is not addressing the deacons or their wives. William Hendriksen makes that abundantly clear when he writes,

That these women are not “the wives of the deacons” nor “all the adult female members of the church” is clear from the syntax: “The overseer must be Deacons similarly (must be) Women similarly (must be)” One and the same verb coordinates the three: the overseer, deacons, women. Hence, these women are here viewed as rendering special service in the church, as do the elders

and the deacons. They are a group by themselves, not just the wives of the deacons nor all the women who belong to the church.⁶

Hendriksen knows that these women are not the wives of the deacons.⁷ Because of the structure, Thomas R. Schreiner, takes this one step further when he says, “Paul introduces the women mentioned here in the same fashion he introduced the men in 1 Timothy 3:8, i.e., he uses the word likewise. In 3:1-7, Paul lays out the qualifications for elders, and in 3:8 Paul says likewise there are similar qualifications for deacons. The likewise in 3:11 suggests that the qualifications for men who are deacons also apply to women deacons.”⁸ Thus, the structure of the text is extremely important in how I would translate and interpret the text in favour of deaconesses or women deacons.

2. Scholars Must Insert the Word “Their” in the Translations

A second reason why I believe that Paul is speaking of deaconesses is that, if Paul was referring to the deacons wives, one would expect to find a qualifier such as *auvtnw* in the Greek text.⁹ However, it is absent. In other words, “their” is not even “there”. As James B. Hurley notes, “Translations wishing to adopt the meaning ‘wives’ have generally supplied one of the two words. The biblical text offers no support for this.”¹⁰

In some of the translations, “their” is italicized to show that it is an insertion. Thus, for the passage to make sense in English, the translators have had to insert a word that is not even in the Greek text. It seems to me that it would have been very easy for Paul to include such a qualifier and its absence is noteworthy. Samuel M. Ngewa agrees with my conclusion when he writes, “While it is impossible to be dogmatic on the point, the fact that ‘their’ is omitted and the lack of corresponding instructions for elders’ wives

⁶ William Hendriksen, *Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, Fourth Printing, 2007), 132.

⁷ Hendriksen states that Paul, “. . . regards these women as the deacon’s assistants in helping the poor and the needy, etc. These are women who render auxiliary service, performing ministries for which women are better adapted.” Hendriksen, 132-233.

⁸ Thomas R. Schreiner, “The Valuable Ministries of Women in the Context of Male Leadership: A Survey of Old and New Testament Examples and Teaching”, in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, eds. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 213.

⁹ Mounce refers to this argument in favor of deaconesses in his commentary, though he himself is not of this opinion. William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles: 1 Timothy*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 204.

¹⁰ James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 230.

provides grounds for assuming that Paul is talking about a group of women leaders, equivalent to deaconesses.”¹¹

3. No Explicit Qualifications for the Wives of Elders

Furthermore, when we compare the qualifications of elders and deacons, one notices that there are no qualifications for the wives of elders. It seems strange to me that there would be qualifications for the wives of deacons but no qualifications for the wives of elders! As Thomas Schreiner notes, “Another argument in favour of women deacons is that Paul says nothing about the wives of elders in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Such an omission is hard to explain if he is speaking of the wives of deacons in 1 Timothy 3:11. One would expect that higher qualifications would be demanded of wives of elders than of wives of deacons.”¹² I agree.

Surprisingly, some argue that the wives of elders have nothing to do with assisting their husbands and that is why there are no qualifications for them. In my opinion, that is a very weak argument. The wives of elders have much to do in assisting their husbands. One of the qualifications for elders is that they be hospitable. Surely, their wives would be very involved in this area of ministry and would often share most of the load. Both elders and deacons would find it very difficult to carry out their ministries if they did not have godly wives helping them.

4. Both Elders and Deacons Must Have Well Managed Homes

I would think that when it says that both elders and deacons must have well managed homes that it would cover qualifications for wives. Obviously, if one’s wife was not a godly woman, a man would be disqualified from the office of elder or deacon (3:4, 12). Thus, it would be absolutely essential for a wife of an elder or deacon to be an example to the rest of the women of the church. The wives of the elders and deacons in our local church are godly women and certainly enhance the ministries of their husbands.

5. Why Paul Did Not Use a Greek Word for Deaconess

Finally, some might find it strange that Paul did not use the Greek word for deaconess in 1 Timothy 3:11. There is a reason that the Greek word for deaconess does not appear. John MacArthur explains the reason, when he says,

To avoid confusion, why didn’t Paul refer to those women as deaconesses? Because there’s no Greek word for that. Phoebe is called a deacon in Romans 16:1 because there’s no feminine form of *diakonos*. The only other word Paul could have used would have

¹¹ Samuel M. Ngewa, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, Africa Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 76.

¹² Thomas R. Schreiner, 214, endnote 2, 503-504.

been *diakonos*, but we would not have known that he was referring to women. Clearly Paul introduced another category of deacons: what we have come to know as deaconesses. I prefer to call them women deacons because that maintains the New Testament terminology.¹³

Paul did not use the Greek word for deaconess because there wasn't one! William Mounce verifies this when he states, "The feminine form of the word *diakonos* (*diakonissa*) had not yet been created."¹⁴ Thus, for me, the evidence leans heavily towards translating *gunh* as "women" rather than "wives". However, there is weightier evidence, in my opinion, in another of Paul's writings.

IV. Phoebe Is Called a *Diakonos* in Romans 16

Another reason why I believe that women are called to serve as deaconesses is because in Romans 16:1, a woman by the name of Phoebe is called a *diakonos*. We read in Romans 16:1-2, "(v. 1) I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchrea, (v. 2) that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well." Verse 1 tells us that Phoebe was a "servant [*diakonos*] of the church at Cenchrea"! There are reasons from the text why I believe that *diakonos* should be translated as deacon/deaconess rather than servant.

The first thing that we notice is that Paul highly commended [*sunisthmi*]¹⁵ Phoebe. Paul commends Phoebe as a sister, a servant of the church at Cenchrea, and a patron of many including Paul. He exhorts the Romans to welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints. He tells them to help her in whatever she may need from them. Indeed, because of this commendation and for other reasons, many think that Phoebe delivered Paul's epistle to the Roman Christians! William Hendriksen is typical when he writes, "It is reasonable to believe that it was Phoebe who, in departing for Rome, carried Paul's letter with her and delivered it to its destination. Some manuscripts even make mention of this in a subscript."¹⁶ Surely, Phoebe would have to be someone of great reputation for Paul to trust with his epistle.

¹³ John MacArthur, "Qualified Servants for the Church – Deacons, Part 2", <http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/54-26/Qualified-Servants-for-the-Church-Deacons-Part-2>.

¹⁴ William D. Mounce, 202.

¹⁵ *Sunisthmi* is found three times in Romans (3:5; 5:8; 16:1).

¹⁶ William Hendriksen, *Romans*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1980, 1981), 499.

1. Phoebe Was a “*Diakonos*” of the Church of Cenchrea (Romans 16:1)

Paul calls Phoebe a *diakonos*. This is the same word that is found in 1 Timothy 3:8.

