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Editorial Introduction



Adam Harwood, PhD

Adam Harwood is associate professor of theology, occupying the McFarland Chair of Theology; director of the Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry; and editor, Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

The four articles in this issue of the *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* address the topics of persecution and martyrdom, Old Testament theology, Baptist confessions, and New Testament theology. The articles are followed by reviews of books in the fields of biblical studies, theology, and ministry.

J. Tristan Hurley is an adjunct professor at L. R. Scarborough College, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. In “Finding the *Missio Dei* in Persecution and Martyrdom,” Hurley revisits the history of North Africa and the teachings of the New Testament to discern the benefit for the church in persecution and martyrdom. In “From ‘Fear’ to ‘the Fear of the Lord,’” Kon Hwon Yang, associate professor of Old Testament Studies at Gateway Seminary in Ontario, California, explores the themes of fear and fear of the Lord in four passages from the book of Exodus. E. Peter Frank Lumpkins is director of TMU Press at Truett-McConnell University in Cleveland, Georgia. In “The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith: Reevaluating Its Impact on Baptists in the South During the Nineteenth Century,” Lumpkins presents a persuasive case that a key confession influenced Baptist churches and associations via an earlier version and at an earlier period than most Baptist historians presently identify. In “Evaluating the Points of Congruence and Incongruence between the Doctrines of Justification of John Calvin and N. T. Wright,” Robert F. Littlefield compares the writings of Calvin and Wright on eight doctrinal points to argue that the two are much closer theologically than some critics of the new perspective on Paul might expect.

May the Lord use this issue of JBTM to develop in its readers a critical mind but a gentle spirit, loving God and others (Matt 22:36–40) while pursuing excellence in academic and ministry pursuits.

Finding the *Missio Dei* in Persecution and Martyrdom



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Christof Sauer observes,

Rarely have Western theologies engaged with the reality of suffering, persecution and martyrdom for Christ and their significance for mission. From a Western perspective, persecution is often something associated with the past. A few might know it is happening elsewhere, but the general assumption seems to be, “it will never happen here”.... Could it be that on closer study the topic might be of more relevance than we think, and that an exercise in globalizing theology might uncover some of our blind spots and correct our own theology?¹

Christians all over the world experience persecution. For instance, throughout the Middle East and North Africa, Christians are seeing what journalist Stan Guthrie refers to as a “renewed assault on the church.”² Raymond Ibrahim asserts, “Although Muslim persecution of Christians is one of the most dramatic stories of our time, it is also one of the least known in the West.”³ Churches are destroyed, families are torn apart, women are forced into slavery, and exile and murder are a reality for the majority Christian population. Rarely do Christians in the West place a concerned eye or academic study to the phenomena of Christian persecution. Eugene Weiner also attests to the “western” mindset regarding martyrdom and persecution, “In the modern western world, the psychological climate discourages total commitment and martyrdom. Individuals willing to martyr themselves for a cause strikes us as irrational and motivated by psychological problems.”⁴

¹Christof Sauer, “A Theology of Persecution and Martyrdom: An Example of Globalizing Theology,” in *The Globalization of Christianity: Implications for Christian Ministry and Theology*, ed. Gordon L. Heath and Steven M. Studebaker (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 135–36.

²Stan Guthrie, “Religious War: North Africa’s Christians Multiply amid Persecution,” *Christian Headlines*, January 25, 2013, www.Christianheadlines.com/ReligiousWar/ (accessed August 11, 2017).

³Raymond Ibrahim, *Crucified Again: Exposing Islam’s New War on Christians* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2013), 8.

⁴Eugene Weiner and Anita Weiner, *The Martyr’s Conviction: A Sociological Analysis* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 2.

Persecution is not a new phenomenon; persecution is a constant reality for Christians.⁵ In 1999, a group of international mission leaders outlined some key values for moving forward in a new century of missions with a key focus on persecution. This particular group published the *Iguassu Affirmation* which stated,

Suffering, persecution, and martyrdom are present realities for many Christians. We acknowledge that our obedience in mission involves suffering and recognize that the church is experiencing this. We affirm our privilege and responsibility to pray for those undergoing persecution. We are called to share in their pain, do what we can to relieve their sufferings, and work for human rights and religious freedom.⁶

While the *Iguassu Affirmation* rightly brings attention to the reality of persecution, it does not present an understanding that persecution can possibly be a means that God uses to grow the church, mature individual Christians, and advance the message of Jesus Christ. Glenn Penner asserts,

Much of the problem, it seems to me, comes down to a failure to adequately consider many of the scriptural passages on suffering in their context. For example, it is rarely recognized that the New Testament authors are not overly concerned to answer the question of suffering in general. That such suffering occurs is recognized, but most of the New Testament passages that address suffering do so in the context of suffering for righteousness and not because of sin or because one lives in a fallen world.⁷

This article seeks to understand persecution and martyrdom in a Christian context as a vital part of the *missio Dei*. This article, due to brevity will primarily look at persecution and martyrdom in relation to the *missio Dei* within only historical and biblical contexts. Pastors, theologians, and teachers often recognize the reality of persecution and martyrdom, but do not often recognize the possibility that God uses persecution and martyrdom to grow the church, mature individual Christians, and advance the message of Jesus Christ. Christians should be encouraged to confront persecution and martyrdom from a biblical perspective and view it as a part of the *missio Dei*.

⁵Todd Johnson asserts that since AD 33, more than 70 million Christians have been martyred. He states, "Martyrdom is a consistent feature of church history and occurs in every Christian tradition and confession. . . . The rate of martyrdom across the world throughout the ages has been remarkably constant at 0.8 percent." Todd M. Johnson, "The Demographics of Martyrdom," in *Sorrow and Blood: Christian Mission in Contexts of Suffering, Persecution, and Martyrdom*, ed. William D. Taylor, Antonia van der Meer, and Reg Reimer (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 2012), 33.

⁶William D. Taylor, ed., *Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000), 15.

⁷Glenn Penner, "A Biblical Theology of Persecution and Discipleship," in *Sorrow and Blood*, 72.

Defining Terms

It will be beneficial at this point to define certain terms which will be used throughout this article: *missio Dei*, persecution, and martyrdom. The term *missio Dei* is a Latin expression meaning “mission of God,” and as a theological concept focuses on how God works to redeem his people.⁸ Understanding missions from the perspective of *missio Dei* elevates both missions and evangelism from the level of human activities in a postmodern world, rightly showing missions as participating in something which God is already doing.⁹

In a modern setting, the phrase *missio Dei* was introduced in the mid-twentieth century at the 1952 International Missionary Council held in Willingen, Germany.¹⁰ In Willingen, the term *missio Dei* took on the contemporary missiological-theological meaning with strong connotations associated with the doctrine of the Trinity, the idea that God sent his Son, and the Son sent the Spirit and differentiated itself from an ecclesiastical and soteriological term.¹¹ Amid minute discussion of the *missio Dei* since Willingen, Darrell L. Guder comments: “Mission as *missio Dei* necessarily makes relevant Western understanding of mission. God cannot be restricted to what has been and is happening in Western cultural Christianity. God’s work is universal in its impact.”¹² As a twenty-first century theological concept, the term *missio Dei* is largely defined by David Bosch in his *Transforming Mission*. Bosch writes,

During the past half a century . . . there has been a subtle but nevertheless decisive shift toward understanding mission as God’s mission. . . . Our mission has no life of its own: only in the hands of the sending God can it truly be called mission, not least since the missionary initiative comes from God alone. . . . In the new image mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God. . . . Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. . . . The understanding of mission as *missio Dei* has been embraced by virtually all Christian persuasions.¹³

⁸See Philip L. Wicker, “Mission from the Margins: The *Missio Dei* in the Crisis of World Christianity,” *International Review of Mission* 93.369 (2004): 182–99.

⁹See Leslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (London: SPCK, 1995). See also J. A. Kirk, *What is Mission? Theological Explorations* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1999).

¹⁰Tormod Engelsen, “*Missio Dei*: The Understanding and Misunderstanding of a Theological Concept in European Churches and Missiology,” *International Review of Mission* 92.367 (2003): 482.

¹¹Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Conflict: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004), 290.

¹²Darrell L. Guder, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2000), 20.

¹³David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shift in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 389–90.

Persecution is a term that continues to be largely untouched by theologians, as Peter Kuzmic laments, “Contemporary reference works on religion move remarkably easily from ‘perfectionism’ to ‘perseverance.’”¹⁴ In a biblical sense, the primary term used for persecution is *diōkō* in Greek and *rādap* in Hebrew. These two particular terms and their forms carry the idea of being pressed, pursued, driven out, harassed, and brought to justice. Some examples include Gen 44:4; Deut 30:7; Job 19:22; Prov 11:9; Matt 5:11–12; Luke 11:49; 17:23; Acts 8:1; and Phil 3:12. One other Greek word, *thlipsis*, is used and carries the idea of affliction, tribulation, and oppression.¹⁵ Throughout the Bible, the idea of persecution is seen in numerous ways, from people persecuting God, people persecuting people, nations persecuting nations, the wicked persecuting the righteous, and even the righteous persecuting the wicked.¹⁶

Perhaps persecution can be difficult to define because the term carries with it a broad spectrum ranging from unjust actions to intense hostility, torture, restrictions, and death; and as Paul Marshall aptly adds, persecution rarely has a single “impetus.”¹⁷ A correct definition of persecution should include the broad range of reality that religious persecution brings. Persecution will be defined as “any unjust action of varying levels of hostility perpetrated primarily on the basis of religion and directed at Christians, resulting in varying levels of harm as it is considered from the victim’s perspective.”¹⁸

Much like the term persecution, the word martyr is just as troublesome to define. In a biblical sense, the term martyr is simply a transliteration of the Greek term *martus* and carries the idea of being a witness. The term martyr does not always carry with it an association with suffering and persecution; rather, the term *martus* is more closely related to the idea of a witness in a legal sense. For instance, throughout the New Testament (in texts such as Matt 18:16; Mark 14:63; Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8; 2:32; Rom 1:9; 2 Cor 1:23; and Heb 10:28) the term *martus* references the idea of being present for something, or speaking about an event in which one was present. While the term martyr may not historically be

¹⁴Peter Kuzmic, “To Suffer with Our Lord: Christian Responses to Religious Persecution,” *The Brandywine Review of Faith and International Affairs* 2.3 (Winter 2005): 35.

¹⁵Examples of where *thlipsis* and its various forms are used in the New Testament are Matt 24:9, 21; Acts 11:19; Rom 12:12; 2 Cor 4:17; 8:13; Col 1:24; 2 Thess 1:6; James 1:27; Rev 2:9, 22; 7:14.

¹⁶Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 599.

¹⁷Paul Marshall, “Persecution of Christians in the Contemporary World,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 1 (January 1998): 2.

¹⁸For this article, persecution is defined with an emphasis on the Christian religion. However, religious persecution is defined by Tieszen as “an unjust action of varying levels of hostility directed at a believer or believers or a particular religion of belief system through systematic oppression or through irregular harassment or discrimination which may not limit these believers’ ability to practice their faith, resulting in varying levels of harm as it is considered from the victim’s perspective, each action having religion as its primary motivator.” Charles L. Tieszen, “Redefining Persecution,” in *Sorrow and Blood*, 47.

associated with suffering, throughout the books of Acts and Revelation, attesting to the events and lordship of Jesus Christ sometimes leads to bloodshed and suffering, which may contribute to the development of the term *martus* having its contemporary meaning, “a person who is killed because of their religious or other beliefs.”¹⁹

Norbert Brox in his influential *Zeuge und Märtyrer* asserts that it was the publication of *Martyrdom of Polycarp* in the middle of the second century when the meaning of *martus* shifted from its classical meaning to taking on the idea of being killed for one’s witness and devotion to Jesus Christ.²⁰ Hence, most likely it was Christians that redefined the term and developed the idea of martyrdom. A strong case can be made, however, that the contemporary idea of martyrdom predates Christianity because Socrates and other early philosophers were hailed as martyrs, or even proto-martyrs.²¹ The main difficulty in defining the term martyr is in understanding the boundaries in which the term can or should not be applied. For this article, the term martyr will be associated with an individual who is killed for his/her witness and devotion to Jesus Christ, yet the author acknowledges that the term martyr can be applied to individuals who are killed due to the other beliefs.

An immediate need exists to merge the experience of missionaries, national believers, and theologians of both the West and the Global South regarding the purpose and—most important—the missiological dimensions of persecution and whether or not persecution and martyrdom relate to the *missio Dei*.²² The pressing need is to recapture not only a theology of persecution but also a missiology of persecution to frame Christian thought and undergird Christian perseverance to advance the gospel of Christ even through adversity.

Why North Africa?

The primary scope of this article is placed on the northern coast of Africa, often referred to as Roman North Africa. Maureen Tilley clarifies this as a reference to “the land north of the Sahara, excluding Egypt and Ethiopia, but including modern-day Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya.”²³ North Africa, and Africa in general, is an extremely important factor

¹⁹Note the following New Testament verses as connecting the idea of witness to bloodshed and suffering: Acts 22:20; Rev 1:5; 2:13; 3:14; 17:6. *Oxford Dictionary*, s.v. “martyr.”

²⁰Norman Brox, *Zeuge und Märtyrer: Untersuchungen zur frühchristlichen Zeugnis-Terminologie* (Munich: Kösel, 1961), 32.

²¹See Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York: Harper One, 2013).

²²“The decline and shift of Christianity is occurring in all Western Countries. . . . The mission task becomes even more pertinent as one looks at the current immigration of non-Christian people from central and eastern Asia.” Klaus Detlev Schulz, *Mission from the Cross: The Lutheran Theology of Mission* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2009), 3–4.

²³Maureen A Tilley, *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, eds. Margaret M. Mitchell and Frances M. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2006), 381.

in World Christianity. Andrew Walls, a preeminent scholar of World Christianity, notes the importance of Africa regarding contemporary Christianity:

We may need to look at Africa today in order to understand Christianity itself. . . . Africa can no longer be taken as peripheral to the study of Christianity; it contains too high a proportion of the world's Christians for that. And Africa may be the theatre in which some of the determinative new directions in Christian thought and activity are being taken.²⁴

Historical Evidence of Persecution in the *Missio Dei*: Modern North Africa

North African Christians are characterized by their faithfulness amidst relentless persecution and oppression from Islamic radicals. Pastor Imad Dabour asserts that persecution is simply a part of being a Christian in predominantly Muslim North Africa, “There are two things about Christianity that we teach people—that it gives you salvation and a lot of joy with it, and persecution. . . . Persecution is a basic teaching in our church.”²⁵ Raymond Ibrahim reports that throughout North Africa, Christians are regularly beaten, denied civil rights, and killed; and churches are randomly attacked and burned.²⁶ For instance, in late 2013, a group of four Coptic Christian-owned stores were destroyed and set on fire by Islamic radicals. Not far from the burning storefronts, Egyptian police neutralized an automobile filled with explosives; the target was believed to have been a Christian church on Christmas day.²⁷ In February 2015, a group of Egyptian Christians were kidnapped and brutally murdered by the Islamic radical group referred to as ISIS (Islamic State).²⁸ Tim Keese describes how Christians are subject to Islamic terrorist groups and

²⁴Walls also states, “What happens in the African Churches in the next generation will determine the whole shape of church history for centuries to come; what sort of theology is most characteristic of the Christianity of the twenty-first century may well depend on what has happened in the minds of African Christians in the interim.” Andrew F. Walls, “Towards Understanding Africa’s Place in Christian History,” in *Religion in a Pluralist Society: Essays Presented to Professor C. G. Baëta*, ed. J. S. Pobee (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 182. See also Tim Stafford, “Historian Ahead of His Time,” *Christianity Today* 51.2 (February 2007), 86–89.

²⁵Maria Mackay, “Persecution Comes with Being a Christian in North Africa, Says Pastor,” *Christian Post*, October 20, 2010, www.christianpost.com/news/persecution-comes-with-being-a-christian-in-north-africa-says-pastor-47270/ (accessed February 24, 2018).

²⁶Raymond Ibrahim, “Muslim Persecution of Christians,” *Gatestone Institute: International Policy Council*, March 27, 2013, www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3641/muslim-persecution-of-christians-january-2013/ (accessed February 24, 2018).

²⁷*Christian Post*, April 4, 2013, “Christian Persecution Continues in Mideast, Asia, And Africa,” christianpost.com/news/christian-persecution-continues-in-mideast-asia-and-africa-93289/ (accessed February 22, 2018).

²⁸The mentioned documentation of Christian persecution throughout North Africa is mere examples of the intense hostilities that Christians face around the world. International Christian Concern (ICC), “21 Egyptian Christians Killed By Isis in Libya,” *Persecution.org: International Christian Concern*, February 15, 2015, www.persecution.org/2015/02/15/21-egyptian-christians-killed-by-isis-in-

are “run down in the streets and shot like animals.”²⁹ North Africa is witnessing a renewed assault on the church.³⁰

Evidence exists pointing to the reality that persecution and suffering may be a beneficial component to church growth and Christian maturation. Take for instance the North African situation of the seventh century; the area was overwhelmed by zealous Islamic force. David Barrett reported that by AD 500, the African continent held roughly 8 million Christians. Throughout the Islamic takeover of North Africa, the Christian population in Africa shrank to 1.3 million by 1500.³¹ Such numbers would not suggest that persecution always leads to church growth; however, upon a review of contemporary and suspected future advance of Christianity in Africa, expansion is apparent. Barrett reports that Christian adherents in Africa in 1900 were 9.9 million, and by 1970 he estimated the number of Christians in Africa to be 144 million. Likewise, Barrett asserted that in 2000 there were 360 million Christians in Africa. He estimates that by 2025, the number will grow to 634 million; according to Barrett, areas that are currently centers of radical Islam will soon be Christian metropolises.³²

Stan Guthrie reports that Christianity in North African, despite a renewed assault from Islamic radicals, continues to grow 5 percent annually.³³ Likewise, Jayson Casper details that Christians in Egypt utilize martyrdom as opportunities to spread the gospel message. Casper notes, “The martyrdoms have allowed Copts a platform to witness to the realities of their faith.”³⁴ Tim Keesee explores the reality of “gospel advance” in places all over the world where persecution and suffering abound. Keesee explains that the growth of Christianity despite persecution and suffering is possible because Christ’s mission was a “bloody-sacrificed-turned-risen-King” reality.³⁵

Even Pope Francis recognizes that persecution unites Christians. “Just as in the early church the shedding of the martyrs’ blood became the seed of new Christians, so today the

libya/ (accessed February 24, 2018).

²⁹Tim Keesee, *Dispatches from the Front: Stories of Gospel Advance in the World’s Difficult Places* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 182.

³⁰Stan Guthrie, “Religious War: North Africa’s Christians Multiply amid Persecution,” *Christian Headlines*, January 25, 2013, www.Christianheadlines.com/ReligiousWar/ (accessed August 11, 2017).

³¹David B. Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Nairobi: Oxford University, 1982), 796.

³²David B. Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University, 2001).

³³Stan Guthrie, “Religious War: North Africa’s Christian Multiply amid Persecution,” *Christian Headlines*, January 25, 2013, www.christianheadlines.com/news/religious-war-north-africa-christians-multiply-persecution.html (accessed February 24, 2018).

³⁴Jayson Casper, “How Libya’s Martyrs Are Witnessing to Egypt,” *Christianity Today*, February 23, 2015, www.ChristianityToday.com/ct/2015/february-web-only/how/libyas-martyrs-are-evangelizing-egypt.html (accessed February 24, 2018).

³⁵Keesee, *Dispatches from the Front*, 12.

blood of the many martyrs of all the churches has become the seed of Christian unity.”³⁶ How can such Christian growth occur? How can churches grow despite current persecution and suffering? Growth may not occur instantaneously, but growth seems to be a viable outcome of Christian persecution because God utilizes the events.

Roman North African Example of *Missio Dei*

Not only does a contemporary glance at the renewed assault on Christians throughout the Northern African coast signify a connection between persecution and martyrdom to the maturation of Christians and growth of the Church, but an ancient look at the same area reveals a similar outcome. Tertullian (AD 160–225), a well-known North African Christian writer expressed, “the blood of Christians is seed.”³⁷ With this phrase, Tertullian expresses a deep theological truth in which persecution and martyrdom is something that God wills, enacts, and which serves a paramount purpose in making disciples. The idea of the blood of the Christians being seed incorporates a relationship to growth, but most importantly it assimilates into the overarching *missio Dei*, in which God reveals his will for the salvation of others. Tertullian’s viewpoint of persecution was prevalent throughout North Africa. Tertullian represents a prospect that persecution held significance within the Christian community; and as Tertullian was, in a sense, the voice of North African Christianity, it is plausible that his beliefs were shared throughout North Africa.

Perhaps the preponderant aspect of Tertullian’s writing and theology is his usage of opposing reality, and such implies significance regarding persecution. Tertullian’s usage of opposing reality is the distinct separateness between the things of God and the things of the world and how the two interact together. For instance, throughout the *Apology*, Tertullian accuses the Roman government of being illogical in that the Christians, while on the one hand are followers of truth and innocent and on the other hand are treated like the worst of criminals. “How often you inflict gross cruelties on Christians. . . . How often, too, the hostile mob . . . assails us with stones and flames. . . . Yet . . . what single case of revenge for injury are you able to point to?”³⁸ In this manner, Tertullian confirms the goodness and rationality of Christians by contrasting the action and characteristics of pagans.

³⁶Pope Francis as quoted by Junno Arocho Esteves, “Persecution By Isis Draws Once-divided Christians Closer,” *Catholic News Service*, February 29, 2016, catholicphilly.com/2016/02/news/world-news/persecution-by-isis-draws-once-divided-christians-closer/ (accessed October 17, 2018).

³⁷“*semen est sanguis Christianorum.*” Tertullian, *Apology*, 50.

³⁸Tertullian, *Apology*, 37. Other examples include: “Come, plunge your knife into the babe, enemy of none, accused of none, child of all” (*Apology*, 8). “Such as these have always been our persecutors,—men unjust, impious, base, of whom even yourselves have no good to say” (*Apology* 5). “Let this perversity of yours lead you to suspect that there is some hidden power in the case under whose influence you act against the forms” (*Apology*, 2). “She (Truth) knows that she is but a sojourner on the earth, and that among strangers she naturally finds foes; and more than this, that her origin, her dwelling place, her hope, her recompense, her honors, are above” (*Apology*, 1).

The climax of Tertullian's usage of opposing reality is perhaps seen most vividly in his explanation of the power and the purpose of the cross. Tertullian attests that the early Christians were exceptionally committed to the cross.³⁹ For Tertullian, the cross was more than a mere symbol. Rather, the cross was a reminder that the call to Christianity was centered on persecution. Tertullian asserts strong belief in the idea that life is found in death, another of his opposing realities. Tertullian deduced the idea that resurrection was symbolic of God creating out of nothing; when Christians die, or cease to exist in a sense, they are made new from nothing but the power of God. All things are preserved in perishing just as God implemented the idea of opposites into creation. Christian martyrs, therefore, are part of God's will being enacted through the opposition of reality. Christianity is valid because it is oppressed by darkness. "What does not exist, is in its non-existence secure from suffering."⁴⁰

Intertwined into the idea of opposing reality, Tertullian asserts clearly that persecution and martyrdom serve a purpose. Tertullian utilized a specific term to express what he believed to be the purpose of persecution and martyrdom, which was that they were "seed." In two particular places, Tertullian employs the term "seed" to express the idea of martyrdom as evangelism. "At last by Nero's cruel sword sowed the seed of Christian blood at Rome."⁴¹ In this first example, Tertullian alludes to the historical persecution of the Christians in AD 64 under Nero.⁴² The second example is perhaps one of the most well-known dictums of the early Church, "the blood of Christians is seed."⁴³

Tertullian's use of "seed" must be understood in the realms of his comprehension of God's divine will and his usage of opposing reality. In reference to the first mention of the term seed, Tertullian equates Christian blood to the persecution of Nero. Tertullian communicates the imagery of a farmer sowing seed in that the blood of the martyrs is equivalent to God sowing seeds. There seems to be a plausible connection between the sowing of seeds in the martyrs' blood and the idea of an evangelical witness for Christ. Tertullian writes, "Yes, and we shall prove that even your own gods are effective witnesses for Christ."⁴⁴ Tertullian connects the blood of the martyrs to the idea of being a witness for Christ—hence, the plausibility to assert that the blood of the martyrs is seed in that it produces disciples of Jesus Christ. Recognizing the imagery of martyr as evangelist fits into the idea of opposing reality so eminent in Tertullian's thought; even in death, the Christian message is proclaimed. Even at the end of one person's life, those in witness of the martyr are keen to begin their life anew.

