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## THEOLOGY
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BCTM exists to provide theological and ministerial resources to enrich and energize ministry in Baptist churches.  Our goal is to bring together professor and practitioner to produce and apply these resources to Baptist life, polity, and ministry.  The mission of the BCTM is to develop, preserve, and communicate the distinctive theological identity of Baptists.

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# Editorial Introduction

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The five articles in this issue of the *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* address topics in the fields of church history, systematic theology, Christian education, pastoral ministry, and preaching. The articles are followed by reviews of books in the fields of biblical archaeology, biblical studies, Christian education, textual criticism, and theology, as well as Old and New Testament commentaries.

The first article was penned by Michael A. G. Haykin, Professor of Church History and Biblical Spirituality, and Director of The Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Haykin commemorates the bicentennial of the death of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) by writing about his friendships, which included key figures in the modern missionary movement. In the second article, Günther H. Juncker, Professor of New Testament and Greek at Toccoa Falls College in Toccoa Falls, Georgia, argues that the nature of God and existence of evil requires a rejection of meticulous, theistic determinism. In the third article, based on a 2015 Ed.D. dissertation at University of the Cumberlands in Williamsburg, Kentucky, Lora Canter examines current issues related to faith integration within evangelical, faith-based, higher education. In the fourth article, Scott Douglas draws from his Ed.D. dissertation completed in 2013 at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, to identify pastoral skills and qualities for effective ministry in Southern Baptist churches. In the fifth article, Kevin L. Hester, Professor of Theology and Chair of the Department of Theological Studies at Welch College in Nashville, Tennessee, suggests that Christian preaching should be Trinitarian.

May the Lord use this collection of articles and book reviews to sharpen your mind and deepen your love for Him and for others (Matt 22:36–40).

# "A Little Band of Brothers":
# Friendship in the Life of Andrew Fuller
# —An Essay on the Bicentennial of His Death

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**Michael A. G. Haykin, Ph.D.**

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Revival and reformation are rarely, if ever, wrought by God through one individual, contrary to the impression given by some popular church histories. Collegiality is central to times of spiritual blessing. As James Davison Hunter argues in his book, To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World, the "great man of history" view, namely that "the history of the world is but the biography of great men," is wrong.[2] Rather, "the key actor in history is not individual genius but rather the network [of individuals and friends] and the new institutions that are created out of those networks." Hunter thus maintains that "charisma and genius and their cultural consequences do not exist outside of networks of similarly oriented people and similarly aligned institutions."[3]

A superb illustration in church history of the truth of Hunter's thesis is the revival of the English Baptist community in the late-eighteenth century. Christopher Anderson (1782–1852), a Scottish Baptist leader who became a close friend of a number of those who were centrally involved in this momentous revival, reckoned

> …that in order to much good being done, co-operation, the result of undissembled love, is absolutely necessary; and I think that if God in his tender mercy would take me as one of but a very few whose hearts he will unite as the heart of one man—since all the watchmen cannot see eye to eye—might I be but one of a little band of brothers who should do so, and who should leave

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[2]James Davison Hunter, To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 38.
[3]Ibid.

behind them a proof of how much may be accomplished in consequence of the union of only a few upon earth in spreading Christianity, oh how should I rejoice and be glad! In order to such a union, however, I am satisfied that the cardinal virtues, and a share of what may be considered as substantial excellence of character, are absolutely necessary, and hence the importance of the religion which we possess being of that stamp which will promote these. Such a union in modern times existed in [Andrew] Fuller, [John] Sutcliff, [Samuel] Pearce, [William] Carey, and [John] Ryland. They were men of self-denying habits, dead to the world, to fame, and to popular applause, of deep and extensive views of divine truth, and they had such an extended idea of what the Kingdom of Christ ought to have been in the nineteenth century, that they, as it were, vowed and prayed, and gave themselves no rest.[4]

For much of the eighteenth century, far too many Baptist churches in England, Wales, and Ireland were moribund and without vision for the future or passion for the salvation of the lost at home or abroad. Definite tendencies towards "hyper-Calvinism," an introspective piety that was a reaction to the Enlightenment of that era, and an inability to discern God's hand at work in the Calvinistic Methodist revivals of their day, as well as various social and political factors were central in their decline. By the first decade of the next century, however, the low-burning embers in their churches had been fanned into white-hot flame as this Baptist community became a world leader in the foreign missionary enterprise, an enterprise that became identified with one name in particular, William Carey (1761–1834). But the man whose writings, above all others, provided the theological underpinnings for this revival was Andrew Fuller (1754–1815), who, because of the weightiness of his theological influence and acumen, has been rightly called "the elephant of Kettering."[5] As Harry R. Boer has noted: "Fuller's insistence on the duty of all men everywhere to believe the gospel . . . played a determinative role in the crystallization of Carey's missionary vision."[6]

Yet it is vital to recognize that neither Fuller nor Carey accomplished what they did simply by themselves. There is little doubt that Fuller's friendship with a number of like-minded Baptist pastors from the Midlands—in particular the elder Robert Hall (1728–91) of Arnesby, John Sutcliff (1752–1814) of Olney, John Ryland Jr. (1753–1825) of Northampton, Samuel Pearce (1766–99) of Birmingham, and William Carey—was indispensable to the transformative impact of his theology. These men took the time to think and reflect together, as well as to encourage one another and pray together. "An aversion to the same errors, a predilection for the same authors, with a concern for the cause of Christ at home and abroad"[7] bound these

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[4]Christopher Anderson, Letter, September 7, 1822, in Hugh Anderson, *The Life and Letters of Christopher Anderson* (Edinburgh: W. P. Kennedy, 1854), 379.

[5]David Phillips, *Memoir of the Life, Labors, and Extensive Usefulness of the Rev. Christmas Evans* (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1843), 74.

[6]Harry R. Boer, Pentecost and Missions (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 24.

[7]John Ryland Jr., *The Indwelling and Righteousness of Christ No Security against Corporal Death, but the Source of Spiritual and Eternal Life* (London: W. Button & Son, 1815), 35–36. These words are actually used by Ryland of his friendship with Fuller, but they can also be applied to the other friendships of these men. In the "Postscript" to this sermon, Ryland describes Sutcliff and Fuller as "my dearest brethren" (Ry-

men together in a friendship that was a significant catalyst for revival. The network of relationships between these men, this "little band of brothers" as Anderson puts it, clearly bears out Hunter's thesis.[8] Due to space constraints, the focus of this article will be upon one of these friendships among this band of brothers, that of Andrew Fuller with John Ryland.

## Friendship in Contemporary Western Culture & That of the Ancient World

Our culture is not one that provides great encouragement for the nurture and development of deep, long-lasting, satisfying friendships. Such friendships take time and sacrifice, and western culture in the early twenty-first century is a busy world that as a rule is far more interested in receiving and possessing than sacrificing and giving.[9] Roger Scruton, the conservative public commentator and philosopher who specializes in aesthetics, has rightly noted in a recent interview that westerners "are living through . . . a decline in real friendship."[10] Now, what is especially disturbing about this fact is that western Christianity is little different from its culture. The English Anglican writer C. S. Lewis (1898–1963) has an ingenious little book entitled The Screwtape Letters, a remarkable commentary on spiritual warfare from the point of view of our Enemy. In it there is one letter from the senior devil, Screwtape, to his nephew Wormwood in which Screwtape rejoices over the fact that "in modern Christian writings" there is to be found "few of the old warnings about Worldly Vanities, the Choice of Friends, and the Value of Time."[11] Now, whether or not Lewis is right with regard to a scarcity of twentieth-century, Christian literature about "Worldly Vanities" and "the Value of Time," he is undoubtedly correct when it comes to the topic of friendship.

How different in this respect is our world from that of the ancients, both pagan and Christian. In the ancient world, friendship was deemed to be of such vital importance that the pagan philosopher Plato devoted an entire book, the Lysis, as well as substantial portions of two other books, the Phaedrus and the Symposium, to a treatment of its nature. Aristotle, the other leading thinker of the classical Greek period, also considered the topic of friendship significant enough to have a discussion of it occupy two of the ten books of the Nicomachean Ethics, his

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land, *Indwelling and Righteousness of Christ*, 47). In *The work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope, illustrated; in the life and death of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (2nd ed.; Charlestown, MA: Samuel Etheridge, 1818), viii, Ryland states that he always regarded Fuller and "Brother Sutcliff, and myself, as more closely united to each other, than either of us were to anyone else."

[8]For an attempt to do this, see Michael A. G. Haykin, *One Heart and One Soul: John Sutcliff of Olney, His Friends, and His Times* (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 1994).

[9]Diogenes Allen, *Love: Christian Romance, Marriage, Friendship* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1987), 45–46.

[10]Roger Scruton, "Staving Off Despair: On the Use and Abuse of Pessimism for Life," *Standpoint*, September 2010, 36, col. 1.

[11]C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, Letter 10 in *The Best of C. S. Lewis* (Washington, DC: Canon Press, 1969), 43.

major work on ethical issues. For the ancient Greeks—and this is true also of the Romans—friendship formed one of the highest ideals of human life.

Though we do not find such extended discussions of the concept of friendship in the Scriptures, we do come across reflections on friendship like Eccl 4:7–12 as well as marvelous illustrations of what a true friendship looks like. For instance, there is the friendship of Ruth and Naomi that cuts across generations or that of David and Jonathan, or in the New Testament, Paul and Timothy. There are also nuggets of advice about having friends and keeping them in that Old Testament compendium of wisdom, Proverbs. One comes away from texts like these with the impression that the world of the Bible regards friendship as a very important part of life.

Two central images are found in the biblical representation of friendship.[12] The first is that friendship involves the knitting together of souls. Deuteronomy provides the earliest mention of this when it describes "a friend who is as your own soul" (Deut 13:6), that is, a friend is a companion of one's innermost thoughts and feelings. This is well illustrated by Jonathan and David's friendship, described in 1 Sam 18:1–4. In this text, we see that the privileges and responsibilities of a biblical friend entail strong emotional attachment and loyalty.

The second metaphor that the Bible uses to represent friendship is the face-to-face encounter. This is the image used, for example, of relationship between Moses and God. In the tabernacle, God spoke to Moses "face to face, as a man speaks to his friend" (Exod 33:11; see also Num 12:8). The image of a face-to-face encounter implies conversation, a sharing of confidences and consequently a melding together of minds, goals, and direction. One of the benefits of such face-to-face encounters between friends is the heightened insight that such encounters produce. As Prov 27:17 famously puts it: "Iron sharpens iron, and one friend sharpens another."

Now, an excellent example of a friendship that has both of these scriptural characteristics is that between Andrew Fuller and John Ryland Jr. Something needs to be said about these men's lives before an examination of their friendship, though.

## Remembering Andrew Fuller

Charles Haddon Spurgeon once described Fuller as "the greatest theologian" of his century.[13] He was born on February 6, 1754, at Wicken, Cambridgeshire. His parents, Robert Fuller (1723–81) and Philippa Gunton (1726–1816), rented and worked a succession of dairy farms. When Fuller was seven years of age, his parents moved to the village of Soham, also in Cam-

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[12]"Friendship," *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, ed. Leland Ryken et al. (Downers Grove: IVP, 1998), 308–9.

[13]Gilbert Laws, *Andrew Fuller: Pastor, Theologian, Ropeholder* (London: Carey Press, 1942), 127.

bridgeshire and about two and a half miles from Wicken. Once settled in Soham, they joined themselves to the Particular Baptist work in the village. The pastor of this small work was John Eve (d.1782), who had been a sieve-maker before becoming pastor of the church in 1752. Eve was a hyper-Calvinist, that is, according to Fuller, one who "had little or nothing to say to the unconverted." The sovereignty of God in salvation was so prominent a theme in far too many English Baptist circles that it seriously hampered effective evangelism.

Thus, despite the fact that Fuller regularly attended the Baptist meeting-house, he gave little thought or heed to the sermons that he heard. In the autumn of 1769, he came under deep conviction that his life was displeasing to God. He later declared, "I saw that God would be perfectly just in sending me to hell, and that to hell I must go, unless I were saved of mere grace." After much soul-wrestling Fuller finally decided: "I will trust my soul, my sinful, lost soul in his [i.e. Christ's] hands." So it was in November 1769 that Fuller found peace with God and rest for his troubled soul in the cross of Christ.[14]

In April 1770, five months after his conversion, he was baptized and joined the Soham church. Over the course of the next few years, it became very evident to the church that Fuller possessed definite ministerial gifts. Eve left the church in 1771 for another pastorate. Fuller, who was self-taught when it came to theology and who had been preaching in the church for a couple of years, was formally inducted as pastor on May 3, 1775. The church consisted of forty-seven members and met for worship in a rented barn.

Fuller's pastorate at Soham, which lasted until 1782 when he moved to pastor the Baptist work in Kettering, Northamptonshire, was a decisive period for the shaping of Fuller's theological outlook. It was during these seven years that Fuller began a lifelong study of the works of the New England divine Jonathan Edwards (1703–58), his chief theological mentor after the Scriptures. It was also in this period of time that he made the acquaintance of that afore-mentioned circle of friends that were critical to the future usefulness of his ministry: Robert Hall Sr., John Ryland Jr., and John Sutcliff. Finally, it was during his pastorate at Soham that Fuller decisively rejected hyper-Calvinism and drew up a defense of his own theological position in *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, though the first edition of this book was not published until 1785.

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[14]For Fuller's early years and his conversion, see Andrew Gunton Fuller, "Memoir," in *The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, rev. Joseph Belcher (1845 ed.; repr. Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), 1:1–7. For the details of Fuller's life that follow, see especially John Ryland's classic study of Fuller's life: *The work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope, illustrated; in the life and death of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (London: Button & Son, 1816). The same publisher published a second edition of this biography in 1818 (the American edition is referenced above in footnote 6). For more recent studies, see Laws, *Andrew Fuller: Pastor, Theologian, Ropeholder*; Phil Roberts, "Andrew Fuller," in *Baptist Theologians*, ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 121–39; Peter J. Morden, *The Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)* (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2015).

A preliminary draft of the work was written by 1778 (this is now in the archives of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary). In what was roughly its final form it was completed by 1781. Two editions of the work were published in Fuller's lifetime, one in 1785 and one in 1801. There were some important differences between the two editions, but the work's major theme remained unaltered: "faith in Christ is the duty of all men who hear, or have opportunity to hear, the gospel." This epoch-making book sought to be faithful to the central emphases of historic Calvinism while at the same time attempting to leave preachers with no alternative but to drive home to their hearers the universal obligations of repentance and faith.[15]

With regard to Fuller's own ministry, the book was a key factor in determining the shape of that ministry in the years to come. For instance, it led directly to Fuller's whole-hearted involvement in the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society in October 1792, and the subsequent sending of William Carey, the Society's first missionary, to India in 1793. Fuller also served as secretary of this society until his death in 1815. The work of the mission consumed an enormous amount of Fuller's time as he regularly toured the country, representing the mission and raising funds. On average, he was away from home three months of the year. Between 1798 and 1813, moreover, he made five lengthy trips to Scotland for the mission as well as undertaking journeys to Wales and Ireland (1804). He also carried on an extensive correspondence on the mission's behalf. Fuller's commitment to the Baptist Missionary Society was not only rooted in his missionary theology but also in his deep friendship with Carey. Fuller later compared the sending of Carey to India as the lowering of him into a deep gold-mine. Fuller and his close friends, Sutcliff and Ryland, had pledged themselves to "hold the ropes" as long as Carey lived.

The critical role played by Fuller in the controversy with hyper-Calvinism led to other defenses of key aspects of biblical Christianity during the 1790s. Fuller issued an extensive elucidation of the deity of Christ as a response to the Socinian theologian Joseph Priestley (1733–1804), also renowned as the discoverer of oxygen, in 1793. Due to Priestley's vigorous campaigning, Socinianism, which denied the Trinity and the deity of Christ, had become the leading form of heterodoxy within English Dissent in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Fuller ably showed that the early Church made the divine dignity and glory of Christ's person central to their life and thought. Seven years later, he published the definitive Baptist response to Thomas Paine's (1737–1809) Deism, which proved to be one of Fuller's most popular works. It went through three editions by 1802 and the Scottish theologian Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847) was especially enamored with it. The work has two parts. In the first, Fuller compares and contrasts the moral effects of Christianity with those of Deism. The second part of the book aims to demonstrate the divine origin of Christianity from the general consistency of the Scriptures. And in 1810, Fuller tackled the predominantly intellectualist view of faith

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[15]For the second edition of *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, see *Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 2:328–416.

promoted by the Scottish evangelical Robert Sandeman (1718–71), known to historians as Sandemanianism.[16]

Alongside his apologetic works, Fuller also exercised a significant pastoral ministry at Kettering. During his thirty-three years at Kettering, from 1782 to 1815, the membership of the church doubled (from 88 to 174) and the number of "hearers" was often over a thousand, necessitating several additions to the church building. Perusal of his vast correspondence—today housed in the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, the University of Oxford—reveals that Fuller was first and foremost a pastor. And though he did not always succeed, he constantly sought to ensure that his many other responsibilities did not encroach upon those related to the pastorate.

Two examples well display his pastoral heart. After Fuller died, there was found among his possessions a small book entitled "Families who attend at the Meeting, August, 1788." In it he wrote: "A Review of these may assist me in praying and preaching."[17] Then, among his letters there is one dated February 8, 1812, which was written to a wayward member of his flock. In it Fuller laid bare his pastor's heart when he stated: "When a parent loses . . . a child nothing but the recovery of that child can heal the wound. If he could have many other children, that would not do it. . . . Thus it is with me towards you. Nothing but your return to God and the Church can heal the wound."[18]

## The Younger Ryland

John Ryland Jr.'s father was the Baptist minister, John Collett Ryland (1723–92), "a Promethean personality" who had a voracious appetite for learning.[19] For much of his life, the

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[16]Fuller's main refutation of Socinianism may be found in *The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems Examined and Compared, as to their Moral Tendency* (*Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 2:108–242). His chief response to Paine's Deism is *The Gospel Its Own Witness* (*Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 2:1–107). And for his reply to Sandeman's thought and its Scotch Baptist proponent, Archibald McLean (1738–1812), see Fuller's *Strictures on Sandemanianism, in Twelve Letters to a Friend* (*Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 2:561–646). For examinations of Fuller's reply to these theological aberrations, see Michael A. G. Haykin, "'The Oracles of God': Andrew Fuller and the Scriptures," *Churchman* 103 (1989): 60–76; Haykin, "A Socinian and Calvinist Compared: Joseph Priestley and Andrew Fuller on the Propriety of Prayer to Christ," *Dutch Review of Church History* 73 (1993): 178–98; and Haykin, "Andrew Fuller and the Sandemanian Controversy," in *"At the Pure Fountain of Thy Word": Andrew Fuller as an Apologist*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (Carlisle, Cumbria, UK/Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2004), 223–36.

[17]Gladys M. Barrett, *A Brief History of Fuller Church, Kettering* (St. Albans, Hertfordshire: Parker Brothers, *ca.* 1946), 9.

[18]Ibid.

[19]For the phrase "Promethean personality," see Thomas Wright, *Augustus M. Toplady and Contemporary Hymn-Writers* (London: Francombe & Son, 1911), 234.

elder Ryland was pastor of College Lane Baptist Church, Northampton, and one of the leading Calvinistic Baptist lights of the eighteenth century.[20] He seems to have sought to stimulate a similar appetite for books and learning in his children, in particular, in his namesake, John Ryland Jr. And it worked, for the son recalled that as a young child, he "was fond of reading, and generally preferred that employment to play." The elder Ryland's piety also influenced his son. Though at times quite eccentric, the father was an ardent lover of the Lord Jesus. "What a glory to be connected with all the infinite good in Christ," he wrote on one occasion in a small piece enumerating encouragements to pray.[21] Thus, learning and devotion were interwoven early on in the life of the younger Ryland.[22]

The younger Ryland was converted and baptized in 1767.[23] He spoke for the first time before his father's church in May of 1770—he was but seventeen years old. Many years later he would say that he had "had very few silent Sabbaths since."[24] Ryland was invited by College Lane in 1781 to become co-pastor with his father. When his father moved five years later to Enfield, near London, Ryland became the sole pastor.[25] Ryland himself moved from

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[20]On John Collett Ryland, see Peter Naylor, "John Collett Ryland (1723–1792)," in *British Particular Baptists, 1638–1910*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 1998), 1:184–201.

[21]In *The Baptist Annual Register*, ed. John Rippon (London: n.p., 1801), 3:366.

[22]This interweaving of piety and theological reflection is well seen in a phrase that Ryland inserted in a printed copy of an ordination sermon by Samuel Spring (1746–1819), a New England preacher who was married to the daughter of the New Divinity theologian Samuel Hopkins (1721–1803). At the point where Spring is describing the depth of the well of theology and that "fresh and pure water" can only be drawn out of this well by "hard study," Ryland has added "prayer &" just before "hard study" (Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "Some of John Ryland's Books," *The Baptist Quarterly* 33 [1989–90]: 214).

[23]The earliest memoir of Ryland is that found at the conclusion of the sermon Robert Hall Jr. preached at Ryland's funeral: "A Sermon Occasioned by the death of the Rev. John Ryland, D.D., preached at the Baptist Meeting, Broadmead, Bristol, June 5, 1825," in *The Works of the Rev. Robert Hall, A. M.*, ed. Olinthus Gregory and Joseph Belcher (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1854), 1:213–24. Later in the nineteenth century, James Culross devoted a significant section of his *The Three Rylands: A hundred years of various Christian service* (London: Elliot Stock, 1897), 69–91, to recounting the life and ministry of John Ryland Jr. An examination of Ryland's theology may be found in the excellent study by L. G. Champion, "The Theology of John Ryland: Its Sources and Influences," *The Baptist Quarterly* 28 (1979–80): 17–29.

[24]John Ryland, "Autograph Reminiscences" (Ms. Z.f.31; Bristol College Library, Bristol College, Bristol), 44.

[25]During his early years of ministry Ryland received much solid and judicious advice and encouragement from John Newton (1725–1807), the Anglican Evangelical. Ryland's friendship with Newton began a few years after the latter had become the curate at the parish church in Olney in 1764. It lasted until Newton's death in 1807. The year before Ryland's own death in 1825, he summed up his friendship with Newton in this way: "Mr. Newton invited me to visit him at Olney, in 1768; and from thence to his death, I always esteemed him, and Mr. [Robert] Hall [Sr.] of Arnsby . . . as my wisest and most faithful counsellors, in all difficulties." ("Remarks on the Quarterly Review, for April 1824, Relative to the Memoirs of Scott and Newton," in his *Pastoral Memorials* [London: B. J. Holdsworth, 1828], 2:346). For a discussion of the friendship between Ryland and Newton, see especially *Wise Counsel: John Newton's Letters to John Ryland, Jr.*, ed. Grant Gordon (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2009). See also L. G. Champion, "The

Northampton in 1793. He went to Bristol where, until his death in 1825, he was the pastor of Broadmead Church and the principal of Bristol Baptist Academy, both positions being held concurrently.[26] The year before he moved to Bristol, Ryland had played a key role in the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society. When Fuller died in 1815, Ryland succeeded him as the secretary of this society.

An able Hebrew scholar and solid preacher, Ryland exercised a significant influence on the lives of the two hundred or so students who studied at Bristol during his time as principal. The student body was never huge at any one time. In 1816 for example, there were 22 students studying at the school.[27] Yet, the majority of them went on to become Baptist pastors and missionaries, imbued with Ryland's evangelicalism and commitment to revival. Over time, Ryland became one of the respected pillars of Calvinistic Baptist life in England. On one occasion, when Robert Hall Jr. (1764–1831), the most celebrated preacher among the English Baptists in the first third of the nineteenth century, was told something he regarded as incredible, Hall asked on whose authority was the report based. When he was told it was on that of Ryland, he replied, "Did Ryland say so, Sir? Then it is true, Sir; for I would as soon receive his testimony as the affidavit of seven archangels."[28]

## A Baptist Friendship

Ryland and Fuller first met in 1778 when both of them were young men, and they were wrestling with a number of extremely important theological issues. Within a year, they were the closest of friends. After Fuller moved to Kettering in 1782, the two of them had frequent opportunities to talk, to pray, and to spend time together, for Northampton and Kettering are only thirteen miles apart. Their friendship was to be unbroken for the next thirty-seven years, until Fuller's death in 1815.