At the very least Phoebe is to be viewed as an exceptional servant of the Lord because of her service. What is very noteworthy is that Paul connects her with a specific church. She is a servant of the church in Cenchrea [*diakonon tes ekklesias tes en Kenchreais*]. When Paul connects her with the church in Cenchrea, it certainly gives the sense that she had some kind of special ministry there. She was not just a servant of the Lord; she was a servant of “the church in Cenchrea”. Geoffrey Wilson would agree that there is some significance to this when he says, “Although the question cannot be decided with certainty, the fact that she is introduced as ‘a servant’ of the church at Cenchrea lends support to the view that she served it in the official capacity of ‘deaconess’” (ASV margin).¹⁷

Furthermore, this is the only reference in the entire New Testament that calls someone, male or female, a *diakonos* of a particular church! There are one hundred references in the family of words related to *diakonos*. The family of words consists of *diakonos*, *diakonew* and *diakonia*. In examining all these references, I discovered that Christians are often called servants of Christ but *only* Phoebe is explicitly called a servant of a particular church!¹⁸ That, to me, is somewhat significant and suggests that she was more than just a servant in the way that we understand servant. If any man had been called a *diakonos* of a particular church, translators would have been quick to state that he was a deacon of the church at Cenchrea.

2. Phoebe Was a Patron of Many (Romans 16:2)

Furthermore, Paul uses another very high title for Phoebe. He calls her a patron [*prostatis*]¹⁹ of many and of himself. Phoebe had been a tremendous help to many in the church in Cenchrea and also to the apostle Paul. The word used for helper is very unique and is only found here in the New Testament. W. E. Vine says of patron,

a feminine form of *prostates*, denotes a protectress, patroness; it is used metaphorically of Phoebe in Roman. 16:2. It is a word of dignity, evidently chosen instead of others which might have been used (see, e.g., under Helper), and indicates the high esteem with which she was regarded, as one who had been a protectress of many. *Prostates* was the title of a citizen in Athens, who had the responsibility of seeing to the welfare of resident aliens who were

¹⁷ Geoffrey B. Wilson, *Romans* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 242.

¹⁸ A possible exception is Colossians 1:25, where Paul speaks of himself as *diakonos* of the church, but I think he is referring to the entire body of Christ and makes the application to the church at Colosse.

¹⁹ Bauer defines *prostatis* as “protectress, patroness, helper”, 718.

without civic rights. Among the Jews it signified a wealthy patron of the community.²⁰

Whatever the case, the use of this word to describe Phoebe reveals that she was a very significant person in the church of Cenchrea. It is very likely that Phoebe was someone of considerable wealth who used what she had as a blessing to others. No wonder Paul commends her highly. Because of the way Paul addresses Phoebe, I believe that she had an important position in the church as a deaconess. Simon J. Kistemaker would agree when he says, “In the harbor city of Cenchrea some believers founded a church in which Phoebe was a deaconess (Rom. 16:1).”²¹

V. There Is No Work in the Office of Deacon That Would Prohibit Women from Functioning As Deaconesses

When we have the proper distinction between elders and deacons in the church, is there any reason why women cannot serve as deaconesses? The elders are responsible for the oversight of the church as I see it in the New Testament. They rule, they lead, and they teach in the local church. It is clear that women cannot serve in that office. They are prohibited. However, deacons are called to serve and to help the elders from being distracted from their ministry of the Word and prayer. The diaconal ministry is one of compassion and care for the sick and the needy. There is no explicit prohibition that would prevent women from serving in this capacity. John Piper agrees with me, when he says,

There is no reason why (as I read the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3) women cannot be deacons. The elders are men and are charged with the governance and teaching of the church (according to 1 Timothy 2:12; 3:2 and 5:17), but the diaconate does not bear that same responsibility. And deacons are charged with the kind of ministries of mercy described, for example, in Matthew 25:44 – feeding the hungry, taking in the refugee, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, visiting the imprisoned. All these are “diaconal” (*diekonesamen*). And, of course, there are more. This fits with the way Paul describes Phoebe at the end of verse 2: “for she has been a patron (a helper, a servant) of many and of myself as well.”²²

²⁰ W. E. Vine, *W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, vol. 4 (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1981), 88-89.

²¹ Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1990), 656.

²² John Piper, “Rethinking the Governance Structure at Bethlehem Baptist Church – A Biblical Examination of Key Terms, Revised 4/27/2000, August 13, 1987”,

There are two extremes that we must avoid. We must avoid being conformed to the world in regards to the feminist movement, but on the other hand we must avoid over-reacting to the feminist movement and so prohibit women from serving in areas where they are not forbidden. Philip Ryken also notes this, when he states, “If the problem with feminist theology has been its failure to submit to divine order, the traditional church has often failed to employ the gifts of women to their full biblical extent.”²³

VI. Anabaptist and Baptist Confessions of Faith Reveal That Some of Our Forefathers Recognized Deaconesses

While we must always begin with Scripture, it is also important for us to consider how godly men and women in other generations understood the teachings of Holy Scripture. As Charles Spurgeon once said, “The only thing that is new is heresy.” I am not sure if I could go quite that far, but it is important to consider if there is any historical precedent for deaconesses. Historically, some of our fathers of the faith had women deacons or deaconesses serving in the churches.

1. Anabaptist Confessions of Faith

i) *The Dordrecht Confession of 1632*. This is the most influential of all Mennonite confessions. In this confession, a rather large section is given to the election and offices of teachers, deacons, and deaconesses in the church. They believed that elders were to be appointed in the churches and they had responsibility for the oversight of the churches. They also believed that all the circuits should be well supplied with deacons and “. . . that honorable old widows should be chosen as deaconesses”²⁴. Some of their responsibilities were to “. . . visit, comfort, and take care of the poor, the weak, afflicted, and the needy, as also to visit, comfort, and take care of the widows and orphans”.²⁵

Thus in this confession, they recognized the offices of elders, deacons, and deaconesses.

2. Pioneer English Separatist-Baptist Confessions

i) John Smyth wrote a *Short Confession Of Faith* in 1609. He made mention of bishops whose main responsibility was to dispense both the Word and

http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Articles/ByDate/1987/1491_Rethinking_the_Governance_Structure_at_Bethlehem_Baptist_Church/.

²³ Philip Graham Ryken, *1 Timothy*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007), 134.

²⁴ William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1959), 73.

²⁵ Lumpkin, 73.

the sacraments. He also mentioned deacons, “. . . men and widows, who attend to the affairs of the poor and sick brethren”.²⁶

ii) *A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland, 1611*. This declaration observed two offices. We read, “That the officers off everie Church or congregation are either Elders, who by their office do especially feed the flock concerning their soules, Act. 20.28, Pet. 5.2,3. Or Deacons Men, and Women who by their office releave the necessities off the poore and impotent brethren concerning their bodies, Acts. 6.1-4.”²⁷ Thus, we see that women served as deacons among this group of brethren.

iii) *Propositions and Conclusions Concerning True Christian Religion, 1612-1614*. This confession recognized two sorts of ministers, namely that of pastors/teachers/elders and that of deacons who were both men and women. We read concerning deacons, “. . . Deacons, men and women: whose ministry is, to serve tables and wash the saints’ feet (Acts vi. 2-4; Phil. i. I; I Tim. iii. 2, 3, 8, 11, and chap. v.)”.²⁸

iv) *Confession Of Faith And Ecclesiastical Principles Of The Evangelical Association Of French-Speaking Baptist Churches, 1879 and 1924*. These French speaking Baptist churches also recognized deaconesses. We read, “In addition to pastors or elders, the local church may have other responsible servants, for example deacons and deaconesses whose role it is to assist the pastors or elders in their ministry, by assuming especial responsibility for everything that relates to the material interests of the congregation.”²⁹

From these Confessions of Faith, we understand that some of our forefathers in the faith recognized deaconesses or women deacons. We also will discover that there are many Reformed and conservative evangelicals who adhere to the historic, orthodox Christian faith that have deaconesses or women deacons in their church.

VII. Two Present Day Conservative, Evangelical Churches That Have Deaconesses or Women Deacons

Two very influential pastors in the English speaking world today are John Piper and John MacArthur.³⁰ They are both orthodox in the faith and have

²⁶ Lumpkin, 101.