³⁹Tertullian, *Ad Nationes*, 8.

⁴⁰Tertullian, *Apology*, 12.

⁴¹Tertullian, *Apology*, 21.

⁴²Tertullian, *Apology*, 5.

⁴³The full quote is, "The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed." Tertullian, *Apology*, 50.

⁴⁴Tertullian, *Apology*, 21.

The other of Tertullian's seminal statements, "the blood of Christians is seed," should also be understood in connection with the idea of the divine will and the strife of opposition. The full quote is as follows:

Nor does your cruelty, however exquisite, avail you; it is rather a temptation to us. The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed. Many of your writers exhort to the courageous bearing of pain and death . . . and yet their words do not find so many disciples as Christians do, teachers not by words, but by their deeds. That very obstinacy you rail against is the preceptress. For who that contemplates it, is not excited to inquire what is at the bottom of it? Who, after inquiry, does not embrace our doctrines. . . . As the divine and human are ever opposed to each other, when we are condemned by you, we are acquitted by the Highest.⁴⁵

Tertullian compares the acts of the martyrs to the classical Roman philosophical writers who taught through word and did not find as many converts as do the Christians through martyrdom. The idea of Christian martyrdom being a wordless form of evangelism fits into Tertullian's understanding of opposing reality. Unlike the Roman philosophers who sought converts in trained words and found little converts, the Christians found exponential converts without words but through the deed of martyrdom.

The connection between persecution and the *missio Dei* as expressed by Tertullian is evident in the majority of documents about North African Christians before AD 313. For instance, documents such as *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, *The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity*, *Life and Passion of St. Cyprian*, documents relating to the martyrs of Abitinae and the poetry of Prudentius—all of which take place in or refer to a North African context—indicate a connection between persecution/martyrdom and witness/evangelism.⁴⁶

New Testament Evidence of Persecution in the *Missio Dei*

The focus will now shift from a historical perspective of persecution and martyrdom to the New Testament sayings and writings attributed to Jesus, Paul, and the apostles in connection with persecution in the *missio Dei*. Persecution and martyrdom is scarcely an exclusively New Testament experience. Arguably, the Psalms address the suffering of God's people more vividly than any other portion of the Bible. Also, the examples of the three men in Daniel as well as the Prophets and the book of Job all reveal that suffering and persecution are a standard aspect of being God's chosen people. "We fail to recognize that persecution is normative for the followers of Christ historically, missiologically, and scripturally."⁴⁷

⁴⁵Tertullian, *Apology*, 50.

⁴⁶See J. Tristan Hurley, "Persecution and Martyrdom in the *Missio Dei*: Evaluating Tertullian's *Semen est Sanguis Christianorum* within a Roman North African Context 180–313 A.D." (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 171–91.

⁴⁷Glenn Penner, "A Biblical Theology of Persecution and Discipleship," in *Sorrow and Blood*, 72.

The Gospels and Acts

In Luke 8:4–15, Jesus speaks of a farmer sowing seeds. Jesus clarifies in verse 11 that the seed represents the word of God. Hence, the martyr proclaims the word of God, and the word of God spread. Jesus also makes mention of seed in John 12:23–26, which is regarded as an idea within Johannine dualism that is similar to Tertullian's strife of opposition. In John 12:24, Jesus speaks of a kernel of wheat falling to the ground, and only when that seed dies will it produce many other seeds. Here Jesus equates the death of the seed not only to being the inception of other seeds, but Jesus connects the dying seed to the servitude of God, as did Tertullian.

Additionally, Jesus discusses persecution using the concept of light and dark throughout the book of John. Beginning in John 1:4–9 John identifies Jesus as the light. Jesus discusses the light/dark motif further in John 3:19–21 and 15:18–25, where it is equated with the hatred of the world. "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also" (John 15:20).⁴⁸ Persecution is based on not only the name association of Jesus Christ but also on the fact the world hates the light. Jesus asserts that persecution based on alliance occurs due to the fulfillment of Scripture, as he quotes from Ps 35:19 and 69:4. Based on such an assumption, persecution and hatred of Christians occur for no reason other than the hatred of the name and association with the light (John 15:21).

Jesus depicts a vivid reality in which the call to follow is associated with suffering. The cross depicts Jesus as the suffering servant, whereby he completed the will of the Father even unto death. In the suffering of Jesus, the persecution of Christians is forecast as a reality that must not be met with fear but with loyalty in which knowledge of coming reward is imminent. John Stott in *The Cross of Christ* asserts, "Suffering and service, passion and mission belong together, both in Jesus' experience and in that of his disciples."⁴⁹ Matthew, Mark, and Luke detail Jesus's teaching to be aware of the coming of persecution and opposition, all of which will result in witness through sacrifice (Matt 24:14; Mark 13:10–11; Luke 21:13–15) and finding life through death (Matt 24:13; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:19). Jesus presents a distinct way to follow, in humble service with a total dedication regarding missionary calling. Scott Cunningham comments, "Persecution is an undeniably significant element in the author's development of plot in Luke-Acts. It is the frequent and sometimes climactic manifestation of conflict between the characters and is particularly directed against Jesus."⁵⁰

See also Glenn Penner, *In the Shadow of the Cross* (Bartlesville, OK: Living Sacrifice, 2004).

⁴⁸Unless noted otherwise, all Bible quotations are from the New International Version.

⁴⁹John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 316.

⁵⁰Scott Cunningham, "Through Many Tribulations": *The Theology of Persecution in Luke-Acts*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 142 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 337.

The book of Acts begins with Jesus's assertion that with the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians will be a witness to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Persecution and martyrdom play a significant role in Christians spreading out and evangelizing the known world. Stephen acts as a catalyst for widespread Christian evangelism. Acts 8:1 describes that due to "great persecution" the Christians scattered away from Jerusalem and into the surrounding areas. Acts 8:5 particularly mentions Phillip going south into a city in Samaria. Darrell Bock comments, "The result of dispersion is not disappointing because it leads to a widened preaching of the word. . . . Ironically, it is persecution that helps the church carry out the commission Jesus gave them."⁵¹ John Stott recognizes the antithetical effect of persecution in which hostility did not stop the spread of the gospel; rather, it contributed to the growth of Christianity.⁵²

Again, in Acts 11:19, Luke writes about the Christian evangelists scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveling as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. Distinct to the description in 11:19 is that the scattered Christians followed suit to Peter's vision of the unclean food and began witnessing to Greeks also, hence initiating the Gentile mission in Antioch (Acts 11:20–21). This particular evangelistic mission did not originate with the leadership of the Jerusalem Church but with God and the mysterious power of persecution.⁵³

Joseph Fitzmeyer observes, "One of the good things that has resulted from such trouble is the spread of the testimony about the risen Christ to the important town of Antioch in Syria, to Phoenicia and even as far as the island of Cyprus. For the first time the Word is carried by disciples beyond the bounds of Palestine itself."⁵⁴ The result of the spreading Christian faith was that a "great number of people believed and turned to the Lord" (Acts 11:21). In the examples of Acts 8:4 and 11:19, persecution led to the scattering of Christians, which led to the spread and growth of Christianity.

Paul

The Apostle Paul represents possibly the archetypal missionary figure of the New Testament. From the very beginning of Paul's conversion to Christianity, suffering was made a keynote to his missionary experience (Acts 9:5, 16). Not only were Paul's evangelistic journeys replete with hostility and persecution, Paul learned from Jesus that there is a relationship between the persecution of the church and hatred of Jesus. "'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting'" (Acts 9:4–5). Jesus identifies personally with the persecution of the church; to persecute

⁵¹Darrell Bock, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 320.

⁵²John Stott, *The Message of Acts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), 146.

⁵³Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 369.

⁵⁴Joseph Fitzmeyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 474.

the church is to persecute Jesus. Paul takes on the role of suffering servant concerning bearing witness of Jesus Christ to the Gentile world. John S. Pobee notes, “Persecution and sufferings were a *sine qua non* of Paul’s apostolic ministry. Indeed, it could be said that the more he was persecuted the more he demonstrated his zeal for the Lord and through that authenticated his apostolic authority.”⁵⁵

The missionary journeys of Paul are constantly attended by persecution and hostility. Paul met great hostility in Damascus (Acts 9:23–25), Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:45–46), Iconium (Acts 14:4–7), Lystra (Acts 14:19), Thessalonica (Acts 17:4–9), Berea (Acts 17:13), Corinth (Acts 18:6–13), Greece (Acts 20:3), Jerusalem (Acts 21:27–36), and Rome (Acts 28:23–28).⁵⁶ In 2 Cor 11:23–33, Paul lists the many hostilities he faced including prison, floggings, being stoned, shipwrecks, hunger, sleeplessness, conspiracy, and constant traveling, part of which is an argument as to why Paul was a genuine servant of Christ; hence, Paul equates suffering to authentic servitude. In his foundational *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* Roland Allen identifies as the most distinctive mark of Pauline Christianity his commitment to suffer for the proclamation of the gospel,

(Paul’s) gospel was a gospel of power. So he taught, and for that all his life was one long martyrdom. If he would have admitted for a moment that his work was to introduce a higher law, a new system, he would have made peace with the Judaizers and he would have been at one with all contemporary reformers; but the Gospel would have perished in his hands. In his own words he would have fallen away from grace; Christ would have profited him nothing. That he refused to do and for that he suffered.⁵⁷

Paul equates persecution and suffering with the confirmation of divine work and reward. In 2 Thess 1:4–5, Paul explains that persecution is evidence that God’s judgment is righteous and one is considered worthy of the kingdom of God through suffering.⁵⁸ Elsewhere, Paul asserts that both he and Timothy must suffer for the sake of the gospel, in which he utilizes a strife of opposition in the power of God and the suffering of genuine servants (2 Tim 1:8, 12; 2:3, 9; 4:5–8, 16–18). Joel Williams remarks, “Although persecution may be difficult, faithfulness to Christ is necessary regardless of the cost. Ultimately, Christians maintain their conviction concerning the truth of the gospel . . . to preserve for themselves the opportunity . . . to suffer for the sake of Christ.”⁵⁹ Paul explains that all those who desire to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted (2 Tim 3:12).

⁵⁵John S. Pobee, *Persecution and Martyrdom in the Theology of Paul* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 13.

⁵⁶Don N. Howell Jr., “Paul’s Theology of Suffering,” in *Paul’s Missionary Methods: In His Time and Ours*, ed. Robert Plummer and John Mark Terry (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 97.

⁵⁷Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962), 148.

⁵⁸Second Thessalonians 1:4–5, “Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. All this is evidence that God’s judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.”

⁵⁹Joel F. Williams, “Conclusion,” in *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*, William J. Larkin and Joel F. Williams, eds. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998), 246.

A fascinating aspect of a Pauline theology of suffering is the understanding that God designs persecution as the paramount expression of eschatological expectation. Pobe comments, “Finally (Paul’s) sufferings are put in an eschatological frame of reference.”⁶⁰ Such an idea is most prevalent in Rom 8:17–23 where Paul asserts that present suffering is not worth comparing with the future glory that will be revealed in the “redemption of our bodies.” Roy Clements notes, “Paul is convinced that his descent into abject despair was deliberately engineered by God’s providence. The opposite of faith, according to Paul, is not doubt but confidence in the flesh.”⁶¹ God’s will is revealed in the fact that strength is found in weakness and life is found in death; the reality of divine opposites. I. Howard Marshall writes, “Are we to say that God intends his people to suffer? Hard though it may seem, the answer to this question is affirmative. It was God’s will that Christ should suffer. . . . It is right to say that God’s will for us is suffering because there is no other way that evil can be overcome.”⁶²

General Writings

This final section will briefly evaluate a theology of persecution from the remaining writers of the New Testament including John, Peter, and the author of Hebrews. Considering the writings of Peter, both Edmund Clowney and Ramsey Michaels assert that the basis of 1 Peter is to give assurance to Christians facing persecution.⁶³ Peter discusses persecution and martyrdom in unique ways throughout his first epistle which includes rejoicing in suffering (1:6; 4:13), connecting persecution and blessedness (3:14; 4:14), suffering and God’s will (3:17; 4:19), suffering and reward (1:3–9; 3:9), and persecution/suffering as imitators of Christ (4:1–2).

Peter notes in 1 Peter 4:12 that Christians should not be surprised by persecution; rather, they should rejoice in that the spirit of God is evident in persecution. D. C. Arichea and E. Nida comment, “Peter considered suffering for Christ as quite normal. . . . It would be strange and unusual if they did not suffer because of their faith.”⁶⁴ The suffering of Christians is in direct comparison to the suffering of Christ, in which each carries the other’s burden and at the same time inherits God’s kingdom.⁶⁵ Much like Paul in his writings, Peter accommodates the reality of persecution and martyrdom to the evidence of God’s Spirit and will. Not everyone will be persecuted and martyred, but there does seem

⁶⁰John Pobe, *Persecution and Martyrdom in the Theology of Paul* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), 106.

⁶¹Roy Clements, *The Strength of Weakness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995), 25.

⁶²I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 157.

⁶³Edmund Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 51. J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter* (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 258.

⁶⁴Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator’s Handbook on the First Letter from Peter* (New York: United Bible Society, 1980), 145.

⁶⁵C. E. B. Cranfield, *1 and 2 Peter and Jude: Introduction and Commentary* (London: SCMP, 1960), 120.

to be a connection between those who suffer and those who experience God's blessing. Dietrich Bonhoeffer comments on this idea, "God does not call everyone to martyrdom."⁶⁶

The writer of Hebrews employs vivid language when discussing persecution and martyrdom alongside the themes of perseverance, discipline, and sacrifice. Hebrews 10:32–39 references the "earlier days" in which Christians were publicly insulted, persecuted, and imprisoned. The writer continues by encouraging the beleaguered Christians to have confidence that God's promise for the sufferer and martyr will not be forgotten, that those who persevere even through trials and suffering will be rewarded (10:35–36). Within Heb 10:32–39, there is a connection between suffering and reward, and there is another example of opposing reality, which in this case the writer of Hebrews opposes those who shrink back and are destroyed to those who believe and are saved.

Perhaps the most overlooked theme within Hebrews is the understanding of faith as seen in the paradigm of persecution. The writer of Hebrews incorporates the idea of perseverance through suffering throughout 11:1–12:12, in which numerous figures of the Old Testament are commended for exhibiting unwavering faith. Such unwavering faith is linked directly to God's will as he disciplines his children (Heb 12:7–11). In the language of Heb 12:7–13, persecution and suffering are both enacted by the will of God for the purpose of training, reward, and as evidence of being a legitimate son of God. "If you are not disciplined . . . then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all" (Heb 12:8).

The Book of Revelation

There is perhaps no more lucid a portrayal of martyrdom and persecution than in the book of Revelation. The Apostle John at the beginning of Revelation identifies himself as "John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus" (Rev 1:9a). From the outset, the book of Revelation is intended for the persecuted and martyred, hence the words of Jesus in Rev 1:17–18, "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." This passage should possibly be understood within the context of martyrdom. Each of the seven churches is addressed using language associated with persecution and are commended or encouraged in the context of persecution.⁶⁷

Regarding martyrs, the fifth seal of Revelation reveals the souls of the martyred under the altar; despite the numerous interpretations of the fifth seal, those who persevere even

⁶⁶Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Witness to Jesus Christ*, ed. John de Gruchy (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991), 204.

⁶⁷The "crown of life" mentioned in Rev 2:10 is set aside only for those who "are faithful to the point of death." See Rev 2:2–3, 9–10, 13, 19; 3:4–5, 8–12, 18–21.

unto death for the testimony of God hold significance. It is plausible that the mention of the 144,000 in association with the Lamb described in Rev 14 concerns those who have been martyred. The possibility that the 144,000 are martyrs comes from the language associated; they had the “Father’s name written on their foreheads” (14:1), they “had been redeemed from the earth” (14:3), they “did not defile themselves” (14:4), and “no lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless” (14:5).

Summary of New Testament Teaching

The writers of the New Testament had a particular understanding of persecution and martyrdom in the life of the church. Jesus, Paul, Peter, John and the author of Hebrews all discussed persecution as a reality that Christians will face. There is a convincing connection among persecution, martyrdom, and reward. Numerous passages allude to persecution and martyrdom as refinement or training by which God builds up believers. Perhaps the most neglected aspect of persecution and martyrdom is the affiliation between suffering and the *missio Dei*.

Conclusion

Persecution and martyrdom are things that God wills; they enact and serve a paramount purpose in the making of disciples. For Tertullian, martyrdom was the ultimate expression of loyalty to the divine will. There is no mention of Tertullian romanticizing volunteer suicide; rather, he understood martyrdom as the outcome of an individual who remains faithful to God amid a generation of idolatry. The act of martyrdom served not only as a seed for the word of God but also as a factor in Tertullian’s view of opposing reality. In the death of Christians, others will find new life and, hence, will be born again.

All these ideas formulated by Tertullian represent a complex view of God’s will that suggests that God reveals his will for the salvation of others in chaos and persecution. The idea of the blood of the Christians being seed incorporates a relationship to growth, but most important it assimilates in the overarching *missio Dei* in which God utilizes disorder to reveal his wisdom; what Nik Ripken refers to as “the insanity of God.”⁶⁸ Paul explains, “But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him” (1 Cor 1:27–29).

The blood of Christians through persecution and martyrdom is a seed for the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Does this mean that persecution and martyrdom will always lead to church growth? No, as history has proven in the later centuries of North Africa, persecution

⁶⁸See Nik Ripken, *The Insanity of God: A True Story of Faith Resurrected* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2013).

and martyrdom will not always lead to growth and advance. However, that does not negate the reality that witness unto martyrdom is a seed; growth is based upon the soil on which the seed falls.

Historical evidence, such as the accounts relating to the Scillitan martyrs, Perpetua and her companions, Cyprian, and others, reveals that persecution and martyrdom can lead to growth and advance, but such is not always the case. Regardless of the growth surrounding persecution and martyrdom, the reality of oppression of Christians is something that is willed by God. Because persecution and martyrdom is something that God wills, both are integral components to the *missio Dei*. Tertullian's proposition regarding the blood of martyrs being seed has permeated and fascinated the church for millennia, and for good reason; for in this idea, a plethora of truth is revealed not only about God but also about the resilient nature of Christianity.

Since persecution and martyrdom are vital elements of the *missio Dei*, one might wonder if persecution should be sought. Persecution and martyrdom are extremely infelicitous and must not be artificial. Jesus teaches and displays in Matt 10:23 and Luke 4:30 that fleeing or escaping from persecution and martyrdom is sensible. Also, Paul and the apostles understood that escaping persecution is necessary, as in Acts 9:22–25. Christians and missionaries serving all over the world should perceive persecution and martyrdom as very plausible realities, but understand that God utilizes persecution and martyrdom in his timing.

Christians should be encouraged to confront persecution and martyrdom from a biblical perspective and view them as part of the *missio Dei*, rather than avoiding a theology of persecution and martyrdom. Tertullian wrote that the blood of Christians is seed, and he was correct. Persecution and martyrdom will not always lead to advance and the growth of Christianity, but they possess the ability to lead to advance and growth. Christian advancement and Church growth in persecution and martyrdom are based solely on God's will. To understand persecution and martyrdom within the *missio Dei* is not to perceive it as missionary service gone terribly wrong; rather, it is evidence of missionary service gone terribly right. Jesus himself spoke to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9).

From “Fear” or the “Fear of the Lord”: A Study on the Motif of Fear in Exodus



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The fear of the Lord as a wisdom theme has received much attention by the scholarly community.¹ This is not true about the same theme in the book of Exodus. This writer believes that the fear of the Lord motif in Exodus demands inclusion in wisdom discussion. Furthermore, understanding the other fear, the fear that threatens and paralyzes life, will help one to understand the subject more accurately. This paper will begin with a survey of the current state of scholarship on the treatment of the subject as a possible wisdom theme (or not), and how scholars treat the same subject as one of the main narrative themes in Exodus (or not). A brief introduction of all the “fear passages” (that include the root *yrr*) in Exodus will precede a discussion on four passages in Exodus on fear, followed by concluding observations.

Survey of the Current Scholarship

Surveying the current state of scholarship concerning the subject of “fear” in Exodus will have two foci, the fear of the Lord as a wisdom theme and the fear of the Lord as a stand-alone theological theme in Exodus.

In his comment on the story of the two Hebrew midwives in Exodus 1:17–21, Terrence Fretheim makes a passing remark that the “fear of God” is a prominent theme in wisdom materials” without identifying the passage as wisdom material.² B. S. Childs makes a direct connection between the two—the fear of God and wisdom material—and states, “The piety of the midwives reflects the religious ideal of the wisdom circles. Their refusal to obey Pharaoh stems from a ‘fear of God.’” For him such piety “evidences itself in cleverness and in the ability to meet the accusation of Pharaoh with rational arguments.”³

¹The fear of the Lord is a foundation for wisdom for some. See, for example, the title of Tremper Longman’s recent publication, *The Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom: A Theological Introduction to Wisdom in Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017).

²Terrence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1991), 32.

³B. S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1974), 13.

On the other hand, various recent works on “Introduction to [OT] Wisdom Literature” either fail to recognize the presence of wisdom material in Exodus completely,⁴ or give a brief mention of certain crafty (wise) behavior (Exodus 1:8–2:14); a clan sage in Jethro (18:13–27); and a skilled person in Bezalel and Oholiab (Exodus 35:31–39:31).⁵

“Fear” or the “fear of the Lord” as a motif or theme in Exodus is recognized by some scholars, but not as widely. H. W. Wolff claims that the fear of God is the most prominent theme of the Elohist in the Pentateuch and finds support for his claim in passages like the Hebrew midwives (Exod 1), the Call of Moses (Exod 3), Jethro’s recommendation for Moses to rely on capable men who fear God (Exod 18), and Moses’s address to the people of Israel (Exod 20).⁶

Deryck Sheriffs recognizes the fear of the Lord as one of the more important motifs in Exodus.⁷ Recognizing the story of Shiphrah and Puah, the two Hebrew midwives, as the introduction of the motif, he explains that these midwives actually “model what primary loyalty means” in the way they “feared God” and acted disobediently against the command of Pharaoh. Eventually, following the great deliverance at the Red Sea, “the Israelites are converted from a fear of Pharaoh to a fear of Yahweh in an extension of the midwives’ faith.”⁸

Describing the state of the mind of the community gathered around the mountain of God in Exodus 20, “the fear of the Lord,” Sheriffs explains that the emotional fear that the community was experiencing in the presence of God is to be converted to an attitude that motivates behavior. The fear of the Lord “should preserve Israel from sin, not only on that particular day and not to preserve the boundary around the mountain only, but into the future and to prevent transgression of commandment boundaries.”⁹ He stresses that the transition that must take place is “from affect to effect, from awe to ethics [and] the experience is to be internalized and integrated with the covenant concept.”¹⁰

⁴See, as examples, Tremper Longman III, *The Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom: A Theological Introduction to Wisdom in Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 65–77, and Stuart Weeks, *An Introduction to the Study of Wisdom Literature* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 135–44.