In the year that he died, Fuller described his relationship with Ryland as a "long and intimate friendship" that he had "lived in, and hoped to die in."[29] And nine days before he died, Fuller asked one last request of Ryland: would he preach his funeral sermon? Ryland agreed,

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Letters of John Newton to John Ryland," *The Baptist Quarterly* 27 (1977–78): 157–63; Champion, "Theology of John Ryland," 17–18, 26. On the life and ministry of Robert Hall Sr., see Graham W. Hughes, "Robert Hall of Arnesby: 1728–1791," *The Baptist Quarterly* 10 (1940–41): 444–47, and Michael A. G. Haykin, "Robert Hall, Sr. (1728–1791)," in *The British Particular Baptists 1638–1910*, 1:203–11.

[26]See Grant Gordon, "The Call of Dr John Ryland Jr.," *The Baptist Quarterly* 34 (1991–92): 214–27.

[27]John Ryland Jr., Letter to John Williams, April 5, 1816 (American Baptist Historical Society, Atlanta, GA).

[28]William B. Sprague, *Visits to European Celebrities* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1855), 63.

[29]Andrew Fuller, *The Admission of Unbaptized Persons to the Lord's Supper Inconsistent with the New Testament* (*Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 3:508). Fuller did not name Ryland specifically in this passage, but it is clear that he is referring to him.

though it was no easy task for him to hold back his tears as he spoke.[30] Towards the end of this sermon, Ryland reminisced about the fact that their friendship had "never met with one minute's interruption, by one unkind word or thought, of which I have any knowledge" and that the wound caused by the loss of "this most faithful and judicious friend" was something that would never be healed in this life.[31] Ryland's statement that his friendship with Fuller had "never met with one minute's interruption, by one unkind word or thought" is quite an amazing statement and speaks volumes about the way these two men treasured their relationship.

## The Cost of Their Friendship

The year following Fuller's death, Ryland published a biography of his close friend. In the introduction, Ryland stated the following about their friendship: "Most of our common acquaintance are well aware, that I was his oldest and most intimate friend; and though my removal to Bristol, above twenty years ago, placed us at a distance from each other, yet a constant correspondence was all along maintained; and, to me at least, it seemed a tedious interval, if more than a fortnight elapsed without my receiving a letter from him."[32] When Ryland moved to Bristol in 1793, he was no longer close enough to his friend in Kettering for them to meet on a regular basis. The only way that they could keep their friendship alive and intact was through the medium of the letter. Thus, for more than twenty years, they faithfully corresponded with one another. Ryland notes that if he did not hear from Fuller at least once every two weeks, he found it "tedious," that is, painful and upsetting.[33] Both Ryland and Fuller evidently knew that their friendship was a fragile treasure that could be so easily lost or neglected in the rush of life if they did not give it the attention it needed. As the American preacher Haddon Robinson has noted: "Even strong friendships require watering or they shrivel up and blow away."[34]

## Friendship—Warts and All

What had initially attracted Ryland and Fuller to one another was the discovery that they shared "a strong attachment to the same religious principles, a decided aversion to the same errors, a predilection for the same authors,"[35] in particular, Jonathan Edwards. In other words, they had that fundamental aspect of a good friendship: a union of hearts. They found deep joy in their oneness of soul—their passion for the glory of Christ and the extension of his kingdom. But friends are not Siamese twins or clones of one another. It belongs to the essence of

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[30]See the remarks at the beginning of the sermon: Ryland, *Indwelling and Righteousness of Christ*, 1–2.

[31]Ibid., 36–37.

[32]Ryland, *Life and Death of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (2nd ed.), viii.

[33]For this now obsolete meaning of the word "tedious," see *The Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v.

[34]Haddon Robinson, "Laughing the Night Away," *Christianity Today*, March 8, 1993, 15.

[35]Ryland, *Indwelling and Righteousness of Christ*, 35.

genuine friendship that friends accept one another for what they are, warts and all, and they give one another room to disagree.[36]

In the case of Ryland and Fuller, their main difference of opinion revolved around what was an extremely volatile issue among the transatlantic, English-speaking Baptists of the eighteenth-century world: the twin issues of open and closed communion, and open and closed membership.[37] In the eighteenth century, the vast majority of pastors and congregations in the Calvinistic Baptist denomination, including Fuller, adhered to a policy of closed membership—that is, only baptized believers could become members of their local churches—and closed communion—that is, only baptized believers could partake of the Lord's Supper in their meeting-houses.[38] Ryland, on the other hand, was of the conviction that both the Lord's Supper and membership in the local church should be open to all Christians, regardless of whether or not they had been baptized as believers. He was thus committed to a policy of both open communion and open membership. When Ryland was the pastor of the College Lane Church in Northampton, for instance, one of the leading deacons of the church, a certain Thomas Trinder, did not receive believer's baptism until six years after he had been appointed deacon.[39] Fuller would never have tolerated such a situation in the church at Kettering. But Ryland and Fuller were secure enough in their friendship to disagree and not have it destroy their friendship.

## Quarrel over Serampore

The only time that this theological difference really came close to disturbing their friendship was in connection with the Baptist Missionary Society's mission at Serampore, India.[40] Headed by William Carey, Joshua Marshman (1768–1837), and William Ward (1769–1823)—all of whom were friends of Ryland and Fuller—this mission adopted a policy of open communion in 1805. Writing to Fuller that year, the Serampore missionaries informed him they had come

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[36]Maurice Roberts, "Christian Friendships," in *The Thought of God*, ed. Roberts (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1993), 175.

[37]On this subject, see B. R. White, "Open and Closed Membership among English and Welsh Baptists," *The Baptist Quarterly* 24 (1971–72): 330–34, 341; Walter Chantry, "Communion: Open or Closed," *Baptist Reformation Review* 6.4 (Winter 1977): 15–21; Joshua Thompson, "The Communion Controversy and Irish Baptists," *Irish Baptist Historical Society Journal* 20 (1987–88): 26–35; Roland Burrows, "The Closed Table . . . Were Our Forefathers Wrong?" *Evangel* 12.1 (Spring 1994): 23–28.

[38]For Fuller's views, see *Thoughts on Open Communion* (1800) (*Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 3:503–6); *Strict Communion in the Mission Church at Serampore* (1814) (*Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 3:507); *The Admission of Unbaptized Persons to the Lord's Supper Inconsistent with the New Testament* (*Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 3:508–15).

[39]Gordon, "Call of Dr John Ryland," 217.

[40]For what follows and the quotes, see E. Daniel Potts, "'I throw away the guns to preserve the ship': A Note on the Serampore Trio," *The Baptist Quarterly* 20 (1963–64): 115–17.

to the conviction that "no one has a right to debar a true Christian from the Lord's table, nor refuse to communicate with a real Christian in commemorating the death of their common Lord, without being guilty of a breach of the Law of Love." "We cannot doubt," they went on to affirm, "whether a Watts, an Edwards, a Brainerd, a Doddridge, a Whitefield, did right in partaking of the Lord's Supper, though really unbaptized, or whether they had the presence of God at the Lord's Table?"

Fuller was deeply disturbed by this reasoning and the decision made by the Serampore missionaries, and exerted all of his powers of influence and reasoning to convince them to embrace closed communion, which they eventually did in 1811. Ryland, though, was not slow to criticize this reversal of policy. But, as he later said of his disagreement with Fuller: "I repeatedly expressed myself more freely and strongly to him, than I did to any man in England; yet without giving him offence."[41] It is also noteworthy that Carey did not take offence at Fuller either. When he heard of Fuller's death in 1815, he wrote almost immediately to Ryland and told him: "I loved him very sincerely. There was scarcely another man on the Earth to whom I could so compleatly [sic] lay open my heart as I could to him."[42]

We are all subject to the temptation to make our views about secondary matters far more important than they actually are, and to squeeze our friends into our own mold when it comes to these issues. Fuller and Ryland, on the other hand, genuinely knew how to give each other space to disagree on what many of their Baptist acquaintances regarded as an all-essential issue.

## The One Essential Friendship

When Fuller lay dying in April 1815, he was asked if he wanted to see Ryland, his oldest living friend in England. His response was terse: "He can do me no good."[43] His reply seems to be an odd statement, lacking in appreciation for what their friendship had meant to the two men. But it needs to be understood in context. In his final letter to Ryland, Fuller had begun by saying: "We have enjoyed much together, which I hope will prove an earnest of greater enjoyment in another world. . . . [There] I trust we shall meet, and part no more."[44] Clearly, his feelings about his friendship with Ryland had undergone no alteration whatsoever. In the light of his impending death, however, there was only one friendship which he knew to be needful in that moment: his friendship with the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As another eighteenth-century writer, an Anglican rector by the name of James Newton, had written when

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[41]Ryland, *Life and Death of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (2nd ed.), viii.

[42]William Carey, Letter to John Ryland, November 15, 1815, in *The Journal and Selected Letters of William Carey*, ed. Terry G. Carter (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 199.

[43]Ryland, *Life and Death of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (2nd ed.), 333.

[44]Ryland, *Indwelling and Righteousness of Christ*, 33.

faced with the death of his brother: "If we have God for our Friend, what need we to fear, Nothing, but without his Friendship we may be looked on as the most miserable of Men."[45]

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[45]Diary entry for January 2, 1759, in James Newton, *The Deserted Village: The Diary of an Oxford-shire Rector, James Newton of Nuneham Courtenay, 1736–86*, transcribed and ed. Gavin Hannah (Stroud, Gloucestershire/Dover, NH: Alan Sutton, 1992), 2.

# The Dilemma of Theistic Determinism

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## Introduction

In the popular tradition of William James's classic "The Dilemma of Determinism" and Sir Karl Popper's "Indeterminism and Human Freedom,"[2] I offer up the following sound bite as food for philosophical and theological thought.

*If determinism is true then either God is evil and the author of evil or all talk of good and evil, of praise and blame, of moral responsibility, and of justice is meaningless and incomprehensible with reference to God.* That is, if God can cause or determine evil and yet remain *good*, and if God can punish those who do exactly and only what He has meticulously caused and determined them to do and yet remain *just*, then we have no idea who God is or what He might or might not do or what Scripture could possibly mean when it calls Him "good" and "just."

These are strong claims; nevertheless, it seems to me that theistic determinism is committed to the conjunction of several theses that lead to precisely such a dilemma. Note, for example, the following related pairs of statements (reading each pair left to right):

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[1]These two essays are "must reading" for any informed critique of deterministic systems of thought. The James essay may be found in his oft-reprinted *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (1897) and is available online at https://archive.org/details/willtobelieveot00jameiala. The Popper essay may be found as chapter 6 of his *Objective Knowledge* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972). My own comments here are a further attempt to capture and articulate, at the popular level, some of our intuitions about a God who is the ultimate and meticulous cause/determiner of *everything, including evil*. Thus, for example, I make no distinction between *causing* and *determining* an act or state of affairs.

| When a moral agent who is not God causes/determines another to do evil, then that first moral agent *is* morally blameworthy and guilty of evil. | When God causes/determines another to do evil, then He *is not* morally blameworthy and guilty of evil.[2] |
|---|---|
| When a moral agent who is not God causes/determines another to do evil, then that other person *is not* morally guilty, responsible, or justly worthy of blame or punishment. | When God causes/determines another to do evil, then that other person *is* morally guilty, responsible, and justly worthy of blame and punishment (up to and including eternal conscious torment in hell). |
| When a moral agent who is not God judges and condemns another for some terrible evil or crime that the judge Himself caused/determined the other person to commit, then that judge *is* unjust and morally reprehensible. | When God judges and condemns another for doing exactly and only the terrible evil that He Himself caused/determined the other person to commit, then He *is not* unjust and morally reprehensible. |

Attempts have perennially been made to reduce the intolerable moral dissonance created by these juxtaposed statements and so, perhaps, avoid the horns of the dilemma posed above by claiming: (1) that we are dealing with an impenetrable mystery (impenetrable at least to fallen and/or finite minds); (2) that God's causal connection to evil is buffered or insulated by means of intermediary secondary causes such that He remains untainted by the moral blame and odium that attach to the ultimate evil actions whose existence He both fully intends and guarantees; or (3) that persons can still be morally blameworthy and justly condemned for the evil they were caused/determined to do if they were free from external compulsion and if it was what they wanted and desired to do. These attempts fail to persuade.[3]

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[2]This is perilously, almost deceptively, abstract. When considering the evil that God causes/determines people to do, what is meant is not only the aggregate sum total of all the evil in the world but also each and every concrete and specific instance of murder, abortion, torture, genocide, rape, child molestation, bestiality, false witness, theft, lust, oppression, bigotry, blasphemy, idolatry, etc. God Himself wills and deliberately and meticulously causes/determines *each and every specific act of evil.*

[3]There is also, I should add for the sake of completeness, a deterministic attempt to explain the inexplicable by boldly grasping the nettle. God *does* cause/determine evil, but that is somehow "okay" because it is necessary for some otherwise unobtainable greater good. Besides the ethically fatal admission (God is the author of sin) and the implicit presumption of omniscience (there was no other way), this is a complete moral dead end: for it leads either to a docetic view of sin and evil, or to the just condemnation that falls on all those for whom the end justifies the means (Rom 3:8). If Paul in no uncertain terms condemned the Machiavellian misrepresentation of *himself*, how much more worthy of condemnation would he find a similar misrepresentation of *God*? It would thus seem inadvisable to pay God backhanded metaphysical compliments after first having turned him into a devil.

# I.

As for the first attempt to avoid the dilemma, it is hardly necessary to say more than that there is a difference between a mystery (antinomy, paradox, etc.) and a contradiction. For here we have what appears to be a fairly obvious and straightforward contradiction (*a being who causes/determines evil is* not *evil*) or else a mystery so profound and abysmal that it: (1) renders God unknowable and all God-talk equivocal and meaningless; and (2) vitiates our ability to make reasoned moral judgments. With reference to the former point, I simply mean to say that if we do not and cannot understand how causing/determining evil can be *good*, or how punishing those whom one has caused/determined to do evil can be *just*, then we do not and cannot know what it would mean to call a being who does such things *good* or *just*, meaning that we do not and cannot know who God is, much less what He might or might not do at any time in the name of such "goodness" and "justice."

With reference to the latter point, consider the following moral judgment: *A being who causes/determines evil is evil.* This moral judgment cannot be attributed to human finitude or depravity or sentimentality and then summarily dismissed—for this judgment gives every indication of being self-evidently true. That is, it is a self-evident moral truth that if agent **A** causes/determines agent **B** to do evil, then agent **A** is guilty and morally responsible for that evil and agent **B** is not guilty or morally responsible for that evil. The truth of this seems utterly basic and completely axiomatic and does not obviously change for any finite agent. (How could it?)[4] But there is no clear logical move, apart from mere question-begging assertion, whereby it can be shown that putting *God* in place of a finite agent changes the truth of this axiom in the slightest. To put it in the form of a syllogism:

> *A being who causes/determines evil is evil.*
> *The God of theistic determinism is a being who causes/determines evil.*
> *Therefore, the God of theistic determinism is evil.*

To deny such a self-evident moral truth is to destroy the very ground of morality and the very basis for reasoned moral judgment. It is, in effect, the *moral* equivalent of denying a self-evident *empirical* truth such as the independent existence of the world of sense experience. (What would it take to convince us of *this*? What would it take to convince us that the objective, external world that we so clearly see, in a mysterious way that defies our most basic intuitions, is actually an illusion?) The cost of this moral mystery—loss of both knowledge of God and the capacity to make reasoned, moral judgments on the basis of our most basic moral intuitions—is simply too great. If, as the logicians tell us, from a contradiction anything follows, then anything would seem to follow *morally* should God and His actions so violently contradict our most basic intuitions—intuitions, I might add, that are fully endorsed and

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[4]Is it more (or less?) true for paupers than for kings; for angels than for archangels? Does size really matter to morality?

supported by Scripture itself as it defines, models, commands, and inculcates such important and foundational virtues as goodness and justice, all the while grounding them solidly in the perfectly good and just character of God.

## II.

As for the second attempt to avoid the dilemma, it is difficult to conceive of a *fully determining* primary cause that is not at the same time an efficient cause, or a *fully determined* secondary cause that is not at the same time an instrumental cause (i.e., a tool). Likewise, it is equally difficult to conceive of an instrumental cause that is morally responsible and blameworthy for the evil effects it produces, or an efficient cause that is not guilty for the evil effects it produces, *regardless of whether those effects are produced directly or indirectly through any number of intermediate secondary causes.* Did people do precisely and exactly and only the evil that God willed and caused/determined that they do? Could they have done otherwise than what God willed and caused/determined them to do? That is all. For the practical business of praise and blame, secondary and intermediate causes and effects are quite irrelevant irrespective of their number given that each secondary cause is fully determined by what immediately preceded it and fully determines what immediately follows it. It does not matter how complicated the Rube Goldberg device is—or whether the device is Rube Goldberg himself acting in complete accordance with his nature—if the ultimate and final evil outcome was *known, intended, and the only possible outcome.* In a fully determined world, all blame resides with the one who created the Rube Goldberg device and set it (or him) in motion. In a fully determined world, there can only be one sinner.

The consistent theistic determinist obviously cannot appeal to the concept of divine permission to get God off the moral hook,[5] as if God *passively* allowed things that He did not *actively* cause/determine, though an appeal could perhaps be made to some kind of confluence or concurrence of divine *and* human causation. And while this idea may be helpful in the case of a good outcome, like the inspiration of Scripture, it really does not seem very helpful in reference to outcomes that are wholly wicked, debased, and evil. Does God share a percentage of the blame? Is he partly evil? If God acts causally in every evil act in the same *finally determining and superintending way* that He acted in the case of inspiring the words of Scripture, then we are right back where we started with our earlier and simpler talk of efficient and instrumental causes. God is still not off the hook, or the horn, as the case may be.

And speaking of Scripture, let us not miss the potentially intractable problem that theistic determinism creates on this very point, namely, that it seems to entail the plenary verbal inspiration of *all* human writings. All human writings would appear to be "God-breathed" (*theopneustos*) if God is equally causally active everywhere and at all times. Not a jot or tittle

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[5]Cf. John Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.16.8; 1.18.1–2; 2.4.3; 3.23.1; 3.23.8, who variously excoriates the notion of permission as "evasion," "fiction," "cavil," and "superstition."

anywhere, ever, lies on a page or falls to the ground except by His meticulous causation and determination. One could thus point to *any book* and say, "Here is a book whose contents were decreed and caused and meticulously determined by God to be exactly and only what He wanted said." And God would then be the author not only of all evil but of all falsehood (wherein may lie another dilemma for another day). This suggests, lest Scripture's own claim to uniqueness be vitiated, that God is minimally (read *not*) causally active in the writing of, say, *Mein Kampf* or *The Da Vinci Code*, but maximally active in the writing of the Old and New Testaments. The following thought, in other words, seems lacking in cogency: "Of course God causally determines *everything*; but, man, does He ever causally determine the words of Scripture!"

# III.

Finally, the third attempt to avoid the dilemma, whether a person did what he or she wanted free from *external* compulsion, is of no obvious help to theistic determinism since that person's *internal* thoughts and emotions—their wants and desires and brain states—are all fully and completely caused/determined by God Himself. There is *nothing* that God does not determine; and to admit *anything* that God does not determine is to abandon theistic determinism. Moreover, compulsion is compulsion on any normal, non-question-begging meaning of the word, whether it is external or internal, whether by the arm or by the brain state, or whether by the strongest (causally determined) desire of the will. The appeal to wants and desires only puts the problem one small but unhelpful step back; it does not solve the problem. Whether or not a person desired or wanted to do the evil that God caused/determined them to do is thus a red herring as the following thought experiment makes clear:

> Imagine that Mr. Hatfield and Mr. McCoy have a longstanding disagreement. We may even call it a feud. And it can be demonstrated by countless witnesses and by looking at Mr. Hatfield's letters and diaries that he abominates Mr. McCoy and wishes him dead. Nothing would make him happier than the death of Mr. McCoy. He often plots the death of Mr. McCoy in his spare time, thinking up new and creative ways to make Mr. McCoy suffer painfully and die as he looks on mockingly. The feelings are, of course, entirely mutual.
>
> Now imagine that Mr. Hatfield is under anesthesia for some routine surgery. While in this state and unbeknownst to him his doctor, Dr. Strangegood, cleverly implants in his brain a small computer microchip timed to activate itself in seventy-two hours and cause/determine him to strangle Mr. McCoy with his bare hands. Exactly seventy-two hours later, Mr. Hatfield is happily strangling Mr. McCoy to death just as the computer chip was programmed to cause/determine him to do.
>
> Mr. Hatfield is then caught, arrested, convicted of first degree murder, and sentenced to death by lethal injection. (He even admits to killing Mr. McCoy and is "glad" he finally did it.)
>
> The doctor who administers the lethal injection is Dr. Strangegood.
>
> Two people are now dead: Mr. Hatfield and Mr. McCoy. Who is *morally responsible* for their deaths? Who is *guilty* for their deaths?

The answer is simple and inescapable; indeed (I again make so bold as to claim) it is *self-evident*. This suggests that if theistic determinism is true, then God is indeed a moral monster. If theistic determinism is true, then God is the evil doctor writ large, a cosmic Dr. Strangegood. These moral intuitions seem completely sound and unobjectionable. No jury of reasonable people could possibly have condemned Mr. Hatfield to death for the murder of Mr. McCoy had the presence of the microchip and its programming been brought to the jury's attention by the defense. The fact that Mr. Hatfield did what he "desired" to do is quite irrelevant to the specific question of his responsibility and guilt for this particular murder at this particular time. He was at the crucial moment in question merely the tool of another, meticulously and irresistibly acting out the plans and intentions of another. If only made aware of the microchip and its programming *after* the autopsy of Mr. Hatfield, no jury of reasonable people could possibly do otherwise than convict Dr. Strangegood of not one but two utterly heinous, cold-hearted, and diabolical murders.[6] And what is more, no jury of reasonable people would ever have exonerated Dr. Strangegood of guilt for these murders because he claimed under oath that what he did was "good" in a mysterious way that bore no analogy to the goodness of ordinary people and the way the word good was ordinarily used. We have a word for goodness that bears no analogy to the goodness of ordinary people and the way the word good is ordinarily used; that word is "evil."

## Conclusion

To say of anyone that he is good, truly good, is to say that he is kind and merciful and benevolent; that what he does is right, just, fair, and conformable to the Moral Law and the Golden Rule; and that in all that he does he seeks the good of others. To say, as with the Psalmist, that "God is good and does good" (Psa 119:68) is to say all of this and more, for God not only seeks the good of others but their *ultimate* good which, in that He Himself is the *Sum-*

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[6]This would hold true whether the microchip caused Mr. Hatfield to do *exactly* what he wanted or whether it gave him an irresistible murderous desire that he did not previously have. Note that for this desire to be irresistible, it need only be an infinitesimal smidgeon—a mere statistically undetectable quantum fluctuation—stronger than Mr. Hatfield's next strongest desire. ("Come now! How much guilt could possibly attach to a smidgeon?" One can almost hear Dr. Strangegood, acting as his own lawyer of course, asking the jury this question.) And it would also hold true whether Dr. Strangegood caused/determined Mr. Hatfield to murder Mr. McCoy by external compulsion, by internal interference via an implanted microchip, by interference at a distance via some new form of radio waves, by voodoo, or by causally efficacious decrees set in motion prior to Mr. Hatfield's birth, provided, of course, that it could be shown that Dr. Strangegood really had the brute strength, the requisite technology, or the supernatural power to perform black magic or enact causally efficacious decrees. I refer those who find such microchips as I have described utterly fantastic and implausible to the May 2005 issue of *Scientific American*, whose cover story was titled "Neuromorphic Chips." For further information see also, e.g.: http://www.braingate2.org/aboutUs.asp; http://www.stanford.edu/group/brainsinsilicon/about.html; as well as to such imagination-stimulating Wikipedia entries as "brain-computer interface," "cyborg," and "neuroprosthetics."

*mum Bonum* (Supreme Good), must necessarily be Himself. The ultimate good of all rational creatures is and can be nothing less than the Beatific Vision.