²⁷ Lumpkin, 121-122.

²⁸ Lumpkin, 138.

²⁹ The first French Baptist Confession was drawn up by the American missionary, Erasmus Willard, and published at Douai in 1848. With the assistance of some French brethren, Willard prepared a second Confession a few years later. Six French preachers, led by A. Ramseyer and H. Andru, produced a third Confession in 1879. This was the first independently prepared Confession of French Baptists, and it was published at Chauny. <http://www.reformedreader.org/ccf/fbconf.htm>.

³⁰ Another exploration here could be Timothy Keller and Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City.

had a great influence for good upon the evangelical church. Both of the churches that they pastor have women who function as women deacons or deaconesses.

1. Bethlehem Baptist Church, Pastor John Piper

In the Church Constitution and By-Laws, under “Article II Church Government”, we find a general statement in regards to the officers of the local church. We read,

a. Officers. The Officers of the Church shall be a Council of Elders and the Deacons. Officers shall be called to office by vote of the membership of the Church as provided for in Article II, Section 2 and Section 3 of these By-Laws. All officers of the Church shall be members of the Church in good and regular standing. The Council of Elders shall be composed of men only, *the Deacons may be composed of both men and/or women*. Except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) below, the Council of Elders and the Deacons are the only bodies and positions created by these By-Laws.³¹

Thus, it is clear that the deacons may be both men and/or women at Bethlehem Baptist Church. Next, we will consider Grace Community Church.

2. Grace Community Church, Pastor John Macarthur

In the Church Constitution and By-laws of Grace Community Church, under ARTICLE VII, Other Councils and Committees, Section 3. Deaconesses, we read,

The Deaconesses shall consist of members possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:11 and Titus 2:3-5 and shall be nominated by members of the church. The Board of Elders will compile and confirm the nominations and submit the names to the members for affirmation at the annual meeting. The Deaconesses shall serve for a term of one (1) year. They shall prepare the Communion elements, assist the Pastor at baptismal services and in the general spiritual care of the church, and shall assist in the care of the sick and needy. A Deaconess shall be dignified, not a malicious gossip, temperate, and faithful in all things.³²

Again, we discover that a very conservative congregation at Grace Community Church has deaconesses.

³¹ Bethlehem Baptist Church, <http://www.hopeingod.org/document/constitution-and-laws>. Italics mine.

³² Grace Community Church, 13248 Roscoe Boulevard, Sun Valley, CA 91352, <http://www.gracechurch.org/about/resources/?topic=Bylaws& year=0000>.

VIII. Conclusion

After spending considerable time exegeting these passages, considering church history, and pondering this issue for some twenty years both as a student and as a pastor, I believe that women may serve as deaconesses in a local church where scriptural church government is practised. I conclude with the words of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, “A living church cannot do without Deaconesses as its organs for doing good. Deaconesses cannot do without the church as the appointed organization for doing good in the world.”³³

³³ Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, “The Deaconess as a Part of the Church”, *Our Church Work* (1903), in Ronald G. Lutz, “B.B. Warfield on Women Deacons”, *Presbyterian Journal* (May 15, 1985): 8, in Philip Graham Ryken, *1 Timothy*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007), 134.

Appendix: Word Study of *Diakonos*

The masculine noun *diakonos*,³⁴ is found twenty-nine times in the New Testament as follows;

Mt 20:26, "It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant."

Mt 22:13, "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

Mt 23:11, "But the greatest among you shall be your servant."

Mk 9:35, "And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, 'If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.'"

Mk 10:43, "But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant."

Jn 2:5, "His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.'"

Jn 2:9, "And when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom."

Jn 12:26, "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

Rom 13:4, ". . . for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil."

Rom 15:8, "For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers."

Rom 16:1, "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea."

1 Cor 3:5, "What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one."

2 Cor 3:6, ". . . who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

2 Cor 6:4, ". . . but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses."

³⁴ Two Greek words that are related to *diakonos* are *diakonew* and *diakonia*. They are found thirty-seven times and thirty-four times respectfully. This makes a total of ninety-eight references in the Greek New Testament.

2 Cor 11:15, "Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds."

2 Cor 11:23, "Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death."

Gal 2:17, "But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!"

Eph 3:7, "... of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power."

Eph 6:21, "But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you."

Phil 1:1, "Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons."

Col 1:7, "... just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf."

Col 1:23, "... if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister."

Col 1:25, "Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God."

Col 4:7, "As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information."

1 Tm 3:8, "Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain."

1 Tm 3:12, "Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households."

1 Tm 4:6, "In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following."

Walter Bauer breaks down *diakonos* in the following manner, "1. masc. – a. servant of someone . . . b. gener. helper . . . c. deacon as an official of the church . . . 2. fem. – a. helper, agent . . . b. deaconess . . ." ³⁵

³⁵ Walter Bauer, *diakonos*, 184-185.

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Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*: Fictional Missionary in Britain's Pre-Missionary Age

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Introduction

For many of us, the *Crusoe* story is something treasured from childhood – a saga from which we remember only the broadest details. There is a prodigal son eventually brought to his senses through a shipwreck of which he is the only survivor; an island wilderness gradually tamed and made to yield agricultural bounty by its sole citizen; a wonderful rescue of an aboriginal from cannibals, with the man subsequently becoming the inseparable companion of Crusoe. This, in sum, is the version of the *Crusoe* story as it has been passed on to us by children's versions of the tale as well as by Hollywood producers.

Among the numerous themes generally passed over in such abbreviated versions is one which I propose to explore here: Crusoe as missionary. It is a sub-theme which is the more striking in that the tale of 1719 seems to anticipate by some decades the English involvement in evangelical missions which we associate with the age of William Carey (1761-1834).

Instances of the Missionary Theme

Authorities on *Crusoe* and its author have previously commented upon the prominence the story gives to the doctrine of Providence.¹ The shipwrecked man is in fact a prodigal – both from his parents and from a devout Christian upbringing. He comes to accept, after the fact, that the shipwreck in the tropics has been the God-ordained means of his being recalled to a sober

¹ Paul J. Hunter, *The Reluctant Pilgrim: Defoe's Emblematic Method and Quest for Form in Robinson Crusoe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), chap. 3; George Starr, "Robinson Crusoe's Conversion", in Max Byrd, ed. *Daniel Defoe: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976).

frame of mind and a renewed Christian faith.² Here, we wish to go further and draw attention to an unmistakable *missionary* thread in the narrative. This exists in two aspects:

a. Crusoe Is Depicted As a Christian Forced to Ask Fundamental Questions about God and Humanity in His Interaction with Aboriginal Peoples.

Because Crusoe's island occasionally has uninvited visitors – sometimes mutinous crews of European vessels,³ but more often cannibals, he is confronted by situations which provoke him to ask questions about wider humanity in its relationship to the Creator. These bear on what we today call the theology of religions. For instance, when he rescues his man Friday from the cannibals, the rescued man's display of gratitude, love and humanity provokes Crusoe to deep reflection about this one whom he considers to be a mere savage. Friday and his civilization seem to Crusoe to be those from whom God has taken:

the best uses to which their faculties and the powers of their souls are adapted (they were after all primitive aboriginals) and yet that He has bestowed on them the same powers, the same reason, the same affections, the same sentiments of kindness and obligation . . . the same sense of gratitude . . . all the capacities of doing and receiving good that He has given to us . . .⁴

Here is the marvel of common grace, by which humans who neither know nor serve God regularly and spontaneously do commendable, constructive, and charitable acts.