⁵Donald K. Berry, *An Introduction to Wisdom and Poetry of the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 98–99.

⁶H. W. Wolff, “The Elohist Fragments in the Pentateuch,” *Interpretation* 26.2 (April 1972): 165–67.

⁷Deryck Sheriffs, “Moving on with God: Key Motifs in Exodus 13–20,” *Themelios* 15.2 (Jan–Feb 1990): 49–60. His later work covers the same subject in a similar manner as the article with an overarching function of the fear of the Lord in Exodus 20:20 under which he dealt with the fear of the Lord demonstrated by the Hebrew midwives (ch. 1) and the Israelites (ch. 14). See his *The Friendship of the Lord: An Old Testament Spirituality* (Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1996).

⁸Sheriffs, *The Friendship of the Lord*, 71.

⁹Sheriffs, *The Friendship of the Lord*, 70.

¹⁰Sheriffs, *The Friendship of the Lord*, 70.

Without calling it a motif, John Goldingay, in his commentary on Exodus 14, also connects the two fear narratives in chapters 1 and 14:

Hebrew uses the same word for being afraid and for revering, for a negative fear and a positive submission. At the beginning of the story the midwives feared God in a good sense rather than fearing Pharaoh and doing what he said. At the end of the story Israel gives up fearing the future and fearing Pharaoh in a bad sense because it has seen the reason for fearing God in a good sense. That it is a good fear is indicated by the fact that it goes along with trusting in Yahweh. The Israelites have caught up with the midwives.¹¹

The connection between the fear of God that the midwives had in chapter 1 and the fear of the Lord that the Israelites had at the end of chapter 14 appears to be **reasonable** considering how one is placed at the beginning—possibly, to be followed and emulated—and the other at the end of the exodus narrative proper, where the Israelites end up with the same fear for the Lord.

Having surveyed the current state of scholarship concerning the subject of the “fear of the Lord” in Exodus, this paper now turns to four “fear” passages in Exodus that involves both “fear” as threat to one’s life and “fear” as reverence to the Lord. It will be preceded by a brief introduction of all the fear passages in Exodus.

From Fear to the Fear of the Lord

Of the twelve appearances (eleven times as verb and once as a participle) of the Hebrew verbal root *yr* in Exodus, it has the meaning of “fearing” or “being afraid” as an emotional reaction six times. Moses was afraid when confronted by a Hebrew man who knew that Moses had killed an Egyptian man earlier (2:14). Being in the presence of God, Moses hid his face because he was afraid for his life to look at the face of God (3:6). As Pharaoh and his forces came close, the Israelites were terrified and cried out to the Lord (14:10). Moses responded to them with an assurance that the deliverance of the Lord was about to come; therefore they should not be afraid but be calm (14:13). As the Israelites trembled with fear looking at the mountain in smoke, Moses once again assured them not to fear (20:20). When Moses came down from the mountain with another set of stone tablets, his face was radiant and Aaron and the Israelites were afraid to come near him (34:30).

Fear as “reverence” or “awe” toward the Lord and his word appears six times in Exodus. The Hebrew midwives feared God and disobeyed the command of Pharaoh (1:17, 21). Those among the servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord brought their slaves and cattle to safety as the hail storm swept across the country (9:20). Moses reminded Pharaoh that he and his servants did not yet fear the Lord (9:30). When the Israelites saw the mighty

¹¹John Goldingay, *Exodus & Leviticus for Everyone* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 64.

power of deliverance, they feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant (14:31). When Jethro, Moses’s father-in-law, came to visit the Israelite camp, he advised Moses to appoint certain capable men who fear God as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens (18:21).

While the great salvation of the Lord at the Red Sea (ch. 14) will be given more detailed attention, the other three passages that involve the choice of fearing the Lord or fearing someone or something else will be discussed next.

The Hebrew Midwives (Exodus 1:15–21)

As the Exodus story begins, Joseph is long gone, but Jacob’s descendants were fruitful and expanded so much that they posed a threat to a new king in the land of Egypt. Fearful that the Israelites would become too powerful for the Egyptians to control, the new king carried out a policy of oppression. However, the more they were oppressed, the more the Hebrews multiplied and spread. The Egyptians dreaded them. The king ordered Shiphrah and Puah, the Hebrew midwives, to kill all male babies born to the Hebrew mothers under their care.

“But the midwives feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them, they allowed the boys live. . . . And because the midwives feared God he gave them families.” (Exodus 1:17, 21)¹²

Ironically, the shrewd (*nt kmh*) dealings that the Egyptians tried to carry out did not go as intended. The Hebrew midwives ended up acting wisely and courageously by choosing to fear God instead of fearing Pharaoh and carrying out his order. The fact that their names are given here adds to the significance that they may be the models to follow by later generations of Israelites. By choosing to fear God, the midwives chose against what threatens life and for what creates life, gives life, and saves life.

“Even Some Egyptians Feared the Word of the Lord” (Exodus 9:20–21)

When the plague of a hail storm was announced, the Egyptians were challenged to take the warning seriously and act accordingly.

“Those who served Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord rushed to bring their slaves and cattle inside. But those who did not put their hearts to the word of the Lord abandoned their slaves and cattle in the field.” (Exodus 9:20–21)

The object of fear is now the word of the Lord, instead of the Lord himself. Those who feared for the safety of their slaves and cattle enough to put their trust in the word of the

¹²All translations are mine.

Lord were able to save their slaves and cattle, while those who ignored the warning lost them all. Once again, it might be that the narrator is emphasizing that fearing [the word of] the Lord is a serious matter that even the Egyptians who chose to fear experienced the life spared as a challenge for future generations of Israelites on top of the challenge to the Egyptians to take the Lord seriously.

“Frightened” . . . “Fear not” . . . “Feared the Lord” (Exodus 14:10–14; 30–31)

Having experienced the great escape from Egypt following the deadly Passover that struck the Egyptian first-borns, the Israelites were now led by a pillar of cloud during the day and by a pillar of fire by night (13:21). However, when Pharaoh and his officials came to senses and realized that they had just lost the service of the Israelite slaves (14:5) they quickly organized a huge pursuit that included over 600 of their best chariots and many foot soldiers. Eventually the Egyptians caught up with the Israelites as they camped by the Sea near Pi Hahiroth, in front of Baal Zephon (14:9).

“As Pharaoh came near, the Israelites lifted their eyes and there were Egyptians marching after them. They were terrified (*wayyîr’û mē’ōd*) and cried out to the Lord.” (Exodus 14:10)

As Pharaoh closed in on them, the momentary taste of a successful escape quickly turned to thoughts of certain death at the face of the oncoming Egyptian attack. Frozen with fear for their lives and running scared, first the Israelites cried out to the Lord as they did under severe persecution in the land of Egypt (2:23–24). They were terrified, so they cried out to the Lord.¹³

In their terror, next they turned to Moses with complaints and accusations: “Was it because there were no graves in *Egypt* that you took us out to die in the wilderness? What is it that you have done to us bringing us out of *Egypt*? Isn’t this what we told you in *Egypt*, ‘leave us alone so that we may serve the *Egyptians*? It would have been better for us to serve the *Egyptians* than to die in the wilderness!” (Exodus 14:11–12, emphasis mine)

¹³After commenting, “Their cry is characteristic of Israel’s faith, modeling the way in which the troubled turn to God. The slaves have now found their insistent voice. They cry out to Yahweh in protest, complaint, demand and hope,” Walter Brueggemann states, “Their speech is not a petition for help; in fact, it is not addressed to Yahweh, as is stated in v. 10. Rather it is an accusation against Moses.” Cf. Walter Brueggemann, “The Book of Exodus,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander Keck et al. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1994), 1:793. I am not sure if Brueggemann is purposefully contradicting himself in saying “they cry out to Yahweh” on one hand while on the other hand “their speech is not addressed to Yahweh.” Durham is more cautious: “They are frightened into a panic, and they cry out to Yahweh and protest to Moses. What they said to Yahweh (as also what Moses said to Yahweh, v. 15) is not recorded.” See John I Durham, *Exodus*, Word Bible Commentary 3 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 191. I, on the other hand, have no difficulty understanding that the Israelites, in their moment of great fear, cried out from the top of their lungs before turning to Moses with complaints.

With the certainty of being recaptured or slaughtered at the hands of the Egyptians, the Israelites accused Moses of bringing them out to the wilderness to die. Overwhelmed with the fear of death, they made sure to let Moses know that being alive even in bondage to the Egyptians was “preferable to life between the devil and the deep blue sea. At such moments, the enemy seems so near; God seems so far away. Even in the aftermath of a grace-filled experience.”¹⁴ Commenting on how the Israelites uttered the name Egypt (*m rym*) five times in rapid succession, Brueggemann offers a crucial assessment:

It is the only name they know, the name upon which they rely. The name they love to sound. In the speech of the protesting, distrusting people, the name of Yahweh is completely absent. They do not perceive Yahweh as being in any way a pertinent, active member of the plot. On their own terms, of course, without Yahweh, their reasoning is sound and their complaint is legitimate. Without Yahweh, they have no resources against Egypt and no hope of success. Moses by himself—without Yahweh—is no adequate resource against Egypt.¹⁵

Having heard their “desire to stay in Egypt, and now the urgent pleas to return there,”¹⁶ Moses’s response to the people who were deeply scared and hurting was calm and to the point:

“Don’t be afraid. Take your stand and you will see the salvation of the Lord that he will do for you today. The Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; just be silent.” (Exodus 14:13–14)

To those who were crying out in great fear, Moses assured them that they could stop being afraid for their fear would not be actualized. So far they had only seen their Egyptian enemies closing in. Because they would soon witness the deliverance of their Lord, they would never see the Egyptians again. To those who believed their only way out was to return to Egypt and serve the Egyptians, Moses twice reminded them that the Lord was their only hope for survival.¹⁷ In fact, because the Lord would fight for them, they could stop crying to the Lord—they could be silent and watch the battle.

¹⁴Fretheim, *Exodus*, 156.

¹⁵Brueggemann, “The Book of Exodus,” 793.

¹⁶Fretheim recognizes this behavior of the former slaves as “typical for people who have gone through an extensive period of oppression. This dispirited and just-released-from-slavery people does not need a word of condemnation from either commentators or Moses.” See his *Exodus*, 156.

¹⁷Again Brueggemann is on target: “Moses refuses to accept the despairing picture of reality offered by the protesters. Their picture includes only themselves and the Egyptians, and there is no hope in such a scenario. Moses asserts that such a construal is a severe distortion of reality, for it eliminates Yahweh as an active player. Thus, in his response, Moses twice mentions Yahweh, the very name the protesters were either unable or unwilling to utter. Moreover, Moses’ entire self-defense is staked on the claim that Yahweh is indeed a live, active, decisive character in this crisis. Thus the dispute turns on the relevance or irrelevance of Yahweh to the crisis.” Brueggemann, “The Book of Exodus,” 793.

Having told the Israelites that the Lord would fight for them, Moses receives detailed instructions for the battle from the Lord (14:15–18). With the angel of God and the pillar of cloud separating the two camps (14:19–20), Moses stretched out his hand over the sea as instructed by the Lord, and the Lord drove the sea back all night with a strong east wind (14:21) and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground (14:22). The Egyptians went after them into the sea only to have the wheels of their chariots come off (14:25). Then the water began flowing back again and covered the entire army of Pharaoh that followed the Israelites into the sea, and none of them survived. Moses did what the Lord told him to do, the Lord fought for the Israelites, and the Israelites saw the Egyptians never again (14:28–29).

The narrator of the book of Exodus then offers a succinct summary of what the Lord did that day and the response of the Israelites in the final two verses of chapter 14:

“On that day, the Lord saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the shore. And [when] Israel saw the great hand of Lord working against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and believed in him and in Moses his servant.” (Exodus 14:30–31)

The fear that came from looking at the advancing Egyptians and what Moses had told them not to fear earlier (v. 13) was now replaced with the fear of the Lord after they had witnessed the great salvation at the hands of their Lord. Furthermore, this new fear [of the Lord] now took on a new meaning of trust—in their Lord and in Moses the servant of the Lord. The Israelites were terrified looking at what threatened their lives. Following the great deliverance at the hand of their Lord, the object of their fear changed from what threatens life to what creates life, gives life, and saves life and they believed in him—and in Moses his servant.

Fear at the Holy Mountain (Exodus 20:18–21)

In Exodus 19:16–19, the Israelites experienced the theophany of the Lord. The Ten Commandments is described in Exodus 20:1–17, and the response of the people is stated:

When all the people saw the thunder and lightning and [heard] the sound of trumpet and saw the mountain smoking, they trembled with fear. They stood at a distance and said to Moses: “Speak with us yourself and we will listen. But do not let God speak with us [directly] or we will die.” Moses said to the people, “Do not fear. God has come to test you so that the fear of him may be before your face to keep you from sinning.” (Exodus 20:18–21)

What they saw and heard struck fear in the people. Fearing for their lives, they tried to keep a safe distance. Earlier when their lives were threatened, they turned against Moses with accusations (14:11). Now they turned to Moses for help. Fearing for their lives, they asked him to be the go-between. As he had tried to reassure his people earlier (14:13), Moses once again reminded them with the familiar, “Do not fear [for your lives].” He explained to them

that fearing God and putting trust in him is a serious commitment. Earlier at the Red Sea, their fear for life turned to their fear for the Lord, and so they put their trust in him and in Moses, his servant (14:31). Earlier the people acknowledged that “all that the Lord has said, we will do!” (19:8). In the context immediately following the description of the Ten Commandments, the fear of the Lord that results in putting their trust in the Lord is now given yet another dimension—obedience. The Israelites discovered that day that “the fear of God is not a subjective emotion of terror, but the obedience of God’s law. The glory and holiness of God calls forth [people’s] fear (cf. Isa. 6), but the end is not the emotion, rather the deed.”¹⁸ Ironically, the Egyptians who had feared the word of the Lord and acted obediently earlier (9:20) appear to model the obedience that the Israelites are now called to at Sinai.

Observations on the Motif of Fear in Exodus

Several observations are in order at this point.

The Fear of the Lord in Action

Compared to the fear of the Lord in Old Testament wisdom literature appearing in pithy, proverbial expressions like, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,”¹⁹ the appearances of the fear of the Lord in Exodus are narrative descriptions of that fear in action. The movement from fear for what threatens life and safety to the fear of the Lord is described in the Exodus narrative repeatedly, beginning with the Hebrew midwives in the opening chapter to the Egyptian officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord. Next, the Israelites went through various stages of “fear” in chapter 14 and the Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai following the mention of the Decalogue before the law was revealed to them all describe both fears in action.

The fear passages in Exodus need to be recognized as the fear of the Lord in action—narrative descriptions of the fear of the Lord. Furthermore, the presence of the wisdom theme and material in Exodus must also be recognized. In fact, it is the opinion of this writer that the fear of the Lord passages elsewhere in the Old Testament wisdom literature can be better understood by turning to the narrative examples of the fear in action in Exodus. While Joseph and Daniel are often recognized as the supreme examples of wise persons in the Old Testament by some wisdom scholars,²⁰ the named but otherwise unknown Shiphrah and Puah, the Egyptian servants of Pharaoh and the Israelites, are just as well associated with this wisdom motif.

¹⁸Childs, *Exodus*, 373.

¹⁹Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:33; Psalm 110:10; Job 28:28; Ecclesiastes 12:13, and others.

²⁰Tremper Longman calls Joseph and Daniel “paragons of wisdom.” Interestingly, the three groups that are mentioned above are not recognized by Longman as wise persons; the title of his book, however, is *The Fear of the Lord Is Wisdom*. See pp. 78–93.

The Fear of the Lord as Faith in Action

This is an intriguing dimension to one's understanding of the fear of the Lord. At the Red Sea, the Israelites' fear of the Lord resulted in their belief in the Lord. Of course, they had just witnessed the mighty power of their Lord fighting for them and defeating the powerful Egyptians. Their experience was "seeing that resulted in believing."²¹ For the narrator of the Exodus story, the fear of the Lord is not the end in itself; it would be amiss if the belief in the Lord did not follow in verse 31 as "the story of the stunning triumph of Yahweh over the great power of Egypt is told in order to summon Israel to faith."²² Brueggemann continues,

Both the exaltation of Yahweh and the summons to faith are situated in and dependent upon a concrete, public struggle about power. That is, the glorification of Yahweh and the trust of Israel are not religious ideas or affirmations made in a vacuum unscathed by the reality of life. This narrative insists that the celebration of God and the faith of Israel are inescapably mediated through the transformation of public life. . . . Faith points to transformation, and liturgy recites and replicates these transformations.²³

At the Red Sea, the Israelites came to fear the Lord just as the midwives feared God. Before the Songs of Moses and Miriam are presented in the following chapter, the narrator emphatically states that the fear of the Lord that rises from seeing and experiencing the mighty work of deliverance must also have belief in that power.²⁴

Learning the Fear of the Lord

Recognizing the fact that the fear of the Lord that was in action at the end of chapter 14 all but disappears in the murmuring narratives in the following chapters²⁵ warrants

²¹Sheriffs, *The Friendship of the Lord*, 72.

²²Brueggemann, "The Book of Exodus," 796.

²³Brueggemann, "The Book of Exodus," 796.

²⁴Fretheim aptly states, "When the people see the great work that God has done, they respond in a number of ways (cf. 4:31; 12:27): they revere Yahweh; they believe in Yahweh; they believe in Yahweh's servant Moses; and they sang a song of praise to God for the life and blessing that had become theirs this day. Somewhat unsettling is the fact that the same language of belief is used for Moses as well as for God. The one who serves as an instrument of God's word and action must be trusted as one who truly represents, indeed embodies, the God in whose name he speaks. This lifts up the extraordinary importance of the leader in the relationship between God and people. But it is God alone who is revered and worshiped and to whom Israel's doxologies are sung. Without such a response, the great deeds of God would have been without a voice in the world. God's goal, to have the divine name declared to all the earth (9:16; see Josh 4:24), would have been set back. The importance of this witness is now given prominence with the insertion of the songs in chapter 15." See his *Exodus*, 160–61.

²⁵The murmuring narrative in the Pentateuch includes Exod 15:22–25; 16:1–36; 17:1–7; Num 11:1–34; 20:1–13; 21:4–9.

a crucial question: What does the absence of the fear in these narratives say about the dynamics in the fear of the Lord? In fact, the fear of the Lord that led to the belief in the Lord failed to be activated among the exodus generation beyond Exodus 14:31. The events described in the murmuring narratives are the moments of truth that the narrator uses to challenge the future generations of the covenant community to choose the fear of the Lord over the fear that threatens and paralyzes life. The movement or progress from the fear of what threatens life to the fear of what creates life, gives life, and saves life is not completed overnight. If anything, these narratives explain the difficulty of getting people out of their default settings and teaching them new habits of the heart. The pattern that had already been established in Exodus 14:10–12 is being repeated without the affirmation for the fear of and belief in the Lord as in Exodus 14:31. Sadly, none but two of the exodus generation would enter the Promised Land. Learning to fear the Lord appears to mean learning to walk by faith, which is a learned behavior. After all, the fear known to and associated with the former slaves is not something that is jumped over and done after crossing the sea.

The primacy of the fear of the Lord

The fact that the fear of the Lord that the Israelites came to embrace at the end of chapter 14 becomes rather elusive during the course of the wilderness journey highlights the significance of the wisdom sayings, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” and “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 1:7 and 9:10). If one views the prominent place such sayings have in the wisdom tradition through the experience of the exodus generation, one can actually appreciate the difficult but necessary challenge such sayings pose. A healthy dialogue has been taking place in wisdom circles concerning the meaning of “the fear of the Lord is beginning of wisdom.”²⁶ Whether the fear of the

²⁶For example, in his recent article Zóltan Schwáb affirms Stuart Weeks’s conclusions that “*r’sht* in Proverbs 1:9 refers to the first product of wisdom and *thllt* in Pro. 9:10 refers to the first manifestation of wisdom. Neither of the words can refer to something that is the basis of wisdom. Consequently, the fear of the Lord is not prior to wisdom, neither in a temporal nor in a logical sense, but follows from wisdom.” He also offers a helpful summary of the scholarly opinions about the relationship between wisdom and the fear of the Lord in the following: First, the fear of the Lord precedes wisdom in time (von Rad). Second, the fear of the Lord precedes wisdom but, at the same time, emphasizes that wisdom leads to an even greater fear of the Lord (M. V. Fox). Third, instead of reading *r’sht* and *thllt* as something that temporally precedes wisdom and is clearly distinct from it, but to something that is constantly at the root of being wise; therefore the best translations are “principle” (Henri Blocher), “the first and controlling principle” (D. Kidner), or “essence” of wisdom (E. Davis, K. T. Aitken, and B. Gemser). Schwáb sums up that there is a scholarly consensus that the fear of the Lord is the prerequisite of wisdom. In the end, his own conclusion is that “fear of the Lord is the first manifestation of wisdom, but it is also the prerequisite of wisdom and, in certain contexts, it is basically identified with wisdom. . . . In many cases the best solution might be to join those interpreters who use words like ‘first principle of wisdom’ or ‘essence of wisdom’ to identify the role of the fear of the Lord.” See Zóltan Schwáb, “Is Fear of the Lord the Source of Wisdom or Vice Versa?” in *Vetus Testamentum* 63 (2013): 652–62.

Lord happens to be at the beginning of or at the end of or even in between wisdom, the current study on the motif of the fear of the Lord in Exodus challenges the members of the covenant community that the pursuit of wisdom and the ability to fear the Lord must be pursued at all costs.

Conclusion

The fear of the Lord in Exodus deserves recognition as a wisdom motif and an important stand-alone theological theme. The pervasive nature that the other fear has over the Israelites throughout their wilderness journey makes such recognition even more important. Deliverance from the fear that threatens and paralyzes life so that the members of the covenant community may fear the Lord who creates life, gives life, and saves life is a worthy and necessary process that must follow the initial rescue at the Sea. It really is easier getting people out of slavery than getting the slave mentality out of them.

The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith: Reevaluating Its Impact on Baptists in the South During the Nineteenth Century



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The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith (NHC) remains a confessional milestone within American Baptist life. Composed, adopted, and distributed beginning in 1833 by a small Baptist convention in the northeastern United States, by century's end, the NHC would rise to confessional prominence as one of the most influential Baptist confessions ever composed. W. W. Barnes concluded the NHC is "probably the most widely used and the most influential of any statement of doctrine among American Baptists."¹ Steve Lemke concurs. "By far the most widely accepted and formative Southern Baptist confession from about the 1840s until today is the New Hampshire Confession of 1833."²

¹William Wright Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention 1845-1953* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1954), 118. See also W. W. Barnes, "The New Hampshire Confession of Faith, Its Origin and Use," *The Baptist & Reflector* 39 (1942); James E. Carter, "A Review of Confessions of Faith Adopted by Major Baptist Bodies in the United States," *Baptist History and Heritage* 12 (1977): 75-91; W. R. Estep, "The Nature and Use of Biblical Authority in Baptist Confessions of Faith, 1610-1963," *Baptist History and Heritage* 22, no. 4 (1987): 14-15.