On the other hand, to irresistibly cause/determine people to do evil, to cause/determine people to violate the Moral Law and to offend the Moral Lawgiver, is *not* good. It is not good for anyone. It is not good for God. To not only do this to people but, in addition, to damn those same people to eternal, conscious torment in hell for what He Himself has caused/determined them to do is *very* not good. In fact, it is *supremely* not good. I submit that no possible greater evil is conceivable. No possible greater violation of the Moral Law is conceivable. No possible greater violation of the Golden Rule is conceivable. Is the God who does the most supremely evil thing imaginable—*than which nothing greater can be conceived*—good?[7] The assertion is utterly stupefying.

It would seem to follow, then, that we should not accept the implausible assertion that the God of theistic determinism is "good." If true, we would not know what it meant; in which case we could not know it to be true. It is at root a contradictory and self-refuting assertion. Thus, "when we hear of some new attempt to explain *that the God who causes/determines evil is good*, we ought to react as if we were told that someone had squared the circle or proved the square root of 2 to be rational. Only the mildest curiosity is in order—how well has the fallacy been concealed?"[8]

When God commands us to be good and to do good unto others it means, for example, that it is morally wrong—*absolutely and everlastingly morally wrong*—to cause/determine people to do evil or to hold people guilty and punish them for things that they were caused/determined by others to do. Is what is "good" for God, however, completely different, even *opposite*? The very claim is irrational. Why even use the word good? On any reasonable definition of the term good, a God who caused/determined evil and punished those whom He caused/determined to do evil would not be good but rather would be evil and the author of evil. That God is evil and the author of evil is a conclusion not surprisingly rejected by theistic determinists, who are then forced into a "wretched subterfuge" and a "quagmire of evasion"[9] because deter-

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[7]My apologies to Anselm and the *Proslogion*.

[8]Peter Geach, *The Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 52, cited in Victor Reppert, *C.S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument from Reason* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 45. I have taken the liberty of modifying the original wording slightly. The italicized words in my quote above replace the following words in the original: "reasoning or language or choice naturalistically." Reppert picks up where Lewis's classic book *Miracles* left off and is one of the most cogent refutations of Naturalism available. All naturalistic theories (and hence all *deterministic* theories) are necessarily self-stultifying since the prior and ultimately external causes of one's beliefs cannot validate or account for the truth or falsity of those beliefs.

[9]These well-worn but memorable phrases, both in reference to what is called compatibilism, come respectively from Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* (Abbot trans., §226) and from William James's aforementioned "Dilemma of Determinism," 149, which inspired the title of the present essay even

minism itself so clearly and distinctly demands the very conclusion that they so rightly abhor. Determinism is an acid that corrodes beyond recognition everything it comes into contact with. It destroys all that we ordinarily mean by causation, compulsion, free will, good and evil, justice, moral responsibility, permission, praise and blame, sovereignty, etc. Theistic determinism must be rejected if we are to make any meaningful sense of ourselves, our world, God's Word, and—most importantly—God Himself.

The options are few and simple:
1. Theistic determinism is true and the God who causes/determines evil is evil.

2. Theistic determinism is true and God's mysterious "goodness" (and thus His very nature, character, attributes, and person) is utterly unknowable and incomprehensible to us.

3. Theistic determinism is false and God is indeed good—*unequivocally good*—as the Son of God in his preternatural innocence once said (Matt 19:17; Mark 10:18) on the naïve assumption that what He was affirming would be perfectly obvious to ordinary people everywhere.

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while posing a very different dilemma for the determinist. See also Popper, "Indeterminism and Human Freedom," 217, 222, who speaks forcefully of the "nightmare" of determinism; and especially his invaluable full-length treatment of the subject in *The Open Universe: An Argument for Indeterminism* (London: Hutchinson, 1982).

# Factors Affecting Faith Integration Among Faculty at a Faith-Based Institution

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**Lora Canter, Ed.D.**

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## Background

This study investigated faith integration differences among faculty with respect to gender, religious affiliation, and academic departments. The study took place at one Baptist-affiliated university. Professors completed a Likert-scaled, researcher-designed instrument that measured faculty's incorporation of faith into their teachings, their encouragement of students in developing Biblical worldviews, and whether course content reflected biblical worldviews. Personal interest led me to pursue the topic of faith integration. As a Christian higher education professional, I recruited and hired part-time faculty for a program specifically geared toward the non-traditional student market. Mission fit was an obvious concern for the small, Southern Baptist, liberal arts university that served as the study site. The *Baptist Faith and Message* was a guiding force that outlines Southern Baptist beliefs and must be signed by each professor. It should be noted that professors do not necessarily have to be Southern Baptist, but they cannot teach contrary to the *Baptist Faith and Message*. The only exception to that policy is in regard to the College of the Bible professors, who must have Southern Baptist ordination. Yet, a signature does not guarantee faith integration into the classroom; hence, the need for further study was established and I became interested in learning more about faith integration within the Christian higher education sector of postsecondary education.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the current issues on faith integration within evangelical, faith-based, higher education. Further examination of a specific university dissected the peer observation process, and more specifically, faith integration of part-time faculty within the classroom setting. The Quality Assurance Visit Report is part of the peer evaluation process

at the university. Because gender, academic discipline, denominational affiliation, and level of education could affect attitudes toward faith integration, the research that lies ahead addressed three of those factors. The results will be used to help establish effective faculty development programs that target faith and learning. Results will be shared with universities of comparable demographics. I believe that keeping faith integration alive in the faith-based, higher education sector is one way to ensure that institutional missions are not diluted with sectarian views.

## Problem Statement

The review of professional literature established the notion that evangelical, faith-based institutions face the unique challenge of maintaining institutional mission while staying current with the ever-changing higher education marketplace.[2] Lund also recognizes that the concept of integrating faith and learning needs additional study.[3] The professional literature suggests that faith integration is a hot-button topic. There is much debate about the faith and learning process, and whether "integration" is even a term that should be used within the literature. This research supports the views of Badley and Dockery, who claim that faith integration is actually at the heart of evangelical, faith-based, postsecondary education.[4] On the other hand, Glanzer rejects the term integration and Hart suggests that faith integration is dead.[5] The study also supports the perspective that faith integration is the primary means for separating faith-based schools from secular institutions. The dilution of institutional mission is a serious concern for the future of evangelical, postsecondary educators. Therefore, I am primarily concerned that new faculty, adjuncts especially, may not fully comprehend the importance of faith and learning in relation to institutional mission. The faculty development and peer review processes

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[2]Karl G. Bailey, "Faith-learning Integration, Critical Thinking Skills, and Student Development in Christian Education," *Journal of Research and Christian Education* 21 (May 2012): 153–73; Terry Anne Lawrence, Larry D. Burton, and Constance C. Nwosu, "Refocusing on the Learning in 'Integration of Faith and Learning,'" *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 14.1 (Spring 2005): 17–50; Larry Lyon et al., "Faculty Attitudes on Integrating Faith and Learning at Religious Colleges and Universities: A Research Note," *Sociology of Religion* 66.1 (Spring 2005): 66–69; James A. Mathisen, "Integrating World Views with Social Roles: Supplying a Missing Piece of the Discussion on Faith-learning Integration," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 23.5 (Fall 2003): 230–40; Palmer Muntz and Dan Crabtree, "All Together Different: The World of Christian Higher Education," *Journal of College Admission* (Summer 2006): 16–20.

[3]Joe W. Lund, "Successful Faculty Peer Relationships at Evangelical Christian Colleges," *Christian Higher Education* 9 (July 2010): 207–25.

[4]Ken Badley, "Clarifying 'Faith-learning Integration': Essentially Contested Concepts and the Concept-conception Distinction," *Journal of Education and Christian Belief* 13.1 (Spring 2009): 7–17; David Dockery, *Renewing Minds: Serving Church and Society through Christian Higher Education.* (Nashville: B&H, 2008): 2–12.

[5]Perry L. Glanzer, "Why We Should Discard 'the Integration of Faith and Learning': Rearticulating the Mission of the Christian Scholar," *Journal of Education and Christian Belief* 12.1 (Spring 2008): 41–51; Darryl G. Hart, "Christian Scholars, Secular Universities and the Problem of Antithesis," *Christian Scholar's Review* 30.4 (2001): 383–402.

must specifically address the expectations of faith integration; otherwise, institutional mission could lose meaning over time. Furthermore, I want to determine if faculty demographics provide additional information regarding the faith integration in faith-based higher education.

## Research Questions

In the research, I attempt to answer the following questions:
1. "Is gender related to faculty members' faith integration in the classroom?"

2. "Is religious affiliation related to faculty members' faith integration in the class room?"

3. "Is there a difference in faculty's faith integration among different academic fields?"

## Assumptions

The researcher had the following assumptions about the research topic:
1. Evangelical, faith-based, postsecondary institutions face unique challenges in the competitive higher education global market.

2. Scholars possess varied perspectives on faith integration.

## Pertinent Definitions

The researcher identified the following terminology and definitions to be pertinent to the research study:
**Faith integration**: the process of integrating religious beliefs into the learning environment.
**Faith and learning**: a phrase that could be used synonymously with faith integration.
**Evangelical, faith-based, postsecondary education**: higher education institutions which possess biblical values as part of their institutional mission. These institutions are often nonprofit, liberal arts colleges and universities.
**Part-time professors**: used interchangeably with the term adjunct faculty.
**Southern Baptist Convention**: a network of approximately 50,000 churches, which impacts the world with a kingdom vision.
***Baptist Faith and Message***: statements set forth by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) which reflect specific denominational beliefs supported by Scripture.

## Research Paradigm

The review of literature demonstrated a need to include faith integration in faculty development programs at faith-based, postsecondary institutions; however, little attention is given in the literature to the factors that impact faith integration. Although faculty development is

a commonality among postsecondary institutions, faith integration can be interpreted differently on an individual as well as institutional level. Therefore, the institution is responsible for branding the institution's definition of faith integration and defining perimeters within the school's mission. Qualitative studies were frequently utilized to study faith integration. Surveys and interviews were tools for those qualitative studies. This research focused on a quantitative approach to analyze peer evaluations in regards to faith integration. The Quality Assurance Visit Report, developed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, employed a Likert scale for each question. The Likert scale has a range from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest amount of faith integration. This report is part of normal operating procedures for the institution examined in the study. Adjunct professors were the focus of this study, as they come from different walks of life, and were primarily chosen to meet an immediate academic need. Whereas full-time faculty have opportunities for daily guidance on faith integration issues, part-time faculty generally receive this guidance at periodic faculty training events. Comparisons will be made among adjunct faculty with respect to academic discipline, gender, and religious affiliation.

## Research Design

A causal comparative design was employed to determine differences in perceptions of adjunct faculty's faith integration. The research utilized existing data, which is collected on an annual basis. Three years of data was analyzed to obtain baseline results for recommendations of existing or similar faculty development programs elsewhere. Since the literature revealed that qualitative studies were more common, I chose to conduct a quantitative study on this topic. The purpose of this research was to determine the direction of faculty development and how faith integration should be addressed within the context of those training opportunities.

## Data Analysis

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical test was chosen to compare differences among adjunct faculty in the area of faith integration. The ANOVA is a tool used in a multi-group causal comparative research design. According to Spatz, the one-way ANOVA finds differences among three of more population means.[6] The one-way ANOVA uses the $F$ sampling distribution. An $F$ test reveals the outcome of an analysis of variance. In simpler terms, the $F$ test signifies the statistical difference among three or more means. Sir Ronald A. Fisher (1890–1962) developed the ANOVA in an effort to statistically strengthen his work in genetics.[7] Three questions from the Quality Assurance Visit Report will be analyzed to measure level of faith integration into the learning environment. The questions are as follows:

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[6]Chris Spatz, *Basic Statistics: Tales of Distribution*, 10th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011).

[7]Ibid.

1.  Did the professor lead class discussions around biblical principles related to the discipline?

2.  Did the professor challenge assumptions and help students develop new perspectives in concert with a biblical worldview?

3.  Did the professor encourage students to articulate a biblical worldview as it pertains to the course content?

Means will be analyzed according to academic discipline, gender, and religious denomination for each of the three questions. Any significant results will be further analyzed using independent sample *t*-tests to make pairwise comparisons of the data.

## Participants

Data was collected as part of the annual peer evaluation process; data specific to this study was collected from 2011 thru 2014. There were 145 peer evaluations analyzed in the study. The adjunct professors evaluated were employed in the non-traditional programs. Part-time faculty may be identified as contractual instructors that are hired on a course-by-course basis. Initial vetting for part-time faculty started with review of academic qualifications, alignment with the *Baptist Faith and Message*, and a review of personal belief statements. All participants were believers and attended church. Although not all part-time professors were Baptists, they agreed to not teach doctrines contrary to the *Baptist Faith and Message*. Three questions from the Quality Assurance Visit Report specifically focused on the degree of faith integration and were chosen for statistical analysis in this study. Annual peer evaluations were conducted by the lead professor or department chair and used to promote professional growth of the adjunct faculty pool. The peer evaluation process was a continuation of the support services for part-time faculty.

## Research Methods and Findings

Question one states that the "professor led class discussions around biblical principles related to the discipline." The *t*-tests did not reveal a significant difference between males ($M$ = 4.3) and females ($M$ = 4.3) leading discussion of biblical principles. The Null hypothesis was retained and results are ($t$ [140] = -0.32, $p$. >.05). Differences between Baptists ($M$ = 4.4) and Non-Baptists ($M$ = 4.1) were not significant for question one, ($t$ [120] = 1.62, $p$. >.05). Therefore, gender and religious affiliation did not significantly affect professor-led discussions around biblical principles related to course content. The ANOVA results were also not significant regarding differences between academic departments (Arts and Sciences, $M$ = 4.4, Behavior Science, $M$ = 4.5, Social Science, $M$ = 4.0, and Business, $M$ = 4.0), ($F$ [3,142] = 1.92, $p$. >.05).

Question two states "professors encouraged students to challenge assumptions and develop new perspectives in concert with a biblical worldview." There was not a significant difference

between genders for question two. The Null hypothesis was accepted and results were reported as ($t$ [142] = -0.16, $p.$ > .05). Again, both males and females had an $M$ = 4.3. However, significance was found between Baptists ($M$ = 4.5) and Non-Baptists ($M$ = 4.0). The Null hypothesis was rejected and reported as ($t$ [110] = 2.6, $p.$ < .05). The ANOVA resulted in significant findings among the academic disciplines and were reported as ($F$ = [3,142] = 3.36, $p.$ <.05). Department averages ranged from (Social Science, $M$ = 3.6, Business, $M$ = 4.0, Arts and Sciences, $M$ = 4.4, and Behavior Science, $M$ = 4.5). Post hoc $t$-tests were performed to pinpoint specific areas of significance among the academic departments. Three of six academic departments showed significant differences. Significance was reported between Arts/Sciences and Business, Behavior and Social Sciences, as well as Behavior Science and Business.

Lastly, question three states "professors encourage students to articulate a biblical worldview as it pertains to course content." Independent sample $t$-tests were performed and significance was not indicated between genders. Therefore, the Null hypothesis was again accepted and reported as ($t$ [$t$ 139] = 0.4, $p.$ > .05). Males and females both scored an $M$ = 4.3. There was significance between religious affiliations ($t$ [106] = 2.9, $p.$ < .05). Baptists and Non-Baptists had an $M$ = 4.0. The ANOVA also revealed significance among academic departments. Results are shown as ($F$ [3,142] =3.7, $p.$ < .05). Post hoc tests were performed to identify specific areas of significance. Departmental averages ranged from (Social Science, $M$ = 3.6, Business, $M$ = 3.9, Arts and Science, $M$ = 4.4, and Behavior Science, $M$ = 4.5). Social Science and Business scored the lowest averages among academic departments. Post hoc tests determined where significance lies between academic departments. Two $t$ tests showed significance between Arts/Science and Business as well as Behavior Science and Business. The academic departments' averages ranged from $M$ = 3.6 to $M$ = 4.5. Social Science and Business again had the lowest averages.

Question one was not enhanced by additional faculty development and peer evaluation efforts; however, questions two and three revealed significant differences. One identified weakness was that Non-Baptists did not integrated faith and learning as well as those of the Baptist faith. Conversely, gender scores were not significant for any of the research questions. Independent sample $t$ tests showed some weakness in the degree of faith integration for academic departments and results varied slightly by question. However, Social Science and Business consistently averaged lower scores than other academic departments.

## Limitations of the Study

Despite best intentions, the following limitations may apply to this study. The greatest limitation is that the study analyzed only one small institution of one religious denomination. At its largest enrollment, the private university had 2,000 students. This institution was nestled in western Kentucky in an area of the Bible Belt and may not be representative of other types of faith-based, postsecondary institutions located elsewhere. Second, only three years of peer-reviewed data was analyzed. Although this data can reveal interesting results, a longer-termed study might reveal additional trends. Finally, the study could be limited by extraneous

variables, such as evaluator's differences in scoring. Variations in perceptions about importance of faith integration, ability to score objectively, and their personal feelings about the peer-evaluation process could also limit this study. A defining strength of this study was the quantitative nature of the research methods. Fowler recognized that most faith and learning studies utilize qualitative methods.[8]

## Summary

This study was founded on the following assumptions, which helped to develop the need for this research. First, evangelical, faith-based, postsecondary institutions face unique challenges in the competitive higher education global market.[9] The focus of the study targeted faith integration at one faith-based university in an effort to further the discussion on faith and learning. Second, scholars possess varied perspectives on faith integration.[10] The literature supported that a multitude of viewpoints on faith and learning create confusion within the postsecondary sector. Integration of faith and learning varies from one institution to the next; however, there are some commonalities associated within faith-based educational communities.[11] The results provide a foundation for communicating study findings and enhancing quantitative analysis for faith integration within evangelical, postsecondary institutions.

This study utilized faculty development strategies and peer evaluation efforts. Hands-on professional development and interactive peer evaluation efforts were employed over the course of three academic years. The Quality Assurance Visit Report was the tool utilized to collect quantitative data. Study results indicated that gender was not affected by the professional development efforts. Consequently, religious affiliation and academic departments showed significance for two of the three questions in this survey. Ad hoc tests further analyzed significant results of the ANOVA. It was noted on two of the three questions that Business and Social Science adjuncts averaged the lowest on faith integration. The overarching results of this study demonstrate that employing active engagement in professional development impacts the degree of faith integration.

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[8]James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), cited in Gary K. Leak, "Factorial Validity of the Faith Development Scale," *The International Journal of Psychology of Religion* 18 (April 2008): 123–31.

[9]Muntz and Crabtree, "All Together Different," 16–20.

[10]Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Educating for Shalom: Essays on Christian Higher Education,* ed. Clarence W. Joldersma and Gloria Goris Stonks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004); Dockery, *Renewing Minds,* 2–12; Hart, "Christian Scholars, Secular Universities," 383–402; Glanzer, "Why We Should Discard," 41–51; Badley, "Clarifying 'Faith-learning Integration,'" 7–17; Richard Langer, "The Discourse of Faith and Learning," *Journal of Education and Christian Belief* 16.2 (October 2012): 159–77.

[11]Muntz and Crabtree, "All Together Different," 16–20.

# Implications of the Study

According to Lund, further study is needed to enhance the Christ-centered mission of evangelical, postsecondary institutions.[12] Faith and learning is often intertwined into the language of the mission statements of faith-based institutions.[13] The purpose of this study is to strengthen faith integration and increase the number of quantitative statistics related to this topic. Several implications of this study may impact the faith and learning debate within the evangelical, postsecondary sector. First, faith-based institutions may recognize the need for evoking quantitative methods to measure the degree of faith and learning. Qualitative methods are still the primary indicator for measuring faith and learning. Faith-based institutions of higher learning need to develop statistical methods which quantify data. Quantitative data will measure strengths and weaknesses of faculty development programs. Consequently, areas for improvement can be clearly defined and faculty developers can adjust professional training accordingly. Second, evangelical leaders may develop methods to refine peer relationships, in an effort to target faith integration as well as develop survey methods to quantify data. Training surveys and peer evaluations can be monitored and adjusted to meet institutional and individual faculty needs. Peer support is needed to create open conversations on faith and learning. The literature revealed that multiple perspectives are common on this topic. Therefore, part-time faculty needs meaningful feedback on how faith integration fits into institutional missions. Many part-time professors work for various universities; therefore, each institution must make their mission clear. Lastly, this study will continue the conversation as well as present data with quantitative findings. Although faith is highly debatable, few studies utilize quantitative methods. This research will ultimately be presented to enhance efforts at similar institutions and extend the topic at professional conferences. Faith and learning is a popular topic within such professional organizations as CAHEA (Christian Adult Higher Education Association) and CCCU (Council for Christian Colleges and Universities). Clearer parameters are needed to successfully guide this conversation within professional circles. Institutional leaders must be intentional and proactive in the assessment of faith integration.

Currently, I reside at another evangelical, faith-based institution of Wesleyan religious affiliation and again work in Academic Services of non-traditional student programs. The research started at a Southern Baptist institution of higher learning could be replicated with a similar survey and analyzed with quantitative means to further dissect faith integration in evangelical, higher education. Continued work in faculty recruitment and development will also continue the breadth and knowledge of this topic in today's higher education market.

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[12]Lund, "Successful Faculty Peer Relationships," 207–25.

[13]One of the five requirements for institutional membership in CCCU (Council for Christian Colleges and Universities) is Christian Mission: "Member campuses must have a public, board approved institutional mission or purpose statement that is Christ-centered and rooted in the historic Christian faith. They are committed to integrating Biblical faith with educational programs." See http://www.cccu.org/members_and_affiliates.

# Pastoral Skills and Qualities for Effective Ministry in Southern Baptist Churches

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## Abstract

When considering the qualifications for being a pastor, the primary biblical texts of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 demonstrate the base levels of character and competence. But beyond that, what are the most important skills and qualities for an effective pastor? Much of the work in pastoral skills focuses on the management aspects or was developed using a previous generation as the research base. This study examined twenty-one qualities and skills for their importance for effective pastoral ministry. The qualities and skills for this study came from the recent book *Dream Teams: Building and Leading Winning Ministry Teams*, written by the study author. A total of 441 participants were surveyed, who are in these roles in local churches: 229 lead pastors, 63 staff members, and 149 laypersons. From their input, several observations were made based on the demographic variables. Also, participants were asked to add any skills or qualities they felt were important. From those responses, one additional skill and four qualities were considered for future addition to the list. A total of five conclusions and six application points are provided for local churches, pastors, and seminaries.

## Introduction

Writing for *Forbes* in 2013 during the midst of an impending government shutdown, Mike Myatt declared that the problem in Washington was more than an isolated issue, it was a pervasive social dilemma; there is a leadership crisis in every aspect of life.[2] For years, pastors have bemoaned the oft-quoted statistic that 80% of churches are in decline or plateaued in

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[2]Mike Myatt, "A Crisis of Leadership—What's Next?" available at http://www.forbes.com/sites/mikemyatt/2013/10/10/a-crisis-of-leadership-whats-next/.

attendance and effectiveness. The Malphurs Group attributes the longevity of this statistic to a profound lack of what they call "turnaround pastors," who are able to serve as the catalyst for renewal in a congregation.[3] Recently, Thom Rainer of LifeWay Christian Resources pointed out the dilemma that many churches must look for a new pastor every three to four years.[4] Rainer also suggests that in many cases, pastors are unprepared for the challenges of ministry, despite training in theology, exegesis, preaching, and apologetics.[5] Effective ministry requires more than theological training; it involves the cultivation, growth, and application of qualities and skills necessary for the unique challenges and scenarios of pastoral ministry.

Much has been written in the field of pastoral skills, but the findings from these previous studies do not relate to the unique challenges of pastoral ministry in 2015. For example, Steven Boersma, in his landmark work on management competencies among pastors, primarily focused on areas of management rather than the unique demands in pastoral ministry. His work identified key skills for effective ministry, but was published in 1988 and does not reflect the current demographics and generational trends of Southern Baptist churches.[6] In 1991, John Aukerman's doctoral dissertation revealed some intriguing findings, but was focused on ministers within the Church of God denomination.[7] Brian Flahardy noted there were differences in how lead pastors, staff members, and laypersons identified essential pastoral skills within Southern Baptist churches.[8] His work demonstrated the value in understanding perceptions of necessary skills and qualities of church leadership among different demographics.