But Crusoe is provoked to still further thought by the cannibals themselves. At their subsequent return to his island with prisoners, Crusoe – who has already been given occasion for reflection by the character of Friday⁵ – momentarily hesitates to use his weapons to intervene as he had done on the earlier occasion. Intervention with weapons of death, while it will ensure the survival of the prisoners, will certainly mean the death of those who hold them captive. Perhaps, wonders Crusoe

their barbarous customs were their own disaster, being in them a token of God's having left them, with the other nations of that part of the world, to such stupidity and to such inhumane courses; but

² Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*. The edition of *Crusoe* used for the purpose of this paper is that edited by Michael Shinagel (New York: Norton and Co., 1975).

³ Such a visit by mutineers who propose to jettison their captain on what they believe to be an uninhabited isle will be the means of Crusoe's eventual repatriation.

⁴ *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 163.

⁵ Crusoe has learned to his horror that cannibalism had been as commonplace to Friday as to his captors.

did not call me to take upon me to be a Judge of their actions, much less an executioner of His justice.⁶

But intervene he does – inflicting death, and justifiably too, as events indicate. For Friday, his co-combatant, discovers that the cannibals have his own father lying tied in a canoe, and waiting as their next victim. But there is more than this to consider . . .

b. Crusoe Is Depicted As Missionary-Evangelist in His Role
with the Man, Friday.

A considerable time after his rescue of Friday from cannibals, Crusoe narrates:

I asked him who had made the sea, the ground we walked on and the hills and the woods; he (Friday) told me it was the old *Benamuckee*, that lived beyond all; he could describe nothing of this great person but that he was very old; much older – he said – than the sea or the land or the moon or the stars. I asked him then why did not all things worship him; he (Friday) looked very grave and with a look of perfect innocence said, “All things do say *O* to him”. . . From these things I began to instruct him in the knowledge of the true God that lived *up there* – pointing up toward heaven; that he governs the world by the same power and providence by which he made it . . . He listened with great attention and received with pleasure the notion of Jesus Christ being sent to redeem us. . .⁷

As such spiritual conversation advanced, it led to a consideration of the problem of evil's presence and activity in a world which God had originally made good. On hearing it explained to him that it was the work of the devil to advance the course of evil here, Friday demanded to know, “if God much strong, much might as the Devil, why God no kill the devil, so make him no more do wicked?”

This perennial question Crusoe is (as we might expect) unable to answer to Friday's satisfaction. Yet this seeming impasse sets Crusoe a-praying:

to God that he would enable me to instruct savingly this Savage, assisting by His Spirit the heart of the poor ignorant creature to receive the Light of the knowledge of God in Christ . . . and guide me

⁶ p.181. Crusoe had been provoked to ask similar questions earlier, at his first contemplating that he might possibly share the island with cannibals. See p. 134.

⁷ p. 169.

to speak so to him from the Word of God as his conscience might be convinced, his eyes opened and his soul saved.⁸

In time, Crusoe could report that “the savage was now a good Christian”.⁹

And yet . . . all of this fictional missionary thought and action by Crusoe is apparently coming decades in advance of the time when English-speaking evangelical missionaries will engage in any such activity. How are we to explain this phenomenon? Partly, I propose, by reaching an understanding of the author, Defoe, and partly by reaching an understanding of the state of missionary work then in the world.

I. Defoe the Man

The author of this imaginary discourse between a resourceful (but formerly prodigal) Englander now functioning as a proto-missionary *and* the aboriginal whom he has rescued from grisly death, was Daniel Defoe (c. 1659-1731). He was raised Daniel Foe (the stylish change of name coming in his thirty-fifth year, 1695), son of a Nonconformist London tallow merchant.¹⁰ Defoe was well-educated by the standards of his era; like other Nonconformists of that time, he completed studies at an Academy which was intended to replicate the university education from which all religious Dissenters were barred under the Test Act. While his fellow-students at the Newington Green Academy were chiefly trained for the pastoral ministry, there were numerous others who aimed at advancement in the world of business and public affairs. It seems that the latter ambition, for a role in public affairs, would consistently endanger Defoe’s success in the former, the world of business.

His involvement in that precursor of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 – the unsuccessful Monmouth Rebellion of 1686 – could have cost him his life, as it certainly did the lives of three former colleagues from student days at Newington Green Academy.¹¹ As Nonconformists chafing under the discriminatory religious laws of Restoration England, they acted on a widespread desire, common among Nonconformists, to see the Stuart dynasty displaced. Defoe’s similar enthusiastic involvement in the cause of Prince William of Orange at his landing on the Devon coast in November 1688 was in actuality a second extended diversion from his commercial career. Defoe’s commercial life had first to do with the import and export of wines and tobacco and then, increasingly with what we would call the wholesaling of men’s haberdashery. He was neither manufacturer nor storekeeper, but a supplier to merchants. Financial reverses soon came to Defoe – now a married man with children. Eight commercial lawsuits were filed against him and by 1692 he

⁸ p. 171.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ James Sutherland, *Daniel Defoe*, 2nd ed. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1950), p. 18.

¹¹ Sutherland, *Defoe*, p. 31. Many of the chronological details here are provided from the excellent chronological table provided in the Norton edition of *Crusoe*, p. 394.

was declared bankrupt to the tune of £17,000.¹² Though he would repay all but £5,000 by 1705, his bankruptcy effectively closed off, for him, the life of a civic official. Yet, this was what he had aspired to rise to through a career in the business world.¹³ Now this very turbulence in his life, which made him first a temporary fugitive from home and waiting creditors and latterly a prisoner, exposed him to some of the wide variety of characters whose likenesses may be glimpsed in his later novels.

While he had been involved in journalistic writing as early as 1690, following this debacle of bankruptcy Defoe found that now he must live chiefly by his pen. Sometimes he was a private pamphleteer determined to demonstrate his grasp of national and international affairs, sometimes a journalist interpreting European events. More often than not he was an anonymous propagandist for one government minister or another. At sixty years of age, he turned from this work to publish his *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719. Defoe, who had a marked fascination with geographic detail¹⁴ for one whose own foreign travels were modest, wove a tale embracing England, Morocco, Portugal, and Brazil as well as that soon-to-be celebrated island. On paper, at least, it was near what we today would call British Guiana – off the mouth of the Orinoco River and with the larger island of Trinidad not far off.¹⁵ Yet, we may well ask, how had Defoe at his fingertips the ingredients necessary for the describing of a missionary encounter between his English hero and aboriginals? Three distinct possibilities need to be examined.

II. Defoe the Literary Artist

a. Was There a Possible Literary Dependence Upon Earlier Shipwreck Narratives?

Students of Defoe's *Crusoe* have long been aware of the circulation of a body of ocean-going and shipwreck narrative literature in the years preceding the debut of *Crusoe's* tale.¹⁶ That Defoe was conversant with this literature is entirely likely. It is also entirely likely that a literary indebtedness exists between *Crusoe* and the earlier accounts. *Crusoe*, like the earlier accounts, describes a solitary European on an island in the south latitudes who survives

¹² He experienced bankruptcy a second time in 1702, when a brick making enterprise at Tilbury failed.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 44-46.

¹⁴ Sutherland, p. 29 describes geography as being one of Defoe's "passionate interests".

¹⁵ The Orinoco and Trinidad references appear in *Crusoe* (Norton edition) at p. 168.

¹⁶ The Norton edition (1976) of *Crusoe* utilized in this study supplies excerpts from four such earlier accounts: Dampier's account, "Rescue of a Moskito Indian Marooned Over Three Years on Juan Fernandez Island" (1703) plus three versions of the story of Alexander Selkirk's four year solitary sojourn on the same island by Cooke (1712), Rogers (1712) and Steele (1713).

by domesticating wild goats, cultivating native and imported fruits and vegetables, and assembling clothes made of animal skins.