²Steve W. Lemke, "History or Revisionist History: How Calvinistic were the Overwhelming Majority of Baptists in Their Confessions in the South until the Twentieth Century?" *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 57, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 251. Lemke is among the few who rightly suggest the decline of confessional Calvinism among Baptists was taking place well before the end of the nineteenth century, even before mid-century, citing the NHC as good evidence. However, Lemke never appears to appreciate the significance between the original 16 articles of the NHC and Brown's edition post-1853 (pp. 253-54). Also, Lemke's claim that "By far the most widely accepted and formative Southern Baptist confession from about the 1840s until today" remains a claim difficult to demonstrate so far as the nineteenth century is concerned. Lemke cites the NHC's inclusion in numerous church manuals beginning with Brown's in 1853 and moving forward to the century's end as evidence. Throughout Lemke's well-researched and otherwise insightful paper, Lemke mentions only a handful of Baptist associations that adopted the NHC. Even when combined with the published church manuals, this is inadequate evidence to substantiate his emboldened claim that *by far* the NHC confession was the *most widely* accepted confession. Most probably, Lemke had in mind to factor in— "until today"— the 1925 Baptist Faith and Message (BFM) as it was based upon the NHC. If so, then Lemke's claim has teeth, but only at the risk of forfeiting the NHC's enormous impact on southern Baptists within the nineteenth century. In short, it works against his purpose to demonstrate the decline of confessional

Just under a century after the NHC debuted, the Southern Baptist Convention chose to adopt, as recommended by the committee it commissioned a year earlier, “the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, revised at certain points, and with some additional articles growing out of present needs.”³ However, the widespread acceptance of the 1833 confession among Baptists had not been the equivalent of a YouTube video gone viral. Rather, according to many, the rise in popularity and influence for New Hampshire’s declaration of faith was more like riding on the slow boat to China. As Edward Hiscox described, “The New Hampshire Confession was of slow growth, as most enduring standard documents have been.”⁴

Southern Baptist statesman and theologian Edgar Y. Mullins (1860–1928), then president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and chair of the committee that proposed Southern Baptists’ first convention-wide confession in 1925, had concluded just over a decade earlier, by approvingly quoting from William McGlothlin’s classic work on Baptist confessions, “This Declaration [i.e. NHC] has become almost the sole Confession used in the North, East and West, where Calvinism has become most modified by Arminianism.”⁵ Hence, though the NHC was adopted convention-wide by Southern Baptists in Memphis, Tennessee,⁶ Mullins seemed to have followed McGlothlin by limiting the influence of New Hampshire’s confessional tentacles to the north, east, and west, albeit it apparently was a profound influence.⁷ Others have followed McGlothlin and Mullins in suggesting the NHC was mostly known outside the south during the first half of the nineteenth century.⁸

Calvinism *until* the twentieth century by appealing to confessional evidence well *beyond* the nineteenth century. Why even show any evidence from the nineteenth century at all if one appeals to Baptists in 1925 who adopted the NHC (as amended)? Arguably, that one factor seals the deal on the NHC possessing the most confessional influence among Baptists *until today*. Even so, it seems consistent with the evidence from associations in the southern states that the NHC never actually toppled, so to speak, the influence of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (PCF). Out of the 420+ associations in 12 southern states examined in my doctoral research, the NHC and PCF were almost a dead heat in confessional influence. However, when other confessional traditions clearly dissenting from the PCF are added to New Hampshire’s move away from strict Calvinism, the light of the Philadelphia confessional tradition begins to fade quickly away into influential obscurity. For example, the Broad River confessional tradition, a tradition beginning well before the NHC, had as much and arguably more influence on associational confessions in the south than the NHC. But as we intend to show in this paper, the NHC was more influential among Baptists *especially in the south during the early nineteenth century* than has been previously acknowledged.

³Southern Baptist Convention, “Southern Baptist Convention Proceedings” (Richmond, VA: Convention, 1845), 71.

⁴Edward T. Hiscox, *The New Directory for Baptist Churches* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1894), 538.

⁵E. Y. Mullins, *Baptist Beliefs* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1912), 84. See also W. J. McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1911), 300–301.

⁶Adopted as amended and revised.

⁷Accordingly, the NHC had become “almost the sole Confession used,” though neither Mullins nor McGlothlin identified *how* and/or by *whom* it was so ubiquitously used (i.e., by churches or associations or both).

⁸Phillip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes: The History of Creeds* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878), 857. See also, E. T. Hiscox, *The Baptist Directory: A Guide to*

In addition, most scholars set the publication of J. Newton Brown's church manual in 1853 as the tipping point for both mass circulation and positive confessional reception of the NHC among Baptists which then apparently began to include the south.⁹ William Brackney contends that while the "original" final version of the Confession made only a slight impact on the state convention family," what did catapult the NHC into maximum impact was "J. Newton Brown's adoption of the document in his manual produced by the American Baptist Publication Society."¹⁰ Hence, eventually the NHC became the "watermark of the conservative, traditional Baptist community."¹¹ Stanley Grenz agrees, claiming it was after 1850 that the NHC "gained stature" in broader Baptist life due its inclusion in the "publications of influential leaders" including Brown, James Pendleton, and Edward Hiscox, all authors of church manuals published in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹²

Perhaps Baptist historian William Lumpkin sums up best the current scholarly consensus surrounding the early circulation and impact of the NHC when he writes, "This document might not have become known outside of New Hampshire except for the work of one of its authors, J. Newton Brown, who . . . revised the confession on his own authority and published it in *The Baptist Church Manual* [1853]."¹³ Thus, most historians appear to indicate that New Hampshire's original confession composed of 16 articles remained inconsequential to the confessional life of not only Baptists in the south, but, according to Brackney and others, even Baptists in New Hampshire, until after mid-nineteenth century.¹⁴

the Doctrines and Practices of Baptist Churches (New York: Sheldon, 1868), 153; C. C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740–1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1962), 293–94; Malcolm B. Yarnell III, "Calvinism: Cause for Rejoicing, Cause for Concern," in *Calvinism: A Southern Baptist Dialogue*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen & Brad J. Waggoner (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2008), 81; Lemke, "History or Revisionist History," 253–54.

⁹J. N. Brown, *The Baptist Church Manual* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1853).

¹⁰William H. Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought: With Special Reference to Baptists in Britain and America* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 41.

¹¹Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought*, 41–42.

¹²S. J. Grenz, "New Hampshire Confession of Faith," in *Dictionary of Baptists in America*, ed. Bill J. Leonard (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 202. In addition to manuals already cited, see J. M. Pendleton, *Church Manual Designed for the Use of Baptist Churches* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1867); E. T. Hiscox, *Star Book on Baptist Church Polity* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1880); Hiscox, *The New Directory*.

¹³William L. Lumpkin, "Baptist Confessions of Faith," in *The Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, 4 vols., ed. Clifton Judson Allen (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1958), 1:308.

¹⁴See also Timothy George and Denise George, *Baptist Confessions, Covenants, and Catechisms* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1996), 12; Thomas J. Nettles, *By His Grace and For His Glory: A Historical, Theological and Practical Study of the Doctrines of Grace in Baptist Life*, revised and expanded 20th ann. ed. (Cape Coral, FL: Founders, 2006), xl; Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History* (Valley Forge, PA:

The purpose of this paper is to suggest that, considering the evidences presented, a reevaluation of the confessional impact that the New Hampshire Declaration of Faith had on Baptists before mid-century is justifiably warranted not only for its confessional impact on Baptists in the north, east, and west as earlier scholars like McGlothlin and Mullins contended, but particularly on Baptists of the south, as will be discussed below.¹⁵

The Need Arises for a New Baptist Confession

On June 24, 1830, the New Hampshire Baptist Convention resolved to commission a committee to draft a confession of faith representative of the theology of all New Hampshire Baptists. The resolution acknowledged that while all Baptists were “united in their views of the important and essential doctrines and practice” of their faith, the confessions were not “precisely the same language.”¹⁶ Therefore, a committee composed of N. W. Williams, William Taylor, and Ira Person was appointed to draft a “Declaration of Faith and Practice, together with a Covenant, as may be thought agreeable and consistent with the views of all our churches in this state.”¹⁷

After passing through several stages of an editorial process, the final draft of the NHC was edited, proposed, and unanimously adopted by the convention board of New Hampshire Baptists on January 15, 1833 to be published and recommended to all the Baptist churches of New Hampshire.¹⁸ The original edition apparently had 16 articles though, according to McGlothlin, “all efforts to discover a copy of the original edition have proved unavailing.”¹⁹

Judson, 2003), 190; Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism*, 293–94; Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention 1845–1953*, 118; Gregory A. Wills, *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785–1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 110; O. C. S. Wallace, *What Baptists Believe: The New Hampshire Confession: An Exposition* (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Board, 1913), 6; McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 300–301, 308; Leonard, ed., *Dictionary of Baptists in America*, 202; Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought*, 41.

¹⁵The primary sources, evaluation, and conclusions in the body of the paper below are, in part, included in and based upon a much broader original research project covering confessionalism in Baptist associations in the southern states during the nineteenth century, a requirement for the PhD in Church History and Polity at the University of Pretoria. During the research, over 420 Baptist associations in 12 southern states were examined for articles of faith with a net total of 376 associational confessions and abstracts of faith compiled for confessional analysis.

¹⁶William Hurlin, O. C. Sargent, and W. W. Wakeman, *The Baptists of New Hampshire* (Manchester, NH: The New Hampshire Baptist Convention, 1902), 151.

¹⁷Hurlin, Sargent, and Wakeman, *The Baptists of New Hampshire*, 151.

¹⁸Hurlin, Sargent, and Wakeman, *The Baptists of New Hampshire*, 74.

¹⁹McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 301. Though Wallace claimed an “exact copy” of the “original” NHC existed and was archived “now at the Ford Building, Boston” (Wallace, *What Baptists Believe*, 8). But the original Wallace mentions was not the original 16 articles New Hampshire finally settled upon in 1833. Rather, Wallace had in mind the first draft written by Ira Person and only contained seven articles (Wallace, *What Baptists Believe*, 8). Charles MacDonald included in his

When Brown included it in his church manual two decades later (1853), he had added two articles—one on “Repentance and Faith” and another on “Sanctification” along with minor edits in some of the original 16 articles.²⁰ James Madison Pendleton (1811–1891) included the NHC in his *Church Manual* (1867) without further amendment to Brown’s 1853 version, attributing the authorship of the full confession to Brown.²¹

Edward T. Hiscox (1814–1901) followed Pendleton with his first edition of *The Baptist Directory: A Guide to the Doctrines and Practices of Baptist Churches* by publishing the NHC with 18 articles.²² However, Hiscox later edited the NHC for his *Standard Manual* (1890) by dividing into two articles the one article on “Faith and Repentance” (making the NHC 19 articles).²³ Hiscox finally expanded the articles in the NHC to 20 in his last *New Directory* (1894) with an addition of an entirely new article he composed on “Adoption.”²⁴

McGlothlin indicates that the first known reproduction of the NHC outside of New Hampshire was the publication of the original 16 articles as recorded in William Crowell’s *Church Member’s Handbook* (1850) under the section, “Articles of Christian Belief.”²⁵ McGlothlin claims before providing the NHC in full, “The following is reproduced from William Crowell’s “Church Members Hand-Book,” and may not be the exact original text, though it is certainly substantially so.”²⁶ William Lumpkin and subsequently, Bill Leonard, uncritically assume McGlothlin’s claim without qualification.

research on the NHC a draft of the Person manuscript allegedly containing the original seven articles first proposed by Person. See Charles Riley MacDonald, “The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith” (PhD diss., Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1939), 80–81.

²⁰Most modern-day versions of the NHC seem to follow Brown’s 1853 church manual edition. Interestingly, some have indicated Brown’s edition inserted a stronger Calvinistic strain into the original NHC with his additional two articles. See Wills, *Democratic Religion*, 110. See also Mark Nenadov, “Remind me of my heavenly birth’: John Newton Brown’s Doctrine of Regeneration,” (unpublished paper, 2014), 8, available at https://www.academia.edu/9001388/_Remind_me_of_my_heavenly_birth_John_Newton_Browns_Doctrine_of_Regeneration.

²¹Pendleton, *Church Manual*, 43. Interestingly, Brown’s church manual never attributes the confession as a product of New Hampshire Baptists (Brown, *The Baptist Church Manual*, 1). And, while Pendleton attributed the full confession to Brown, Wallace supposed the NHC to be the work of a committee (Wallace, *What Baptists Believe*, 6).

²²Hiscox, *The Baptist Directory*, 154–175.

²³By Hiscox’s testimony, he divided Brown’s article on Baptism and the Lord’s Supper into two articles totaling 19 articles in 1890. However, Hiscox apparently had forgotten he had already divided the article and consequently had published an edition of the NHC with 19 articles in 1880 (Hiscox, *Star Book*, 20–25).

²⁴Hiscox, *The New Directory*, 542.

²⁵William Crowell, *The Church Members Hand-Book: Guide to the Doctrines and Practice of Baptist Churches* (Boston: Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln, 1850), 19–28.

²⁶McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 301.

McGlothlin overlooks, however, J. Newton Brown, whose first circulation of the NHC was not in his church manual.²⁷ Rather Brown first circulated New Hampshire's declaration of faith 18 years earlier than his church manual published in 1853, and at least a full decade and a half earlier than Crowell's manual in 1850. In 1835, Brown served as editor of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, and in that edition, is published New Hampshire's declaration of faith and covenant.²⁸ In his brief introduction to the NHC in the encyclopedia, Brown identified the confession's source. "The following brief Declaration of Faith, with the Church Covenant, was recently published by the Baptist Convention of New Hampshire, and is believed to express, with little variation, the general sentiments of the body in the United States." Thus, within roughly two years of its adoption, the influence of New Hampshire Baptists' confessional faith began its ascent.

This slight but significant overlook by scholars of the heightened influence the NHC received by being published in the encyclopedia and mass produced and circulated almost two decades before Brown published it in his popular church manual has led to exaggerated claims about the obscurity of the NHC before mid-century. Scholars routinely assert that the NHC's influence and popularity were mainly spread by Brown's and Pendleton's church manuals published in 1853 and 1867 respectively. Yet, the evidence shows Lumpkin's claim cited above that the NHC "might not have become known outside of New Hampshire" but for Brown's publishing it in 1853 becomes an embarrassing case of undocumented presumption.²⁹ Indeed the usage of the original NHC by many Baptist associations cited below demonstrates New Hampshire's original articles of faith already had produced a substantial impact on Baptists in the south before either Crowell or Brown published his manual.

Even so, why would New Hampshire Baptists desire a new confession? While the historical record itself seems to yield little about why New Hampshire Baptists felt compelled to draw up a new faith statement, the lack of evidence from primary sources has not hindered some from speculating as to why New Hampshire Baptists commissioned a committee to propose a new confession of faith. Perhaps the most oft-cited occasion for the rise of the NHC is the birth of the Free Will Baptist movement and consequent desire to smooth over the jagged edges of strict Calvinism found in the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (PCF).

²⁷McGlothlin also overlooks the publication of the NHC in Robert Baird's 1844 edition of *Religion in America* (Robert Baird, *Religion in America; or an Account of the Origin, Progress, Relation to the State and Present Condition of the Evangelical Churches in the United States* [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1844], 230–31). Baird's volume on religion in America was first published in Britain in 1843 as a guide for English people to understand what was religiously happening in the United States (Ibid., Preface to the American Edition). Hence, the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's confession were published in Edinburg 10 years prior to J. Brown's church manual was first released in 1853.

²⁸J. Newton Brown, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Philadelphia: Steen, 1835), 191.

²⁹As noted above, the NHC was published abroad as the confessional consensus of American Baptists a full decade before Brown's church manual was published in 1853.

For example, Stanley Grenz reasoned that since “support for the previously dominant rigid Calvinism was waning,” a new confession was needed to reflect the more moderate views of the churches in New Hampshire. Thus, “Readily evident is the attempt by its drafters to articulate a moderate Calvinism during an era of theological controversy.”³⁰ More emboldened is Baptist historian William R. Estep concerning the confessional modification of the NHC, “General dissatisfaction with The Philadelphia Confession led the New Hampshire Convention to consider the formulation of a new confession that would considerably modify the Calvinism of The Philadelphia Confession”³¹ Phillip Schaff says of the NHC, “It is shorter and simpler than the Confession of 1688, and presents the Calvinistic system in a milder form.”³²

Baptist historian Thomas Nettles rejects this view, opting instead to cite a literary reason about which New Hampshire Baptists were concerned. For Nettles, “succinctness” was a key concern for New Hampshire Baptists not the Calvinism of the PCF. “Many have interpreted the contents of the New Hampshire Confession of Faith as an attempt to modify the strong Calvinism of earlier days into something more palatable to the tastes of eighteenth-century [sic] churches. . . . One of its concerns is succinctness.”³³ So, while acknowledging the NHC is neither as detailed nor lengthy as the PCF, Nettles claims “it is also true that the substance of its doctrine remains unchanged.”³⁴

³⁰Leonard, *Dictionary of Baptists in America*, 202–3.

³¹Estep, “The Nature and Use of Biblical Authority,” 3.

³²Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 857. See also Yarnell, “Calvinism,” 81; MacDonald, “The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith,” 101–6; James Leo Garrett Jr., *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 151; Nettles, *By His Grace and For His Glory*, xl; Matthew M. Barrett and Thomas J. Nettles, eds., *Whomever He Wills: A Surprising Display of Sovereign Mercy* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2012), 360.

³³Nettles, *By His Grace and For His Glory*, xli.

³⁴Few have followed Nettles in suggesting the NHC was not intended to modify the strict Calvinism of the PCF. Perhaps Baptist theologian James Leo Garrett sums up the majority position well: “Since the confession is silent as to the extent of the atonement, interprets repentance and faith as both human duties and divine graces, gives no indication of teaching irresistible grace, does not interpret election as God’s choice from eternity of particular human beings for salvation, and interprets perseverance both in terms of endurance to the end and being kept by the power of God, one can conclude that the label ‘moderately Arminian’ would be as accurate as the term ‘moderately Calvinistic’” (Garrett, *Baptist Theology*, 132). David Bebbington also notes the lack of Calvinistic distinctive in the NHC (Hans J. Hillerbrand, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Protestantism: Volume 1: A–C* [New York: Routledge, 2004], 299), as do many others. While it may be perceived unfair to Nettles, it remains hard to resist concluding Nettles is nudged *a priori* into defending the NHC as a strictly Calvinistic confession since the narrative of his historiography demands it. Namely, “The writer’s thesis is that Calvinism, popularly called the doctrines of grace, prevailed in the most influential and enduring arenas of Baptist denominational life until the end of the second decade of the twentieth century” (Nettles, *By His Grace and For His Glory*, ix). Hence, it would hardly do if, in the first third of the nineteenth century, Baptists confessionally solidified in the NHC an historic shift away from

The Reception and Rejection of the New Hampshire Confession

When New Hampshire Baptists began to ponder a confessional rewrite in 1830, it most probably did not occur to them that the short declaration of faith they would eventually adopt and publish in 1833 would become perhaps the most influential faith statement among American Baptists in history, even eventually surpassing Philadelphia's legendary confession.³⁵ At the end of the nineteenth century, Hiscox averred of New Hampshire's confession "No other creed form has attained to anything like its general circulation among American Baptists."³⁶ Hiscox summarized the circulation up to 1894 as follows:

About 100,000 copies have been circulated with the author's manuals alone, besides its wide dissemination by other means. In the Directory, not far from 60,000 have been sent out. In the Star Book on Church Polity more than 30,000, and in the Standard Manual about 10,000. On the whole, for common use among Baptists, no other form of doctrinal statement has so much to commend it as this, though none can be claimed as perfect.³⁷

The total circulation of the NHC from church manuals published by Brown, Pendleton, and Hiscox remains impressive and accounts in many ways for the wild popularity the NHC enjoyed among latter-nineteenth century Baptists. The sheer volume of copies of the NHC could explain, at least in part, why the PCF lost its powerful place in confessional prominence before the end of the nineteenth century.³⁸ It might also explain how the NHC came to play the significant role it did in the formation of the 1925 Baptist Faith and Message. Mikael Broadway offers a simple and very popular answer.

How did the New Hampshire Confession come to be so widely accepted, and play a significant role in the formation of the 1925 Baptist Faith and Message and the Articles of Faith of the National Baptist Convention? Simply, it was included in the most popular and widely read Baptist minister's manuals, published first by J. Newton Brown in 1853, and later by J. M. Pendleton and by Edward T. Hiscox.³⁹

strict Calvinism as expressed in the PCF.

³⁵Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention 1845–1953*, 118.

³⁶Hiscox, *The New Directory*, 542.

³⁷Hiscox, *The New Directory*, 542.

³⁸However, note the extended comment on Steve Lemke's claim concerning the impact of the NHC on Southern Baptist life (see footnote 2). One might add that counting up the sales and circulation of a product remains distinct from gauging the actual *impact* of a product whether the product is a magazine or a confession of faith. As observed earlier, of the 420 Baptist associations in 12 southern states examined, the NHC was barely a dead heat with the PCF as an associationally-adopted confession. In fact, the majority of the associations examined adopted neither the PCF nor the NHC but followed other confessional traditions. See E. Peter Frank Lumpkins, "The Decline of Confessional Calvinism among Baptist Associations in the Southern States during the Nineteenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 2018), 445.

³⁹Mikael Broadway, "Is It Not the Communion of the Body of Christ?" *Review and Expositor* 100, no. 3 (2003): 411.

Nevertheless, while the NHC was widely and popularly received by nineteenth-century Baptists, not every Baptist community rolled out the red carpet for the new confession's arrival. Charles MacDonald cites a telling description from *The Christian Review* (1859) of the NHC's rejection by some Calvinistic Baptist scholars:

There is a collection of articles, commonly known as the 'New Hampshire Confession,' and frequently referred to by other denominations as the 'Baptist symbol.' This is an entire mistake. It is repudiated by a great many ministers and churches, even in the limited portion of our country where alone it has been adopted. It is a discredit to us; it is the creed of Mr. Facing-both-ways. It is a Calvinistic formulary, with an Arminian undertone of interpretation; 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.' We are sorry to see this confession reprinted, and helped into notice, in Dr. Hiscox's excellent 'Baptist Church Directory', recently published.⁴⁰

Similarly, but more recently, Gregory Wills averred that Baptists in New Hampshire "sought to soften their Calvinist identity" and "adopted a new confession in 1833 that expunged or obscured such Calvinist distinctives as human depravity, imputed righteousness, and eternal election."⁴¹ Indeed, according to Wills, many strict Calvinistic Southern Baptists raised suspicions about any association that would embrace "a creed as vague" as the NHC, a confession "which could accommodate both Arminians and Calvinists," and thus not only be plagued with professing false doctrine "but also [failing] to distinguish clearly between error and truth, especially the truth of election." "Why would any group adopt it in place of abstracts of the London Confession unless it was to move toward Arminianism?"⁴² Clearly, according to Wills, strict Calvinistic Baptists who embraced the PCF routinely viewed the NHC as nothing less than an Arminian compromise.⁴³

⁴⁰MacDonald, "The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith," 60. E. G. Robinson and V. R. Hotchkiss were editors of the volume and most likely the source of the comments posted in the publications review section of the journal (E. G. Robinson and V. R. Hotchkiss, eds., "Article VIII—Shorter Book Notices 1859," *The Christian Review*, Volume XXIV [1859]: 316).

⁴¹Wills, *Democratic Religion*, 110.

⁴²Wills, *Democratic Religion*, 110.