This study sought to answer three distinct questions about necessary pastoral skills and qualities:

1. How are necessary pastoral skills and qualities for effective ministry ranked and rated?

2. Are there different perspectives among lead pastors, church staff members, and laypersons on how necessary pastoral skills and qualities are ranked and rated?

[3]Aubrey Malphurs, "The State of the American Church: Plateaued or Declining," available at http://www.malphursgroup.com/state-of-the-american-church-plateaued-declining/.

[4]Thom Rainer, "Why Pastors Often Leave Their Church in the Third Year," available at http://thomrainer.com/2015/04/why-pastors-often-leave-their-church-in-the-third-year-rainer-on-leadership-117/.

[5]Thom Rainer, "Eight Areas Where Ministers are Unprepared for Ministry," available at http://thomrainer.com/2013/09/eight-areas-where-many-ministers-are-unprepared-for-ministry/.

[6]Steven Boersma "Management Competencies for Church Administration as Perceived by Seminary Faculties, Church Lay Leaders, and Ministers" (Ph.D. diss., Oregon State University, 1988).

[7]John Aukerman, "Competencies Needed for Effective Ministry by Beginning Pastors in Church of God Congregations in the United States" (Ed.D. diss., Ball State University, 1991).

[8]Brian Flahardy, "Essential Leadership Competencies of Professional Ministerial Staff as Identified by Senior Pastors, Staff Members, and Church Lay Leaders" (Ed.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007), 119, 130–31.

3.  Does generation, education, and church size effect how necessary pastoral skills and qualities are ranked and rated?

## Biblical Foundations for Pastoral Skills and Qualities

The two primary biblical passages for understanding the qualifications for pastoral ministry are 1 Tim 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9. These passages lay out a list of qualifications from the doctrine, life, and practice of men who are called to pastoral ministry in order for a church to confirm their calling. In Titus, the starting point is that these men are "gospel men," that they are men who cherish the gospel as the starting place for sound doctrine.[9] Paul's lists to Timothy and Titus are similar in their emphasis: the overarching theme is that pastoral ministry belongs to men who have demonstrated unquestioned character and integrity in their witness for Christ. Beyond that, the emphasis in these passages is on the personal traits of a pastor. Only one distinct ministry skill is mentioned, that he should be able to teach (1 Tim 3:2). This list of requirements for pastoral ministry is the mainstay of many churches looking for a ministry leader, and provides the foundation for what makes an effective ministry leader.

Because of the unique nature of spiritual leadership, it is important to note that the dominant emphasis in effective leadership is that it is rooted in character. Jeff Iorg, president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, notes that character is the primary means of qualifying spiritual leaders in such a way that it magnifies the devastating effects of character failures.[10]

Other passages for understanding what a pastor is to be and do, which support the witness and prescription of Paul's words in 1 Timothy and Titus, include Acts 20:28, Heb 13:17, and 1 Pet 5:1–2. In Acts 20, pastors are told they are to care for the church as overseers. In Hebrews 13, leaders within the church are given the responsibility over the spiritual health and maturity of the congregation under their care. The *ESV Study Bible* also notes from this passage, "The primary role of leaders is to preach and teach God's Word, and their lives should reflect the Word that is taught."[11] Peter also pleads with pastors to exercise oversight as a shepherd for the eager service of the Lord and not for their own gain.

## Pastoral Skills and Qualities for Research Study

The list of pastoral skills and qualities for this study was derived from the book *Dream Teams: Building and Leading Winning Ministry Teams*. The lists in the book were derived from an expert panel of thirteen ministry practitioners, comprised of ministers, laypersons, and seminary professors. Their feedback, which was open-ended in nature, was categorized into

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[9] *ESV Gospel Transformation Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2013), 1647.
[10] Jeff Iorg, *The Character of Leadership* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2007), 16.
[11] *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), 2385.

skills and qualities.[12] More than 100 unique skills and qualities were given by the panel as necessary, and the list that came from the panel represented the most common or consistent themes, skills, or qualities mentioned. A total of nine distinct qualities and twelve distinct skills were observed. The qualities were divided into Public (Being a People Person, Compassion, Example as Spouse/Parent, and Evangelistic) and Private (Personal Holiness, Humility, Spiritual Maturity, Intentionality, and Financial Stability). The skills were divided into Personal (Time Management, Prioritizing, and Financial Management), Pastoral (Teaching & Applying the Bible, Disciple & Equip Believers, and Counsel Believers in Crisis), and Interpersonal (Conflict Management, Delegation, Leadership, Administration, Team Building, and Clear Communication).[13]

## Research Methodology

In order to collect data from as many participants as possible, the survey was developed and distributed online through Google Docs. A link was sent out to every association in the Southern Baptist Convention (approximately 1,100), with instructions to forward the link to the churches in the association. Also, social media was used to collect responses. Anonymity was guaranteed for survey participants, as no information was collected that could compromise a participant's identity. Participants were asked to rate their perception of each skill or quality and its importance for effective pastoral ministry on a five-point Likert scale. At the end of the survey, participants were given the opportunity to add more skills or qualities to the list. To help categorize responses, demographic data was collected, which included the participant's age, education level, state, church size, and what role the participant filled (lead pastor, staff member, or layperson). A total of 449 responses were collected, of which 441 were usable for the research study.

## Results and Conclusions

Three major questions drove this study on understanding the essential skills and qualities for effective pastoral ministry. The first question resulted in an overall ranking and rating of the list of skills and qualities. The second question addressed the rating of skills and qualities as perceived by lead pastors, staff members, and laypersons. The third question compared the rating of skills and qualities along the demographic lines of age, education, and church size.[14]

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[12]The expert panel was simply asked to list all the ministry skills and qualities they felt were necessary for effective pastoral ministry. There were no minimum or maximum responses, and the panel were free to submit whatever they felt was important.

[13]The list of necessary skills and qualities, and their explanations can be found in: Scott Douglas *Dream Teams: Building and Leading Winning Ministry Teams* (Rainer Publishing: Nashville, 2015), 56–64, 72–88.

[14]It should be noted that all of the skills and qualities in this study rated as important. The average score was over three for each of them, so it would be wrong to suggest that any of these were deemed as

The table below shows the rating of the essential skills and qualities for effective pastoral ministry, ranked in order of perceived importance.

| Skill | Average Score | Qualities | Average Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teaching the Bible | 4.76 | Spiritual Maturity | 4.69 |
| Discipling Believers | 4.68 | Personal Holiness | 4.68 |
| Clear Communication | 4.58 | Humility | 4.57 |
| Leadership | 4.47 | Example as Spouse/Parent | 4.49 |
| Financial Management | 4.16 | Compassionate | 4.37 |
| Prioritization | 4.16 | Evangelistic | 4.32 |
| Delegation | 4.12 | Intentionality | 4.21 |
| Pastoral Care | 4.09 | People Person | 3.98 |
| Team Building | 4.08 | Financial Stability | 3.91 |
| Time Management | 4.05 | | |
| Conflict Management | 4.04 | | |
| Administration | 3.64 | | |

In addition to the average, measuring the consistency of the scores using variance was important to understand how the essential skills and qualities were perceived. The most consistent were Teaching the Bible (0.2025), Spiritual Maturity (0.2601), and Discipling Believers (0.2809). These were also among the highest rated, so their necessity for effective pastoral ministry was widely accepted. On the other hand, the least consistent were Being a People Person (0.9095), Team Building (0.6889), Financial Stability (0.6889), Administration (0.6889) and Pastoral Care (0.64). These were also rated among the lowest, but the high variance makes it difficult to know if the necessity of these skills and qualities was widely downgraded.

The second major question of this study focused on the impact of church role on the rating of essential skills and qualities for effective pastoral ministry. Participants categorized themselves as lead/senior pastors, staff ministers, or laypersons.[15] The table below represents the findings presented alphabetically.

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unnecessary for effective pastoral ministry. The rating shows more than anything a prioritization among the survey respondents.

[15]Staff ministers were asked to define their role, but the response rate (n=63) was too low to gain any insight into how those subcategories understood essential skills and qualities. Further research in this area may prove fruitful.

| Skill or Quality | Lead Pastor | Staff Minister | Layperson |
|---|---|---|---|
| Administration | 3.67 | 3.49 | 3.66 |
| Clear Communication | 4.53 | 4.56 | 4.66 |
| Compassionate | 4.36 | 4.24 | 4.46 |
| Conflict Management | 4.04 | 4.14 | 4.00 |
| Delegation | 4.04 | 4.23 | 4.19 |
| Discipling Believers | 4.66 | 4.74 | 4.68 |
| Evangelistic | 4.35 | 4.21 | 4.31 |
| Financial Management | 4.18 | 4.11 | 4.16 |
| Financial Stability | 3.91 | 3.86 | 3.95 |
| Humility | 4.58 | 4.67 | 4.50 |
| Intentionality | 4.13 | 4.46 | 4.21 |
| Leadership | 4.43 | 4.53 | 4.52 |
| Pastoral Care | 4.13 | 3.95 | 4.10 |
| People Person | 3.92 | 3.79 | 4.14 |
| Personal Holiness | 4.73 | 4.81 | 4.56 |
| Prioritizing | 4.12 | 4.21 | 4.21 |
| Spiritual Maturity | 4.70 | 4.71 | 4.67 |
| Spouse/Parent Example | 4.44 | 4.47 | 4.55 |
| Teaching Bible | 4.75 | 4.77 | 4.77 |
| Team Building | 4.02 | 4.16 | 4.14 |
| Time Management | 4.05 | 4.05 | 4.03 |

Overall, there was a sense of continuity among most of the skills and qualities rated across the spectrum of church roles. However, there were some notable differences in how these skills and qualities were rated.[16] Laypersons rated Personal Holiness lower than pastors or staff members. Also, staff ministers rated Being a People Person lower than lead pastors and laypersons. Pastoral Care was higher in rating among lead pastors and laypersons than among staff ministers. Delegation was lower for lead pastors than for staff ministers or laypersons. Intentionality was higher rated among staff ministers than for laypersons or lead pastors. With these differences noted, the following observations emerge from this comparison:

1. Ministers recognize the importance of personal holiness in effective ministry.

2. Those in a lead pastor role recognize the importance of relationships for effective ministry, and laypersons desire to and value knowing their pastor.

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[16]The threshold for determining if a rating was a significant difference was +/- 0.20 points.

3.  Ministry staff members have a desire for intentional administration and leadership, where tasks and work are shared among the ministry staff.

The third major question for this study involved comparing how demographics related to the perception of essential skills and qualities for effective pastoral ministry. The demographic factors in consideration are age (as represented by generation), church size, and education level of the survey participant. The table below shows the rating of each skill or quality based on generation:

| Skill or Quality | Millennial | Gen-X | Boomer | Greatest |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administration | 3.38 | 3.57 | 3.74 | 3.85 |
| Clear Communication | 4.37 | 4.55 | 4.66 | 4.67 |
| Compassionate | 4.14 | 4.27 | 4.49 | 4.59 |
| Conflict Management | 3.83 | 4.08 | 4.07 | 4.24 |
| Delegation | 4.05 | 3.98 | 4.17 | 4.38 |
| Discipling Believers | 4.64 | 4.69 | 4.69 | 4.63 |
| Evangelistic | 4.23 | 4.30 | 4.38 | 4.29 |
| Financial Management | 3.85 | 4.07 | 4.26 | 4.54 |
| Financial Stability | 3.58 | 3.84 | 4.02 | 4.24 |
| Humility | 4.39 | 4.57 | 4.63 | 4.59 |
| Intentionality | 4.02 | 4.30 | 4.24 | 4.15 |
| Leadership | 4.39 | 4.47 | 4.49 | 4.56 |
| Pastoral Care | 4.09 | 4.04 | 4.08 | 4.29 |
| People Person | 3.40 | 3.88 | 4.16 | 4.48 |
| Personal Holiness | 4.64 | 4.64 | 4.74 | 4.59 |
| Prioritizing | 4.10 | 4.12 | 4.21 | 4.20 |
| Spiritual Maturity | 4.63 | 4.65 | 4.73 | 4.71 |
| Spouse/Parent Example | 4.42 | 4.41 | 4.50 | 4.73 |
| Teaching Bible | 4.70 | 4.75 | 4.79 | 4.73 |
| Team Building | 3.69 | 4.13 | 4.22 | 4.02 |
| Time Management | 3.96 | 4.03 | 4.07 | 4.12 |

For many of the skills and qualities in the list, there was agreement among the generations concerning how important those were for effective pastoral ministry. Teaching the Bible, Personal Holiness, Discipling Believers, Spiritual Maturity, Evangelistic, Humility, Leadership, Prioritizing, and Time Management were all consistent in their rating of importance. However, some generational distinctions were noted. Millennials seemed to downplay the importance of

Being a People Person compared to their older counterparts.[17] Also, Administration (while being scored lowest in this study overall) was even lower in importance for younger respondents (Millennial and Gen-X) than older (Boomer and Greatest). Millennials also tended to be far less concerned about finances than their older counterparts. The importance of Pastoral Care was much higher for the Greatest Generation than for any other generation. With these distinctions, it is possible to make the following observations:

1. Multiple generations value the importance of preaching and teaching, as well as the character and integrity of the pastor for effective ministry.

2. Older generations, whose pastors were shepherds who knew them and their lives, valued the personal aspects of pastoral ministry.

3. Millennials as a whole had an entirely different perspective of effective pastoral ministry than previous generations.

The second demographic considered in this study was church size, which was understood to be the average weekend attendance at the church.

| Skill or Quality | < 100 | 100–200 | 200–500 | > 500 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administration | 3.70 | 3.58 | 3.61 | 3.58 |
| Clear Communication | 4.56 | 4.63 | 4.55 | 4.60 |
| Compassionate | 4.43 | 4.34 | 4.44 | 4.12 |
| Conflict Management | 4.04 | 4.09 | 4.16 | 3.79 |
| Delegation | 4.06 | 4.09 | 4.23 | 4.16 |
| Discipling Believers | 4.70 | 4.66 | 4.70 | 4.63 |
| Evangelistic | 4.33 | 4.37 | 4.32 | 4.16 |
| Financial Management | 4.17 | 4.19 | 4.13 | 4.12 |
| Financial Stability | 3.85 | 3.99 | 3.98 | 3.86 |
| Humility | 4.58 | 4.60 | 4.57 | 4.47 |
| Intentionality | 4.06 | 4.32 | 4.29 | 4.25 |
| Leadership | 4.42 | 4.46 | 4.52 | 4.58 |
| Pastoral Care | 4.20 | 4.15 | 4.10 | 3.68 |
| People Person | 3.98 | 4.05 | 4.04 | 3.77 |
| Personal Holiness | 4.66 | 4.68 | 4.75 | 4.61 |

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[17]For this quality, the older the respondent got, the more important this was. Each generation as the categories got older showed a greater importance of this. This same trend was observed in the quality of Compassionate.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Prioritizing | 4.14 | 4.18 | 4.16 | 4.21 |
| Spiritual Maturity | 4.70 | 4.72 | 4.69 | 4.63 |
| Spouse/Parent Example | 4.48 | 4.48 | 4.61 | 4.28 |
| Teaching Bible | 4.78 | 4.77 | 4.79 | 4.61 |
| Team Building | 3.97 | 4.12 | 4.19 | 4.18 |
| Time Management | 3.98 | 4.09 | 4.11 | 4.02 |

Church attendance reflected a shift in the perception of how necessary skills and qualities were rated. Overall, there was still consistency among several of the skills and qualities, many of which rated consistently across all variables (i.e. Teaching the Bible, Spiritual Maturity, and Personal Holiness). However, it was noteworthy that larger churches put a much lower emphasis on the personal skills and qualities of ministry such as Pastoral Care and Being a People Person, while smaller churches put a lower emphasis on the executive functions of a pastor like Team Building and Intentionality. Larger churches also viewed the importance of being Evangelistic as lower than their smaller counterparts. A few observations can be made from this section:

1. The consistently high ranking of skills such as Teaching the Bible and Discipling Believers shows, regardless of church size, these are of universal importance; a skill such as Administration is lower in the scale of importance for effective ministry.

2. Pastoral care is more essential in smaller churches than larger churches for effective ministry.[18]

3. Larger churches downplayed the importance of some of the personal aspects of pastoral ministry, and did not rank the executive aspects in a significantly differently way than their smaller counterparts.

The final demographic to consider in this study is education and its effect on how necessary pastoral skills and qualities are rated, which are shown in the table below:

| Skill or Quality | No College Degree | College Degree | Master's Degree | Doctor's Degree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administration | 3.98 | 3.54 | 3.55 | 3.70 |
| Clear Communication | 4.81 | 4.55 | 4.51 | 4.59 |

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[18]One of the more striking comments in the open-ended section came from a layperson in a smaller church who wrote, "A pastor should be willing to sit and visit for at least an hour. He shouldn't be in a hurry. An hour is really the starting place for a pastoral visit, whether it's in the home, hospital, or nursing home."

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Compassionate | 4.74 | 4.38 | 4.26 | 4.34 |
| Conflict Management | 4.28 | 3.98 | 4.05 | 3.95 |
| Delegation | 4.31 | 4.12 | 4.06 | 4.05 |
| Discipling Believers | 4.83 | 4.69 | 4.64 | 4.61 |
| Evangelistic | 4.57 | 4.25 | 4.31 | 4.24 |
| Financial Management | 4.44 | 4.13 | 4.10 | 4.12 |
| Financial Stability | 3.98 | 3.89 | 3.87 | 3.99 |
| Humility | 4.74 | 4.50 | 4.56 | 4.55 |
| Intentionality | 4.24 | 4.27 | 4.15 | 4.19 |
| Leadership | 4.67 | 4.47 | 4.41 | 4.45 |
| Pastoral Care | 4.48 | 4.12 | 3.98 | 4.00 |
| People Person | 4.39 | 3.99 | 3.84 | 3.96 |
| Personal Holiness | 4.70 | 4.59 | 4.69 | 4.80 |
| Prioritizing | 4.37 | 4.09 | 4.12 | 4.21 |
| Spiritual Maturity | 4.80 | 4.61 | 4.73 | 4.66 |
| Spouse/Parent Example | 4.83 | 4.45 | 4.39 | 4.47 |
| Teaching Bible | 4.91 | 4.74 | 4.73 | 4.74 |
| Team Building | 4.17 | 4.10 | 4.02 | 4.09 |
| Time Management | 4.20 | 4.00 | 3.97 | 4.16 |

In general, the level of education did not have a tremendous effect on how essential skills and qualities were rated. Perhaps the only thing that can be said is that those without a college degree tended to rate many of the skills and qualities on the list higher than those who have a college degree or beyond. It is difficult to assess how education impacted the list of skills and qualities for effective ministry.

A final question was asked of each survey participant to give any additional skills or qualities they felt were important for effective ministry. A number of responses were collected (163 provided input for qualities and 77 provided input for skills). The overwhelming majority of responses failed to give any substantial or useful feedback for this study. However, one skill and four qualities did emerge as potential additions to a future list for effective pastoral ministry.

The skill which resulted from the open-ended feedback was the ability to Cast & Execute Vision. For those who responded with this skill, it was vital for determining the overall direction and strategy of the church. Included in this skill would be strategic thinking and planning and understanding how the systems of the church operate and further the vision. A corollary to the skill of Clear Communication would be for the effective pastor to write and speak well when articulating the vision.

The qualities that emerged were Doctrinal Clarity, Empathy, Prayerful, and Personal Health. Doctrinal Clarity was important for many of the respondents because this fueled the pastor's ability to teach and preach, give counsel, and remain faithful to their biblical calling. Empathy was viewed as an important element beyond pastoral care, to help shape how a pastor prepares and frames his sermons and interacts with people on a regular basis, as well as how he involves himself in the community. Prayerful was viewed by the respondents as an important skill for the spiritual health of both the church and the pastor. Finally, Personal Health was viewed by respondents as a combination of work-life balance, physical health (diet and exercise), and making sure to take time off work to be refreshed.

## Conclusions and Application

The aim of this study was not simply to compile a list of skills and qualities for pastors to put on a to-do list, but to strengthen and equip pastors and local churches to be able to do ministry more effectively. After reflecting on the data, findings, and input from participants, five conclusions can be drawn:

1. There are several non-negotiable and universally applicable skills and qualities that _every_ pastor needs in order to be effective in ministry. An effective pastor needs to be able to: Teach the Bible, have Personal Holiness, be able to Disciple Believers, have Spiritual Maturity, have Humility, be able to Clearly Communicate, Prioritize his responsibilities.

2. Other skills and qualities are contextually driven, and should be recognized by pastors in order to be more effective in their ministry. The culture of each church is unique, and the findings from this study show the importance of recognizing the cultural values of a congregation and the spoken (or unspoken) expectations for pastors.

3. Several skills and qualities, while important, may not be as essential for effective pastoral ministry. This could be best stated by a comment in the open-ended section which said, "Pastors should devote their time and effort to the spiritual well-being of the church, and leave the business and administrative side of it to other staff or deacons."

4. A pastor's effectiveness in ministry is put on display by his character and family. The character of a pastor will go far in determining his effectiveness, and this was shown throughout the surveys as respondents rated qualities of integrity and character very high, as well as how a pastor interacts with his family and the church.

5. The ministry of the Word remains the most important skill for a pastor to be effective. When Paul stated the biblical qualifications for a pastor/elder, the only skill mentioned was the ability to teach. This was reflected throughout the study, because Teach the Bible was by far the highest-rated skill.

For this research study to have value for the local church, it must be applied. Without application, the findings and conclusions serve as observation without transformation. Application for this study can be made in six areas for pastors, churches, and those who train pastors (mentors, Bible colleges, and seminaries).

1. Pastors need to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in each of these skills and qualities. One way to help a pastor determine this is to take an assessment using the list in this study, and then ask others to assess him as well (spouse, colleagues, church members, other pastors, mentors, etc.) to help gain a broad perspective. In doing this, pastors can be made aware of areas of excellence and potential blind spots where they may not recognize their own need for growth.

2. Pastors should commit to a regular growth plan for greater ministry effectiveness. One of the respondents mentioned this idea when he explained his rationale for marking 4 for most of the list: "There is always room to grow, and I don't feel like I can give a 5 for any of these because every pastor can get better." A regular growth plan can include conferences, continued education, mentoring from someone with expertise in an area, or from regular and constructive feedback.

3. Pastors should be in regular accountability and fellowship to ensure their spiritual life is vibrant, their character is strengthened, and their family is prioritized. Growing in ministry skills like Administration, Team Building, and improving Teaching the Bible are commendable, but with the overwhelming biblical witness pointing to the character of a pastor as primary, growth in this area cannot be overlooked. The qualities in this list can be built on, grown, and developed just like the skills. By investing in accountability and fellowship with others, pastors can be sharpened and grow in this crucial area for ministry effectiveness.

4. Churches need to recognize their own unique culture and expectations for what they believe an effective pastor should be and do. For churches going into a new season of ministry with a pastor search in process, this can be a helpful time to assess who the church is, what they value, and how that shapes the kind of man they bring to pastor. Many churches get the right candidate but for the wrong setting.[19]

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[19]For example, I know of a church that values pastoral care, personal connection, and quiet grace in its leadership. But during the pastor search process they fell in love with a candidate who was a tremen-

5.  Those who train pastors and church leaders need to develop more than a pastor's preaching and pulpit ministry. Training for ministry involves, but is not limited to, preaching and teaching. Whether the preparation occurs in a formal sense through theological education or informally through a mentoring/discipleship relationship, effective pastoral ministry training needs to encompass all the qualities and skills that a pastor needs in ministry.[20] Building a well-rounded and effective pastor means giving access to the daily practice of ministry, opportunities to do ministry (preaching, counseling, pastoral care, involvement in long-range strategic planning), and the accountability and fellowship in the third application point.

6.  Finally, the local church needs to recognize it is the primary place of pastoral ministry development, not the Bible college or seminary. As pastors recognize their role in their associate staff or of young men discerning God's call on their lives, they have the opportunity to become what Paul was to Timothy, Titus, and others. The experience gained from serving in ministry as a training ground for future ministry effectiveness is something that cannot be replaced by formal education. The model in the New Testament for developing pastors is through the calling, verification, equipping, and sending from within the local church.