Yet when these probable dependencies are acknowledged, they are easily surpassed by a list of features distinct to *Crusoe*. The older accounts all have to do with a south *Pacific* island off Chile while Defoe's tale has to do with an *Atlantic* island in the vicinity of Trinidad. The Pacific island, while occupied in one earlier account by a Mosquito Indian¹⁷, and alternately – in three accounts, by a solitary Scot – is never home to them both simultaneously. Defoe's Atlantic island is first inhabited by Crusoe, who is subsequently joined by an aboriginal, whom he saves from cannibals. The inhabitants of the Pacific island are marooned there by a tyrannical captain in command of an unseaworthy vessel, while Crusoe is the sole survivor of a hurricane-induced shipwreck. The Scot, Selkirk, is rescued from his solitary existence on Juan Fernandez after four years there; Defoe's Crusoe passes twenty-eight years, the last three of which are spent in the congenial company of the aboriginal.¹⁸

The fact-based earlier stories, because they focus upon a Pacific island never simultaneously inhabited by a European *and* an aboriginal provide neither the possibility nor the opportunity for the reflection on the various religions of man and the urgency of the evangelization of aboriginals which we now recognize as an important theme in *Crusoe*. In sum, the earlier works, while likely supplying Defoe with important details of plot, can have done nothing to assist him in depicting his Crusoe as missionary.

b. Was There Perhaps Some Contemporary Account of Missionary Work Upon Which Defoe Could Have Drawn?

So far as the English-speaking world goes, we can supply a rapid negative to this question. Like other western European principalities and nations which had embraced the Protestant Reformation, England had very little to show by way of missionary activity in the seventeenth century. While that century witnessed gradual changes in orientation toward world mission, these came only gradually as England, like Holland, began to challenge the Spanish and Portuguese domination of oceanic navigation. We may not speak of any *rapid* upsurge of missionary activity in either country.

Yet, as the two nations began to “pursue commercial ventures to the ends of the earth”¹⁹ the possibilities for missionary activity increased apace. In the Dutch colonial context, Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) had penned a treatise *On the Truth of the Christian Religion* for the particular use of Dutch sailors who ventured to Indonesia and Formosa. It was foreseen that such trading expedi-

¹⁷ Also spelled “Mosquito” and “Miskito”.

¹⁸ Crusoe encounters Friday only in his twenty-fifth year on the island. *Crusoe* (Norton edition), p. 159.

¹⁹ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 2nd revised edition (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 188.

tions would bring with them opportunities for explaining the truth of the Christian faith to non-Europeans.²⁰

In this same period, the New England pastor of Roxbury, Massachusetts, John Eliot (1604-90) had begun missionary work among the Indian population in proximity to his community. Joined in this work by others of like sympathy, a mission effort to the Indians of Massachusetts was begun – in time embracing 2500 individuals. Then the immigrant-aboriginal conflict, which came to be known as King Philip's War (1675), dealt Indian evangelization a very severe setback. Yet, all the while, reports of Eliot's missionary work had been publicized in tract form in England from 1643 onward. The recipients of this literature were the Presbyterian and Congregational Independent movements which had come to the fore in England in this period.²¹

Yet while historian of missions, Stephen Neill, noted methodological affinities between older Catholic missions and those which the Dutch and English now undertook,²² no one has ever to date suggested that Defoe was dependent, in his writing of *Crusoe*, upon the meager written accounts of such missionary work.

Because Defoe was capable of French translation²³ and regularly did such translation in pursuit of his journalistic career, it is hypothetically possible that he could have profited by reading the printed records of Jesuit missionary activity known as the *Relations*. But no one has ever suggested that he had access to these, or drew on them. And as for the Moravian missionary movement that was shortly to have so profound an effect on early leaders of the Evangelical Revival such as John and Charles Wesley, it would not even begin its labors until 1731, twelve years after the first publication of *Crusoe*.²⁴ Here, as in the case of potential literary dependency upon those existing shipwreck narratives (above), we find no key to explain or interpret the missionary of theme of *Crusoe*. All of which leads us to consider a third possibility. . .

c. The Missionary Theme of *Crusoe* Is an Expression of the Concern Latent in the Puritan Divinity in Which Defoe Had Both Been Raised and Still Stood.

We now return to the fact that Defoe had been raised in, received an advanced education within, and kept Christian company among notable men of late Puritan Nonconformity. His boyhood minister in London had been the

²⁰ Ibid., p. 190.

²¹ J. A. DeJong, *As The Waters Cover The Sea: Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions 1640-1810*, (Kampen, The Netherlands: J. H. Kok, 1970), pp. 44, 46, 55.

²² Neill, op.cit.

²³ Sutherland, *Defoe*, p. 22.

²⁴ Neill, p. 201.

renowned Dr. Samuel Annesley.²⁵ Annesley, of Presbyterian conviction, had surrendered his position as minister in the London parish of St. Giles Crip-plegate in the Great Ejection of 1662 and thereafter ministered to his Non-conforming flock in a clandestine style since the times required this. Minister and supporters were frequently fined for their not attending the services of the Established Church and for instead attending furtive conventicle-style gatherings. In this very setting, Defoe will have heard the learned, fervent, experiential preaching of late Puritanism and an emphasis upon the doctrines of the Shorter Catechism.

Not only had the nurture of his parents and the teaching provided in his Nonconforming congregation served to establish him in the orthodoxy of that late Puritan period, but Defoe had – as we have intimated – been the recipient of an education in a Nonconformist Academy of some standing.²⁶ The tutor at Newington Green Academy, Charles Morton, would go on to become the vice-principal of the young Harvard College by 1690.²⁷ The course of study was demanding, although it suffered from the drawback of its reliance on a single tutor for all major subjects. The curriculum was far from obscurantist. The instruction in sciences, mathematics, and contemporary history in some respects went beyond that available in the three English universities; these still stressed an extensively classical education. The biblical languages were taught in the academies, as were French and Latin. As for theology, which was studied by all that enrolled, there was emphasis on contemporary writers as well as standard authors in the Reformed theological tradition.²⁸

In Defoe's case, there is the persistent suggestion that his education at Newington Green *could* have been intended to prepare him for the Nonconformist ministry.²⁹ The curriculum had certainly prepared him for that calling

²⁵ Defoe memorialized Annesley at his death in 1697 with *The Character of Samuel Annesley*. Annesley's daughter, Susannah, would meet and marry Samuel Wesley when the latter was studying in the same academy, Newington Green, as Defoe. Apparently they were classmates. Wesley, later father to the evangelists, John and Charles, left Nonconformity and rejoined the Anglican establishment.

²⁶ Michael Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 368, describes this institution as "the most progressive of the early academies".

²⁷ Sutherland, *Defoe*, p. 21 ff.

²⁸ Paula R. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 15, lists John Locke, Richard Baxter, Archbishop John Tillotson, Stephen Charnock, Joseph Hall, Samuel Rutherford and European writers Strangius and Amyraut among the philosophical and theological writers used. Standard authorities on the education available in such academies as Newington Green are: Watts, *op. cit.*, Gordon Rupp, *Religion in England 1688-1791* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), chap. 12, and H. MacLachlan, *English Education Under the Test Acts*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1931).

²⁹ This is the suggestion of the Norton edition of *Crusoe*, p. 354. Backscheider, *op. cit.* p. 29, explains that students aiming at public and business careers would custo-

if he had felt drawn towards it. But he was not in any way a solitary exception in his completing the academy style of education with a view to a career in business and public affairs.

Some have supposed that the key to the interpretation of *Crusoe* is a recognition that Crusoe's boyhood flight from family is most of all a flight from the proper stewardship of his gifts in a business career – something at which he ought to have persisted.³⁰ It is an interesting proposal. There is also the much-debated subsidiary question of whether Crusoe's prodigality is not a projection of Defoe's various neglects – of his failed businesses, of his parental duties, and above all of his possibly having turned away from the ministerial calling.