⁴³For more on the shift away strict Calvinism displayed in New Hampshire's 1833 confession, see C. Douglas Weaver and Nathan A. Finn, "Youth for Calvin: Reformed Theology and Baptist Collegians," *Baptist History and Heritage* 39 (Spring 2004): 40–55; Matthew W. Cook, "The Impact of Revivalism upon Baptist Faith and Practice in the American South Prior to the Civil War" (PhD diss., Baylor University, 2009), 9; 307–309; Walter D. Draughon III, "A Critical Evaluation of the Diminishing Influence of Calvinism on the Doctrine of Atonement in Representative Southern Baptist Theologians: James Petrigru Boyce, Edgar Young Mullins, Walter Thomas Conner, and Dale Moody" (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1987); Joseph F. Super, "The Rail and the Cross in West Virginia Timber Country: Rethinking Religion in the Appalachian Mountains" (PhD diss., West Virginia University, 2014), 259–266; Paul Abbott Basden, "Theologies of Predestination in the Southern Baptist Tradition: a Critical Evaluation" (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986), 92–94; W. Wiley Richards, "Southern Baptist Identity: Moving away from Calvinism," *Baptist History and Heritage* 31, no. 4 (1996): 27–35; Barnes, "The New Hampshire Confession of Faith,

In illustrating the theological suspicion of strict Calvinists toward Baptists who embraced the NHC, Wills cites the Florida association's 1846 petition to the Georgia Baptist Convention for entry into the fellowship. Organized in 1842 by churches that withdrew from Georgia's Ochlochnee association over the latter's anti-missions posture,⁴⁴ Florida Baptists requested correspondence with Georgia Baptists. Consequently, a resulting "protracted debate" began because the Florida association had earlier embraced the original 16 articles of the NHC, and it was not until after Florida Baptists had "assured everyone that the association was not Arminian" that the Florida association was received into fellowship with Georgia Baptists.⁴⁵ Though Georgia Baptists were finally persuaded to accept the Florida association presumably upon verbal assurance alone, the Florida association nonetheless dropped their confessional allegiance to the original NHC and embraced an abstract of faith reflecting the Philadelphia confessional tradition.⁴⁶ Article III in Florida's new abstract of faith read, "We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election," a common article on election found among innumerable Baptist associations across the south depicting confessional dependence upon and theological loyalty to the PCF.⁴⁷

A similar scenario took place in Louisiana's Mississippi River association. Upon organizing in 1843, the association had member churches in both Louisiana and across the river in bordering Mississippi. Adopted were the original 16 articles of the NHC as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*.⁴⁸ As in Georgia, the strict Calvinists in the area were not happy with the confession the new association chose. Paxton describes thusly:

These articles are coined from the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, and differ in some particulars from the neighboring associations, which were based upon the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. At the time, it was customary to lay great stress upon the doctrines of election and predestination, and at first the surrounding associations hesitated to hold correspondence with this body.⁴⁹

The Mississippi River association struggled along for the next two years bickering with each other over the confession as well as being theologically scorned by neighboring Baptist associations. Paxton describes the situation in 1845 as unchanged over the preceding two years. The NHC not only caused the association to be "looked upon with some distrust

Its Origin and Use," 3–8; Leonard, *Baptist Ways*, 190–91; Wallace, *What Baptists Believe*, 6–10.

⁴⁴Allen, *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, 1:441.

⁴⁵Florida Association, *Minutes of the Fourth Annual Session of the Florida Baptist Association* (Tallahassee, FL: Association, 1846), 2–3.

⁴⁶Wills, *Democratic Religion*, 110.

⁴⁷Florida Association, *Minutes of the Eighth Annual Session of the Florida Baptist Association* (Tallahassee, FL: Association, 1850), 13.

⁴⁸W. E. Paxton, *A History of the Baptists of Louisiana, From the Earliest Times to the Present* (St. Louis: C. R. Barnes, 1888), 65–70.

⁴⁹Paxton, *A History of the Baptists of Louisiana*, 70–71.

by some of the neighboring associations,” but the NHC also apparently “failed to satisfy the constituent churches.”⁵⁰ Consequently, a committee was appointed to revise the articles and bring a report back to the 1846 session. On October 24, 1846, the Mississippi River association adopted a new confession containing seven articles reflecting the strict Calvinism of neighboring associations.⁵¹ In particular, Mississippi River Baptists included in Article 4 that God “loved His people with an everlasting love: that He chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world” and “He calleth them with a holy and effectual calling.”⁵² In addition, Article 5 affirms the mediatorial work of Christ on the cross as a sacrifice to fulfill the holy requirements of both law and justice, and therefore “hath by His most precious blood, redeemed the elect...”⁵³ Consequently, correspondence was happily regained with the Mississippi association.⁵⁴

Thus, what remains noteworthy at this juncture is not necessarily either the reception or rejection of the NHC by Baptist associations in the south. In fact, those two responses could be documented through the end of the century. Rather more significant is the original 16 articles of the NHC as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* had already reached the deep south by the early 1840s, a decade before Brown’s church manual was published. Moreover, that Baptist associations in the deep south were discussing the confessional language of the 1833 NHC as early as 1842 suggests as hardly warranted the popular claim that it was only *after* J. Newton Brown published his amended edition of the NHC in 1853 that Baptists in the south were significantly impacted by it. As shown below, associations in several southern states embraced the original NHC before 1853.

Selected Baptist Associations and the Original New Hampshire Confession Before 1853

After examining the published minutes of over 420 Baptist associations among 12 southern states during the nineteenth century, at least 40 Baptist associations had adopted the original 16 articles of the NHC as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. In addition, nine of the 12 southern states examined had at least one Baptist association that had adopted the original 16 articles of the NHC. Also, most of the 40 associations adopted the NHC *before* 1850. Below are some examples from several southern states.

⁵⁰Paxton, *A History of the Baptists of Louisiana*, 75.

⁵¹Paxton, *A History of the Baptists of Louisiana*, 75–77.

⁵²Mississippi River Association, *Minutes of the Thirty-Second Anniversary of the Mississippi River Baptist Association* (New Orleans: Association, 1875), 16. Though the associational minutes are from the 1875 session, above the articles of faith are the words, “Adopted October 24TH, 1846.”

⁵³Mississippi River Association, *Minutes*, 16.

⁵⁴Accordingly, one wonders how Nettles’s interpretation of the NHC as *succinctly* but nonetheless *clearly* depicting confessional allegiance to Philadelphia Calvinism accounts for the rigorous rejection of the NHC by strict Calvinists in Georgia and Mississippi. Apparently, Nettles finds Calvinism where they found Arminianism.

Established in 1818, the Cahaba Baptist Association was one of Alabama's oldest associations and therefore would most likely have had close theological affinities with the PCF.⁵⁵ As early as 1851, however, Cahaba Baptists had adopted what they called "The Baptist Confession of Faith."⁵⁶ Cahaba's articles of faith were the original 16 articles of New Hampshire's declaration published in 1835.⁵⁷ Thus, before Brown's church manual was published in 1853, Alabama's Cahaba Baptists had already adopted the NHC.

Judson Baptist Association located in southeast Alabama was organized in 1851.⁵⁸ Rather than the PCF, the association's faith statement comprises the original 16 articles of the NHC as published in Brown's encyclopedia, another indication the proliferation of New Hampshire's confession had already gained a confessional following in the deep south prior to the publication of Brown, Pendleton, and Hiscox's church manuals.⁵⁹

From the beginning of the association as a split from the Tuscaloosa association in 1835,⁶⁰ member churches of Alabama's North River Baptist Association had been united upon a confession of faith.⁶¹ Composed of 12 articles, North River Baptists' abstract of faith reveals neither confessional dependence upon nor theological loyalty to the PCF. Nor does the abstract show any confessional tendencies toward theological Arminianism as many maintain.⁶² And, as the minutes of each of the annual meetings indicate, the original

⁵⁵Allen, *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, 1:7.

⁵⁶Cahaba Association, *Minutes of the Cahaba Baptist Association* (Tuscaloosa, AL: Association, 1851), 21–23. Interestingly, "The Baptist Confession of Faith" was often used as a term of endearment by strict Calvinists for the PCF.

⁵⁷Cahaba association (1818) should not be confused with Cahaba Valley association (1867).

⁵⁸Allen, *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, 1:9.

⁵⁹Judson Association, *Minutes of the Tenth Annual Session of the Judson Baptist Association* (Abbeville, AL: Association, 1860), 19–24. Though unlike the 1835 encyclopedia edition of the NHC, Judson's articles of faith include proof-texts similar to Crowell's manual. However, the texts were apparently added by the association because they do not match the texts Crowell used. Also, in Judson's 1870 minutes, all proof-texts are dropped from the 16 articles (Ibid, 1870, 14–15). Additionally, an oddity occurs in Article 9 between Judson's 1860 and 1870 minutes. In the 1860 minutes, the ninth article is correctly labeled "Of the Perseverance of the Saints" while the 1870 minutes labels Article 9 as "Of the Preservation of Saints." Whether the change in terminology was intentional or not remains difficult to discern.

⁶⁰Allen, *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, 1:14.

⁶¹North River Association, *Minutes of the Second Anniversary of the North River Baptist Association* (Tuscaloosa, AL: Association, 1836), 4–5.

⁶²See Allen, *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, 1:14. See also Wayne Flynt, *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), 29. Nettles appears confused on the North River Association. "The North River Association, under the leadership of David W. Andrews, had altered its confession on the doctrines of election and effectual calling" (Nettles, *By His Grace and For His Glory*, 138). To suggest the association changed its confession on election and effectual calling not only contradicts the association's published minutes but assumes

confession seems unchanged from 1836 through 1843. However, in 1844, the association moved on and passed a motion that 14 men be “appointed a committee to revise, alter, or amend our Constitution and Confession of Faith.”⁶³ Even more significantly, resolution 34 in the same minutes reads thusly:

34. Resolved, That an Abstract of Principles, as published in the *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, be published in our present Minutes, and recommended to the Churches as a substitute for the one now in use provided the Abstract proposed shall not be considered binding on any of our Churches, unless adopted by them in their Church capacity.⁶⁴

As shown earlier, the 1835 *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* edited by Brown published what may be as close to the original 16 articles of the NHC as one can get. Hence, by 1844, the North River Association, an association branded as “Arminian,” had already embraced the original NHC.

In neighboring Mississippi, the Chickasaw Baptist Association was organized in the northern part of the state in 1837 apparently without a confession of faith until one was adopted in 1848.⁶⁵ According to Mississippi Baptist historians, Z. Leavell and T. Bailey, presumably due to lack of record-keeping, little can be known of the workings of the association prior to 1843.⁶⁶ However, in that year, records indicate 18 churches belonged to

the North River Association once had strictly Calvinistic notions of election and effectual call. To the contrary, the North River Association established itself as consciously dissenting from strict Calvinism. The first statement of the preamble to North River’s original Constitution reads, “We, the United Baptist Churches of Jesus Christ, in Alabama, that believe the doctrine of a free salvation, and a general atonement” (North River Association, *Minutes* [1836], 3). Nettles also credits Basil Manly, Sr. with settling the dispute between North River and Tuscaloosa association by a sermon Manly preached for a specified gathering (perhaps following Wayne Flynt, *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie* [Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1998], 29). Jeff Robinson uncritically follows Nettles when he suggests, “Manly encouraged the North River Association to hold the line on the historic Reformed position on election and avoid attempting to remove the valid biblical tension between God’s absolute sovereignty and man’s responsibility” (Jeff Robinson, “‘These Radical Doctrines’: The SBC and Evangelical Calvinism,” in *Whomever He Wills*, 346). Like Nettles, Robinson wrongly indicates North River was an association that once held to a strictly Calvinistic confession but was teetering on abandoning orthodox doctrine, an indication contrary to the evidence. Furthermore, contra Flynt, no evidence seems to be extant in the North River minutes that it changed its adherence to the NHC it adopted in 1844 to a new Abstract of Faith created in 1849 in response to Basil Manly’s sermon. In fact, in 1875, the original 16 articles of the NHC were still published as the associational confession (North River Association, *Minutes of the North River United Baptist Association* [Tuscaloosa, AL: Association, 1875], 6–7).

⁶³North River Association, *Minutes of the Tenth Anniversary of the North River United Baptist Association* (Tuscaloosa, AL: Association, 1844), 3.

⁶⁴North River Association, *Minutes*, 1844, 4.

⁶⁵Allen, *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, 2:879.

⁶⁶Z. T. Leavell and T. J. Bailey, *A Complete History of Mississippi Baptists From the Earliest Times*

the association when they met in annual session, and 11 more churches were received into fellowship. Leavell and Bailey describe the Chickasaw association thusly: “It may be called the mother association of North Mississippi, as the Mississippi Association is in South Mississippi.”⁶⁷

In 1848, Chickasaw Baptists met for its annual session in Tippah County. The association was 10 years old, and the leaders were concerned about organizational improvements, improvements they believed included adopting a confession of faith. Consequently, Chickasaw Baptists unanimously adopted a resolution concerning articles of faith. “It was unanimously resolved ‘to adopt the articles of faith as found in the Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge,’ which was the declaration of faith, published by the Baptist Convention of New Hampshire.”⁶⁸ What is more, according to Leavell and Bailey, Mississippi Baptists the entire state over embraced New Hampshire’s confession *before* 1850.⁶⁹ Although many Mississippi associations embraced the original NHC as claimed, Leavell and Bailey somewhat stretched their claim.⁷⁰

North Carolina was another southern state profoundly affected by the 1833 New Hampshire confession before mid-century. In May 1849, one of North Carolina’s oldest associations, the Chowan Baptist Association dropped a strictly Calvinistic abstract of faith and adopted an edited version of New Hampshire’s confession of faith.⁷¹ Chowan’s version included the 16 original articles of the NHC (with minor word changes),⁷² plus an original article by Chowan association entitled “Of Church Independence” inserted as Article 12. In all, Chowan’s version of the NHC contains 17 articles. Cashie Baptist Church, a member of the Chowan association, had embraced the NHC only a month earlier.⁷³

(Jackson, MS: Mississippi Baptist Publishing, 1904), 1:498.

⁶⁷Leavell and Bailey, *A Complete History of Mississippi Baptists*, 1:498.

⁶⁸Leavell and Bailey, *A Complete History of Mississippi Baptists*, 1:499.

⁶⁹Leavell and Bailey, *A Complete History of Mississippi Baptists*, 2:1324–26.

⁷⁰After examining 24 associations in Mississippi, it remains clear all associations did not embrace the NHC before mid-century as Leavell and Bailey appear to claim. Some held to abstracts of faith that could be dubbed moderately Calvinistic while several other associations embraced abstracts of faith within the Philadelphia confessional tradition.

⁷¹James L. Delke, *History of the North Carolina Chowan Baptist Association* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards, Broughton, and Co., 1882), 90.

⁷²For example, while New Hampshire’s Article 11 is entitled “Of a Gospel Church,” Chowan changed the title to “Of a Church of Christ.” Also, NHC’s Article 6 “Of the Freeness of Salvation” is changed to “Of the Fullness of Salvation” in Chowan’s confession. However, this appears to be a recording error rather than an intentional change by the Chowan association.

⁷³Raymond Hargus Taylor, *The Baptist Church at Cashie 1770–1970* (Ahoskie, NC: Gatling & Pierce, 1970), 11.

Raleigh Baptist Association was established in 1805 and constitutes one of North Carolina's oldest existing associations.⁷⁴ Whatever confession Raleigh Baptists adopted or not in the earlier part of their history, by mid-nineteenth century, they decided upon the original 16 articles of the New Hampshire confession.⁷⁵

By far, one of the most compelling confessional narratives concerns North Carolina's Sandy Creek Association. The Sandy Creek Association was organized in 1758 by Shubal Stearns as the first Separate Baptist association in the south and, by many accounts, the third Baptist association in America.⁷⁶ Given Separate Baptists' well-documented aversion to writing confessions, it remains unsurprising that the association apparently existed from 1758 until 1816 before composing articles of belief. According to Lumpkin, Sandy Creek's decision to compose and adopt a confession in 1816 was largely attributable to the influence of Luther Rice.⁷⁷ The 10 brief articles of faith display a moderate to strict Calvinism. The single article that pushes the confession toward strict Calvinism is Article 4:

We believe in election from eternity, effectual calling by the Holy Spirit of God, and justification in his sight only by imputation of Christ's righteousness. And we believe that they who are thus elected, effectually called, and justified, will persevere through grace to the end, that none of them be lost.⁷⁸

Within two decades, however, the association became uneasy with their confession. In 1836, a motion was made and passed to set up a three-person committee to "draw up Articles of the Faith of Baptists, and present them to our next Association."⁷⁹ While no minutes are apparently extant for 1837, whatever debate ensued, the association appended the 1816 confession to the 1838 minutes.⁸⁰ Consequently, it appears reasonable to assume that since the debate on the articles was seemingly a wash, they decided to keep the 1816 confession. If so, the satisfaction with the original confession wore off quickly, and they once again became uneasy about their confession.

Thus, in 1845, the Sandy Creek association "Resolved, therefore, That we adopt the following Sixteen Articles, with the Scripture References, as the Faith of this Association" recommending it "to the different Churches for their adoption."⁸¹ The 16 articles are, almost

⁷⁴Allen, *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, 2:1011.

⁷⁵Raleigh Association, *Minutes of the Forty-Sixth Annual Session of the Raleigh Baptist Association* (Raleigh, NC: Association, 1851), 12–14.

⁷⁶Allen, *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, 2:1012.

⁷⁷Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 374.

⁷⁸Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 374–75.

⁷⁹Sandy Creek Association, *Proceedings of the 78th Annual Meeting of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association* (Fayetteville, NC: Edward Hale, 1836), 6.

⁸⁰Sandy Creek Association, *Minutes of the 80th Annual Meeting of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association* (Fayetteville, NC: Edward Hale, 1839), 6–7; 9–10.

⁸¹Sandy Creek Association, *Proceedings of the Ninety-Seventh Anniversary of the Sandy Creek Baptist*

verbatim, the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Hence, before Brown's manual had been published, the original NHC made a profound impact in North Carolina.

Organized in 1786, Tennessee's Holston Baptist Association was the first association in the volunteer state.⁸² It was established upon the Philadelphia confessional tradition. "We adopt as our Confession the same which was adopted at Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) in the year of our Lord—1742—."⁸³ However, by mid-century, many Holston Baptists had apparently become confessionally dissatisfied with Philadelphia's articles of faith. In the 1844 minutes, Holston printed the original 16 articles of *The New Hampshire Declaration of Faith* as published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*.⁸⁴

The following year, a request came from Jonesborough church that the association "consider the propriety of adopting the articles of faith as [printed] in the minutes of 1844."⁸⁵ The association's response was clear: "We recommend the adoption, and request the churches to answer next year."⁸⁶ The minutes for the next several years appear to reflect no official feedback from Holston churches. Nor does it seem, that after the association's recommendation that New Hampshire's confession be adopted in 1845, a confession of any persuasion was published as late as 1890.

Some historians assume Holston kept Philadelphia's confession.⁸⁷ Others appear to suggest Holston Baptists officially adopted the NHC.⁸⁸ Still others insist Holston's leaders held questionable allegiance to the PCF.

Association (Fayetteville, NC: Association, 1845), 9.

⁸²Allen, *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, 2:1353.

⁸³Holston Association, *Plan of Association on Holston River* (manuscript, 1786), n.p. The minutes are handwritten and have no page numbers.

⁸⁴Holston Association, *Minutes of the Holston Baptist Association* (manuscript, 1844), 5–8.

⁸⁵Holston Association, *Minutes of the Holston Baptist Association* (manuscript, 1845), n.p. The minutes are handwritten and have no page numbers.

⁸⁶Holston Association, *Minutes* (1845), n.p.

⁸⁷Holston historian Glenn A. Toomey seems to have concluded the association kept Philadelphia's confession as its theological declaration since he published it in its entirety in his work on the association, even naming the confession the "Holston Confession." Glenn A. Toomey, *Bicentennial Holston: Tennessee's First Baptist Association and Its Affiliated Churches 1786–1985* (Morristown, TN: n.p., 1985), 332ff. Curiously, Toomey fails to mention Holston's leadership recommended the adoption of the NHC in 1844.

⁸⁸Albert Wardin appears to acknowledge and accept that Holston Baptists officially adopted the new confession in 1845 upon leadership's recommendation. Albert W. Wardin Jr., *Tennessee Baptists: A Comprehensive History, 1779–1999* (Brentwood, TN: Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, 1999), 98.

One such leader and first moderator of the Holston association was Tidence Lane,⁸⁹ the successor to Shubal Stearns, the “father” of Separate Baptists in the south.⁹⁰ Lane was reportedly, at best, a moderate Calvinist. Lane is described by historian, J. J. Burnett, as, “much sought in counsel by the churches. He was not so hard in doctrine as some of his brethren, his doctrinal belief being a modified Calvinism.”⁹¹ If Burnett is correct about Lane, one who embraced the entire PCF presumably would not be described as a modified Calvinist.

Another early leader in the Holston association was William Murphy. John Sparks indicates that not only did Murphy reject the Philadelphia confession, at least in parts, but others in Holston most probably did as well.

William Murphy categorically declared that Holston had endorsed the Confession only as “a general statement of principles” and that no one in the association had ever been bound to a strict observance of the precepts of the document. In fact, some old Separates in Holston may never have accepted any portion of the Confession, and it is certain that Robert Elkin never did.⁹²

Thus, since Holston Baptists apparently only accepted the PCF as a “general statement of principles,” caution should be followed in suggesting the association was wholly dependent upon and theologically loyal to Philadelphia’s *strict* Calvinism. In fact, given the leaders recommendation to accept the original 16 articles of the NHC in 1844, the evidence seems to tilt in the direction that Holston Baptists embraced it.

What is more significant, the Holston leaders’ 1844 recommendation demonstrates the powerful influence the original NHC had on Baptists in the south *before* Brown published an amended edition in his church manual in 1853.

Conclusion

At least 40 Baptist associations in the southern states adopted the original 16 articles of the NHC as first published in the 1835 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*.⁹³ Some of those associations adopted the original articles as published in the encyclopedia well into the latter-nineteenth century, a practice which suggests that the impact of the 1833 edition of the NHC had not run its course. That is, some associations apparently still preferred the original 16 articles (1833) over Brown’s edition of 18 articles (1853). Whatever

⁸⁹Holston Association, *Holston Baptist Association Minutes* (Association, 1885), 21.

⁹⁰John Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity: The Life & Legacy of Elder Shubal Stearns* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 48–71.

⁹¹Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. 10: Jasper–Larkin (New York: Scribner, 1933), 582.

⁹²Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity*, 193.

⁹³Comparatively, of the 420 associations in 12 southern states examined for articles of faith, 51 associations embraced Brown’s 18 article edition of the NHC published in 1853.

the case, given the number of Baptist associations that adopted the original 16 articles of the NHC, it seems to follow that many have wrongly presumed New Hampshire's confessional impact on Baptists in the south came only after Brown amended and published in it 1853.⁹⁴

⁹⁴More research is needed in associational confessionalism in the southern states. While examining 420 associations proved to be a daunting task, there remain hundreds of associations yet to be examined for articles of faith to be analyzed to gain a clearer picture of Baptist confessionalism in the nineteenth century.