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dous preacher, visionary, and motivator. Because his personality and the church's culture did not blend well, it created a season of frustration for both parties until the pastor resigned after less than two years.

[20]In my doctoral thesis, I looked at the leadership development of associate pastors in Southern Baptist churches, and one of my major conclusions was that the primary area for associate pastors to get "on the job training" was occasionally filling the pulpit. Many of the associate pastors interviewed in the study reported that while they were grateful for the opportunity, they wanted to do more in pursuing their growth for ministry effectiveness. See Scott Douglas "Intergenerational Discipleship for Leadership Development: A Mixed-Methods Study" (Ed.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013).

# Trinitarian Preaching: On the Father, In the Son, and Through the Holy Spirit

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## Introduction

The concept of Trinitarian preaching may sound like an oxymoron. Like jumbo shrimp or a silent alarm, it seems to bring together two things that at first glance have little to do with one another. If the Trinity really is such a mystery, how can it have any practical relevance for the nitty-gritty activity of changing lives? Doesn't theology belong more in the classroom than in the pulpit? What does a historical theology professor know about preaching?

I would submit to you that the reason Trinitarian preaching feels like an oxymoron is due to two misunderstandings related to theology and the purpose of preaching, both of which rely on an erroneous bifurcation between thinking and acting. The Enlightenment epistemology of science divided the metaphysical from the physical, leading to modern methods in the theological process that left little room for faith. At the same time, increasingly pragmatic approaches to ministry and preaching specifically drove the division of practical and systematic theology further apart. This shift has resulted in congregations that speak a syntax of Trinitarianism without grasping its reality.[2] Our current practice does not adequately reflect its theological foundation in Scripture and God's economy.

In October 2014, *Christianity Today* reported the findings of a recent LifeWay Research poll commissioned by Ligonier Ministries.[3] The poll was targeted at the evangelical community and surveyed a number of key theological topics and concepts including God, the person and

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[2]Robin Parry, *Worshipping Trinity* (London: Paternoster, 2005), 131, writes, "All languages have a syntax—a set of rules about how words do and do not fit together meaningfully in that language. . . . (T)he Trinity functions in Christian God-talk in such a basic and foundational way that it starts to function something like a syntax—a set of rules about how Christian language works."

[3]Kevin P. Emmert, "New Poll Finds Evangelicals' Favorite Heresies," *Christianity Today*, October 28, 2014, available at http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2014/october-web-only/new-poll-finds-evangelicals-favorite-heresies.html.

work of Christ, the Holy Spirit, Scripture, and salvation. While these topics would seem to be basic Sunday school fodder, the results of the survey were disturbing. In most cases, 25–50% of evangelicals reported a lack of awareness or assurance regarding the teaching of the church on basic dogma. One seeming bright spot was that 96% of self-reported Evangelicals believed in the Trinity. However, subsequent questions revealed that this affirmation lacked significant comprehension. For example, 31% of respondents said that God the Father is more divine than Jesus, and 58% believe that the Holy Spirit is a force rather than a personal being. This survey reveals that our churches, while confessing dogma, are failing to adequately teach, define, and defend the basic beliefs of the church. The church needs Trinitarian preaching.

To begin, we will establish a definition of theology that will serve our purposes of addressing both the mystery of the Trinity and the purpose and process of preaching. We will then examine Scripture's basic definition of preaching and briefly trace its development into the modern era. We will see how the professionalization of ministry and the pragmatic approach of revivalism have led to a dearth of theological preaching. We will then review the basics of Trinitarian theology in order to establish some principles that will enable us to rethink and reform our preaching according to the Trinitarian basis of Scripture and the divine Triune's work of redemption in accomplishing the *missio Dei*.

The thesis of this essay is that preaching, as the divinely appointed means of proclaiming the gospel of God's redemption, should reflect the inherent Trinitarianism of the divine economy of salvation. Preaching is theological and, more specifically, Trinitarian.

## A Working Definition of Theology

Most beginning theology students will happily define theology as "the study of God." This is certainly true and is more meaningful than most of them suspect. But this "study" means more than opening a theology book and reading. The Greek word *logizō,* which is the root of this term, actually means "to reason or to consider." This begs the question of the subject of this reasoning. The usual response is to use the other root and say, of course, *theos* ("God"). My interest at this point is to draw out the relationship between thinking and speech. The Greeks understood that thinking and speech were intricately connected. This is demonstrated in the ultimate Greek root *log* (from *logizō*), which is also used to indicate a complex of words related to speech including *logos* ("word") and *logia* ("a saying"). One who spoke eloquently was *logios*. Theology then can be understood as right thinking about God that is manifested in right speech about His *Logos,* Jesus.

Michael Quicke makes this assertion when he writes that "theology is speaking meaningfully about God. Everyone who expresses ideas about God has a theology, whether they admit it or

not. . . . Christian theology is speaking meaningfully about God in three persons."[4] Preaching is *practical* theology because it is theology spoken aloud. If the purpose of preaching is to expound the text, then then interpretive process must take into account the whole story of the Triune God who reveals Godself in all of Scripture. There is a hermeneutical spiral from theology to text to theology that rightly culminates in proclamation. As Pasquarello explains, theology "monitors the church's proclamation of the gospel and functions as the mediator between exegesis and preaching. Because of the nature of the task of preaching, theology and exegesis serve the important purpose of creating and sustaining the life of a community in which the ministry of the Word is the final expression of its theology."[5]

Purves states, "All knowledge of God, by virtue of the subject matter, namely, the acting and self-revealing God, is inherently a practical theology or a practical knowledge of God."[6] As such, its purpose is to reveal God and draw us into God's life in Christ by the edifying work of the Holy Spirit in the community of the church. God's ordained means of accomplishing this economic work of the Trinity is through the preaching of His word.

## A Brief Introduction to Preaching in Scripture and History

One of the most well-known scriptural definitions of preaching is found in 1 Cor 1:18–31, where Paul contrasts the wisdom of this world with the foolishness of preaching. What many people miss is the Trinitarian nature of the passage. Preaching is the power of the Father (v. 18), His wisdom (v. 21), and His means of salvation (v. 21). Preaching tells the Son's story (v. 23) of the Son's cross (v. 18). Attending this preaching is the calling of the Spirit (vv. 24, 26). Finally, the purpose of this preaching is doxological; "as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (v. 31).

The subject of preaching is the economic Trinity revealed in redemption to the glory of the Father. Preaching is the means by which Christ has commanded the Triune mission to go forth. It is God's power, God's mission, and God's calling. As Jesus declared, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt 28:18–20).[7]

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[4]Michael Quicke, "Thinking as Trinitarians," *Preaching*, September 1, 2007, available at http://www.preaching.com/resources/articles/11555256/.

[5]Michael Pasquarello III, *Christian Preaching: A Trinitarian Theology of Proclamation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 37.

[6]Andrew Purves, "The Trinitarian Basis for a Christian Practical Theology," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 2 (1998): 222.

[7]All biblical quotations are taken from the *King James Version* (KJV).

The Trinitarian basis of preaching is rooted in the evangelistic mission of God. This continued through the early church fathers as the church continued its expansion. Preaching as proclamation dominated the early church, and theological content called congregations to missional living. As the medieval period dawned, the sermon became less and less the focus of Christian worship as they concentrated on more visible reminders of the Trinity and the cross in the sacraments and icons of the churches. The Protestant Reformers called their congregations back to a focus on Scripture and moved the pulpit back to the center of worship. During the Enlightenment, this same Protestant preaching came to focus less on the text and more on philosophical minutia. The "theology" of their sermons was not one that was lived out in community, but one that was delivered without the zeal of spiritual experience or the power of the gospel's call.

It was into this environment that the first Pietists and revivalists emerged. The Pietists rightly reordered spirituality, but at the expense of theology and community. The revivalists emphasized the call of the gospel and a need for an individual experience with God. The power of preachers like John Wesley and George Whitfield met great success. Their inheritors in the Second Great Awakening would become victims of it. Their preaching led to a "voluntarist, individualist, and sectarian kind of Protestantism . . . which served to legitimate the individuated market and the myth of rational individualism and individual choice."[8]

There is perhaps no greater example of this type of preaching than Charles Finney. Finney's preaching borrowed from "populist politicians" and emphasized a shift from "message to method."[9] Finney insisted that "preaching must always be practical: whatever cannot be made *immediately useful* is not preaching the gospel. Yet in his zeal for reaching lost souls, Finney's definition of 'useful' and 'practical' was increasingly shaped by a form of Biblicism grounded in private judgment and personal experience."[10]

In today's evangelicalism, this trend has unfortunately continued. The professionalization of the ministry has contributed to this problem as has the rise of various, modern church growth movements that focus on method over meaning and the individual over the body. The privatization of faith has led to "an increasing anthropocentric emphasis in preaching that is reflected in excessive self-consciousness and dependence on the communication skills, style, techniques, innovative methods, and personality of the preacher, and a correlative preoccupation with the likes, preferences, opinions, and 'deeply felt needs' of listeners."[11]

The end result is a gospel devoid of power. It has left our congregations theologically weak and open to doubt and attack. The privatization of faith has left them with no one to turn to in

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[8]Pasquarello, *Christian Preaching*, 21.

[9]Ibid., 22.

[10]Ibid., 22–23. Emphasis mine.

[11]Ibid., 14.

times of trouble and no canon by which to measure their individualized theology. The focus is wrong and these strategies misguided. Pasquarello explains,

> Uninformed by the grammar or rule of Christian doctrine, such evangelistic and apologetic strategies, no matter how well intended, fail to discern a problem that is fundamentally theological, since Christian preaching is a practice. At its heart, preaching is the human articulation of the speech of God, the Gospel, through which the Spirit is actively gathering up all things in heaven and on earth under the lordship of Christ for the praise and glory of the Father.[12]

# The Doctrine of the Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity was hammered out in the first four centuries of the Christian church. It was an attempt to define the Christian belief wrapped up the in the affirmation "Jesus is Lord" and to reconcile it with the rigorous monotheism of the Jewish tradition of the Shema: "Here O Israel the Lord your God the Lord is one." While the word "Trinity" is not found in Scripture, the early church believed that the concept certainly was biblical. God is clearly presented as one God (Deut 6:4, Isa 44:6, Rom 3:30). At the same time, the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit are all clearly defined in Scripture as personal beings who do the work of God and receive the worship that is due only to God. The union of their purpose and will as well as their economic distinction is seen in the baptism of Jesus (Matt 3:13–17), the Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20), and in the great benedictions of the church (such as 2 Cor 13:14).

Historically, the church has affirmed its Trinitarian belief by consistently rejecting early attempts to reconcile statements that did not sufficiently express what the church believed, preached, and taught. This included teaching that sought to conflate the persons of the Godhead (Monarchianism) and beliefs which denied the full divinity of Christ (Adoptionism and Arianism) or the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatomachianism). The church reified this belief in the foundational confessions of the Church at Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381), affirming that the one God exists eternally as three distinct (but not separate) personal ways of existing.

Theologically, the church teaches that God is one in number, purpose, and will, but three in relation to dispensation, or work. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are united in one God, all possessing the attributes of God in full measure. Because God cannot change, this Trinitarian existence is an eternal aspect of God's ontological existence. This Trinitarian dogma was formed by the early kerygma and informed all subsequent liturgical and creedal development.

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[12]Ibid., 46.

With the Trinity thus defined, the theological process began to unpack how it understood and applied it. Three aspects of this work will be important for us as we examine what impact Trinitarian thought should have on our preaching. First, early theologians realized that almost all of Scripture speaks to the way the Triune God relates to humanity, especially in the process of redemption. The church used the term "economic" (from the Greek *oikonomos*) to describe this division of labor. The Father created and loves the world. He sends the Son who revealed the Father and purchased humanity's redemption on the cross. The Son was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now intercedes for us before the Father. The Spirit glorifies the Son, convicting us of sin and convincing us of the truth. The Spirit indwells believers, applying the merits of the Son's sacrifice and making us more like Him. This interaction of the Triune God for our sake is referred to as the economic Trinity.

The economic Trinity thus reveals God as God is in relationship to humanity, but God's existence is eternal. Theologians developed a different term to describe how God relates to Godself. The concept of the immanent, or ontological, Trinity is used to outline the eternal interrelatedness of the Godhead in His aseity.[13] It speaks to His oneness as a Triune being, transcendent above all things. God's greatness is more than can be revealed, even in redemption. God cannot be exhausted or limited by His interaction with those created in His image.[14] God has always existed as one personal God relating to Godself in the reciprocal love of the Father and the Son and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.[15]

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[13]"Aseity" is a philosophical term that has reference to the properties held in and by a subject itself. In theology, the term since Augustine, has been used to speak of God's absolute independence and divine simplicity.

[14]Purves writes,

> While God is known only insofar as God is self-revealed, in the divine economy of salvation, this does not mean either that the being of God is limited to God's being with us or that knowledge of God has no reference beyond our self-reference. To dissolve God's being into God's being for us not only leaves no place for God existing *a se* (the immanent Trinity), ....It is God who acts in the economy of salvation, and while God acts as God is, we must beware of insisting upon a vice versa that would collapse God's being into the human experience of God in history. (Purves, "The Trinitarian Basis," 223).

[15]In recent years evangelical scholars have returned to a robust discussion of the Trinity in light of early-twentieth century attention given to the topic by mainline and neo-orthodox theologians. Stanley Grenz seeks to contextualize and appropriate this discussion for Evangelicalism in his, *Rediscovering the Triune God: The Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2004). Others have reexamined the church's thinking historically, see Roger E. Olson and Christopher A. Hall, *The Trinity.* Guides to Theology Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdman's, 2002); systematically, see Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity in Scripture, History, Theology and Worship* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 2004); apologetically, see Gregory A. Boyd, *Oneness Pentecostals and the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992); constructively, see *Advancing Trinitarian Theology: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014); and popularly, see R. C. Sproul, *What is the Trinity?* Crucial Questions Series, Book 10 (Sanford, FL.: Reformation Trust, 2011).

The unity and the distinction implied in one God who exists eternally in relationship is outlined in the theological concept of Perichoresis. This term is used to express the way the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit fill one another and share life, love, and existence. It outlines the way that God acts in Godself and outside Godself with unity of purpose and will. Perichoresis thus preserves both the unity of God as well as the individuality of the persons and explains such passages as John 10:38.[16]

As we are drawn into the life of God by the Spirit, we share in His life and His love. Divine perichoresis touches us. The immanent Trinity draws near in the economic Trinity. Seamands explains,

> The Trinitarian circle where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit indwell and are indwelt by one another is open, not closed. We have been invited into the circle to participate in the divine dance. In the incarnation of the Son, when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, God's desire and intention to pour himself into us and draw us into himself is fully revealed. Through this act of self-giving, divinity flowed into humanity and humanity was drawn into divinity.[17]

## How is Preaching Trinitarian?

The task of preaching is to draw others to Christ. It is distinctly missional and by definition contains both a proclamation of the truth and an invitation into the life of God. The Father sent the Son to accomplish His mission of redemption, and the Son has sent us into the world to proclaim this salvation. As we preach, teach, and baptize, the Spirit of God is at work testifying to Christ, convicting us of sin, and sanctifying our efforts.

This basic, Trinitarian framework is composed of the earliest examples of apostolic preaching. Trinitarian theology formed the *kerygma*, or homiletic content, of the earliest church's preaching. C. H. Dodd in his *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* identified the

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[16]Michael Quicke writes:

> To preserve both the unity of the one God and the individuality of the three persons, perichoresis describes how the persons of the Trinity do not function distinctly from each other, but that they dwell inside each other (John 10:38; 14:8–11), mutually inhering, drawing life from one another and therefore are only to be experienced because of their relationship to each other. Because of their mutuality, no divine person acts apart from the others. For example, in Creation, the Father is Creator, but Jesus is involved (John 1:3), as is the Spirit (Ps. 104:30). Or, in Eph. 1:3–14, the Father elects (vv. 4, 5, 11), the Son redeems (vv. 3, 7, 8) and the Holy Spirit seals the outcome (vv. 13, 14). (Quicke, "Thinking as Trinitarians," *Preaching*, available at http://www.preaching.com/resources/articles/11555256/).

See also Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 209.

[17]Stephen Seamands, *Ministry in the Image of God: The Trinitarian Shape of Christian Service* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2005), 145.

following characteristics which demonstrate how the early *kerygma* was proto-Trinitarian in content and shape. Dodd argues that these early sermons were characterized by these views:

> God's prophecies of old are fulfilled, and the new age inaugurated by the coming of Christ.
> He was born of the seed of David.
> He died according to the Scriptures, to deliver us out of the present evil age.
> He was buried.
> He rose on the third day according to the Scriptures.
> He is exalted at the right hand of God, as Son of God and Lord of quick and dead.
> He will come again as Judge and Savior of men.[18]

Dodd adds that "the *kerygma* always closes with an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness and of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of 'salvation,' that is, of 'the life of the age to come,' to those who [by baptism] enter the elect community."[19]

It should not surprise us that this preaching included such propositional content, for salvation requires both repentance of sin and belief. Belief is necessarily propositional in nature. One must believe *something*. This belief and the essentials of the Christian commitment came to be expressed in the early church fathers Irenaeus and Tertullian as the rule of faith, or the canon of truth.[20] It therefore served not only as an expression of the gospel but as a standard of Christian belief that defined Christianity over against the paganism of their world and the abundant heresies that rejected orthodox expressions of the Trinity.

The definitional quality of Trinitarian preaching was also early established in the liturgy, or the formational, "visible" word of the church. The earliest creeds and confessions were used in baptism and always followed a basic Trinitarian form.[21] Baptism in the Triune name was a picture of the human reception of the economic Trinity's salvation. It marked the entrance of a believer into the community of faith, thus forming the community and reminding each believer of his or her own Trinitarian confession.

Preaching then, much like baptism, provides a "Trinitarian grammar of faith confessed by the church."[22] Pasquarello writes that in

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[18]C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1944). Quoted in Geoffrey Wainwright, "The Trinity in Liturgy and Preaching," *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, ed. Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 467.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Wainwright, "The Trinity," 467.

[21]See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (New York: Continuum, 2006).

[22]Pasquarello, *Christian Preaching*, 37.

Christian preaching . . . the source, means, and goal of all we are and all we do is the Word spoken by the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. Christian preaching, in contrast to "effective communication," is a personally oriented, participatory, and embodied form of graced activity that is the Triune God's gift to the church. This is not subject to human mastery and control, but as an expression of doxological speech is gratefully received and offered back to God through the praise and thanksgiving of the Christian community in worship.[23]

# What is Trinitarian Preaching?

## Worship

Trinitarian preaching is first and foremost worship. In the mid-twentieth century, Evangelicalism featured the sermon prominently as the centerpiece of the worship service. All other aspects of the service were minimized in order to give preaching its place. Many of the recent changes in worship have been positive, but the shift has been dramatic. This practice was fraught with its own theological problems. Today, many churches have expanded "worship time" and constricted the sermon to a twenty-minute reflection on morality or pietism. "Worship" is being confined to what we do and is increasingly being separated from preaching. There is a growing gap in perception between preaching and worship. Preaching is worship. But much modern preaching seeks to serve a pragmatic end rather than inviting the presence of the Triune God.[24]

What this separation indicates is a lack of appreciation for the Trinitarian nature of Christian worship. God's design of worship is to draw us into the experience of His life and His glory. Our union effected by Christ perichoretically fills us with the Spirit so that we can then return our thanks by worshiping Him in Spirit and in truth. Our worship is enabled by his grace in all aspects of His economic activity. "Preaching belongs within the rhythm of God's grace that both reaches down to us with his word of life and also enables us to respond back to him [as] Father, Son and Holy Spirit. . . ."[25]

## Missional

Trinitarian preaching defines the missional purpose of the church. Missional has become a buzzword in the first part of the twenty-first century. To be missional is to cultivate methods of outreach that are authentic and relevant. The problem, as we have seen, comes when method becomes the measure of mission.

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[23]Ibid., 10.

[24]Michael Quicke, "Beware Tuneless Preaching," *Preaching*, July 12, 2007, available at http://www.preaching.com/resources/articles/11547624.

[25]Ibid.

The mission of the church begins with the mission of God. In fact, until the Jesuit missions of the early-modern period, the term "mission" was only used in reference to the Trinity to speak of the Father's sending of the Son for our salvation applied by the Holy Spirit.[26] Preaching fulfills the evangelistic and edificatory purposes of the Great Commission. We have tended in the modern missional movement to focus on strategies and outreach rather than God's prescribed means of preaching. Many of these missional strategies start in the wrong place, with an anthropocentric focus rather than a Trinitarian focus. Tennent writes, "Mission is first and foremost about God and his redemptive purposes and initiatives in the world, quite apart from any actions or tasks or strategies or initiatives the church may undertake. To put it plainly, mission is far more about God and who he is than about us and what we do."[27]

Lesslie Newbigin, in his lectures to men and women preparing for missionary service, pointed out this very thing. He focused in his work on the Trinitarian mission of God as unfolded in the church through the preaching of the gospel. The gospel and its expansion is the work of the Triune God. The economic Trinity acts in salvation and in its application in unfolding the kingdom of God. All such action, all evangelism and church growth, is therefore caught up in the ontological Trinity and expresses the love that characterizes the union.[28]

Our task is to allow God to work through us by the power of the Holy Spirit. God will accomplish His mission. Jürgen Moltmann has said "it is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church as it goes on its way."[29] Our most appropriate response to God's mission is to follow Him, preach His Word, and try to stop getting in the way. We are not simply commissioned to tell the story; we are the story.

<div align="center">Prophetic</div>

The same tension arises in the prophetic function of preaching. As we confront with the truth a society that continues its slide into greater wickedness, we must be careful to remember that the answer to cultural ills is not simply moral critique and instruction. Bryan Chapell reminds us,

> Evangelical preachers reacting to the secularization of both church and culture can mistakenly make moral instruction or societal reform the primary focus of their messages. No one can blame

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[26]David Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 1.

[27]Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010), 54–55.

[28]Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdman's, 1978).

[29]Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids: Fortress Press, 1977), 64.

these preachers for wanting to challenge the evils of the day. When sin closes in, faithful preachers have a right, a responsibility, and a desire to say, "stop it!"

However, if these preachers' actual or perceived cure for sin's sickness is human correction or cultural criticism, they inadvertently present a message contrary to the gospel. The Bible does not tell us how we can improve ourselves to gain God's acceptance. Fundamentally and pervasively the Scriptures teach the inadequacy of any purely human effort to secure divine approval. We are entirely dependent upon the mercy of God to be what he desires and to do what he requires.[30]

Trinitarian preaching will focus on God's perspective and God's work to redeem rather than our pious reflections. Trinitarian preaching is a response to God's work of redemption in us and an eschatological expectation of what God will do. Of course, as Christians faithfully live out and faithfully speak of His kingdom, it will bring conflict. Augustine's two cities remain ever before us and ever at war. As Moltmann has said, "Those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is, but begin to suffer under it, to contradict it. Peace with God means conflict with the world, for the goad of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfulfilled present."[31] It is because of the gospel, because of the life of the Trinity in us, that the life of the church will always prophetically speak to culture. Jesus Himself said, "I have come not to bring peace, but a sword" (Matt 10:34). As Christians seek to live in communion with God, they seek to share His life in all their relationships and "to incarnate that reality day by day in the ordinary spheres of existence."[32]

## Community

Trinitarian preaching will also remind us that we are more than individuals. We were made for relationship with God and others. In the very beginning God said, "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen 2:18). God exists eternally in relationship as immanent Trinity; as creatures made in His image, intimate relationships should characterize our lives and our churches. Jesus underscored our need for others and the fact that His kingdom would manifest itself in relationships when He promised His presence wherever two or three are gathered in His name (Matt 18:20). Tertullian drew out this connection when he wrote,

For the very Church itself is, properly and principally, the Spirit Himself, in whom is the Trinity of the One Divinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (The Spirit) combines that Church which the Lord has made to consist in "three." And thus, from that time forward, every number (of persons) who may have combined together into this faith is accounted "a Church," from the Author and Consecrator (of the Church).[33]

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[30]Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 12.

[31]Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM, 1967) 20.

[32]Purves, "The Trinitarian Basis," 239.

[33]Tertullian, *De Pudicitia* 21, trans. S. Thelwall, available at http://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf04/anf04-19.htm#P1279_349605.