But here, all we propose is the plausibility of understanding that the solicitude which Crusoe shows for the eternal welfare of his Friday, his efforts to point him to the way of salvation in Christ, his prayers for the Holy Spirit's illumination of the man's heart and mind, as well as his reflections on the status of the cannibal in the sight of God – all these have been furnished to Defoe by his being nurtured in Puritan divinity.

This was the movement in which it had been possible for John Winthrop, future governor of the Massachusetts Bay colony, to advocate emigration there from England not only as a means of securing refuge from religious persecution but “to help on the coming of the Gentiles and to raise up a bulwark against the kingdom of antichrist which the Jesuits do raise up in those parts”.³¹ Here was a consciousness in 1629 that Protestant missions were in arrears and needed to make up ground already lost to others. It was also the movement that had heard with pleasure of the subsequent progress made in evangelizing American Indians – under the leadership of John Eliot. The eleven tract-reports which the London-based Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England circulated on behalf of this evangelization between 1643 and 1671 stirred considerable interest among English Independents and Presbyterians.³² Many of their ministers – some who had been prominent in the Westminster Assembly (1643-47) – were happy to lend their names to the

marily leave Newington after the third year, while those aiming at the pastoral ministry would stay for five. Defoe terminated his studies after the *fourth* year, indicating – at very least – that his mind had still been open to the ministerial calling at the end of year three.

³⁰ See the essay by Maxmillian Novak, “Robinson Crusoe's Original Sin” in Max Byrd, ed. *Daniel Defoe: A Collection of Critical Essays*, chap. 5. The passage in *Crusoe* critical to Novak's investigation is found at p. 152 of the Norton edition.

³¹ John Winthrop, “Reasons to be Considered by the Undertakers of the Intended Plantation in New England” (1629), excerpted in L.B. Smith and J.R. Smith, eds., *The Past Speaks: Sources and Problems in English History*, Vol. 1 (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1993), p. 411.

³² De Jong, *As the Waters Cover*, p. 45.

tracts circulated in endorsement of this cause.³³ And it was not only the New England colonies and the needs of their aboriginal populations that became the focus of Puritan missionary concern. There was also a concern to evangelize the Caribbean islands and the region of Guiana – proximate to the fictional island Defoe would describe in 1719.³⁴

In short, the idea of missions to aboriginals in the Americas was widespread in the Nonconformist Protestant community into which Defoe had been born. It was upon the London merchant community – so substantially made up of Nonconformists – that these initiatives had been dependent ever since their inception. This was the community in which Defoe followed in the footsteps of his own father.

Moreover, Defoe had himself demonstrated his personal interest in such a missionary cause closer to home than New England. While posted to Scotland by the English government as journalist and correspondent at the time of the Treaty of Union (1707), he actively aided and abetted in the founding of the Scottish Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (incorporated in 1709). This society sought to aid in the circulation of Christian literature in Scotland and abroad in New England, to advance evangelization in the still-intensely Catholic Highlands, and, in due course, to assist with finance and personnel the evangelization of Indians in the American colonies.³⁵

It is necessary, therefore, to allow that missionary ideas and themes had a well-warranted part in Nonconformist, English thought three quarters of a century before William Carey's celebrated departure for India in 1792. Defoe's depiction of Crusoe as a proto-missionary can only be adequately understood within this context and in light of his own expressed personal interest in such causes. Yet this suggestion – that Defoe wrote simply from within the context in which he had been raised – is open to objection at several levels. We must now address these in turn.

i. It May Be Suggested That This Was an Era in Which Puritanism and Calvinism Were Disintegrating and Thus, Unlikely to Provide the Influence We Propose.

As long ago as 1950, G. R. Cragg contended that the second half of the seventeenth century saw the “overthrow” and “eclipse” of the Calvinism

³³ De Jong, *op. cit.*, pp. 48, 49.

³⁴ De Jong, *op. cit.* p. 44.

³⁵ These Scottish involvements of Defoe are described in Backscheider, *Defoe*, p. 239 ff. The origin and eventual transatlantic influence of this society is helpfully described in Donald Meek, “Scottish Highlanders, North American Indians and the SSPCK: Some Cultural Perspectives”, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* XXIII (1989): 378-396. Further details are provided in Donald MacLean, “Scottish Calvinism and Foreign Missions”, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* VI (1938): 5-7, and F. V. Mills, “The Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge in British North America”, *Church History* (1994): 15-30.

which had undergirded the Puritan period.³⁶ Could a declining and disintegrating Puritan culture truly provide the undergirdings for a great work of literature? One may grant the substantial accuracy of this idea of decline as regards Puritan influence on political life, inasmuch as the Commonwealth period (1653-60) did mark the zenith of the public influence of Presbyterians, Congregationalists and others who had enjoyed enlarged liberties under Cromwell. One may grant the accuracy of the idea also as regards the teaching of theology in the universities. The Acts of Uniformity of 1660 and 1662 largely removed Puritan teachers of theology who were concerned to uphold Calvinistic teaching in its then-current international form from the English universities.³⁷

But when one has acknowledged the substance of this contention, the whole ground has not been covered. As to its inner vitality, there was no necessary decline or disintegration of this Protestant culture automatically descending after the Restoration of the monarchy. After all, there were those who *did* pledge conformity to the Prayer Book and Episcopal oversight who continued the Puritan emphasis of seventeenth century English Calvinism within the Church of England. William Gurnall of Lavenham, Suffolk whose sermons on Ephesians were not long ago republished, is one example of a Puritan who conformed.³⁸ Of similar outlook was Bishop Morley of Winchester and Dr. John Edwards of Cambridge University.³⁹ Appreciable differences in the pastoral emphasis and theology of a William Gurnall and the Presbyterian, Samuel Annesley, who so influenced young Defoe, would have been almost non-existent. Thus, more recent writers on the history of the period, such as E. G. Rupp, have flatly maintained that Calvinism *was* continued through the Restoration period, both within and beyond the Church of England.⁴⁰ And this Puritan theological outlook was able to draw fresh breath from the example and sympathy of King William at his accession in 1689. His own Reformed Church background in the Netherlands meant that he had

³⁶ G. R. Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), p. 13 ff.

³⁷ Important exceptions to this general pattern have recently been highlighted by Stephen Hampton, *Anti-Arminians: The Anglican Reformed Tradition from Charles II to George I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

³⁸ Gurnall's expositions of the sixth chapter of Ephesians were published as *The Christian in Complete Armour* (1669) and were subsequently republished in 1864. The Banner of Truth Trust republished the 1864 edition at London, 1964.

³⁹ Cragg, *From Puritanism*, pp. 19, 30. Note the recent full attention paid to John Edwards of Cambridge in Dewey Wallace, *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660-1714: Variety, Persistence, and Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), chap. 6.

⁴⁰ Rupp, *op. cit.*, pp. 110, 111.

an open ear for the reports of grievance and harassment that the Calvinist Dissenters experienced.⁴¹

Now our concern is not to suggest that our author, Defoe, can be seen to have hewed to a particular theological line in his writings, but only to suggest that he lived and moved in a religious subculture where the Puritan and Calvinist ideology was far from spent. J. Paul Hunter has argued that Defoe's *Crusoe* belongs to a type of still-current Puritan devotional literature which he calls the "guide" tradition. In examples of this genre, readers (especially young adults) were urged and admonished to beware of the enticements of the world and to see in their employments a sphere in which God could be directly served.⁴²

Surely this is the vein in which Defoe has a now-wiser and now-holier *Crusoe* admit to himself that it is only by the sheer mercy of God that his errant ways have been over-ruled by his shipwreck and sojourn on the island:

My grief set lighter on me, my habitation grew comfortable to me beyond measure; and when I reflected that in this solitary life which I had been confined to, I had not only myself been moved to look up to heaven and to seek the hand that brought me there, but was now to be made an instrument, under Providence to save the life and for ought I knew, the soul of a poor savage.....when I reflected on these things, a secret joy ran through every part of my soul.⁴³

Thus, it is credible not only to maintain that the Puritan tradition, with its missionary sub-theme, was the framework within which Defoe wrote *Crusoe*, but that this tradition – while increasingly marginalized from universities and parliament – was still a living force within England.