Evaluating the Points of Congruence and Incongruence between the Doctrines of Justification of John Calvin and N.T. Wright



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N. T. Wright advocates a new perspective on the writings of Paul. In 1978, he claimed that he was offering a new way of seeing Paul and a new perspective on certain Pauline problems.¹ Some scholars, particularly John Piper, have expressed their disagreement with Wright's perspective on the doctrine of justification. For instance, Piper expresses his conviction that although Wright is not "under the curse of Galatians 1:8–9," he believes that Wright's "portrayal of the gospel—and of the doctrine of justification in particular—is so disfigured that it becomes difficult to recognize as biblically faithful."² Other authors also have expressed concern about Wright's new perspective on Paul.³

This article is a summary of a dissertation that evaluates the proximity of the doctrines of justification of John Calvin and N. T. Wright.⁴ Wright refers to himself as a "good Calvinist"⁵ and favorably refers to the doctrine of John Calvin a number of times concerning his covenantal theology, his viewpoint on God's commands on law-keeping and godliness, his understanding of justification relative to being in Christ, and the importance of the Spirit's work in salvation.⁶ Wright maintains that a doctrine that takes into account the whole of Scripture and demonstrates a reliance on the work of the whole Trinity will embrace both the truths that the Reformers espoused and those that they moved to the

¹N. T. Wright, "The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith (1978)," in *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978–2013* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2013), 6.

²John Piper, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 15.

³See Donald Macleod, "The New Perspective: Paul, Luther and Judaism," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 4–5; Alan C. Clifford, "Justification: The Calvin-Saumur Perspective," *Evangelical Quarterly* 79, no. 4 (2007): 331; Paul Helm, "John Calvin and N. T. Wright on Imputed Righteousness," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 13, no. 4 (Winter 2009): 54; Piper, *The Future of Justification*, 1–3 and back cover.

⁴Robert F. Littlefield, "Evaluating the Points of Congruence and Incongruence between the Doctrines of Justification of John Calvin and N. T. Wright" (PhD diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015).

⁵N. T. Wright, "New Perspectives on Paul (2003)," in *Pauline Perspectives*, 277.

⁶N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 10, 12, 75, 84–85, 102.

side. He claims that his view of justification establishes the Reformation tradition, rather than overthrowing it.⁷ The thesis of this paper is that a substantial congruence can be demonstrated between the doctrines of justification of Calvin and Wright.

The following key doctrinal elements offer a reasonable way to organize the discussion of Calvin's and Wright's doctrines of justification in order to compare and contrast them:

- the role of the covenant in the doctrine of justification
- an understanding of the righteousness of God
- forensic justification
- the eschatological component of justification
- the nature and meaning of the *works of the law*
- union with Christ and the imputation of righteousness
- the nature and scope of salvation
- the means of salvation to include the work of Jesus, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the role of faith.

The Role of the Covenant

Five points of congruence exist between Calvin and Wright concerning the role of the covenant. First, the old and new covenants are essentially one. Calvin makes the explicit declaration that “the covenant made with all the patriarchs is so much like ours in substance and reality that the two are actually one and the same.”⁸ Wright refers to the new covenant as the *renewed* covenant, indicating that he conceives of the new covenant as a renewal of the old covenant rather than a situation in which the old covenant has been replaced by a new covenant.⁹ He also states that the covenant, “though apparently redrawn, redefined, rethought or whatever, has been fulfilled rather than abrogated.”¹⁰ Even though Wright is not as explicit as Calvin in his statement of the unity of the old and new covenants, their fundamental agreement is apparent.

Second, Christ is the person in whom the covenant reaches its ultimate consummation. Calvin points out that the promise God made to Abraham, recorded in Gen 12:3, was to be completed in Christ concluding, “Who, then, dares to separate the Jews from Christ, since with them, we hear, was made the covenant of the gospel, the sole foundation of which is Christ?”¹¹ Wright explicitly declares Christ is the culmination of God's plan in his

⁷Wright, *Justification*, 72–73.

⁸John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 2.10.2.

⁹N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1992), 254.

¹⁰Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 195.

¹¹Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.10.4.

characterization of the covenant as the “single-saving-plan-through-Israel-for-the-world-now-fulfilled-in-the-Messiah, Jesus.”¹² This term is Wright’s shorthand method for referring to his belief that the theology of Paul can be understood best by observing Paul’s use of covenantal concepts as the backdrop of his exposition of the work of Jesus in salvation.

Third, the purpose of the covenant is to rescue God’s people from sin. For Calvin, the purpose of the covenant was to assure both the adoption of the Jewish people into immortality, and the spiritual blessings affirmed in the gospel message of the New Testament church. Wright explains that the covenant theology of the Jews is the “belief that the Creator God called Abraham’s family into covenant with him so that, through his family, all the world might escape from the curse of sin and death and enjoy the blessing and life of a new creation.”¹³ The focus, for Wright, is the covenant as God’s plan for the rescue of the world from sin. Calvin, in his focus on the salvation provided by the work of Christ and the unity of the covenant, also views the covenantal work of God in a global sense.

Fourth, the covenant is based on God’s mercy and does not depend on the merits of his chosen people. Calvin reasons that if the blessings promised in the New Testament apply to the people of the Old Testament, then “it follows that the Old Testament was established upon the free mercy of God.”¹⁴ This view of Calvin parallels Wright’s view that the covenant is the story of God continuing to work through his people Israel, in spite of their failings, in order to accomplish his ultimate goal of the restoration of the whole world.

Fifth, the covenant was not merely meant to promise physical blessings to the Jewish nation but was intended to foreshadow God’s ultimate spiritual blessings to his people. Both Calvin and Wright view God’s physical blessing as a sign to Israel that he will be faithful to his covenant and bring about the solution to sin.

The Righteousness of God

Calvin and Wright both affirm that the righteousness of God consists of two aspects—as an inherent characteristic of God and as the actions of God. Calvin, in his commentary on Rom 1:17, explains that in order to be saved, a person must seek the righteousness that results in reconciliation to God. He defines the righteousness of God as “that which is approved before his tribunal.”¹⁵ This righteousness is, for Calvin, the inherent moral characteristic of God, for he would not approve something contrary to his essential nature.

¹²Wright, *Justification*, 96 (emphasis added).

¹³Wright, *Justification*, 250.

¹⁴Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.10.4.

¹⁵John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, trans. Ross MacKenzie, Calvin’s Commentaries (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 28 (page citations are to the reprinted edition).

Calvin also affirms that the righteousness of God is seen in his actions. In his commentary of Ps 22:31, Calvin states, “The term righteousness, in this place, refers to the faithfulness which God observes in preserving his people,” and so “he proved himself to be righteous.”¹⁶

Both of these meanings are affirmed by Wright in his statement, “The ‘righteousness of God’ is the divine covenant faithfulness, which is both a *quality upon which God’s people may rely* and *something visible in action* in the great covenant-fulfilling actions of the death and resurrection of Jesus and the gift of the Spirit.”¹⁷ Calvin, for the most part, chooses to focus on the character of God as the standard against which to measure the moral character of humans. For Wright, the righteousness of God is that God has acted in accordance with his covenant, which was originally destined to deal with the sin of humankind. The difference between the two is not one of definition but in the emphasis each theologian places in their thinking on the righteousness of God.

Forensic Justification

Five points of congruence exist between Calvin and Wright on the meaning of justification. First, justification is a forensic term, used in reference to a court of law setting, meaning that a person is declared righteous. Calvin states that “‘to justify’ means nothing else than to acquit of guilt him who was accused, as if his innocence were confirmed.”¹⁸ Wright states that justification is “the declaration that somebody is in the right. It is a term borrowed from the lawcourt—that is what people mean when they say it is ‘forensic.’”¹⁹ Both Calvin and Wright affirm that justification is simply a declaration by God of the righteousness of a believer.

Second, God’s forensic declaration does not change the inherent moral quality of people. If unrighteous people come before God in judgment and God somehow acts in such a way as to change their nature so that they were indeed righteous, then a verdict of justified would be appropriate. Calvin rejects the doctrine that people are judged righteous because they have been infused with the righteousness of Christ. Wright asserts that the declaration of justified is not a statement on behalf of the judge as to the moral character of the justified parties. In justification, the inherent character is not changed.

Third, works are not the basis of justification. Calvin maintains that works cannot be the basis of justification. He writes, “When reward is made for works it is done out of debt,

¹⁶John Calvin, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2 vols., trans. James Anderson, AGES Digital Library: Commentary (Albany, OR: AGES Software, 1998), 369.

¹⁷N. T. Wright, “On Becoming the Righteousness of God: 2 Corinthians 5:21 (1993),” in *Pauline Perspectives*, 74–75 (emphasis added).

¹⁸Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.11.3.

¹⁹N. T. Wright, “Justification: The Biblical Basis and Its Relevance for Contemporary Evangelicalism (1980),” in *Pauline Perspectives*,” 22.

not of grace [Rom. 4:4]. But righteousness according to grace is owed to faith. Therefore it does not arise from the merits of works.”²⁰ Wright makes the point that good works arise out of gratitude for the salvation made possible by the death of Jesus on the cross. Good works are not the basis for justification. Because persons cannot stand before God in judgment and claim any righteousness of their own, God must have some other basis of declaring them justified. Both Calvin and Wright assert that God renders the impartial and true verdict of justified because of an expression of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Fourth, justification is a recognition of God reconciling his people to himself. Calvin writes, “This is the experience of faith through which the sinner comes into possession of his salvation when from the teaching of the gospel he acknowledges that he has been reconciled to God.”²¹ He claims that God’s will was to reconcile and to adopt his people. Wright states that justification is “not, for Paul, ‘how people enter the covenant,’ but the declaration that certain people are already within the covenant.”²² People outside of the family of God live in rebellion to God. God brings persons who place their faith in Jesus into his family.

Fifth, justification is not regeneration. Both Calvin and Wright maintain that justification and regeneration are distinct. Regeneration is the process that starts with the new birth of a believer and ultimately comes to completion as the perfection is revealed in the final resurrection.

The Eschatological Component

Five points of congruence exist between Calvin and Wright concerning eschatology. First, justification contains a completed-in-the-present/yet-to-be-completed-in-the-future component. Calvin, in his commentary on Rom 8:23, writes of the future glory that believers should “aspire to and strive for the attainment of so great a good both by the firmness of our hope and the endeavours of our zeal.”²³ He affirms that believers’ confidence in the future glory promised by God should be exemplified in their life as they look forward to a future deliverance from the miseries of the present. Wright views the longing for adoption as a desire to experience the future glorification promised by God. He states that in Rom 8:23, “we strike once more the characteristic note of ‘now and not yet’ that runs right through Paul.”²⁴ He explains that “we are already ‘children of God’”²⁵ but still await the final fulfillment of this adoption.

²⁰Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.11.13.

²¹Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.11.16.

²²N. T. Wright, “Romans and the Theology of Paul (1995),” in *Pauline Perspectives*, 125.

²³Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, 175.

²⁴N. T. Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, ed. Leander E. Keck, vol. 10, *Acts; Introduction to Epistolary Literature; Romans; 1 Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 597. Subsequent citations will reference the shortened title, “Romans.”

²⁵Wright, “Romans,” 597.

Second, the plan of salvation includes a new creation. Calvin writes that “everything in heaven and on earth strives after renewal [Rom. 8:19].”²⁶ Calvin did not conceive of the future resurrection as one of the creation of new bodies but rather the resurrection of the old bodies. Wright understands that Paul is rethinking Jewish eschatology in light of the Messiah. A renewal of the world means freedom from corruption and death. He explains that Paul’s theology was that of a “renewed, redeemed creation.”²⁷

Third, the last days bring about the final judgment. Both Calvin and Wright affirm that this judgment is not something to be feared by the justified since the judgment is known in advance. For Calvin, the good works that flow out of the lives of justified believers are evidence of justification and can be said to be the reason they are crowned. Wright sees “that God’s final judgment will be in accordance with the entirety of a life led—in accordance, in other words, with works.”²⁸ This judgment of justified is not based on works but entirely on faith in Christ that is evidenced by works.

Fourth, the final days will be the fulfillment of God’s promises to his people. Both Calvin and Wright affirm that although the present-day church receives the blessings of the Spirit, the promises of an end to sin and eternal life with God will not be realized fully until the return of Jesus. Both Calvin and Wright recognize the distinction between justification and sanctification. Justification is a one-time distinct event in the life of believers. Sanctification is an ongoing process in the remaining life of believers as they are brought, through the power and guidance of the Spirit, into conformity with Christ.

Fifth, Christ is at the center of the eschaton. Calvin looked forward to the second coming of Jesus as the completion of the work of salvation accomplished on the cross. Wright explains that the yearning for a future, when God’s people are to be set free of oppression, to be brought out of exile, and to see the judgment of the pagans, has been accomplished in the Jesus of history. The completion of the work of Jesus will be seen at his second coming.

The Nature and Meaning of the Works of the Law

Three points of congruence exist between Calvin and Wright concerning the nature and meaning of the *works of the law*. First, *works of the law* include all works that are accomplished in accordance with the whole of the Torah. Calvin argues that Paul understood that *works of the law* included all of the requirements of the Torah rather than a subset of laws. Wright also claims that when Paul states that “*a person is not justified by works of the law*” he always

²⁶Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.25.2.

²⁷N. T. Wright, “Redemption from the New Perspective? Towards a Multi-Layered Pauline Theology of the Cross (2004),” in *Pauline Perspectives*, 299.

²⁸Wright, “New Perspectives on Paul,” 281–82.

means “the Jewish Law, the Torah,” as *works of the law*.²⁹ Calvin and Wright differ in the emphasis on the meaning of *works of the law*. Calvin focuses on the moral laws while Wright focuses on the ceremonial laws. However, both Calvin and Wright assert that *works of the law* referred to both the ceremonial laws and well as the moral laws of the Torah.

Second, the failure to accomplish the *works of the law* is grounds for a verdict of unrighteousness in the eyes of God. Calvin, commenting on Rom 3:20, explains that the Jews could not claim any righteousness because of their status as the people of God under the covenant. The *works of the law* that they failed to perform served to condemn them. Wright argues that the lawcourt context of Rom 3:20 indicates that no person can stand before God and claim a righteous status due to his adherence to the laws of the Torah.

Third, the Jewish people did not see the *works of the law* as the basis of being considered righteous in the eyes of God. Even though both Calvin and Wright affirm this view, each theologian places a different emphasis on *works of the law* and the role they played in Paul’s thinking on justification. This point forms an important element in the doctrine of justification for Wright, while Calvin does not emphasize it. Wright maintains that Paul understood *works of the law* to be a boundary marker that indicated to the Jews that they were included in the covenant people of God. The Jews, thus, depended on their covenantal status as God’s chosen people rather than *works of the law*. Calvin, in his commentary on Rom 2:25–29, explains that the Jews thought of circumcision as a symbol of the covenant God made with them. In this thinking, they were depending on their covenantal status for righteousness, rather than depending on works. Calvin interprets Paul’s reference to the phrase *Jews by nature* as meaning Jews thought of themselves holy because they are the chosen people of God and not because of their works. Both Calvin and Wright support the understanding that the Jews saw themselves as righteous based on their inclusion as God’s chosen people under the covenant.

Union with Christ and the Imputation of Righteousness

Two points of congruence exist between Calvin and Wright concerning union with Christ. The first and primary point is that the nature of union with Christ is that of being incorporated into the family of God—his church. Calvin describes this union in terms of the “joining together of Head and members,” the “indwelling of Christ in our hearts,” to “put on Christ,” to be “engrafted into his body,” and to be “one with him.”³⁰ Wright views union with Christ in terms of covenantal membership. Persons who have expressed belief in Christ by faith are now within the covenant family of God. To be in this covenant family is to be one with Christ who, as the Messiah, represents God’s covenant people. Even though Calvin and Wright utilize different imagery to picture union with Christ, at the end

²⁹Wright, *Justification*, 116.

³⁰Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.11.10.

both view the body of Christ as believers brought together in union with Christ. This union of Christ and believers is a close, intimate union so that believers can claim righteousness and eternal life because Christ is righteous and, through his resurrection, has guaranteed eternal life.

The second point is that union with Christ is necessary for salvation. Calvin explains that union with Christ is essential to salvation “since it is into his body the Father has destined those to be engrafted whom he has willed from eternity to be his own, that he may hold as sons all whom he acknowledges to be among his members, we have a sufficiently clear and firm testimony that we have been inscribed in the book of life [cf. Rev. 21:27] if we are in communion with Christ.”³¹ As believers are united in Christ, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers. For Wright, salvation is accomplished as believers are united with Christ in his death and resurrection. In light of Wright’s view, those who are in Christ “are to be regarded as those who have already died and been raised.”³² The congruence between Calvin and Wright is seen in that union with Christ is critical for salvation. Salvation cannot exist for people who are not brought into union with Christ.

Given the two points of congruence discussed above, one apparent matter of incongruence exists between Calvin and Wright concerning the issue of imputation. At several points in his *Institutes*, Calvin teaches that when the believer is united with Christ, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer. This imputation occurs “because we put on Christ and are engrafted into his body—in short, because he deigns to make us one with him.”³³ Calvin views the basis of God’s justification as a believer being so identified with Christ that he can take on the righteousness of Christ and experience the forgiveness of sins and the favor of God. Wright, however, states that justification has nothing to do with the imputed righteousness of Christ. Wright asserts that the Reformed tradition has viewed imputed righteousness “in terms of Jesus Christ having fulfilled the moral law and thus having accumulated a ‘righteous’ status which can be shared with all his people. As with some other theological problems, I regard this as saying a substantially right thing in a substantially wrong way.”³⁴ In contrast, Wright expresses his view of imputation as follows,

“I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God; I have been crucified with the Messiah; nevertheless I live; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.” If this is what you are trying to get at by the phrase “imputed righteousness,” then I not only have no quarrel with the substance of it but rather insist on it as a central and vital part of Paul’s theology.³⁵

³¹Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.24.5.

³²Wright, “Romans and the Theology of Paul,” 109.

³³Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.11.10.

³⁴N. T. Wright, “Paul in Different Perspectives: Lecture 1,” section “3. The Glory of God.” Available at <http://ntwrightpage.com/2005/01/03/paul-in-different-perspectives/>.

³⁵Wright, “Paul in Different Perspectives: Lecture 1.”

These two ways of expressing the imputation of righteousness may seem to be incongruent, but Calvin and Wright arrive at much the same destination through different paths. Both theologians express the critical need to be united with Christ. Both express that Christ was inherently righteous and that this righteousness was demonstrated in his obedient life. Both deny that believers are infused with the righteousness of Christ, but rather they are viewed through the righteousness of Christ. In the end, Calvin includes the whole course of the obedience of Jesus, as well as his death on the cross, as achieving righteousness for believers. For Wright, the death and resurrection of Christ are the essential components of the righteousness of Christ that achieves a righteous judgment in the life of the believer. Calvin and Wright are incongruent in their expression of what God sees in a believer when he renders a verdict of justified without being incongruent in their expression of the means by which sin has been defeated, that is, the death of Jesus on the cross and union with Christ, which is the application of salvation.

The Nature and Scope of Salvation

Four points of congruence exist between Calvin and Wright concerning the nature and scope of salvation. The first point concerns the nature and effects of sin. Calvin describes sin as “not only destitute and empty of good, but so fertile and fruitful of every evil that it cannot be idle.”³⁶ For Wright, sin consists in the “rebellious idolatry by which humans worship and honor elements of the natural world rather than the God who made them.”³⁷ Both Calvin and Wright express the understanding that sin has broken the relationship between God and humankind. Calvin claims that sin is the root cause of the break of the relationship between God and his creation. Adam’s disobedience results in God’s withdrawal of his favor from Adam and the world in which he lived. Wright sees that God’s call to humankind to live according to their vocation met with sin, resulting in a “corruption, a distortion, a fatal twisting of genuine humanness into a ghastly perversion, an abuse of power which is destructive.”³⁸

Second, salvation is redemption from the penalty of sin. Sin demands a judgment of death and eternal estrangement from God. Salvation, for Calvin, is the redemption of believers from the calamity of sin. Wright consistently presents the need of believers—members of God’s covenant family—to be forgiven of their sins. For Wright, salvation means the defeat of sin and its effects, which results in humankind no longer being under the control of an inherent nature that drives the individual to rebel against God.

³⁶Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.8.

³⁷N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2008), 95.

³⁸N. T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, vol. 4, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2013), 493.

Third, salvation is reconciliation with God. Calvin writes, “The righteousness of faith is reconciliation with God, which consists solely in the forgiveness of sins.”³⁹ Because sin is foreign to God’s righteousness, in order for reconciliation to occur, sin must be forgiven. For Wright, restoration relates more to reestablishing humankind in their proper place in creation than simply to repair the relationship between God and humankind that had been broken by sin. For Calvin, this reconciliation is focused on the individual in relationship to God. For Wright, this reconciliation is focused on restoring humans to their proper place in creation but also includes restoring believers to their proper place as children of God.

Fourth, the scope of salvation is the rescue not only of individual believers but also of the whole world from sin. Even though Calvin grounds his thinking on salvation in individuals, he looks forward to the ultimate end of God’s plan to defeat sin. He expresses a cosmic view of salvation, claiming that “everything in heaven and on earth strives after renewal.”⁴⁰ Wright’s understanding of salvation extends beyond the benefit to each individual believer, asserting that “‘salvation’ must now mean ‘rescue from the disease of which pagan idolatry-and-immorality are an obvious symptom,’ in other words, ‘rescue from sin’; where ‘sin,’ *hamartia*, is the deadly infection of the whole human race.”⁴¹ Wright, like Calvin, expresses the belief that salvation includes the rescue from the corruption and death that is the result of sin.

Even starting from differing perspectives, both Calvin and Wright understand sin as a corruption of God’s natural order. The nature of salvation is threefold: rescue from the effects of sin, redemption from the penalty of sin, and reconciliation with God. Calvin focuses mainly on the individual need for salvation, while Wright focuses on the grand scheme of God to rescue the world from sin. The differing perspectives do not create an incongruity between Calvin and Wright concerning the nature and scope of salvation.

The Means of Salvation

Both Calvin and Wright discuss the work of Jesus, the work of the Holy Spirit, and faith. They affirm the essential characteristics concerning the work of Jesus in propitiation, redemption, and reconciliation. The word *hilastērion* in Rom 3:25 is treated similarly by both Calvin and Wright. Calvin translates *hilastērion* as “propitiation.” He brings out the meaning that the death of Jesus both restrained the judgment of God and provided expiation for sins.⁴² Wright states that for Paul it carries “the note of propitiation of divine wrath—with, of course, the corollary that sins are expiated.”⁴³

³⁹Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.11.21.

⁴⁰Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.25.2, quoting Rom 8:19.

⁴¹Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 754.

⁴²Calvin, *Romans*, 76–77.

⁴³Wright, “Romans,” 476.

Calvin's view is that redemption was paid through "the forgiveness of sins" resulting in the rescue of believers from the debt owed by sin.⁴⁴ Only through the death of Christ can believers be seen in a favorable light in the eyes of God and be granted life. Wright, from his viewpoint that Christ was faithful in accomplishing God's covenantal promises, observes that "as God 'redeemed' his people from Egypt with the covenant blood, so now the blood of Jesus Christ becomes the blood of the new covenant, shed for the worldwide forgiveness of sins, achieving the redemption . . . of the true family of Abraham."⁴⁵

Calvin expresses a bi-directional view of reconciliation between God and humankind. In his commentary on Col 1:21–22, he states that sinners "are born children of wrath, and every thought of the flesh is enmity against God."⁴⁶ Thus, a mediator in the person of Christ is needed to reconcile the Father to believers. This reconciliation is accomplished in the death of Christ. Wright views reconciliation in terms of the overall grand narrative of God's work to reconcile a sinful world to himself. As the faithful Israelite Messiah, Christ faithfully accomplished God's plan of salvation. Wright, in his exposition on Rom 5:10, expresses much the same view as Calvin. He points out that all persons are enemies of God because of sin. God, because of his just nature, opposed sin but, at the same time, loved people. God offers a way of deliverance and reconciliation in the message of the gospel.⁴⁷

Three main points of congruence exist between Calvin and Wright concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation. First, the work of the Holy Spirit is necessary to the faith of a believer. Concerning the Holy Spirit, Calvin writes, "By faith alone he leads us into the light of the gospel."⁴⁸ Believers do not initiate the move to God. God, instead, through the Holy Spirit, moves toward people so that they might receive faith and thus be united to Christ. Wright affirms the same view of the work of the Spirit. As the gospel is preached, the Spirit works within a person's heart and life to bring about a confession of faith. This faith can come about only as a direct work of the Spirit during the proclamation of the gospel.