Trinitarian preaching will define the body of Christ in unity and diversity. Individuality is realized in community. We cannot "believe without belonging."[34] Just as God's Trinitarian existence demonstrates unity and distinction, the divine gift of grace carries this life forward into the church. "The doctrine of the Trinity is the church's attempt to tell the truth about God and about ourselves. If God really is triune, this powerfully resolves many of the classic tensions in intellectual thought between unity and diversity, rationality and relationality, the material and the spiritual, autonomy and dependence, the one and the many, and so forth. God's self-disclosure also demands that the Trinity be at the center of all our theology."[35] If God is at the center of our lives and our preaching it will unite our churches in the glorious diversity of His kingdom.

Comprehensive

Trinitarian preaching is also comprehensive in its recognition that all revelation is a record of God's mission of redemption. We must always be willing to read the Gospel forward no matter what text we read and expound. God's work in the Old Testament is just as revelatory as the New Testament and anticipates it. Trinitarian preaching

will open up to your people the progression of revelation in Scripture from a God who is holy and just, punishing sin and rewarding righteousness, to a God who fulfilled his promise to redeem his people in and through his Son, whom He sent to be the Saviour [*sic*] of the world; from a God who is transcendent and awesome, to a God who cares and provides for his people; from a God who is love and light, in whom mercy and truth unite, to a God who has revealed himself in his word, in which we see his purposes and plans laid out; from a God who has sent his Spirit to indwell us so that we are capable of living for his glory, to a God who will complete salvation history at our glorification. In sum, a God who alone is worthy of all our praise.[36]

Trinitarian preaching will be comprehensive in covering all of Scripture, but it will also touch on all aspects of life. There is nothing that is untouched by the Trinity's work of creating, redeeming, and sustaining this world. As God builds His kingdom, we are His tools in the process.

Purves writes,

Christians of good conscience can disagree profoundly on all kinds of issues and approaches; what they cannot disagree on is the need to live Trinitarian faith in the life of the world, in families, in business, in health care, and law, in response to criminal justice the politics of communion, seeking through prayer, worship and study to respond with faithfulness to the personalizing ministry of Jesus, will be a public politics at the specific points where our lives particularly and

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[34]Seamands, *Ministry in the Image of God*, 39.

[35]Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions*, 74.

[36]Roger Pascoe, "A Call to Preach the Trinity," *Bible.org*, available at https://bible.org/A-Call-To-Preach-The-Trinity.

communally intersect the world's pain. It is not enough to engage in private acts of charity, valid as they are. Jesus is Lord of all existence, and his mission as God with us judges and redeems the public as well and the private spheres of life.[37]

## **Conclusion**

Trinitarian preaching is really just Trinitarian living. The God who is life has given us new birth. As we are united to Christ, we are filled by the Spirit and sent out as sons and daughters of the Father. The Trinitarian mission of redemption works in us, and through us renews the world. When we recognize our preaching as worship and our lives as a reflection of Trinitarian Perichoresis in loving God and the world, our faith becomes sight and the kingdom of God will come.

As Burrows writes,

Preaching is not primarily moral teaching or instruction on salient points from the life of Israel, Jesus, and the early church. Rather, preaching is the process whereby the Holy Spirit uses the minister of the church to invite hearers of the word to experience the truth that their inmost being and energy vibrate at the same frequency and pitch as God's inmost being. That experience is the foundation of Christian life in faith, hope, and love.[38]

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[37]Purves, "The Trinitarian Basis," 239.

[38]William R. Burrows, "Preaching and Immersion in Trinitarian Life," *Living Pulpit*, January-March 2002, 16.

_A Commentary on Exodus_. By Duane A. Garrett. Kregel Exegetical Library. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014. 741 pages. Hardcover, $39.99.

This evangelical, exegetical, and expositional commentary explicates the beloved book of Exodus. Garrett serves as John R. Sampey Professor of Old Testament Interpretation and Professor of Biblical Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. His commentaries include _Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs_ in NAC (B&H, 1993), _Hosea, Joel_ in NAC (B&H, 1997), _Song of Songs_ in WBC (Nelson, 2004), and _Job_ in EEC (Logos, forthcoming). The other published volumes in the Kregel Exegetical Library include Robert Chisholm's _Commentary on Judges and Ruth_ (2013) and Allen Ross's three-volume _A Commentary on the Psalms_ (2011, 2013, 2015).

Each section of the book consists of an original translation, structural analysis, running commentary, and theological summary. The appendix isolates the eight poems of Exodus (5:21; 6:2–8; 15:1–18, 25–26; 19:3–6; 24:15–18; 29:42–46; 34:6–7). Some of these textual units are rarely classified by scholars as poetry, distinguishing Garrett's study as a unique contribution. The commentary foregoes indexes, but contains a seventeen-page bibliography.

The Documentary Hypothesis finds no friend in Garrett. The theory possesses "only a shell of intellectual coherence," is "not based on any ancient Near Eastern analogies," is "fraught with contradictory conclusions and a general lack of clarity," and constitutes "a dubious enterprise . . . of doubtful heuristic value" (17–18). Moreover, a preoccupation with the Documentary Hypothesis "leads to commentaries that have more to say about the supposed sources of Exodus than they do about the canonical text" (19). The theory is "entirely based on a mistranslation of the text" of 6:3 (250).

Following a fifty-seven page discussion of the reality and date of the exodus, Garrett concludes, "I do not think it is wise or right to suppose that we can correct what seems to be a deficiency in the Bible and fix a date for the exodus, describe fully the historical setting, or name the pharaoh of the exodus. At the same time, I see nothing that causes me to distrust the biblical account" (103). For him, the radiocarbon dating of the charred grain from Jericho undermines a fall of Jericho in 1400 BC (75).

While embracing the existence of miracles, Garrett gravitates toward natural explanations. Pharaoh's magicians lacked demonic power—they charmed the snakes into catalepsy and produced frogs by mere trickery (275–76, 290). Red clay or flagellates turned the Nile red (281). A "wind setdown event" parted the water for the Israelites (386). In 15:25 Yahweh instructed Moses to desalinate the bitter water by mixing it with charcoal (414).

Distinctive interpretations punctuate the commentary. The Israelites traversed the Aqaba Gulf (133). Mount Sinai rests south of the Salt Sea or in the Arabian Peninsula (134). Reuel

desired Jethro and possibly Hobab; Jethro probably sired Zipporah (183). Zipporah rescued her son (not her husband Moses) from Yahweh's judgment by circumcising him (230–31). In addition, 3:14 reads, "This is who I am: 'I AM'" (193). The plagues were not intended to oppose specific Egyptian gods (301). And the small tent of meeting sufficed only until the main tabernacle was finished (645).

The commentator identifies literary devices and explains their interpretive relevance. Yahweh's poetic speech in 19:3–6, for instance, forms an ABCBA strophic chiasm that stresses the conditionality of the Mosaic covenant (459). At times, the interpreter should exercise caution by not pressing the text for too much detail. Scripture leaves some matters undeveloped, such as the hardening of Pharaoh's heart (373) and the dynamic of Moses' domestic life (445).

The English translation of the Hebrew targets a more learned audience as evidenced by the choice of vocabulary: "they set corvée bosses over them" (1:11; p. 152), "Pharaoh's heart was implacable" (8:19, p. 303), "you vaunt yourself toward my people" (9:17, p. 329), and "haters of graft" (18:21, p. 447). A good translation pays dividends according to Garrett: "In interpreting a book of the Bible, the most important single issue is the obtaining of an accurate translation" (22). To this end *mal'ak yĕhōwâ* in 3:2 should read "the Messenger of YHWH" rather than Garrett's "the angel of YHWH" so that the reader does not confuse this individual with an angelic being (202).

On the whole, the author offers a thoughtful and contextually sensitive translation of the Hebrew, but sometimes the grammar and syntax receives questionable treatment. Four issues stand out. First, the *waw*-consecutive he translates with the hackneyed conjunction "and" rather than conjunctions or wordings that convey the function—sequential action (e.g., 540–41). Second, the macrosyntactic markers *wayhî* and *wĕhāyâ* appear as verbs (e.g., "And it happened") rather than untranslatable particles (e.g., 14:24, p. 379; 17:11, p. 433). Third, the author's translation blunts the force of the participle of the imminent future (*hinnē* + 1st person + participle). The construction expresses impending action, as in "I am about to strike" instead of "I strike" (7:17, p. 277). Fourth, the introductory imperative relinquishes its semantic value and denotes urgency. Thus "Tell Pharaoh immediately" surpasses "Go! Tell Pharaoh" (6:11, p. 255).

This reviewer commends Garrett's work as a valuable contribution to the study of Exodus. Even those who disagree with some of the conclusions can benefit from this fine commentary.

*–Mark A. Hassler, The Master's Seminary, Sun Valley, CA*

*Christ and the New Creation: A Canonical Approach to the Theology of the New Testament.* By Matthew Y. Emerson. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013. 206 pages. Softcover, $23.00.

Matthew Y. Emerson is Assistant Professor of Religion, occupying the Dickson Chair of Religion at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma. He earned his Ph.D. from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2011. His academic areas of interest include biblical theology, biblical interpretation, and biblical studies.

Emerson's purpose in his book is to demonstrate that "the order of the books in the New Testament (NT) presents a reading strategy that points the reader to its theological focus, which is that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament's (OT) eschatological messianic hope through inaugurating the new creation in his life, death, resurrection, ascension, and Pentecost and consummating it at his return" (ix). For Emerson, the major theological focus is new creation. He discovers this theme using canonical criticism, which is comprised of interpreting individual passages within the framework of the canon of scripture as the church now possesses.[2] For Emerson, the key to unlocking the major theological focus for the NT is in reading the books of the NT in their canonical order.

Emerson begins his work in chapters 1 and 2 by situating his analysis in the broader stream of interpretation, concluding that the canonical and theological reading strategy he employs is faithful to the history of biblical interpretation. Canonical criticism, while sometimes being seen as simply a response against historical-critical methodology, views the Bible as one book in which individual passages must be interpreted in light of the whole. As such, the order of individual books within the canon impacts interpretation.

In the remaining chapters, Emerson applies his canonical reading strategy to the books of the NT. Beginning in the Gospels, Jesus inaugurates the new creation through his life, death, and resurrection. Matthew emphasizes Jesus as the new Moses and explicitly connects the NT with the OT through its heavy use of OT quotations and allusions, which is why it is first. Mark emphasizes the role of Jesus as the paschal lamb, who gave his life to restore God's creation. Luke emphasizes Jesus as the prophet and king, who inaugurates God's restored kingdom. Lastly, John consistently demonstrates that Jesus redeems, restores, and renews his creation, and presents Jesus as the new Adam. Acts then follows John, which partners Jesus as the new Adam with the bride of Christ and the command to "be fruitful and multiply," so to speak, in Acts 1:8. Acts also portrays the results of the commission of Jesus to the church to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth through his disciples, mainly Peter and Paul, thus acting as a bridge between the Gospels and Epistles.

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[2]Canonical criticism has been an important hermeneutical method for the OT but has recently been used for interpreting the NT as seen in the work of scholars such as Brevard Childs and John Sailhamer, both of whom influence Emerson's work to a great degree.

Emerson then turns his attention to the order of the Pauline Epistles, devoting chapter 4 to Romans through Colossians. Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians seem to provide a framework for Galatians through Colossians. In both sections, the basic pattern Paul uses is gospel explanation followed by ethical exhortation. The order focuses on new creation as the goal of salvation and sanctification. In the next block of Pauline Epistles, Emerson notices a shift in emphasis. Beginning in 1 Thessalonians and ending in Hebrews, the focus becomes looking back on what Christ has done to what he will do in his second coming.

Continuing the same emphasis seen in 1 Thessalonians through Hebrews, the Catholic Epistles exhort Christians to obey Christ and avoid false teaching in light of what Jesus will do in the future when he returns to judge the world and consummate his new creation. The entire structure of the Epistles provides an already/not yet tension, as Romans through Colossians demonstrate that the Christian is already a new creation capable of obeying, but 1 Thessalonians through Jude demonstrate that Christians are not fully transformed yet and must continue to be faithful.

For Emerson, Revelation concludes not only the NT but the entire biblical narrative. For the NT, Rev 22:16 refers to Jesus as the descendant of David forming an _inclusio_ with the beginning of Matthew's Gospel. For the entire Bible, Rev 20-22 forms an _inclusio_ with the first three chapters of Genesis and details Christ's ultimate defeat of sin and death, and the restoration of the world into a new creation.

Emerson's work succeeds in discovering a cohesive theological theme that weaves its way throughout the entirety of the NT, especially on the macro level. He is convincing when he argues that the canonical order found in modern Bibles prominently displays the theme of new creation. In this regard, churches, seminaries, and curious readers would do well to learn to interpret individual passages and books within the NT canonical order.

A question that comes to mind when analyzing the shape of the NT canon is the _realia_ of the manuscript (MS) tradition in regard to the order of the NT. While Emerson interacts with quality sources, his analysis of the shape of the NT canon could be refined a bit further. The text of the NT came together as four collections—the Gospels, Acts and the Catholic Epistles, the Pauline Epistles, and Revelation. When found together in the same codex, the MS tradition for the first 1,000 years of the church consistently keeps Acts with the Catholic Epistles and presents the Pauline Epistles afterward. The first appearance of the Paulines-before-Catholics order occurs in the eleventh century, but Acts is still kept with the Catholics. Even then, MSS present different orders throughout the centuries, so that Gregory-Aland MS 69 (fifteenth century) arranges Acts/Catholics before the Paulines. The modern canonical order for the NT has been influenced majorly by late-Greek MSS and the Latin Vulgate. These differing arrangements mean that, for the Epistles at least, too much stock could be placed in the modern Acts-Paulines-Catholics order. How would Paul's epistles be interpreted if they were read _after_ James?

In the same way, the ordering of the letters within collections does not seem to be intentional or theological.[3] The simplest hypothesis on the ordering of the Pauline Epistles is that they are arranged by length and category—letters to churches first (arranged longest to shortest) then letters to individuals (arranged longest to shortest). Hebrews is added to the Pauline collection at an early date and is located in a length-appropriate position in the oldest codex of the Pauline Epistles (P46). Hebrews, though, gets moved around in the collection. Sometimes, it is found in between the letters to church and the letters to individuals, and most of the time it is found at the end of the collection. Hebrews, though, seems to move around due to issues of its authorship. When the Catholic Epistles are gathered into a collection, James, Peter, and John are kept together as pillars of the church, but are still arranged by length, and Jude makes it into the collection due to its relationship to 2 Peter but is placed at the end due to its size. Again, this breakdown on the micro level does not devalue Emerson's work, but does provide a certain level of caution when arguing for an intentional ordering by the church for theological purposes.

The real value of Emerson's work is in encouraging readers to read the NT holistically instead of reading disparate works in isolation. The idea of a macro-level reading strategy should be adopted in many churches and classrooms. The weaknesses pointed out above should not detract from what Emerson has done. He never argues that his reading strategy is the *only* faithful reading. As such, he has accomplished what he set out to do, and provided an excellent analysis. The use of canonical criticism on the texts of the NT is a relatively new and novel approach, and Emerson should be praised for his foray into its application.

*–Matthew Solomon, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*

*Faith Speaking Understanding: Performing the Drama of Doctrine*. By Kevin J. Vanhoozer. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014. 278 pages. Softcover, $30.00.

Kevin J. Vanhoozer is Research Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. He holds degrees from Westmont College (B.A.), Westminster College (B.A.), Westminster Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and Cambridge University (Ph.D.). In *Faith Speaking Understanding*, Vanhoozer seeks to provide a theatrical model for understanding the nature and purpose of doctrine that is accessible to laypersons in the church and serious students. The book is divided into two parts. In part 1, Vanhoozer discusses the theatrical model that he proposes for doing theology. He discusses important terminology that

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[2]Emerson notes that he is taking the typical Protestant view of canonization and that the church has arranged the books in certain orders (67 n. 8). As such, his analysis grows out of this assumption. His conclusions, therefore, are consistent with his starting point, but other starting points exist.

will be used throughout his work, and then shows the important parallels between aspects of the theatrical drama and the aspects of doctrine. For example, he discusses Scripture as somewhat fulfilling the role of the play script; the world functions as the stage; the church is the audience; and God is the author. He uses the term theodramatics to mean "the study or practice of acting in God's royal theatre" (21). Vanhoozer also discusses in this portion of the book the role of the church. The church is not a passive audience, but is part of the drama of doctrine in that she is called to live it out. He references different speech acts, such as confessions, to show that doctrine is not merely the assent to truths about God, but is a type of knowledge that one lives out in her life.

In part 2, Vanhoozer discusses *how* faith speaks understanding, in other words, how doctrine makes disciples and how disciples do doctrine. Here, he discusses the twentieth-century context as the stage for the great theatre of the world. He notes that in contemporary American culture, the church has chosen spirituality over traditional Christian doctrine (53). After setting the stage, Vanhoozer focuses on the grand narrative that makes up the theodrama, approaching it "from above" as well as "from below." He uses the concept of the Trinity to show how God's being relates to God's action. He even goes as far to say that the Trinity is "longhand" for the gospel itself (73). The drama of redemption is the Father's sending of the Son and Holy Spirit for the sake of humanity (81). As humans encounter the truth of God, the drama of redemption unfolds for them. Vanhoozer moves on to discuss the identity and responsibility of the believer. The Christian identity is a role one assumes as a result of her response to God's call (116). The Christian is called to put on Christ (120). Vanhoozer then returns his focus to the identity of the church. The church is the coming together of disciples (139). Christians are not called to a life of autonomy, but to a corporate life with each other. Doctrine does not merely make up theological truth claims that the church cognitively ascends to; it also provides actions that are distinctive to the church. Vanhoozer next turns his attention to "how the company of the Gospel enacts parables of the Kingdom" (169). The church "plays Christ in ten thousand and more places" (171). Also, the church embodies the person of Christ and lives Christ out to the lost world around her. This of course requires improvisation at times on the part of the church (188). In the final chapter of the book, Vanhoozer discusses the theodrama's climax, conflict, catharsis, and recapitulation. The climax is when Jesus Christ sits down at the right hand of the Father (209). The conflict is the continuing struggle between the oppressed of the world and the oppressor of the world (214). The catharsis is the purifying of the heart of the believer (220). The recapitulation is the command to worship and glorify God in all that one does (225).

*Faith Speaking Understanding* has multiple strengths. Foremost, Vanhoozer has done a remarkable job addressing the unfortunate disconnect between spirituality and Christian doctrine in the contemporary American church. He rightly notes that doctrine and spirituality cannot be separated. Many have found doctrine to be mundane, tedious, and boring. Vanhoozer has provided an accessible model for doing doctrine that has the potential to reinvigorate believers concerning the role of doctrine in the church. He strategically uses elements of

speech-act theory to help explain how one *does something* when she speaks. An example of this is the self-involving nature of confessions and creeds. Doctrine is a form of *dispositional belief* that necessitates *self-involving* speech acts.

One potential weakness of Vanhoozer's theatrical model is that it presupposes an understanding of theatre on the part of the reader. Those who are not familiar with theatre may not fully grasp the approach of this model. Though Vanhoozer does provide more than adequate definitions of the theatrical elements as well as their parallels in doctrine, the thrust of the book's argument might miss its target if there is a lack of theatrical knowledge on the part of the reader.

Overall, Vanhoozer has provided a helpful model for doing doctrine in the contemporary church. Though those not well acquainted with the theatre and its terminology may not see the book's argument as overly enlightening, it can still serve as a helpful tool for understanding the task of doctrine. This book would serve well the student of theology as well as the curious layperson who is interested in the role of doctrine in the church.

–*Andrew Hollingsworth, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*

*1 Corinthians.* In New American Commentary, vol. 28. By Mark Taylor. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2014. 473 pages. Hardcover, $32.99.

Mark Taylor has produced an excellent addition to the New American Commentary Series with his commentary on 1 Corinthians. The commentary series is designed to represent the best of "contemporary evangelical scholarship" while assisting those who are dealing with "the practical work of preaching and teaching." Taylor is Professor of New Testament and Associate Dean for Master's Programs at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and specializes in discourse analysis. Taylor also has pastoral experience. Thus, he is well equipped to meet the goals of the commentary.

The commentary begins with a brief introduction to the book, including a short section on the city, author, audience, and occasion, followed by an expanded outline of the book utilizing a thematic analysis. Each commentary section begins with an overview of the larger section identifying key themes and features. Next, the author exegetes the text verse by verse. In line with the goals of the commentary series, technical notes can normally be found in the footnotes with more general comments in the body of the text.

One of the helpful emphases of this work is the attention to Paul's flow of thought from one discourse section to another. Thus, Taylor avoids the weakness of some commentaries which

seem to focus only on specific passages without making the connections clear for the reader. In addition, the author seems to have given a concerted effort to focus on the major ideas rather than to get lost in the details. Taylor helps the reader keep the broad movement of the text in mind by the way he has organized and written this work.

One of the difficult tasks created by the nature of the commentary series is balancing technical explanations with practical theological help for the local minister. Taylor does a fine job of balancing these interests. He often gives the various exegetical choices in the text without burdening the reader with overly-technical material. In addition, the author normally will bring the discussion to a conclusion that refocuses the reader on implications for understanding the text at the broad level. For example, Taylor discusses the potential slogans in 1 Cor. 6:12–18 and concludes that section by stating, "In the end, one's view of the presence or absence of slogans does not obscure the clarity of Paul's teaching regarding the gravity of the sin of sexual immorality and the nature of the believer's body" (153). Taylor's approach throughout reminds the reader of the main idea of the text being studied while enlightening the reader concerning various exegetical issues.

One weakness, that the author could not control, is the use of the NIV (1984) as the base text throughout the New American Commentary Series. This translation is no longer widely available, and the series editors should consider a change. The editor's preface says the commentary series chose the NIV because of the desire for a "readable" commentary. Even so, perhaps the time for a change has come. The functional nature of the NIV translation leads to numerous sections where the author has to point to other translation possibilities in the exegesis. A more natural fit for this series might be the Holman Christian Standard Bible version.

A second weakness is that the introductory section seems too brief for a good exegetical commentary. While the chronology of Pauline correspondence with the Corinthians receives some mention, Taylor should have taken more space to explain the Corinthian correspondence. Almost half of the introduction consists of a summary of Paul's flow of thought in the Epistle. Such a focus on the text is appreciated, but more attention to the traditional critical introduction material was desired.

This book is recommended for pastors and ministers who desire a solid commentary that will not weigh them down with technical jargon. Professors will also use this commentary as a text for an exegesis course, but they may need to supplement the introductory material. Taylor has provided a helpful resource for the study of 1 Corinthians, and many will benefit from his work.

*–Norris C. Grubbs, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*

*From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 3rd ed. By T. Desmond. Alexander. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. 384 pages. Softcover, $29.99.

T. Desmond Alexander is a senior lecturer in Biblical Studies and director of Postgraduate Studies at Union Theological College in Belfast, Northern Ireland. For the past ten years, he has served as director of Christian Training for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Prior to his current position, he lectured for eighteen years in Semitic Studies at the Queen's University Belfast.

In the preface, the author writes that the "present volume seeks to (1) guide the reader through the maze of modern approaches to the Pentateuch, and (2) focus on the main themes of the Pentateuch, viewed as a unified literary work, by drawing on the best insights of recent research into Hebrew narrative techniques" (xiii). These two aims are undertaken in distinct sections of the book. The first section deals with the study of the Pentateuch in modern times. The second section of the book systematically progresses through the themes of Pentateuch as a literary work.

In chapter 1, Alexander briefly outlines the four main methods of pentateuchal study. These four methods (source criticism, form criticism, traditio–historical criticism, and literary criticism) are explored in greater depth in the following chapters. In chapter 2, the author explores the rise of source criticism by taking a cursory look at the Documentary Hypothesis in its many forms. The author notes that the Documentary Hypothesis focused primarily on the written sources behind the final form of the Pentateuch. In chapter 3, the author states, "Following the widespread acceptance of the Documentary Hypothesis as the definitive explanation for the source documents underlying the Pentateuch, toward the end of the 19th century a few scholars began to consider the pre-literary stage in the growth of the Pentateuch" (32). Accordingly, this "led to the development of two new methods of studying the Old Testament text: form criticism and traditio-historical criticism" (32). According to Alexander, form criticism sought to examine the development of the Pentateuch's sources in their oral form. By contrast, traditio-historical criticism sought to examine "what happened between the oral form of the source and the written form of the source" (35).