⁴¹ King William had, consistent with this Reformed outlook, ended the Stuart attempts to impose Episcopacy upon the Church of Scotland. The Presbyterian form of government was restored to Scotland's national church in 1690.

⁴² J. Paul Hunter, *The Reluctant Pilgrim: Defoe's Emblematic Method and Quest for Form in Robinson Crusoe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), p. 23 ff. Among the then-current literary practitioners of this form was Nonconformist minister Daniel Williams (after whom the famous London Nonconformist library takes its name). Williams was memorialized by Defoe at his death in 1718 in *Memoirs of the Life and Eminent Conduct of That Learned and Reverent Divine, Daniel Williams, D.D.*. An older Puritan who had written in the genre was John Flavel (d. 1691).

⁴³ *Crusoe* (Norton edition), p. 172. The reduced appetite for contention in matters theological in this period is helpfully described by Cragg in *From Puritanism*, p. 31 ff.

- ii. It Might Be Thought That Defoe and Puritan Nonconformity Would Be Characterized by Concessions to All-Powerful *Reason* by the Time of *Crusoe*'s Publication in 1719 and That This Would Work Contrary to Missionary Interest.

Defoe's writing does reflect the currents of change that were gradually wending their way through this Nonconformist subculture as part of the larger English scene. Nonconformity was increasingly less dogmatic in this era in matters theological than it had been previously. The culture was moving to exalt the role of reason in matters of faith and judgement of controversies. Ralph Cudworth of Cambridge University (1617-1688) had led the tendency away from the theological dogmatism attributed to the Puritan age; he with others led a movement we now call *Cambridge Platonism*. In time, the effect of this outlook that eschewed theological controversy was noted even in the Nonconformist academies which groomed Defoe and his contemporaries. We can note that while *Crusoe* and his Friday converse freely, in due course, about matters central to the gospel, there are also Christian topics that they do *not* meddle with:

As to all the disputes, wranglings, strifes and contentions which have happened in the world about religion – whether niceties in doctrines or schemes of church government, they were all perfectly useless to us – as for ought I can yet see, they have been to all the rest of the world. We had the sure guide to heaven, viz. the Word of God, and we had – blessed be God, comfortable views of the Spirit of God teaching and instructing us by His Word, leading us into all the truth . . .⁴⁴

Here we have none other than the voice of the chastened English Dissenter of the early eighteenth century who has experienced the double upheaval of religious discrimination at home and the onset of the Age of Reason. These have combined to make for a reduced or simplified deposit of Christian dogma needing to be maintained. But what *Crusoe* maintains, he maintains with spiritual gusto!

The breezes of the Age of Reason can certainly be detected, but that the central facts of the Christian faith are undergirded by revelation from heaven is never seriously in doubt for *Crusoe*. The pensive castaway ruminates on the uncertain lot of the unenlightened cannibal races of his south Caribbean region before an all-wise God:

I checked my thoughts with this conclusion: (1st) That we did not know by what Light and Law these should be condemn'd; but that as God was necessarily, and by the nature of his being, infinitely

⁴⁴ *Crusoe* (Norton edition), p. 173.

Holy and just, so it could not be, but that if these creatures were all sentenc'd to absence from Himself, it was on account of sinning against that light, which as the Scripture says, was a law to themselves (Rom. 2.14) and by such rules as their consciences would acknowledge to be just, though the foundation was not discover'd to us. And (2nd) that as we are all the clay in the hand of the Potter (Jeremiah 18.6) no vessel could say to him, "why hast thou form'd me thus?"⁴⁵

Here is a mind asking eighteenth century questions – questions proper to the Age of Reason – (what of the nations and peoples who have never heard?), but in a framework provided after all by Puritan divinity. Defoe's *Crusoe* here provides us with a useful window for understanding how the thinking of orthodox Christians about missionary issues unfolded in an age that was unsatisfied to hear old dogmatism trotted out. To be sure, the rising generation of Nonconformists after Defoe would feel the siren-call of reason more powerfully than he and his *Crusoe*. The anonymous author of the circa 1731 treatise, *A View of the Dissenting Interest* (a one-man investigation into Nonconformity's decline in ministerial zeal as well as congregational numbers), remarked that this decline

is very often first manifested in their attacking the divine decrees, by explaining the doctrine of universal redemption as a sentiment that is full of benevolence; from thence they appear fond of pleading the cause of the heathens, and of the possibility of salvation merely by the light of nature.⁴⁶

As such sentiments took hold and became fashionable among Nonconformists, the missionary interest which had characterized the generation of Defoe and his parents would be soon eclipsed.

Yet contrary to what may be our suspicions, the Enlightenment period did *not* uniformly raise obstacles in the path of missionary thinking. As has been made plain in the excellent volume, *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*,⁴⁷ there were at least *two* ways in which this emphasis on reason materially assisted the missionary cause. A *first* was the promotion of a heightened confidence in the fundamental unity of humanity, while a *second* was to render English Christians more confident "about the elevating and illuminating capacity of knowledge and rational argument".⁴⁸ Defoe's *Crusoe*, remember, had been depicted as recognizing the fundamental unity in which he

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.164.

⁴⁶ *A View of the Dissenting Interest* (c.1731) quoted in Watts, *Dissenters*, p. 392.

⁴⁷ Brian Stanley, ed., *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

⁴⁸ Stanley, "Christian Missions and the Enlightenment: A Reevaluation" in Stanley, ed., *Christian Missions*, pp. 11, 12.

stood with the savage he had rescued, while rational argument was the very approach that the English survivor had utilized when he began the attempt to evangelize his man, Friday, with the question “who made the sea, the ground we walked on, and the hills and the woods?”⁴⁹ In sum, the Age of Reason is present as a backdrop in Defoe's story, but it poses no hindrance to the missionary efforts of his islander.

In Conclusion

We are now entitled to draw together the threads of our exploration into Defoe's ability to compose a narrative containing an imaginary missionary encounter. We contend that the ability to conceive of these encounters seventy years prior to the departure of Carey for India was:

- *Consistent with* a pre-existent missionary concern of the seventeenth century Puritans, both Presbyterian and Independent, which groups had been exposed to periodic briefings about an actual missionary effort underway among American Indians in the second half of the century.
- *Consistent with* Defoe's own personal education, which had brought him to within one year of a full educational preparedness for the Presbyterian ministry, and
- *Consistent with* a personal involvement, while resident in Edinburgh in 1709, in the founding and funding of the Scottish Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, a mission agency to the unevangelized Scottish highlands, and eventually America.

We are, I believe, warranted in asserting that Defoe's missionary Crusoe is a composite figure of three parts. He is one part taken from the factual tale of Alexander Selkirk, marooned four years on an island off Chile's coast. He is one part a composite of Defoe's own upbringing and Nonconformist ethos. Significantly, the very name Crusoe seems derived from the actual name Cruso – Timothy Cruso, who had been Defoe's fellow student at the Newington Green academy – a student who *did* proceed to enter the Presbyterian ministry.⁵⁰ He is also one part a composite of the progress – modest, but real – of English evangelical missions as they existed in the closing decades of the seventeenth century and the dawn of the eighteenth.