Second, the Holy Spirit provides assurance of salvation. Calvin characterizes the Holy Spirit as "an earnest, pledge and seal" that invokes the sense of a contract that is absolutely confirmed and guaranteed by the person of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁹ Wright conveys much the

⁴⁴Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.17.5.

⁴⁵N. T. Wright, "Justification: The Biblical Basis and Its Relevance for Contemporary Evangelicalism (1980)," in *Pauline Perspectives*, 31.

⁴⁶John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians*, trans. T. H. L. Parker, Calvin's Commentaries (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 314 (page citations are to the reprinted edition).

⁴⁷Wright, "Romans," 520.

⁴⁸Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.1.4.

⁴⁹John Calvin, *The Gospel according to St. John 11–21 and the First Epistle of John*, trans. T. H. L. Parker, Calvin's Commentaries (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 303 (page citations are to the reprinted edition).

same thinking in his commentary on 1 Thess 1:4–5. He explains that the sign of the election of believers “has not simply come to them in an empty ‘word,’ but in power, in the spirit and with ‘great assurance.’”⁵⁰

Third, the Holy Spirit works to unite Christ and believers. The Spirit, according to Calvin, works to be the “bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself.”⁵¹ Wright, in explaining the significance of the resurrection, observes that the point of Rom 8:12–17 is that “as Easter declared that Jesus had all along been ‘God’s son,’ so even now the spirit bears witness with the believers’ spirits that they are ‘God’s children.’ . . . That is why Paul speaks of believers ‘awaiting our *adoption*, the redemption of our bodies’ (8:23).”⁵²

Three points of congruence exist between Calvin and Wright concerning the role of faith in justification. First, Calvin defines faith as a “firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit.”⁵³ Calvin expresses faith as consisting of both the knowledge that God loves believers and desires to provide the rescue from sin and grant eternal life as well as the confidence that comes about due to an experience with the faithfulness of God and the witness of the Holy Spirit that is embraced by the believer. Wright expresses much the same thought in a more succinct manner, stating that true Christian faith is the “belief that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead.”⁵⁴ In expressing faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, the believer demonstrates confidence in the knowledge that the death of Jesus on the cross has paid the penalty of sin and that the resurrection is a guarantee of eternal life.

The second point is that faith is not an action that earns salvation but rather demonstrates that one already is saved. Calvin writes, “We seek a faith that distinguishes the children of God from the wicked, and believers from unbelievers.”⁵⁵ For Calvin, true faith is the mark of the believer. Wright views faith as a boundary marker that designates people who belong to the family of God from those who are outside. Faith is not something that a person expresses in order to gain entry into the family of God. Instead, faith is the expression of a believer that one is already within the family of God.

Third, faith is grounded in the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. The content of faith must be communicated to the believer. For Calvin, all three persons of the Trinity are involved in revealing the content of faith. The Holy Spirit draws people to seek Christ so that the invisible Father might be revealed in the image of Christ. For Wright, faith arises

⁵⁰Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 918.

⁵¹Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.1.1.

⁵²Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 941.

⁵³Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.2.7.

⁵⁴Wright, “Justification: The Biblical Basis,” 24.

⁵⁵Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.2.30.

from the work of the Holy Spirit in the preaching of the gospel to a person in order to bring about faith in Christ. Like Calvin, Wright understands that the Trinity is involved in the content of faith and in bringing that faith to the believer. As the gospel message about God's saving plan for the world is announced, God's Spirit works within that message.

Conclusion

Wright does not parrot Calvin. Wright's language, approach, and emphasis are not those of Calvin. Each in his own way, however, reaches the same point in his development of the doctrine of justification, that is, a justified believer. To offer an analogy, they are both on a journey to understand how God justifies persons he has chosen as his own people. They start from the same departure point—the covenant. They both travel the same ground—Scripture. In this journey, they see the same landmarks: the nature of the righteousness of God, albeit with different emphases; justification as forensic; the meaning of eschatology; the role of *works of the law*; the necessity of union with Christ; and the nature, scope, and means of salvation. They both reach the same destination—justified believers. Believers who are justified because of imputed righteousness and believers who are justified because God views them as members of the body of Christ are in the same position before God. All are persons who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior by faith through grace. All have been united in the body of Christ. All have been forgiven of sin due to the work of Christ on the cross. All will live forever in the presence of God. All have been accepted into the family of God, not through any righteousness of their own, but because they have repented of sin and accepted the free gift of salvation.

The implications of the congruent doctrines of justification of Calvin and Wright should impact those scholars who align themselves with Calvin as the basis of Reformation tradition. A reconsideration of Wright certainly should be made in light of the fact that a case has been developed that he does not refute the traditional view but rather upholds the essential characteristics of it. Conformance with Scripture, not Calvin, is the standard to which any theological doctrine should be held. Both Calvin and Wright demonstrate the importance of Scripture in developing Christian doctrine. A survey of their works indicates that each of them is careful to exegete the passages of Scripture that are relevant to whatever subject they are discussing. Even though each of them will bring in the thoughts of other scholars to reinforce their own arguments, their primary source of understanding rests in Scripture. Wright's doctrine, in the end, is not "so disfigured that it becomes difficult to recognize as biblically faithful."⁵⁶ Instead, Wright explains, "The problem is not that he, like many others, is disagreeing with me. The problem is that *he hasn't really listened to what I'm saying.*"⁵⁷

⁵⁶Piper, *The Future of Justification*, 15.

⁵⁷Wright is responding to Piper. Wright, *Justification*, 21 (emphasis added).

Call for Papers

Southwest Regional Meeting
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March 8–9, 2019

NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Meeting Theme

Middle Knowledge

Plenary Speaker 1

John Laing - "*Molinism: A Biblical-Theological Analysis*"

Laing (PhD, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is professor of systematic theology and philosophy at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and chaplain in the Texas National Guard. He has chaired the ETS Molinism Consultation since 2011, and he is the author or editor of several works, including *Middle Knowledge: Human Freedom in Divine Sovereignty* (Kregel, 2018).



Plenary Speaker 2

Kirk MacGregor - "*A Molinist Exegesis of Open Theist Prooftexts*"

MacGregor (PhD, University of Iowa) is assistant professor of philosophy and religion at McPherson College in McPherson, Kansas. He is the author of several books, including *Luis de Molina: The Life and Theology of the Founder of Middle Knowledge* (Zondervan, 2015) and a new textbook, *Contemporary Theology: An Introduction: Classical, Evangelical, Philosophical, and Global Perspectives* (Zondervan, 2018).



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Christianity at the Crossroads: How the Second Century Shaped the Future of the Church.
By Michael J. Kruger. London: SPCK, 2017. 256 pages. Paperback, \$21.69.

Michael J. Kruger is president and Samuel C. Patterson Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina. He also serves as associate pastor of teaching at Uptown PCA. Kruger earned a BS from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, an MDiv from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Edinburgh. He is a leading scholar on the New Testament canon and transmission of the New Testament text. Kruger has authored and edited several books and articles, including *The Question of Canon* (IVP, 2013), *Canon Revisited* (Crossway, 2012), and *The Heresy of Orthodoxy* (Crossway, 2010).

Kruger's thesis is that second-century Christianity faced many critical issues that would significantly shape the form of Christianity we know and enjoy today. Unfortunately, this "Cinderella Century" (as Larry Hurtado calls it) has been often neglected in scholarly research, especially when compared to the attention other centuries have received. The goal of Kruger's book is to provide an introduction and general overview of Christianity and what it faced during the second century.

The second century can be described as one that was both transitional and vulnerable for the church as it began to move beyond the apostolic age. As the title suggests, Christianity in the second century came to the crossroads. Christians faced major sociological, cultural-political, ecclesiastical, doctrinal, and textual-canonical transitions that would impact the direction of the church.

Kruger begins by examining the sociological make-up of second-century Christianity. He notes that it is both a time of great expansion for the church and a time when Christians were becoming more distinguished from both the Greco-Roman and Jewish cultures. The church was ethnically, economically, and intellectually diverse. For many reasons, Christianity also proved to be more favorable toward women than the culture at large.

Second-century Christians faced a tremendous amount of political and intellectual persecution. Referencing many primary sources, Kruger concludes that there were two main reasons Christians faced political persecution. First, Christians were solely committed to the worship of Jesus and refused to worship Roman gods publicly. Second, Christians met privately, which aroused suspicions such as debauchery, cannibalism, and illicit sexual activity. Ultimately, Christianity was labeled by many secular writers as a *superstitio* that threatened the peace and stability of Roman society. Leading philosophers and thinkers like Celsus also attacked Christianity, labeling it with disdainful terms such as scandalous, irrational, inconsistent, incoherent, anti-social, immoral, uneducated, and unsophisticated. Church apologists like Justin Martyr returned the rhetoric and attempted to overturn caricatures and misrepresentations, defended against false accusations, explained controversial beliefs and doctrines, and pleaded for tolerance.

Kruger notes that church leadership was also in flux during the second century. A plurality of elders/bishops during the apostolic age began to give way to the emergence of a single ruling bishop whose authority also appears to have developed as time progressed. This development seems to have grown out of necessity to prevent local community factions and divisions, and so that local churches could have a single voice to address heresies and schisms. Christians' monotheistic worship of Jesus set them apart from both the Greco-Roman and Jewish cultures. Christian worship included gathering together for teaching, eating, washing, singing, praying, and offering.

Kruger takes aim at Walter Bauer's assumption that distinctions between orthodoxy and heresy in the earliest centuries of the church were nonsensical. Kruger acknowledges that distinct groups (Ebionites, Marcionites, Gnostics, Montanists) existed in early Christianity but that this diversity does not dissolve the traditional understanding of orthodoxy and heresy. Most of second-century Christianity was committed to the rule of faith, a summary of orthodox teaching passed on from the apostles. These other groups represented a minority whose theology often contradicted the earliest apostolic teaching.

From the very beginning, Christianity was a textual culture despite the heavy reliance on oral instruction and a high rate of illiteracy. The earliest Christians adopted the Old Testament as Scriptures. The public reading of the Scriptures was central to the life of the church, and early Christians wrote a plethora of works that span the spectrum of genres. Book production in early Christianity also appeared to be well-developed and sophisticated, including the use of professional scribes, readers' aids within the manuscripts, and publication networks.

The New Testament canon in the second century was more developed than previously assumed. Kruger argues that Irenaeus was not the creator of the canon and Marcion's truncated canon did not initiate the formation of an orthodox version of the canon. Instead, a well-developed core canon existed well before both Marcion and Irenaeus, though the boundaries of the canon had not yet hardened. Kruger notes that the "big bang" theory of canon does not explain the available evidence. Earlier second-century writers such as Justin Martyr and Papias already affirmed the authority of some New Testament writings.

To conclude, Kruger provides a summary of each of the chapters and then offers three observations about how second-century Christianity can inform modern Christianity. First, modern Christians can learn how to be a prophetic voice in the midst of a hostile world where the church lacks significant influence. Second, Christianity was a bookish religion that had a robust intellection dimension. Third, Christians were always keen to keep their focus on the worship of Jesus despite how their pagan and Jewish counterparts viewed them.

Kruger can be commended for enlightening readers about the major issues that Christianity faced during the second century. The book fulfills its goal as an introduction and general overview. Those with no formal theological or historical training would probably gain the most from this book. Kruger addresses debated topics related to the period, especially Bauer's thesis on orthodoxy and heresy. He is also right to humbly acknowledge that the issues have been addressed on a cursory level. For those interested in a more in-depth study on the topics covered in his book, Kruger provides an annotated bibliography of current works related to second-century Christianity. I think it is fitting to acknowledge that as I read the book, my conclusions were very similar to Kruger's final observations. No matter what one thinks about the book in general, it would be wise to seriously contemplate the invaluable influence second-century Christianity could have for modern Christianity and its influence on our culture.

- David Champagne, Mississippi College, Clinton, Mississippi

***The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America.* By Frances FitzGerald. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017. 753 pages. Hardcover, \$35.00.**

Frances FitzGerald is a journalist and award-winning author of books focused primarily on the second half of the twentieth century. She received the Pulitzer Prize for *Fire in the Lake: the Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam* (Little, Brown & Co., 1972), her inaugural book. Other books include *Cities on a Hill: A Journey through Contemporary American Cultures* (Simon & Schuster, 1981) and *Way Out in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War* (Simon & Schuster, 2000). Her latest work, *The Evangelicals*, received the 2017 National Book Critics Circle Award.

One of the most talked-about statistics to come out of the election of Donald Trump in 2016 is this one: 81% of white evangelicals voted for him. Once again the political pundits, the press, and the public had to be re-introduced to this segment of the American population. Who are the evangelicals? And why did this group vote in large numbers for a candidate with questionable moral and religious values?

Frances FitzGerald takes on the task of these questions and many others with her latest tome, *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America*. Her research is meticulous, and her bibliography reads like a Who's Who of historians of American Christianity, not to mention her extensive use of primary sources.

Her introduction is a concise survey of American evangelicalism, or to be more precise, "white evangelicalism." At the outset, she states her intention to present "a history of the white evangelical movements necessary to understand the Christian right and its evangelical opponents that have emerged in recent years" (3). In a sense, therefore, the title should be "White Evangelicals."

For this reason, her Anglo-American readers who identify as evangelicals should appreciate the opportunity to see themselves from the viewpoint of an outsider. As a rule, her exposition is informative and nuanced, but occasionally, the author's disdain for her subject seeps through her veneer of objectivity. For example, she refers to "the unfortunate George W. Bush" (626) and "this ridiculous, unenforceable law" regulating the use of public bathrooms (622).

FitzGerald does her readers a service by connecting contemporary evangelicalism to the Great Awakenings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as the revivalism that resulted from these movements and extended well into the twentieth century. Her first eight chapters, which comprise more than a third of the book, provide a worthwhile summary of more than two hundred years of American Christianity, setting the historical-theological context for evangelicalism.

Along the way, FitzGerald supplies her readers with succinct summaries of such diverse evangelicals as the Calvinists Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield and the Arminian Charles Finney; the colorful fundamentalist J. Frank Norris and the irenic neo-evangelical Harold Ockenga; the Pentecostal Oral Roberts and the Separatist Carl McIntire; the preeminent revivalists D. L. Moody and Billy Graham. Her surveys of dispensationalism and fundamentalism, especially the chapter on "The Fundamentalist-Modernist Conflict," are very insightful. As FitzGerald rightly points out, evangelicalism led to many, much-needed reforms in American society, so as an outgrowth of the Christian revivals, voluntary societies addressed such causes as foreign and domestic missions, educational reform, the abolition of slavery, temperance, and women's suffrage.

FitzGerald presents a mostly positive view of evangelicalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but when she arrives at the latter decades of the twentieth century, her narrative turns dark. One suspects that all that has gone before is prologue; the remainder of the book is her main act: the descent of white evangelicalism into the politics of the Christian Right. For this reason, she subtitled the book: *The Struggle to Shape America*. Ultimately, her questions are: Why did evangelicals, a seemingly religious group, become engaged in American politics? What success, if any, have they had in shaping America?

Her initial foray into the politics of white evangelicalism occurred in 1980, when she wrote an article on Jerry Falwell for the *New Yorker* magazine, so she has been researching and writing on this topic for well over three decades. The amount of space that she devotes to Jerry Falwell in *The Evangelicals* could constitute a small book in itself. But she gives plenty of attention to other politically involved evangelicals, such as Pat Robertson and James Dobson. And she gives more attention than evangelicals might prefer to the sexual sins of televangelists like Jim and Tammy Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart.

FitzGerald also reports the stories of two of the few prominent women in the movement, Phyllis Schlafly and Anita Bryant, prophetesses who were about four decades ahead of their time. In 1972, Schlafly, a conservative Catholic and political activist, opposed the Equal Rights Amendment, predicting that it would lead “to unisex toilets, the legalization of homosexual marriage, and women on the front lines of battle with men” (297). Today, all of her predictions have been fulfilled.

Certainly not a typical participant in evangelical politics, Anita Bryant was best known as a pop singer and spokesperson for the Florida citrus industry. In 1977, however, galvanized by the pro-homosexual hiring policy in the school district of her hometown of Miami, she became an advocate for pro-family policies in her state and across the nation. FitzGerald fails to mention that Bryant became an early victim of backlash from the advocates of homosexuality when their boycott of Florida orange juice led to the loss of her advertising contract with the Florida Citrus Commission. Ironically, the evangelicals as a whole ignored concerns about the homosexual agenda because they found the possibility unimaginable (300).

Just as evangelicals slowly but surely became aware of the danger of the homosexual agenda, so also did they come late to the opposition of the legalization of abortion. FitzGerald reminds her readers that initially, evangelicals reluctantly supported abortion, at least in cases of rape, incest, and danger to the mother. Even when *Roe v. Wade* made abortion on demand legal, the decision was met with approval by the Southern Baptist Convention even as late as 1980 (255–56). According to FitzGerald, the turning point came when Francis Schaeffer released his books and videos that asked the questions: *How Should We Then Live?* and *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* Released in the late 1970s, these works equated abortion with such evils as “slavery, the Holocaust, . . . infanticide, euthanasia, and state control” (355).

In 1979, the Conservative Resurgence of the Southern Baptist Convention began in earnest with the election of Adrian Rogers as president. The conservatives’ number one priority was biblical inerrancy, but they also wanted to overturn their convention’s liberal views of social issues. This secondary concern was evident in their resolutions “denouncing pornography and homosexuality, rejecting the Equal Rights Amendment, and calling for a reversal of the Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*” (291).

Other evangelicals were organizing their opposition to the moral decline in America: “Jerry Falwell launched the Moral Majority;” “two Southern California pastors, Robert Grant and Richard Zone, organized the Christian Voice;” “Pat Robertson of the Christian Broadcasting Network and Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ cochaired a Washington for Jesus rally” (291). In Falwell’s words, “We are fighting a holy war, and this time we are going to win” (291). The culture wars had begun.

The first victor of the culture wars was the evangelicals' political ally, Ronald Reagan. Even though Reagan was a divorced, former movie star, he courted evangelical support by changing his position and opposing all abortions (299), by evoking the "old civil religion of exceptionalism," and by utilizing "'born-again' speech" (313). The remainder of FitzGerald's narrative is taken up with this uneasy alliance between many evangelicals and the Republican Party, which has continued ever since with mixed results.

In her last couple of chapters, FitzGerald shines her spotlight on what she calls the "New Evangelicals," a younger, more diverse group, who still eschew abortion but are less opposed to the homosexual agenda and are much more engaged in social justice. The leading evangelical in this camp, according to FitzGerald, is Rick Warren, Southern Baptist pastor of the Saddleback Church in California. In 2009, Warren declared that the Christian Right is dead (589), and in that same year, Barack Obama invited him to pray at his inauguration. Even with Obama's approbation, however, the LGBT community was not appeased; they criticized Warren's continued opposition to abortion and the homosexual agenda and cried out unsuccessfully for him to be removed from the program.

Another "New Evangelical" receiving FitzGerald's attention is Russell Moore, the president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. She considers Moore to be conservative but less rigid than other white evangelicals, and she details his sustained criticism of Donald Trump.

FitzGerald also calls her readers' attention to progressive evangelicals, including Joel Hunter, Richard Cizik, and Jim Wallis. Two others are David Gushee and Jonathan Merritt, who can claim life-long evangelical pedigrees but who now function more as watchdogs and whistleblowers against their former community.

FitzGerald closes her book with an epilogue that reads more like a conclusion. Here, she returns to the theme with which she opened her book, the election of Donald Trump. This event cannot have been the catalyst for her research and writing, for she began that work back in 1980 as is evident by this expansive tome. Trump's election with the support of 81% of white evangelicals, however, provided a *raison d'être* for the publication of an exposé of evangelicalism and its influence on American culture and politics.

In her epilogue, FitzGerald suggests that the influence of evangelicalism is waning and its membership is fragmenting. She looks to the new and progressive evangelicals, the Millennials, and the Latinos to "vote ... out" Donald Trump, the Republican Congress, and the representatives of the Christian right (636). With this prediction, she echoes the pronouncements of journalists during the last several decades: the influence of evangelicalism is dying in America. If evangelicalism could be personified, the movement might say with Mark Twain: "The rumors of my death are greatly exaggerated."

For all of FitzGerald's research into American evangelicalism, she has focused only on the public, often outspoken, sometimes outrageous representatives of the movement. Barry Hankins, history professor at Baylor University, characterizes typical evangelicals much differently than the ones featured by FitzGerald. Hankins says that "the important things for most evangelicals are: (1) living godly lives; (2) raising their children to be committed, evangelical Christians; (3) being active in their local churches; and (4) evangelizing their neighbors."¹ Those evangelicals who meet these criteria will squirm when reading FitzGerald's evaluation of the evangelicals that she chose to highlight, power-hungry politicians and scandalous televangelists. Such readers might well ask, "What about the rest of us?" But evangelical Christians who live godly lives, raise their children to do likewise, and serve the kingdom of God never have attracted the attention of the American media. To these, Jesus says, "Your father who sees what is done in secret will reward you" (Matt 6:4).

- Rex Butler, *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana*

***Expository Exultation: Christian Preaching as Worship.* By John Piper. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018. 328 pages. Hardcover, \$29.99.**

John Piper received degrees from Wheaton College (1968) and Fuller Theological Seminary (1971) as well as a PhD in New Testament from the University of Munich (1974). He served as senior pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis for thirty-three years. His current academic position is chancellor of Bethlehem College and Seminary. Piper is the founder and leader of the multi-media ministry Desiring God.

Expository Exultation is Piper's third book in a series about the Bible. As Piper described, the first book, *A Peculiar Glory* (Crossway, 2016), focused on how to know the Bible is completely true. The second book, *Reading the Bible Supernaturally* (Crossway, 2017), focused on how to read the Bible supernaturally for worship. Piper's main research question for *Expository Exultation* was, If the Bible is completely true and is to be read supernaturally in the pursuit of worship, what does it mean to preach this word, and how should we do it (15)? His purpose in writing this book was "that God's infinite worth and beauty be exalted in the everlasting, white-hot worship of the blood-bought bride of Christ from every people, language, tribe, and nation" (21). To answer his research question and to complete his purpose, Piper wrote twenty-one chapters about topics ranging from corporate worship to interpreting the Old Testament.

¹Barry Hankins, "Why an Award-Winning Writer Turned Her Attention to Evangelicals," available at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/evangelicals-struggle-shape-america-frances-fitzgerald>.

Piper began his preaching book with a discussion of worship and teaching. He noted that some people believe worship services are superfluous because the New Testament does not call for those meetings. He wrote, “My provocative bait is to say that the plan to meet weekly, say, for teaching but not worship is like the plan to marry without sex” (25). Piper’s view of worship is that of *seeing, savoring, and showing* the beauty and glory of God. The *seeing, savoring, and showing* the glory of God should occur in all aspects of life including the outward forms and places of worship and the inward, spiritual experiences, of worship (28). If worship is all-encompassing, then is there a need for corporate worship? Piper believed corporate worship was an appropriate means for *seeing, savoring, and showing* the beauty and glory of God. He described corporate worship as appropriate because it was fitting for the people of Israel to gather in a great congregation to worship so it must be fitting for Christians to do so as well. Corporate worship provides a means for God to receive greater glory because Christians are worshipping together instead of individually. The people, along with their voices and hearts, attuned to God bring that greater glory (34). Thus far in his book, Piper defined worship and argued for corporate worship so now he can begin to defend preaching as part of worship.