Chapter 4 details the many modifications and alternatives that have been postulated since the inception of the three forms of criticism mentioned above. In this chapter, one finds a brief discussion of the use of literary criticism, which will be further developed in chapter 6. Before concluding the first part of the book, Alexander presents in chapter 5 a test case using the Sinai narrative. His ultimate conclusion is that the Sinai narrative "provides no evidence to support the existence of the sources associated with the documentary hypothesis" (80), and that "while links have been observed with the book of Deuteronomy, these are best explained in terms of the priority of the Sinai narrative" (81). These conclusions lead to chapter 6, wherein the reader finds Alexander's brief case for a literary approach to the study of the Pentateuch.

Chapter 7 begins the second part of the book. Here, Alexander presents an argument for the unity of the Pentateuch. Each chapter begins with the introduction of its respective material and is followed by a discussion of the theme in its pentateuchal context. After each discussion of the theme, the author provides an Old Testament summary and a New Testament connection section to demonstrate how the theme fits within the rest of the canon of Scripture. Chapters 8 through 23 comprise the bulk of the book, covering topics, such as: the establishment of God's temple city in the garden of Eden, the initiation of a royal lineage, Abraham and the blessing intended for the nations, the covenant disclosure of the Lord, the significance of the Passover, the covenant at Sinai, the tabernacle, the need for holiness and its relationship to the Lord, the sacrificial system, the significant of food laws, the role of the different tribes in preparation for entering the promised land, the frequent unfaithfulness of the wandering people, and the place of love and loyalty to the Lord as the elect people of God. Each of these topics are dealt with successively as they appear in the books of the Pentateuch, and provide a surprisingly well-organized outline of the history of the Israelite people prior to their entrance into the promised land. Chapter 24 begins where chapter 7 ended, with a discussion of the unfinished story of the Pentateuch. Alexander concludes the book with a brief attempt to demonstrate how the Pentateuch fits within the framework of Scripture's metanarrative. While interested readers will doubtless want more, the chapter whets the appetite for a whole Bible theology that incorporates the richness and complexity of Old Testament content into the life of the new covenant community.

This book is well written and well organized. It accomplishes its stated purpose; especially in terms of familiarizing the beginning student with the different approaches to pentateuchal study. There are many commendable aspects about this book. Whether it is Alexander's deft handling of the intricate details related to the Documentary Hypothesis or his broad canonical understanding of biblical themes, it is clear that he possess an expert grasp on these issues. His evaluation of those with whom he disagrees is fair and free of inflammatory, polemical rhetoric. He does not settle for easy answers, but instead evaluates the evidence and weighs it accordingly. One such example of fairness is found where he states, "A late date of editing does not automatically deny the authenticity of traditions contained in the Pentateuch, especially when, as we have noted, earlier written documents have been used in its composition" (110). Unlike some of the anti-intellectual fundamentalism of his day, Alexander is able to incorporate the best of biblical scholarship into his study of the Pentateuch without buying into the naturalistic worldviews of some of the more popular, historical-critical scholars.

In terms of how this book helps the students and pastors, Alexander's incorporation of how a theme fits within the context of the rest of the Old Testament and also connects with the New Testament enables readers to teach the Pentateuch as Christian Scripture. This is not to suggest the Pentateuch should not be understood in its grammatical historical context, but that the Christians claim to its application and significance is mediated through Christ, who as the seed of Abraham blesses all nations through their incorporation into the people of God by faith. In terms of a final point of appreciation, Alexander's inclusion of a "Recommended

Further Reading" section and a Scripture index makes this book a perpetually helpful resource for future study of the Pentateuch. All students of God's word would benefit from this book.

—*Casey Hough, First Baptist Church of Camden, AR*

*Heart-Deep Teaching: Engaging Students for Transformed Lives.* By Gary Newton. Nashville: B&H, 2012. 212 pages. Softcover, $14.99.

Gary Newton serves as Professor of Discipleship Ministries and director of the Discipleship Ministry and Family Ministry majors at Crown College in St. Bonifacius, Minnesota. He has served in various churches as well as a professor previously at Taylor University, Denver Seminary, and Huntington University.

The intended readers for the book are teachers of the Bible, since the author desires to produce a work that would help teachers engage students to discover and obey the truth from God's Word.

The book begins by stating a perceived problem with shallow Bible teaching which is validated through six partial truths of "good learning." In Christian Education, the goal must be to transform the heart so that every aspect of the person becomes progressively more Christlike (13). In order for the teacher to avoid being shallow, his preparation to teach the Bible should involve preparing the heart. Newton walks readers through preparing their minds, emotions, will, and actions to prepare each aspect of their heart. Readers will be exposed to the Old Testament in relation to the Hebrew's view of the heart, as well as Jesus and Paul's use of the heart in the New Testament. Newton references Dallas Willard and explains Willard's view of the heart as a framework for transforming teaching through the work of the Holy Spirit. The book does not entertain various positions. Rather, it presents research and people that align with the author. This approach can be viewed as a strength or limitation, since the book is published as an academic resource.

Newton provides a snapshot of learning domains in light of four taxonomies: cognitive, affective, volitional and behavioral. Learning domains are related to the teacher's ability to utilize all four of the domains, which allows a teacher to get closer to the heart and thus the domains become integrated (54). The idea presented in the book that one should ponder concerning Bible teaching is as follows: if the progressive journey into the depths of the heart provides a conceptual basis that reveals sequential steps, then students must pass through the steps in order to mature in their relationship with Christ.

Readers can expect to glean a step-by-step process for lesson preparation designed to help the teacher learn, and thus teach at a heart-deep level. The preparation of the teacher is a crucial component in *Heart-Deep Teaching*. Each teacher of the Bible should have a process

for preparing one's own heart that allows learners to experience a deeper learning experience by discovering and applying biblical principles. Four steps are presented to help a teacher to design deeper learning experiences. These steps are simple, and could be taught with ease to lay Bible teachers. The process is not profound, but it would be easy to avoid diligence in all four of the following steps: 1) Looking at the Biblical text through students' eyes; 2) Setting goals to encourage deeper student learning; 3) Understanding how people learn; 4) Designing learning experiences that encourage heart-deep learning (83). Half of the book is committed to explaining these four principles, which will enhance a teacher's ability to design a great Bible teaching experience. Readers will be introduced to or reminded of helpful ways: to engage the learners; to allow for individual learner goals that meet particular needs and burdens; and students can learn if guided by a teacher that utilizes the various approaches and methods. The final chapters of the book instruct teachers how to choose and sequence the learning experiences into a lesson that moves students to a maturity in their walk with Christ that has engaged the heart (149).

Laity and academic teachers of the Bible will be encouraged from this refreshing, simple read. Newton will encourage readers of many things they may have known but have not employed recently, or will help teachers further grasp engaging their heart and the hearts of those to whom they teach the Bible through the work of the Holy Spirit. The greatest value of the book is that it provides practical methods to prepare and principles that can be employed for maximum transformation to occur. The inexpensive cost also makes it a great supplementary academic textbook or gift to teachers in churches as they develop Bible teachers. Many who read the book may expect a further explanation of several aspects, but the book is designed to remain focused on the direction of engaging the heart at a deeper level through teaching. The book presents accurate information for navigating the biblical text and preparing a lesson utilizing learning theory methods which if employed will prepare the teacher and engage the student. Challenges to *Heart-Deep Teaching* are presented in the concluding pages of the book as well as benefits which one should consider when employing the aspects presented in the text.

*–Jody Dean, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*

*Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9.1–9: An Intertextual and Theological Exegesis*. By Brian J. Abasciano. Library of New Testament Studies 301. Edited by Mark Goodacre. London: T&T Clark, 2005. 280 pages. Hardcover, $180.00.

This volume appears in the Library of New Testament Studies, which formerly was the Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series. This series consistently has offered the promising results of current New Testament research on a number of topics using a variety of methodologies. Often, the publications represent the evolution of dissertations into monographs, as is the case with the present publication. This volume is Abasciano's 2003 Ph.D.

thesis accepted by the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. The original impetus was G. K. Beale's class at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary on the Old Testament in the New.

Abasciano's study on Rom 9:1–9 is intended to lay the foundation for investigating Paul's use of the Old Testament throughout Rom 9 and then the larger unit of Rom 9—11. He builds on the present scholarly consensus that Rom 9–11 is the climax of all of Rom 1—11, beginning with the theme statement that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, then to the Greek (Rom 1:16–17). His work is counter to a former generation of Pauline scholarship more willing to suggest Paul's use of the Old Testament was in disregard to the original context.

The work of C. H. Dodd and Richard Hays was the watershed in the movement to demonstrating Paul's sensitivity, even dependence upon, the original Old Testament context as the very basis of Paul's argumentation, style, logic, and content. Hays moved the argument forward beyond simple "quotation" questions by being able to articulate a concept of allusion that was methodologically implemented. A sophisticated, nuanced, intertextual method of study emerged based on the fundamental principle of metalepsis. Based on the work of Hays, Abasciano redefines allusion as the broader category into which quotation is a subset. Allusion broadly is "any intentional reference to a text, person, event, etc." (16). More narrowly, allusion is intentional reference that is not a direct quotation. Abasciano acknowledges the poststructuralist origins of intertextuality, but also insists that poststructuralist presuppositions do not have to be foundational to adapting an intertextual approach to the unique literary character of the biblical material.

The methodology is straightforward. Abasciano assumes a historical-biblical, critical foundation. He is traditional about text and author, stable meaning, established forms of communication, authorial intention as key to meaning, and that critical research can reveal this meaning. He adapts Hays's criteria for establishing allusions, which has become a standard practice in the field. The (Hebrew) Old Testament text is the genesis of research. The circle is expanded to textual traditions based on the Hebrew text, which include the LXX, Targums, and early Jewish translations, under the assumption that all translations are interpretations that might alert readers to budding interpretive traditions. The circle is expanded once again to Jewish interpretive traditions themselves in the exegetical history of a passage or theme. Lastly, the New Testament context is considered, and then specifically Paul. While categories may overlap in varying degrees given a particular passage and context, a study of Paul's use includes analyzing the presuppositions behind Paul's hermeneutic, the rhetorical exigence within the context, the semantic significance (in terms of meaning-effects), and, finally, the theological significance. To the criticism that Paul's audience would not have been so extensively educated in the Old Testament as to "catch" or "hear" the allusions, Abasciano responds with the obvious. The extensive use of the Old Testament by Paul, most especially in Romans, both as quotation and allusion, automatically presumes the Old Testament familiarity of the audience. Further, community interpretation quickly and adequately would inform those who were not familiar.

The first of two units studied is Rom 9:1–5. Here, an allusion to Exod 32:32 in 9:3 almost universally is agreed. Abasciano sets up this allusion in the context of the story in Exod 32—34. Moses intercedes for Israel after the golden calf incident has broken the Sinai covenant. The covenant is renewed but significantly altered. The divine presence in the camp no longer is possible, otherwise sinful Israel would suffer annihilating judgment. Divine presence now wholly is dependent upon God's mercy and the intercession of a chosen mediator (Moses). Israel is cast out of her original covenant status in order to preserve her from annihilation. In this way, rejection of Israel is absolutely imperative to save Israel and represents an act of God's mercy. Israel at least has a future chance to become integrated again into covenant relationship, but now based solely on repentance and faith. Later Jewish interpretive traditions worked hard to play down the prominent role of judgment and altered covenant status that is clear in the original context of Exod 32—34. Thus, Rom 9—11 acts as a Pauline midrash on Exod 32–34 in both theme and subject matter in analyzing Israel's current status with the coming of Messiah. Israel is rejected from covenant status in order to preserve an opportunity for Israel to regain covenant status, but on God's terms. In Rom 9:1–5, Paul is interceding for Israel based on the paradigm of Moses. Jews who respond positively to Paul's gospel in Christ reenter God's covenant glory and divine presence. The privileges of Israel Paul identifies in Rom 9:4–5 are the facts of history, not transcendent and unchanging truths. Israel becomes reestablished into covenant status only by faith in Christ, the chosen mediator of the new covenant.

Abasciano next turns attention to the use of Gen 21:12 and 18:10, 14 in Rom 9:6–9. The broader narrative is the story of Abraham and the fulfillment of God's promise of descendants. Textual traditions confirm that Paul has conflated Gen 18:10 and 18:14. The issue is theodicy and God's faithfulness to his word, very similar in nature to the use of this text in *4 Ezra* 6:35–9:25. Interestingly, rabbinic tradition concords with Paul's idea that incorporation into the people of God is by faith and that this is the meaning of "in Isaac." The second occurrence of Israel in 9:6 is ecclesial (the church), and this meaning does not contradict 9:1–5. The broader narrative structure of Gen 18–21 is imperative for Paul's point in 9:6–13. Ishmael "is the pattern for non-believing Israel," and this fulfills God's purpose to bless all families through Abraham (194). The "called" verb in 9:7 is naming, not summons (a tip of the hat in the Arminian direction). Dunn's shift away from the covenant category as central to Pauline exegesis is rejected; rather, Abasciano insists that intertextual study in Paul strongly reaffirms that covenant is foundational (219).

Abasciano convincingly shows that Paul's intertextuality is narratively grounded in the Scripture of Israel, and, most importantly, in the warp and woof of the Genesis story. Paul finds in the patriarchal story of what defines Israel and defends God a typological analogy that corresponds to Israel in her present encounter with Messiah, her new covenant rejection in order not to destroy her utterly, and her potential recovery by faith, as for all families of the earth. Paul's gospel is the dynamic power of God unto salvation, even as promised to Abraham that he would be a blessing to all families of the earth, for the Jew first, and also for the Greek. Along the way, Abasciano also shows that Paul was not some hermeneutical wild card in

his synagogue setting, doing things with Israel's Scripture that no one else had contemplated. Themes and emphases important to Paul from these same Old Testament texts surface repeatedly in Jewish textual and interpretive traditions. Paul's distinctive but controversial conclusion is that Christ is the fulfillment of all the patriarchal promises, who covers even Israel's present rejection. That conclusion and the way Paul works this out in Rom 9–11 forever will be Paul's unique contribution to Israel's interpretive traditions.

*–Gerald Stevens, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*

*Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude as Scripture: The Shaping and Shape of a Canonical Collection.* By David R. Nienhuis and Robert W. Wall. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. 314 pages. Softcover, $30.00.

*Reading the Epistles* is penned by David R. Nienhuis and Robert W. Wall, colleagues at Seattle Pacific University. The dissatisfaction of the authors with typical treatments of the Catholic Epistles (CE) serves as the impetus for the text. They therefore hope to revitalize interest in the collection through their work, which is directed toward both lay and scholarly readers. The authors are troubled by the manner in which critical scholarship often ignores the church and intend for *Reading the Epistles* to serve as a resource for the local church.

The authors are indebted to Brevard Childs for the methodology employed in their text. While *Reading the Epistles* does not offer a formal dialogue with the work of Childs, Nienhuis and Wall intend for it to be read in conjunction with *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul: The Canonical Shaping of the Pauline Corpus* (2008), in order that the reader might gain a more complete understanding of the canonical interpretation of NT epistles. Nienhuis and Wall assert that interpreting the CE as a whole yields greater insight than reading the books in isolation.

The text is divided into three parts. In part 1, the authors present their approach, which considers how the shaping and shape of the seven-book canon impacts interpretation. Nienhuis and Wall first summarize scholarly perceptions of the CE, noting that, surprisingly, even Childs himself "saw no compelling reason to read the letters together as a single canonical witness" (5). By way of response, Nienhuis and Wall assert that their own methodology resolves perceived difficulties by emphasizing the "ancient canonical process" by which the CE canon was formed. As a result, canonical intent supersedes authorial intent, and "original meaning" is found within the canonical whole rather than the historical audience. To support their methodology Nienhuis and Wall present a three-fold "ethics of canonization," which describes the work of the Spirit in guiding the canon into an optimal form that would best accomplish the purposes of God in the world (15–16).

Nienhuis and Wall assert that the CE is the "pièce de résistance" that completes the entire canon of scripture (17). They assert that the CE canon and the letters of Paul create a mutual conversation that is moderated by Acts, further arguing that the "Pauline reductionism" that "displace[s] the ethics of a holy life" is balanced by an apostolic witness to Jesus that focuses the reader's attention on holy living (56, 275). The importance of the CE is founded upon the four "Pillars of Jerusalem": James, Peter, John, and Jude, eyewitnesses to the life and ministry of Christ and exemplars of the Christian faith. To conclude part 2, Nienhuis and Wall adopt and adapt Tertullian's rule of faith into five theological elements through which each book of the CE is filtered. These categories can be generically described as God, Christ, Holy Spirit, Christian community, and creation (72–73).

Part 2, the lengthiest section of the text, is comprised of introductions to each book of the CE canon. The introductions provide information on the composition and canonization of each letter as well as a section-by-section commentary and theological summary. The introductions do not consist of the traditional categories of author, date, and setting. Rather, each introduction begins with an investigation of the canonical author. The real author of the text is virtually irrelevant, and salient authorial characteristics are gleaned only from the writings of the NT. Likewise, concerns over dating and audience are subsumed into the canonical portrait painted by Scripture.

The final section of the book draws together information from parts 1 and 2 to outline a "unifying theology of the Catholic Epistle collection" (247). The authors stress that "the theological deposit of each CE, when taken up and used as a canonical whole, articulates a more fluent and influential word that more effectively forms the Christian faith and witness of its readers than does their use as individual documents" (247). While Nienhuis and Wall do not prescribe a strictly linear reading of the texts, they do assert that the canonical sequence forms an order of reading that provides maximal benefit.

Nienhuis and Wall are to be commended for an insightful presentation of the CE. Their appreciation of Scripture as the genuinely inspired and cohesive Word of God, along with their insistence on scriptural efficacy in the life of the believer is much appreciated. Their love of Scripture and desire to edify the community of faith shines through in their writing.

However, significant problems with the theology and methodology of the text must be noted. Throughout the text, the authors repeatedly advocate a works-based salvation. Their assertions that the CE provide a much-needed corrective to Paul's message of salvation by faith alone represent a misunderstanding of both Pauline and CE theology. The arguments against Paul are the same as those leveled against him since the first century. Paul does not advocate a faith unconcerned with obedience to Christ. Indeed, he specifically addresses such concerns (Rom 6:2).

A second major problem with the text is the methodology employed by the authors. Certainly, canonical criticism has many proponents and its attention to the overall context of Scripture is appreciated. However, Nienhuis and Wall fail to make a case for their preference of canonical form over compositional form. They point to difficulties in determining the historical author and date of each biblical text, yet just because the specific historical circumstances behind each text are difficult to ascertain, should scholarship abandon the effort? Certainly not. Furthermore, the biblical text is clear that all Scripture is divinely inspired (2 Tim 3:16). Yet, do such verses indicate that the canon is inspired as well? If Nienhuis and Wall presuppose a scriptural basis for their methodology, then they do not present it. Canon criticism also raises numerous questions. For instance, why is *this* particular canon the inspired one? Indeed, variations on the Christian and Jewish canons exist in various sects/denominations around the world. Additionally, what of the deuterocanonical books of the Catholic canon? The authors even use the work of the great Catholic scholar Jerome to support their own assertions.

Overall, Nienhuis and Wall accomplish their purpose. In partially directing *Reading the Epistles* toward a lay audience, the authors ask a great deal of the average churchgoer endeavoring to read their text. While the book is not overly technical, the level of detail may be difficult for lay readers to ingest. However, aside from the problems stated above, the authors offer many excellent new insights on the cohesiveness of the CE, such as a James/Jude inclusio for the CE. Further, the call for a greater appreciation for the CE is well sounded. The appreciation of the authors for the literary artistry and cohesiveness of the collection is a welcome contribution to NT scholarship that should lead to further investigations into the unity of the CE.

*—Andrea L. Robinson, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*

*Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit: Jewish Daily Life in the Time of Jesus*. By Jodi Magness. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. xv + 335 pages. Softcover, $25.00.

*Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit* is expertly written by the prolific scholar Jodi Magness. Magness is Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Early Judaism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Magness specializes in the archaeology of the ancient Near East, as her book, *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit*, reflects. Magness has also appeared as an archaeological expert on various television programs, as well as the documentary "Jerusalem." Her archaeological fieldwork is extensive, with her most recent project being the Huqoq excavation in Israel.[2]

According to Magness, the original manuscript of *Stone and Dung* focused primarily upon the archaeological evidence for purity practices of Second Temple period Jews. However, based

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[2]"Jodi Magness," available at http://www.jodimagness.org/.

upon critiques of her work, Magness revised the book to focus upon aspects of Jewish daily life. Even in revised form, Magness retains the emphasis and develops her arguments within the framework of purity conceptions.

In the preface, Magness explains that the impetus for *Stone and Dung* originally arose out of her archaeological work at Qumran. Although the focus has broadened to encompass other Jewish groups, she still places a strong emphasis on Qumran and the Essenes, an emphasis which proves to be a strength of the book. Magness provides readers with a well-rounded description of the various customs, beliefs, and practices of Second Temple Jews. She shines light on the spectrum of beliefs held by early Jews, from the ascetic practices of the Essenes to the lavish lifestyle of the Jewish upper classes.

Magness makes no claim of providing a comprehensive survey. Rather, she examines selected daily activities based upon available literary and archeological data. Although the Second Temple period boasts an abundance of extant literary and archaeological data, many aspects of life during this period remain obscure. Magness's research in *Stone and Dung* makes a valuable contribution toward filling these gaps.

Magness begins chapter 1, "Footprints in Archaeology and Text," by asserting that no other period in history has been the subject of such fascination and study as the late-Second Temple period in Palestine. This introductory chapter provides a framework for the book, and gives readers a general introduction to Palestine of the Second Temple period. Magness describes and differentiates the major Jewish sects of the period, the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Christians. As a major concern of the text, Magness also delineates conceptions of purity and holiness within the various groups.

The following ten chapters each treat a specific aspect of Jewish life: purification of the body and hands (ch. 2), insects and animals (ch. 3), household vessels (ch. 4), dining customs (ch. 5), Sabbath observance and fasting (ch. 6), coins (ch. 7), garments and *tzitzit* (ch. 8), oil and spit (ch. 9), toilet habits (ch. 10), and burial customs (ch. 11).

Portions of the discussion on household vessels in chapter 4 prove enlightening. Magness discusses imported pottery, which reflects the Romanization of the Jewish elite. Conversely, local pottery reflects the more basic lifestyle of common Jews. However, the disappearance of imported pottery in the first century C.E. likely reflects the Jewish desire to make a unified political statement against the Roman presence. Additionally, the use of vessels crafted from dung appears to have been a common practice. While the concept of dung vessels may seem repellent to modern sensibilities, the use of such appears to have been a common practice. Dung vessels were cheap, easy to produce, and, ironically, insusceptible to impurity.

Chapter 7 describes an interesting collection of coins found along the shore of the Dead Sea. While some scholars propose that the coins originate from a sunken boat, the coins more

likely reflect a practice prescribed in rabbinic literature in which "money consecrated for vows, offerings or tithes that could not be brought to the Jerusalem temple should be cast into the Dead Sea" (104). Further, dissident groups such as the Essenes might have taken part in the practice due to their refusal to take part in the sacrificial cult of the temple.

Chapter 11, a highlight of the book, deals with "Tombs and Burial Customs." Magness utilizes the discussion of common burial practices to shed light on the burial traditions of Jesus and his family. Regarding the crucifixion and interment of the body of Jesus, Magness concludes that the biblical account does, indeed, agree with archaeological data. Magness then disputes the claim that the Talpiyot Tomb is the burial site of the family of Jesus, citing numerous inconsistencies between the life of Jesus and the archaeological data from the site. She also discredits the "James ossuary" as the place of burial for the brother of Jesus.

The final chapter of the book provides a brief overview of Jewish life after the destruction of the temple. While the daily lives of lower class Jews were only peripherally affected, the religious elite and upper classes felt the change most acutely. The priests, having no temple, as well as elite Jewish families were dispersed. Scholars disagree on the extent to which purity concerns were observed following the temple's destruction, although *miqva'ot* and vessels associated with purity concerns virtually disappeared by the fourth century.