This proposal, if correct, warrants a different understanding of the often-lamented late launch of English-speaking Protestant missions. The conventional understanding has been that the rise of that late eighteenth century movement is only to be explained in terms of the impetus provided by the Evangelical Revival and the desire to do something to recompense the unde-

⁴⁹ *Crusoe* (Norton edition), p. 181 quoted above at page 3.

⁵⁰ Backscheider, *Defoe*, p. 48.

veloped nations for the horrors of the slave trade.⁵¹ But in the light of this study, a different analysis might be warranted. Inasmuch as *Robinson Crusoe* stands as a witness to a missionary curiosity and zeal in the century *preceding* Carey – might it not be said of eighteenth century missions (i.e. that of Carey and subsequently the London Missionary Society) what historian Michael Watts said of the period of the Evangelical Revival?

“It was an attempt to return, after . . . spiritual lethargy . . . , to the religious fervour of an earlier age.”⁵²



Title page, first edition, 1719

⁵¹ Max Warren, *The Missionary Movement from Britain in Modern History* (London: S.C.M., 1965), chap. 2.

⁵² Watts, *Dissenters*, p. 394.

Index of Books Reviewed

[Barge, Nigel, and Philip Malloch.] <i>Funeral Training: Visiting the Bereaved, Organising and Conducting a Funeral</i>	119
Blomberg, Craig L. with Jennifer Foutz Markley. <i>A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis</i>	57
Brake, Donald L. <i>A Visual History of the King James Bible: The Dramatic Story of the World's Best-Known Translation</i>	122
Brauns, Chris. <i>When the Word Leads Your Pastoral Search: Biblical Principles & Practices to Guide Your Search</i>	120
Campey, Lucille H. <i>With Axe and Bible: The Scottish Pioneers of New Brunswick, 1784-1874</i>	123
Canlis, Julie. <i>Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension</i>	71
Carson, D. A., ed. <i>Entrusted with the Gospel: Pastoral Expositions of 2 Timothy</i>	60
Chediak, Alex. <i>Thriving at College: Make Great Friends, Keep Your Faith, and Get Ready for the Real World!</i>	116
Chester, Tim. <i>Closing the Window: Steps to Living Porn Free</i>	106
Cromarty, Jim. <i>The Lord of Glory: Day by Day Devotions with Your Children</i>	114
Davis, Jennifer. <i>The age of consent: a warning from history: The work of Josephine Butler</i>	124
De Young, Kevin, ed. <i>Don't Call It a Comeback: The Old Faith for a New Day</i>	82
Driscoll, Mark and Grace. <i>Real Marriage: The Truth About Sex, Friendship, and Life Together</i>	121
Fee, Gordon D. <i>Revelation</i>	64
Frame, John M. <i>Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology</i>	75
Fraser, J. Cameron and Sonya M. Taekeme. <i>God Is Always Good: Cassidy's Story</i>	120
Goheen, Michael W. and Craig G. Bartholomew. <i>Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian World View</i>	109
Horton, Michael. <i>The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way</i>	78
Keller, Timothy. <i>Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just</i>	103
Keller, Timothy. <i>Counterfeit Gods: When the Empty Promises of Love, Money and Power Let You Down</i>	108
Kling, Fritz. <i>The Meeting of the Waters: 7 Global Currents That</i>	

<i>Will Propel the Future Church</i>	123
Letham, Robert. <i>The Westminster Assembly: Reading Its Theology in Historical Context</i>	89
Mounce, William D. <i>Biblical Greek: A Compact Guide</i>	67
Packer, J. I. and Gary A. Parrett. <i>Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way</i>	81
Phillips, Richard D. <i>Jonah & Micah</i>	55
Piper, John and D. A. Carson. <i>The Pastor as Scholar & The Scholar as Pastor: Reflections on Life and Ministry</i>	98
Ryken, Leland. <i>The Legacy of the King James Bible: Celebrating 400 Years of the Most Influential English Translation</i>	95
Stein, Robert H. <i>A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules</i>	66
Stewart, Kenneth J. <i>Ten Myths About Calvinism: Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition</i>	69
Stott, John. <i>The Radical Disciple: Wholehearted Christian Living</i>	113
Strauch, Alexander. <i>If You Bite & Devour One Another: Biblical Principles for Handling Conflict</i>	101
Sullivan, Robert E. <i>Macaulay: The Tragedy of Power</i>	84
Sunshine, Glenn S. <i>Why You Think the Way You Do: The Story of Western Worldviews from Rome to Home</i>	111
<i>The Holy Bible 1611 Edition King James Version 400th Anniversary</i>	121
Theodore of Mopsuestia, <i>Commentary on the Gospel of John</i>	86
Walters, Gwyn. <i>The Sovereign Spirit: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Writings of John Calvin</i>	93
Wilson, Derek. <i>The People's Bible: The Remarkable History of the King James Version</i>	122
Wright, Christopher J. H., ed. <i>Portraits of a Radical Disciple: Recollections of John Stott's Life and Ministry</i>	119

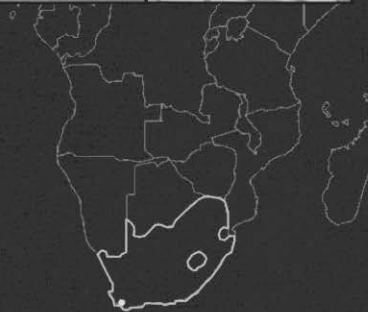
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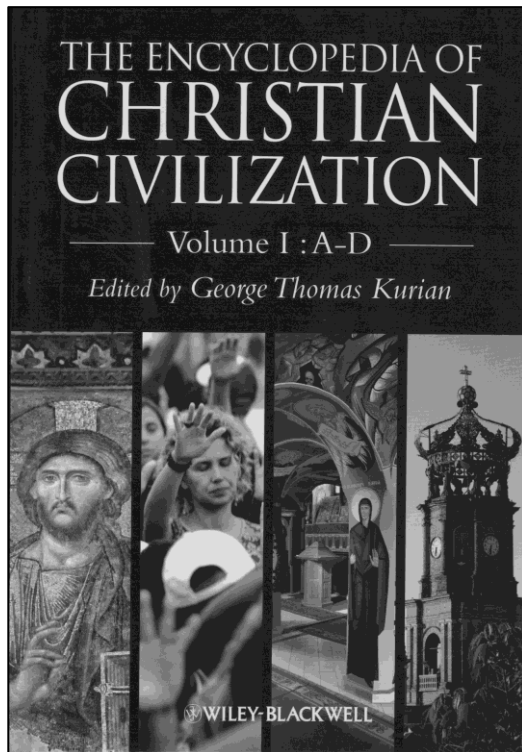
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CONTENTS

General Articles

- Devotional: Thy Word Is A Lamp 5
Urban Ministry in Khayelitsha, South Africa 9
Information Technology in Missions in
Theological Colleges in the Majority World 13
"Are You Growin', Man?" A Second Look at
Pauline Growth Imagery 21
Discernment As an Essential Leadership Quality 27
Heidelberg Catechism Twenty-Fifth Sunday:
The Sacraments 33
God's Good News for a Marginalised
African Man, Acts 8:26-40 43

Book Reviews

- Department of Biblical Theology 55
Department of Systematic Theology 69
Department of Historical Theology 84
Department of Applied Theology 98

Book Briefs 119

Academic Articles

- Developments In Biblical Counseling 127
Deaconesses 155
Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*: Fictional
Missionary in Britain's Pre-Missionary Age 173

Index of Books Reviewed 189