Extensive supplementary material follows the final chapter. Throughout the book, Magness makes extensive use of endnotes, which comprise nearly 100 pages of the text. Magness also provides an extensive bibliography and useful indices. The twenty-four pages of illustrations provided roughly halfway through the book might offer a greater contribution to the text had they been interspersed throughout the book to accompany the sections with which they correspond.

Despite the excellent quality of research, the author's attention to detail stymies her at a few points. For example, Magness spends an inordinate amount of time on whether the blue thread of the *tzitzit* is produced from wool or linen. Overall, Magness does well at providing a concise summary of the abundant literary and archaeological data that is available.

*Stone and Dung* is an excellent resource for any scholar or student of the Bible. The writing is clear and accessible, even for non-specialists. Her well-documented and thorough research is a valuable contribution to biblical and archaeological scholarship. She weighs scholarly opinion on points of debate and presents her own logical conclusions. Her assertions are supported with extensive references to rabbinic literature, Greco-Roman literature, Qumranic literature, and biblical material. Magness convincingly demonstrates that Second Temple period Jews were not a homogeneous entity, but a culturally diverse group held together by the common threads of Torah and temple.

*—Andrea L. Robinson, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*

*Telling God's Story: The Biblical Narrative from Beginning to End*. 2nd Edition. By Vang Preben and Terry G. Carter. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013. xv + 430 pages. Hardcover, $39.99.

Due to the growing problem of biblical illiteracy, a change in philosophy regarding how to teach the Bible has developed to better teach the truths of God's Word to the current generation. Preben Vang and Terry Carter employ this narrative method of teaching the Bible. Vang is the chair of the Department of Biblical and Theological Studies at Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida, and Carter is Associate Dean, Pruet School of Christian Studies, and chair of the Christian Ministry Department at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. This second edition attempts to strengthen its pedagogy for conveying the biblical message. The edition contains "pictures, maps, short sidebars, and smaller nuggets of information" (xv). These changes serve the purpose of taking "students through the entire biblical story helping them learn and understand the Bible as one story" (xiv).

This edition features icons, which serve to clarify information and enhance student comprehension. The icons "Digging Deeper," "Bible Questions," "Questions to Study and Ponder," and "Assignments" are laden throughout the chapters to help readers retain the information through a process that supports memorization and reproduction. These updates arose from the experience of the authors teaching this material to undergraduate student in Old and New Testament Survey classes.

Vang and Carter frame the biblical narrative as fourteen episodes, consisting of several acts. The first episodes follow a chronological order, surveying creation, the act of redemption, forming the nation, the Promised Land and sin's power, Israel's king, rebellion and judgment, and captivity and return. The New Testament episodes describe the birth of the Christ child, the ministry of Jesus, the entry into Jerusalem before the crucifixion, the resurrection, the Acts of the apostles and Paul's missionary journeys, church struggles, and looking forward to the eternal city. The conclusion of the book relates the biblical story to the identity of mankind. The who, what, where, and why of life are answered within the story of God's redemption of mankind. The authors explain, "If Jesus is the only way to find true life, the best choice is to trust in him. The biblical story speaks of gaining life from death through the redemption provided by Jesus on the cross. Without it, all people are separated from God" (404).

The strength of the second edition is found in its expanded use of charts, graphs, and other tools for developing a clearer manner of retaining the biblical information. These illustrations are scattered throughout the book and reflect the important points of each chapter. Discussion questions assist in critical thinking and application of each chapter's information. Such pedagogical tools guide the reader and support a premise of the book, which is the importance of Scripture for practical use.

Despite the numerous advantages of Vang and Carter's narrative method of teaching the biblical story, this method may also be the book's greatest weakness. The challenge presented by

this approach is that their method may not properly account for non-narrative literary genre in Scripture, such as the prophetic and wisdom literature. The book commits only five pages to describing those who ministered in the position of a prophet of God. Many descriptive occurrences generalized the prophets without giving specific examples of their ministry and prophetic method (145–49). The section describing wisdom literature, one of the largest sections of the canon, reveals insightful information concerning the books considered in the pericope of wisdom writings. This section, however, is limited to a generalized discussion of the books. The description of the Psalms does not appear to reference specific elements, such as authorship and the different types of Psalms, for understanding the nature of this particular book (204–5). Also, the placement of the section discussing wisdom literature does not appear to support the overall premise of the book. While the book is structured by a narrative approach of Scripture, the section on wisdom literature is placed immediately before the discussion on the New Testament. Placing individual wisdom books alongside corresponding historical books based on time of authorship (such as placing the Psalms near the discussion of David, and placing the Song of Songs and Proverbs near Solomon) would better serve the books narrative approach instead of locating the wisdom literature last in the discussion of the Old Testament. Both of the sections provided beneficial information, but would have benefitted from fuller development. It would appear that the discussion of the prophets and wisdom literature succumbed to the book's emphasis on the narrative style.

Overall, Vang and Carter's book is both innovative and easy for readers to utilize and reproduce within their specific context. The book provides a unique manner of conveying biblical information for practical use and for understanding the meta-narrative of Scripture. Those who serve as laypersons in the local church can benefit from their work. The innovations in the second edition provide a strengthened approach for conveying the biblical information within the narrative process. Hopefully, such a work can be utilized so the telling of God's story affects the way a person thinks and "impacts action as well" (405). By this manner of study, God's story can become our story.

–*Charles B. Rogers Jr., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*

*Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. 3rd edition. By Emanuel Tov. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012. 512 pages. Hardcover, $90.00.

Emanuel Tov is the J. L. Magnes Professor of Bible Emeritus at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and Editor-in-Chief of the Dead Sea Scrolls Publication Project. Tov describes this work as a "handbook to the textual criticism (TC) of the Hebrew Bible" (lvii). He makes the "intrinsic correctness of the presentation rather than the attractiveness" of the subject matter the "primary goal" of the book (lvii). As such, the book serves the purpose of providing an in-depth reference resource for a wide audience, but neither attempts nor claims to be a step-by-step guide for TC of the Hebrew Scriptures.

In chapter 1, Tov argues for the practice of the TC of the Hebrew-Aramaic Scriptures. After detailing examples of textual differences among the witnesses, Tov outlines reasons for the practice of TC on the basis of "mistakes, corrections, and changes in the text," the fact that the Masoretic text does not reflect the original text, and differences between "Inner-Biblical parallel texts" in the Masoretic text (9–17). In light of "the discovery in the Judean desert of many Hebrew-Aramaic texts in 1947," Tov addresses the need for a modern approach to TC before concluding with a brief discussions regarding the rise of text-critical practices and how matters of canonicity and "sacred status" impact TC.

In chapter 2, Tov identifies the key textual witnesses that need to be considered in the practice of TC. He begins with the Hebrew witnesses, which focus on the proto-Masoretic text and the Masoretic text. Tov also gives attention to what he calls "the consonantal framework of the proto-Masoretic text," vocalization, para-textual elements, accentuation, and the Masorah. From here, Tov addresses the Pre-Samaritan texts and the Samaritan Pentateuch, before dealing extensively with the biblical texts found in the Judean desert. The chapter concludes with a brief consideration of additional Hebrew witnesses and how ancient translations are useful in TC.

In chapter 3, Tov addresses the relationship between the text in research before 1947 and after 1947. Tov suggests a "new approach" for defining this relationship. In particular, he suggests that instead of perceiving "a tripartite division of the textual witnesses," one should view the textual witnesses as being a part of a larger number of texts (158). Tov clarifies that his view "challenges the characterization of the textual witnesses as text types and recensions" (159). After noting the central position of Masoretic text both in the research and in tradition, Tov addresses the need for scholars to "accept a view on the original text" (161). He suggests there are essentially two options for acceptance (163–69). He concludes by addressing the development of the biblical text in "textual theories," debunking an assumption regarding the stabilization of the biblical text, and postulating a new description of how the text has developed over time.

In chapter 4, Tov addresses the matter of the copying and transmitting of the biblical text until the time of the Middle Ages (191). He addresses topics such as the types of material used in the copying of the text, the different writing practices of the scribes, orthographic matters, and the different traditions of the scribal schools that contributed to the manuscript evidence. He concludes with matters regarding textual transmission.

In chapter 5, Tov introduces the "essence and aims" of TC. He writes, "As a rule, textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible aims neither at the compositions written by the biblical authors, nor at previous oral stages, if such existed, but only at that stage (those stages) of the composition(s) that is (are) attested in the textual evidence. The very assumption of earlier stages is based merely on logical deductions and cannot be proven." Tov provides a helpful explanation of the process of TC (265) before concluding with a brief discussion of the different types of variants within TC (267–68).

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 are inextricably related to the theory and praxis of TC presented in chapter 5. In chapter 6, Tov provides guidelines for assessing the validity of variants on the basis of external and internal criteria. In chapter 7, he addresses the relationship between TC and literary criticism as it relates to "literary or editorial variants" (284). Tov wants his readers to be aware of the need to distinguish between the literary growth of a source prior to its final form and actual variants that appear during the process of textual transmission (324). Elements of literary growth should not be evaluated by text critical methods. In chapter 8, Tov addresses the matter of conjectural emendation. He begins the chapter by correcting common misunderstandings of this topic before briefly outlining the "three main types of emendations" (331).

In the two final chapters of the book, Tov address the resources available to the student in the form of printed editions of the Hebrew-Aramaic Scriptures and computer-assisted tools as of 2011. In chapter 9, he gives cursory evaluations of the different editions of the Hebrew Scriptures. In chapter 10, he considers the advantages and disadvantages of technology in TC, without going into details on how to use the technology itself beyond the basic features.

It would be hard to overstate the importance or quality of this book. The author is brilliant, fair, critical, and intellectually honest. His attention to detail, his ability to explain difficult concepts, and his concise writing style makes this book an indispensable resource for all serious students of the Hebrew Bible. The author's inclusion of a glossary, a didactic guide, thirty-two "plates" of manuscripts, his discussion of matters like the apparatus of the Masorah and the significance of translations in textual criticism, his presentation of the essence and aims of textual criticism, and his gratuitous use of examples make this work one of the most complete handbooks for critical study ever published. It is the standard in its field.

If a weakness must be identified in Tov's work, it would be his presupposition of source-critical conclusions regarding the composition of the text. Understandably, text critics struggle to define what is meant by the term "original text." Furthermore, Tov's weakness in this area may not be unique to his work. The author's footnote on page 167 is illustrative of the difficulty all text critics face. It reads, "The task of the textual critic is not to restore the text of the sources, nor even of some earlier state of the composite work, but only the form in which it left the hand of the last redactor." The difficulty at this point is this: how is one to determine when the text left the hand of the last redactor? To what extent is redaction criticism to be employed in the work of textual criticism? This is not to suggest that the author's presuppositions are necessarily wrong, but that they make the goal of TC particularly elusive.

Overall, Tov's work is exceedingly informative and serves as a helpful guide for students and scholars with an interest in TC.

*–Casey Hough, First Baptist Church of Camden, AR*

*The Testing of God's Sons: The Refining of Faith as a Biblical Theme*. By Gregory S. Smith. Nashville: B&H, 2014. 240 pages. Hardcover, $24.99.

Gregory S. Smith is Associate Vice President for Academic Administration and Associate Professor of Bible at the College at Southwestern in Fort Worth, Texas. He received his Ph.D. and M.Div. from Southern Seminary, an M.A. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and the B.S. from Purdue University. Smith is a member of the Evangelical Theological Society, the Institute for Biblical Research, and the Society of Biblical Literature.

One of the greatest challenges for pastors is helping those who suffer to better understand their circumstances. In *The Testing of God's Sons: The Refining of Faith as a Biblical Theme*, Gregory S. Smith traces the themes of testing and suffering throughout Scripture in an attempt to connect them, to contextualize them in the lives of biblical heroes, and to develop a pastoral and practical understanding of biblical testing. Smith concludes by suggesting that God is obligated to test His faith family in a fallen world as His love is established through suffering and authenticated through testing.

Smith introduces the work by exploring the biblical language and concepts of testing and comparing them to texts from the ancient world. He establishes a range of testing from mild (a revealing of faith) to medium (an authentication of faith) to hot (a refining of faith). At one end of this spectrum lies testing as a "Quality Check" of faith while the other represents a "Quality Improvement." Chapter 1 situates the biblical narrative within a broader understanding of testing drawn from non-biblical texts from the ancient world, considering testing from a variety of angles and perspectives to help readers understand how thinkers historically understood the purposes for testing. Chapter 2 is a comprehensive look at testing in the Joseph narrative as well as a survey of previous scholarship. Smith then investigates testing in Joseph's life and connects this to the Pentateuch's portrayal of testing and its importance as a sign of

covenantal relationship with a loving God. Chapter 3 examines testing as a coherently-presented theme throughout the Pentateuch as evidence of God's concern for the development of faith and fidelity in the lives of His followers. The fourth and longest chapter is devoted to a broad expansion of the theme of testing by observing it in the lives of Adam, the Patriarchs, Israel, Jesus, and the church. In the final chapter, Smith tersely concludes the book with a three-page summary of his thinking.

I was drawn to the book because of my background as a social worker and urban missionary. I have observed deep pain and suffering, from the ravages of poverty and inner city violence to the grieving children of a prominent Christian who committed suicide. Frequently I am asked, "Why?" and am called upon to give an answer both firmly grounded in Scripture and descriptive of a loving, caring heavenly Father. Pat, simplistic answers rarely suffice.

Smith's work does much to foster an understanding of why God allows trials in the lives of His people. Far from being remote and distant, the God of the universe is constantly working to draw humanity to Himself, shaping and directing our lives to wholeness and holiness, and, most importantly, to relationship with Him. Joseph's betrayal into slavery by his family provides redemption for Israel when famine threatens their decimation. The suffering and death of Jesus provides the means for redemption of all humanity. The church suffers with Christ for the purpose of being glorified with Him. Thus, Smith connects the themes of testing from the Old to the New Testament, and provides a context for understanding testing and suffering in the lives of God's people today.

_The Testing of God's Sons_ is not an easy read. To understand its more subtle nuances requires a basic understanding of biblical languages and thus would appeal more to a seasoned theologian or seminary-prepared pastor than to the layman. The prose can be a bit cumbersome at times and reads more like a doctoral dissertation than a trade publication on suffering.

Despite these limitations, Smith left me with much food for thought. First, I applaud the way he bridged the theme across the two testaments by giving a broad understanding of testing through the entire biblical narrative. Second, his attention to detail, including comparing his thinking to previous writers as well as drawing upon ancient texts, provided an amazing context for understanding the concepts. Finally, I was deeply appreciative of Smith's conceptualization of testing as both a spectrum (mild-revealing of faith, medium-authentication of faith, and hot-refining of faith) and a category (testing as check of the quality of one's faith and testing as an improver of one's faith).

There are some books on our shelves that we loan to those in need; this is not one of those. There are other books that provide a deeper understanding of a concept and often become a sermon series. _The Testing of God's Sons_ falls into the latter category. It will deepen your understanding of the concept of testing in the context of a loving God's covenantal relationship with

His children and will inform one's preaching, teaching, and counseling. For those willing to wade through the intricate and sometimes cumbersome details of the book, there are distinct rewards.

–_Kevin J. Brown, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA_

_Victory through the Lamb: A Guide to Revelation in Plain Language_. By Mark Wilson. Wooster, Ohio: Weaver Book Company, 2014. 223 pages. Softcover, $15.99.

Weaver Book Company is a newcomer to the already-crowded religious publishing field. The company is the vision of Jim Weaver, who launched out on his own in 2013 after previ-

ously working for Baker, Kregel, and Thomas Nelson. The publisher's target audience is pastors, church leaders, and serious lay students. The author of this volume, Mark Wilson, has lived in Turkey since 2004 and is founder and director of the Asia Minor Research Center. He holds positions associated with the University of South Africa, Regent University, and Stellenbosch University. He is English editor for the Turkish journals *Adalya* and *Anmed*, and is a member of numerous academic societies, including the Society of Biblical Literature, the Evangelical Theological Society, and the Institute of Biblical Research. His writing principally is focused on his area of research in Turkey, especially with the seven churches of Revelation.[2]

Wilson's target audience is pastoral and lay leadership in the church. He frames his book on the over-arching theme of suffering and persecution in Revelation, which resonates with the views I expressed in my recent publication.[3] Wilson has seen martyrdom of Christians first-hand in Turkey and understands the issues of the church outside the United States, where the distorting lens of an affluent and religiously non-persecuted society has sold out the gospel and perverted the true message of the New Testament. We in the United States sorely need Wilson's overall message.

Each of the book's twelve chapters has three units: a martyr account, a translation of the Revelation from the Greek, and a commentary focused on the theme of victory. Each chapter begins with a vignette on martyrdom, the majority from church history. These powerful stories reinforce Wilson's approach to give the reader a vision of the nature of the victory that John is presenting. The author's own translation effort is commendable, but superfluous. The translation rarely is even referenced in the following commentary, so unnecessarily lengthens the volume and impedes reading.

Historical contextualization is an issue. Authorship is one of these historical parameters. Wilson says the author of Revelation is John the apostle. The carefully-studied arguments of the church father Dionysius based upon the Greek of Revelation simply are ignored. Wilson maintains the myth of John's "exile" to Patmos, despite the preponderance of historical evidence against such a conjecture. Wilson also asserts (the apostle) John was a "target" for Roman authorities as a Jew from the Judean war zone, enhanced by John being a prominent leader of the sect that recently was persecuted in Rome (Nero and the fire). Thus, John instantly is in the crosshairs of Roman authorities in Asia the moment he sets foot in Ephesus. Yet, we have no specific evidence of any of this highly speculative conjecture directly related to John the apostle being on a Roman "most wanted" poster. More likely historically, Roman government officials did not even have a clue who John the apostle was, even begging the question of authorship.

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[2]See his *Charts on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007); *The Victor Sayings in the Book of Revelation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007); and *Revelation*, in Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015).

[3]See my *Revelation: The Past and Future of John's Apocalypse* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014).

Dating also controls contextualization. Wilson depends upon a surprisingly literal reading of the kings list in Rev 17. (Surprising, because he insists on so much in the book being symbolic.) He presumes to start with Augustus, even though John does not tell us where to start counting, and commentators have given arguments for starting with anyone, from Julius Caesar (the beginning of the imperial line of Augustus) to Galba (the beginning of civil war in Rome). Wilson further ignores the complications of counting the three civil war emperors after Nero's suicide (as a group? as individuals? not at all?). Wilson concludes Revelation can be precisely dated at AD 69, shortly before Jerusalem's destruction. Wilson ignores that his own literal sequence applied to the kings list in Rev 17 makes the eighth king in this list to be Vitellius, the last civil war emperor. So, Vitellius is the king in whom, by this reckoning, Revelation's imagery is fulfilled? The elephant in the room is that Vitellius was dispatched ignominiously by execution in December of 69 after only eight months in office. Thus, Wilson wants to accept patristic evidence for authorship by John the apostle but completely ignore that same evidence clearly indicating Revelation was written in the time of Domitian (Irenaeus). Further, Wilson fails to mention the evidence that suggests churches did not even exist in Smyrna or Thyatira (two of the seven churches in Revelation) until after the Jewish War. Wilson thinks his dating argument is confirmed by the command to measure a temple in Rev 11:1 as proof that the Jerusalem temple is still standing (89, note 1). However, we never are told specifically what temple is to be measured in the first place, nor even where, much less the temple in Jerusalem. Wilson also appeals to the "exile to Patmos" theory to explain that John physically could not fulfill this command to measure the temple, so this event has to be some type of teleportation to Jerusalem experience John had—despite that John makes no allusion to such an experience whatsoever, in dramatic contrast to the experience Ezekiel recounts in Ezek 8:3 that makes teleportation explicit (89). Wilson further uses the AD 69 dating scheme to argue that the two witnesses of Rev 11 are Peter and Paul, recently martyred in Rome by Nero. All of this argumentation is undergirded by a dubious dating scheme and is riddled with difficulties.

Unwarranted overstatements occur and cloud interpretation. Wilson can leap a chasm of historical ambiguity to create the fiction of historical event. Take Antipas, the martyr in Pergamum revealed in Rev 2:13. Wilson, absent any warrant, asserts that "the governor of Asia, with his seat at Pergamum, thus had a direct role in ordering the death of Antipas" (37). John of Patmos says nothing of the sort. Antipas could have been killed by local mob action that had absolutely nothing to do with the governor of Asia. Again, Wilson says John weeps in Rev 5 because, like Isaiah, "he realizes his spiritual state of unworthiness" (54). This Isaiah comment is a false parallel and an alien importation, since John himself, in distinct contrast to Isaiah, actually says nothing about a sense of unworthiness in Rev 5, and doubly since the reason for weeping actually is explicit in the context: not finding one able to open the book. Another example is the heavenly army following the rider on the white horse in Rev 19. Wilson presents this army as a description of the resurrection of the saints from the dead. John, however, has no problem describing resurrection as resurrection (Rev 20:5–6), and framing this army as a resurrection allusion lacks evidence from John himself.
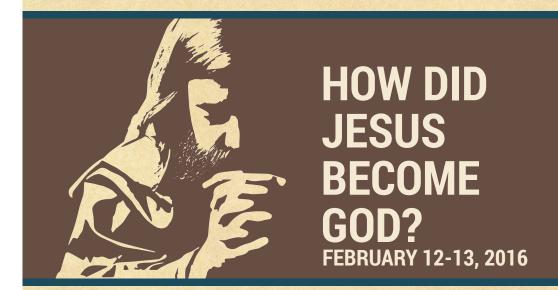
Understanding John's literary strategy also can be lacking. As one example, since the 144,000 of Rev 7 are from the twelve tribes of Israel and later are called "firstfruits" in Rev 14:4, Wilson concludes this group has to be Jewish, and represents initial Jewish believers who responded to the gospel as depicted throughout Luke's account in Acts (76). This literal reading in Rev 7 is surprisingly without literary nuance, since such a reading misconstrues John's regular literary strategy of presenting dual Old Testament/New Testament images simultaneously to figure one theological truth. Just as the Old Testament image of the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev 5:5) immediately is transfigured into the New Testament reality of the slaughtered Lamb standing (Rev 5:6), likewise, the Old Testament image of the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev 7:1–8) immediately is transfigured into the New Testament reality of the great multitude (Rev 7:9–17). John's dual images work in concert to represent one reality, not discrete entities. In terms of literary strategy, John immediately transforms everything Old Testament into a Christological corollary. On occasion, Wilson even can ignore what John explicitly says. Wilson insists those who participate in the thousand year reign of Rev 20 necessarily must include even those who have not been martyred for their testimony; John explicitly indicates the opposite (193). Wilson further thinks that the deception of 16:13–16 that leads to the battle of Armageddon is the same as that of Satan loosed in 20:7–8 that leads to the battle of Gog and Magog, conflating Armageddon and Gog and Magog as the same battle (195). Such a conclusion is illogical and inconsistent, given that Wilson already (rightly) has identified the issues of Armageddon as those within the first-century setting of the seven churches of Asia (154).

Such issues aside, Wilson's commentary is rich with theological reflection on the nature of the victory of Christ in the church. His essential exegetical point is: "Even though Revelation's story line advances slowly into the future, it remains anchored in the events occurring among the Christians in the Seven Churches" (53). That story line is one of faithful witness in persecution. Thus, Wilson insists that Jesus' victory *requires* tribulation. Wilson rightly notes that reference to "coming like a thief" and "naked" in the trumpet series of judgments (16:15) are John's own intratextual allusions to Sardis (3:3) and Laodicea (3:17–18) to make clear that "Jesus' audience in the Seven Churches remains in mind" (154). Likewise, "Harmagedon" is no real place in Israel and meant by John symbolically (155). The great whore of Rev 17 is dea *Roma*, patron goddess of the city of Rome. Thus, throughout the commentary, the immediate context of Revelation is the seven churches of first-century Asia Minor, which is dealing with the idolatrous claims of the Roman Empire that have compromised a true, gospel confession of Jesus as Lord. Wilson makes clear this story continually will reprise itself in church history and always challenge the church with the specter of martyrdom until Jesus comes and God sovereignly reigns supreme in the New Jerusalem.

–*Gerald Stevens, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*