The next question Piper asked and answered was, What is preaching and why should it be an essential part of corporate worship (48)? Both sections of this question were important for Piper’s overall purpose in the book. Piper’s stance is that preaching is worship. “Preaching shows God’s supreme worth by making the meaning of Scripture known and by simultaneously treasuring and expressing the glories of God revealed in that biblical meaning” (51). Piper calls that preaching *expository exultation*. He emphasized John Stott’s definition of exposition as “to expound Scripture is to bring out of the text what is there and expose it to view” (52).¹ Exultation, then, is preaching as worship (53). Combining the two concepts, he wrote, “*Exposition*, as making clear what the Scripture really means, and *exultation*, as openly treasuring the divine glories of that meaning—they combine to make preaching what it is” (53). Piper’s view of the essence of preaching is not just the explanation of a text, but the “*reality* that the text is communicating” (52). In other words, the essence of preaching is the application of the text in the lives of the hearers. Piper’s view is compatible with John A. Broadus’s view of application in preaching. Broadus wrote, “The application in a sermon is not merely an appendage to the discussion, or a subordinate part of it, but is the main thing to be done.”² For Piper, application in preaching is the *showing* part of *seeing, savoring, and showing* the beauty and glory of God.

After Piper defined his view of preaching, he provided arguments from Scripture about the setting, the content, and the nature of preaching. The setting of preaching, Piper

¹John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 125–26.

²John A. Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1887), 230.

concluded, was for “the people of God gathered to hear it” (63). One must take note that Piper abandoned the idea that preaching is to unbelievers. Even though he acknowledged *euangelizomai* is used most often in the New Testament as a reference to “public speaking to unbelievers,” he believed it “especially suited to the work of Christian pastors in bringing the word of God *to their people*” (54, emphasis added). He described *euangelizomai* as the kind of speaking where the speaker is “animated not by boring or uninterested or gloomy news, but on the contrary by ‘good news’” (55).³ Piper’s acknowledgment of the New Testament usage does not align with his understanding of *euangelizomai* in contemporary preaching. If the New Testament usage of *euangelizomai* suggests that type of preaching was done to unbelievers, then our contemporary usage should reflect that and allow for preaching to unbelievers. The content of preaching is the word of God (2 Tim 4:2). To preach the word means to preach Scripture, both Old and New Testaments (63–64). Piper argued that teaching is the nature of preaching. He wrote, “It belongs to the very nature of the case that heralding the word of Scripture must involve significant measures of teaching” (65).

After his discussion about preaching in chapters 3–5, Piper turned his attention to contextual issues and hermeneutical principles as they relate to preaching. His sixth and seventh chapters addressed the need of the Holy Spirit in the preparation and act of preaching. He discussed the need for clear logic and the peril of eloquence in speech in chapters 8 and 9. In the remaining chapters, he addressed the hermeneutical principles as they relate to the glory of God, Christ crucified, the obedience of faith, and interpretation of the Old Testament.

The organization of Piper’s book lacked coherence and, at times, seemed to lose focus of his intended purpose. The book lacked coherence because of Piper’s approach to accomplishing his goal. Many of the chapters included large sections of Scripture where Piper exegeted passages to buttress his arguments. At many different places, the book read more like a New Testament theology of preaching than a book about preaching being an act of worship. Likewise, the book lacked focus due to the extensive nature of the book. Piper wrote twenty-one chapters about various topics on preaching. The book could have been divided into at least two books. The first five chapters could have been one book, and the remaining sixteen chapters could have been another book.

Piper’s writing style made the book difficult to read. His overzealous use of adjectives pervaded the entire book. He commonly used excessive phrases like “white-hot worship,” “radical penetration,” and “God-drenched reality” (21, 162). His writing style gave the impression that his intended audience was someone other than pastors and homileticians.

³Jonathan Griffiths’s research’s conclusion about *euangelizomai* is different than Piper’s. Griffiths wrote that “the verb *euangelizomai* should generally import a particular emphasis on the content of the message that is communicated.” Jonathan Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical-Theological Study* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017), 20. Griffiths’s research revealed that *euangelizomai* is about *content* not *delivery*.

Overall, *Expository Exultation* provided much information about Piper's view and praxis of preaching. A pastor who reads this book may find a helpful resource for his preaching ministry. Only time will reveal the benefits of this book for the academy.

- Thomas Magers II, Holly Baptist Church, Corinth, Mississippi

***The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture From the Prophets and Apostles.* By Abner Chou. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2018. 251 pages. Paperback, \$23.99.**

The current age bears witness to a variety of hermeneutical methods (e.g., feministic, trajectory, *sensus plenior*, and Christo-centric). This has resulted in an era where the field of biblical interpretation can be summarized by stating that “everyone does what is right in their own eyes” (Judg 21:25; Deut 12:8) since they have accumulated “for themselves teachers to suit their own passions” (2 Tim 4:3). As such, Abner Chou has purposed *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers* with providing a corrective to this hermeneutical epidemic.

For Chou, hermeneutics is not simply a discussion for academic circles. Instead, as Chou states, “Hermeneutics does not just stay in the realm of academia but ultimately shapes how we live and whether or not we please God. . . . Hermeneutics is not a negotiable issue; it is essential for the Christian walk” (13). This statement is an almost verbatim reiteration of The Master's University doctrinal statement, where Chou serves as the John F. MacArthur Endowed Fellow. Thus, Chou's work—as well as his *I Saw the Lord: A Biblical Theology of Vision* (Wipf & Stock, 2013)—is devoted to demonstrating how the biblical authors are both theologically consistent as well as the models for proper biblical interpretation. According to Chou, the biblical authors of both Testaments have “embedded in Scripture the way Scripture should be interpreted” (232).

To defend this statement, Chou has organized *Biblical Writers* into four major complementary sections, with each section building upon its antecedent. Chapters 1 and 2 provide the reader with preliminary information and the implications of reading with presuppositions. Chapters 3 and 4 investigate how the prophets interpreted previously written Scripture (e.g., the Pentateuch). Chou calls this the “prophetic hermeneutic,” which is otherwise known in modern scholarship as “inter-biblical exegesis.”¹ Chapters 5 and 6 investigate how the apostles interpreted the writings of the Old Testament as well as the theological consistency that exists between each New Testament writer. Similarly, Chou labels this as the “apostolic hermeneutic” in accordance with modern scholarship (20). Lastly, Chou devotes chapters 7 and 8 to demonstrate how the Christian should read and interpret Scripture. Following the pattern, Chou designates this as the “Christian hermeneutic.”

¹See Bernard M. Levinson, *Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Chou has included within *Biblical Writers* many examples of how the “prophets advanced the concepts and ideas already found in earlier revelation” (93) and of how the “apostles maintained the rationale of the prophets” (156). This results in *Biblical Writers* being very broad in scope but somewhat shallow in depth; even Chou himself is aware of this (231). Still, a few themes that run throughout the book are worthy of mention. These include the authorial logic of the biblical writers, their theological consistency, and the nature of biblical intertextuality.

Chou begins his work by citing a plethora of hermeneutical works that defend the “literal-grammatical-historical” method of interpretation from both a philosophical and doctrinal standpoint (13–15). According to Chou, while these works are useful, many have not sought to take into account the authorial logic found within both Testaments. Instead, the New Testament authors are normally seen as coherent thinkers until they quote from the Old Testament. Then, they are viewed as utilizing “spiritualization and allegorization” (16). On the same note, the Old Testament writers are seen by some as “simplistic in their thinking and writing” (48), more “political than theological” (54), or “not completely cognizant of complex theological concepts discussed in the New Testament” (94). In contrast to this, Chou argues that “the prophets themselves were the first biblical theologians” (89).

This line of argumentation becomes the thesis of *Biblical Writers*. Instead of viewing the biblical writers as “hermeneutical hypocrites,” Chou argues that “they practiced what they preached with immense precision and thereby laid out for us how to read Scripture better. The way they read is the way they wrote and the way we should read them. By this, their hermeneutic is our hermeneutic” (22). According to Chou, any modern misconceptions about the biblical authors’ theological consistency is rooted in a misguided understanding of biblical intertextuality.

After affirming that the crux of biblical hermeneutics revolves around the New Testament’s use of the Old (16–17), Chou makes a compelling argument for the multi-textual nature of the Old Testament. In other words, when discussing a case of intertextuality, such as the quotation of Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15, Chou argues that one should not simply examine the “two texts” that are obviously linked but should seek to study other less obvious connections within the context of both texts. The importance of this is found in the fact that “ancient readers did not merely link ‘two texts’ together but rather wove multiple texts together” (36). In other words, Matthew’s use of Hos 11:1 is not simply a quotation of that one text, but also of the numerous texts already being reference within the book of Hosea (see 105–110). As such, Chou states that if scholars were more aware of “the way the authors” of Scripture “thought and wrote,” they would have a greater understanding “of how theology works in texts we (particularly as Westerners) are not comfortable gleaning theology from” (209). Thus, Chou correctly labeled much of the discussion of intertextuality as walking “into the tail end of essentially over a millennia of conversation (texts intertextuality relating to other texts)” and accusing “everyone but ourselves as being hermeneutically awkward” (213).

While the above topics are some of the primary emphases of *Biblical Writers* and are well articulated, argued, and affirmed, the work does suffer from some minor faults. First, the work is highly repetitive. Though written repetition can be helpful, Chou's utilization of it is somewhat excessive. Second, the work contains a few hints of disorganization. For example, footnote 32 mentions a "previous discussion" of Deut 4:1–2, but this discussion has not been mentioned previously. Third, some of Chou's examples of the intertextuality are not only unconvincing but unnecessarily tedious. For example, instead of viewing Lev 18:5 as a reference to "covenant obedience to gain earthly (not eternal) life" (165), it is better to view it as "purely hypothetical" since the New Testament authors interpret the "life" in Lev 18:15 as "eternal life."² Despite these shortcomings, *Biblical Writers* will serve as a good introduction for any who are unaware of how biblical intertextuality helps to provide Scripture with its theology and proper interpretation.

- Ron Lindo, *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana*

***The Holy Spirit.* By Christopher R. J. Holmes. *New Studies in Dogmatics.* Edited by Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015. 213 pages. Paperback, \$24.99.**

Christopher R. J. Holmes occupies the position of associate professor in systematic theology at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. He earned the MRel and ThD from Wycliffe College at the University of Toronto. Holmes has contributed to numerous publications and authored *Revisiting the Doctrine of the Divine Attributes: In Dialogue with Karl Barth, Eberhard Jüngel, and Wolf Krötke* (Peter Lang, 2007), *Ethics in the Presence of Christ* (T&T Clark, 2012), and *The Lord is Good: Seeking the God of the Psalter* (IVP Academic, 2018).

Holmes's purpose was to investigate what Scripture teaches regarding the Holy Spirit, yet he did not limit the work to his own perspective and assumptions. Placing his work in the larger theological context, Holmes set out to discern the pneumatology of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Karl Barth. In doing so, not only did he interact with their writings but also their contributions in light of the theological controversies of their respective times surrounding the Holy Spirit as well as their interpretation of texts within the fourth Gospel.

For Holmes, the correct starting point when addressing the Holy Spirit is the establishment of deity. Holmes identified the Holy Spirit as a member of the Trinity, which

²See Michael B. Shepherd, *The Textual World of the Bible*, *Studies in Biblical Literature* 156 (New York: Peter Lang, 2013).

he defined as a “knowable mystery” (20). The backbone of the work is the necessity to uphold the Trinity as the majority of the content investigated the dynamics of the Holy Spirit’s relations and functionality with the Father and Son. Additionally, Holmes offered a proposition he referred to as “first principles.” The principles involve the essence and existence of God. For the author, “In God essence and existence are one. This is what it means to speak of God as one who lives from himself. . . . First principles describe the reality that God is, that this life exists from itself” (21–22). God is known by what God has done. For Holmes, for one to know rightly the Holy Spirit, one must first know rightly God.

Holmes began the first section of the work with the teachings of Augustine regarding the divinity of the Holy Spirit. He started by engaging Augustine’s work on John 2:23–3:21. He sought to understand the essence and relationship of the Father, Son, and Spirit. According to the author, “The theme is that the Spirit renders us trustable to Christ, gives life, the life that is intrinsic to God’s being from eternity” (46). The confirmation of divinity through the work of the Spirit is “secured via his proceeding from the Father and the Son” (54). Accordingly, the Father has given the Spirit to the Son “without measure.” With the Son’s having the Spirit, the Spirit is of the Son, “proceeding from him (secondarily) as from the Father (primarily)” (56). For Augustine, while the persons of the Trinity differ in relation, they remain equal in their essence. In other words, within God “there is no ontological hierarchy” (61). Augustine concluded that the Holy Spirit is God. The Spirit proceeds, first from the Father and second from the Son, all the while being co-equal with both the Father and the Son.

Holmes then turned his attention to Thomas Aquinas. In doing so, Holmes consulted Thomas’s *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Thomas, in agreement with Augustine, perceives the Trinity as consisting of three equal persons, all relating to one another uniquely and distinctly. The distinguishing factors within the Trinity are “not their essence but their respective properties” (87). Regarding the Spirit, he receives his mission as he is “conceived from the Truth [the Son]” (87). With the Spirit proceeding from the Truth, he proclaims the truth, ultimately indicating that the truth is nothing less than love. Accordingly, “Love is the property of the Holy Spirit” (87). The idea of the Spirit being love weaves its way throughout Thomas’s understanding of the Trinitarian relationship. The Holy Spirit is the proof of the Father’s love for the Son, and the Son goes forth as the Son’s love for the Father. Further, the Spirit is God’s gift to humanity as an expression of his love (93). For Thomas, “to love him [Jesus] is to receive the Spirit whereby the Father loves him and he loves the Father” (107).

The third theologian engaged is Karl Barth and what Holmes referred to as “The Other-Directed Spirit.” According to Holmes, “Barth’s pressing concern is the freedom of God—God’s remaining God in the creation, maintenance, and perfection of covenant fellowship with creatures” (133). Barth refers to the freedom of God as displayed through redemption as his self-revelation, which he defined as follows: “God acts among us as God is” (135).

God's self-revelation is the new birth given through the Spirit. Holmes asserts, "Barth is emphatic that it is the Spirit who makes us God's children, that the new birth of the Spirit is God's work" (136). Barth affirmed the life of God as being in and of himself, yet he asked the question, "How does the Spirit originate?" While not compromising the co-equality of the Father, Son, and Spirit, Barth appeals to the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed in affirmation of the "immanent *Filioque*" or "the Spirit as the 'bond of peace between the two [Father and Son]'" (143). The Spirit unites the Father and Son through love. Barth holds closely to the teachings of both Augustine and Aquinas. Holmes concluded his section regarding Barth by drawing attention to his perspective on the relationships between the Spirit and Christ. Holmes wrote, "That Barth will not set the Spirit free from Jesus, just as Jesus will not describe himself apart from the Father, points in my view to the very depths of the perfection of the triune life" (162).

The book contained numerous biblical, theological, and historical truths that stimulate the mind when seeking to understand further the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. A major strength of the work is the author's devotion to Scripture and historical theology. The content is rich, at times dense, which is helpful considering the topic at hand. A further strength is the book's ability to transcend different levels of learning. Both the academic and the practitioner can benefit from the work as it was not written in a manner that only the theologically trained could benefit. The book's brevity is both a strength and a weakness. The length of the book is a strength for the person desiring a concise viewpoint of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit through the years without having to wade through a multi-volume systematic theology. However, because of the brevity, many of the concepts were unable to be fully developed. Regardless, Holmes has constructed a masterful work that is a must read for all who seek further information regarding the Holy Spirit.

- Andy Baker, *First Baptist Church Oloh, Sumrall, Mississippi*

***Infants and Children in the Church: Five Views on Theology and Ministry.* Edited by Adam Harwood and Kevin E. Lawson. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017. 218 pages. Paperback, \$24.99.**

Adam Harwood and Kevin Lawson's work, *Infants and Children in the Church*, is one of the few volumes that addresses the topic of theology and ministry of infants and children with an ecumenical approach. There are five different theological and ministerial traditions represented in the book. They are the Orthodox view, represented by John Foster; the Roman Catholic position, represented by David Liberto; the Lutheran position, as demonstrated by David P. Scaer; and the Reformed view, per Gregg Strawbridge. Harwood depicts the Baptist position. The rationale for the multiple-views approach is to help the universal church to foster "the kind of theological reflection for ministry practice that will help the church better respond to the gift of children" (3).

The methodology of the book is to answer four major questions designed to elicit “how best to minister to, for, and with the children God brings to his people” (8). The four questions are: “1) How are children and infants impacted by sin? 2) How does God treat people who die in infancy or childhood? 3) When and how are children considered members of the church? 4) When and how are children instructed in Christian doctrine?” (8). The reader benefits from the layout by gleaning not only each author’s chapter but also the responses of the other contributors to each author. Readers should be cautioned that this approach will require them to use critical thinking skills, which is not a bad requirement.

There are many strengths that commend the book. First, the five contributors represent their various Christian traditions faithfully. Second, each author details his specific view of church authority in conjunction with scriptural authority. Foster argues that since the Protestant Reformation was aimed at Catholicism and did not impact the Orthodox, his Orthodox position is closer to ancient Christianity than other views (12). Liberto claims that “the teaching of the Catholic Church on the spiritual condition of infants requires an examination of the Sacred Scriptures, to be sure, but must also include the magisterial teachings of the Catholic Church” (49). Scaer states that the Lutheran position is “committed to the Reformation principle of the *sola Scriptura*, that all doctrines are derived from the Bible” (84).

The Reformed view appeals “to the Reformation’s historic point of view,” which “reached deeply into the well of Scripture to defend the inclusion of children in the church, against the Anabaptist views” (116). The Baptist position, represented by Harwood, understands church authority to rest upon the New Testament, which demonstrates a “clear pattern for the conversion of individuals and for the formation of local churches” being comprised “of only people who are regenerate, or born again” (157). This position naturally leads to believer’s baptism only, which is a denial of infant baptism. The appeals to the differing levels of authority present the five views on *Infants and Children in the Church* as distinct from one another.

A third strength of the book reveals the basic issues of disagreement among the various ecclesiastical traditions and the authors who adhere to them. This is a significant strength. Inadvertently, the book offers a detailed look at the foundational ecclesiology of each position. Every pastor and every church realizes that the gospel is at stake for the child, parents, and the church. Each author realizes this fact. However, even though the purpose of the book is to review the issues of infant baptism, sin, church membership, and death and eternal state, the reader is treated to the core ecclesiastical positions that drive the various church ministries toward children. Thus, each church’s ecclesiology is displayed.

A fourth strength of the book is the theological topics under discussion. The topic of original sin is reviewed by the various authors with differing persuasions. Again, the purpose of the book is not to extract theological issues; however, the nature of the topic affords

itself such discussions. The differing interpretations of the covenants by the various views are noteworthy. The church's relationship to those covenants often depicts the theological undergirding of the ecclesiastical positions within the book.

The last area that commands attention is the final chapter, which serves as a summary. The chapter builds on the common understanding of each author and each church tradition. The divisions are apparent as one reads the interaction of the authors. Regardless, Lawson's attempt to present a comprehensive ecumenical position that seeks gospel ministry for the child, the parents, and the church is the nuance of the book. There is a section on further study and action that is a must-read. Hopefully, the church can dialogue more on this ministry issue.

The book has one weakness that is notable. In all fairness, the word "weakness" may be too strong. The fault of the book is that it lacks chapter numbers. Yes, that is probably a sign of an older critic that has become dependent upon chapter numbers for clarity; however, the format could help with easy reference by simply placing a chapter number with each section/chapter.

Harwood and Lawson have served the kingdom with an outstanding review of the differing positions in *Infants and Children in the Church*. I heartily recommend the book to pastors, church members, Sunday school teachers, and theologians who want to cultivate an understanding of the God's view of his precious creation—the little children that Jesus encouraged to come to him.

- Marvin Jones, Louisiana College, Pineville, Louisiana

***Light in a Dark Place: The Doctrine of Scripture.* By John S. Feinberg. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018. 799 pages. Hardcover, \$50.00.**

John S. Feinberg (PhD, University of Chicago) is the department chair and professor of biblical and systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. He is the author of *Ethics for a Brave New World* and *No One Like Him* as well as the general editor of the Foundations of Evangelical Theology series of which this book is the latest entry. The series is intended to cover all areas of evangelical theology. The contributing authors draw on Scripture while bringing in support from historical theology, philosophy, and other relevant sources. Even though the series authors represent a Reformed perspective, alternate viewpoints are discussed.

This current entry to the series explores the doctrine of Scripture. It is "meant to rest on the very best of scholarship while at the same time being understandable to the beginner in theology as well as to the academic theologian" (15). After the first introductory chapter, the book is divided into four sections.

The first section is titled "Creating Scripture." Feinberg discusses natural revelation as that which is available to all persons at all times and consisting of the knowledge that a "supreme being, God, exists," that each person has some concept of basic moral behavior, and that a person deserves to be punished for disobeying God's rules (75). Special revelation provides a broader content than natural revelation and includes more forms including Scripture and Jesus as the incarnate Word. Feinberg asserts that the doctrine of Scripture must be formulated based on those passages of Scripture that address the topic at hand. In this methodology, he presupposes that Scripture is reliable, referring the reader to his previous work in which he defends this position. This section concludes with eight theses concerning the inspiration of Scripture that present a view of Scripture as based on God rather than humans as the source. As such, all Scripture is the very word of God. Feinberg rejects the dictation theory of inspiration while maintaining that humans are fully involved in the writing of Scripture. The Holy Spirit ensures the integrity of all those involved in the production of Scripture so that the entirety of Scripture is what God intends to communicate while not restricting the use of human language and concepts. Feinberg affirms the view of Karl Barth that "Scripture is a record of and witness to revelation" while also accepting the view that it is also a revelation in and of itself (215). Finally, he states that both the Old Testament and New Testament are the word of God. He supports each of these theses with careful exegesis from Scripture. He concludes this chapter with a discussion of Peter Enns's incarnational analogy between the dual nature of Christ and the dual nature of Scripture.

The second section, titled "Characteristics of Scripture," deals with the attributes of Scripture. The bulk of this section is devoted to discussing inerrancy. He accepts Paul Feinberg's definition that "Inerrancy means that when all facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything that they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences" (237). Feinberg presents a view of inerrancy that asserts that Scripture corresponds to the real world in all it says. He establishes that Scripture teaches that it is inerrant. He discusses how various types of scriptural passages can be shown to be inerrant. He devotes two chapters to addressing objections to inerrancy. The final chapter of this section is a discussion of what is meant by biblical authority and the biblical evidence for it.

Feinberg's goal in the third section, titled "Setting the Boundaries," is to thoroughly discuss the "issues related to canonicity" (432). For instance, given that Scripture interprets Scripture, a closed canon is essential. If the canon is in flux, then the context of scriptural interpretation will also be in flux. Another question concerns the authority of Scripture. If some books of the canon can be ignored, then the biblical authority of those books can be questioned. He focuses on six questions: "What is the concept of canonicity?" Does "Scripture *directly* teach this concept?" What is the process of the canon's formation? Why are some books included in the canon while others were excluded? What is its relationship to

other doctrines? Is the canon closed? (432–35). Feinberg considers carefully the importance of a closed, stable canon and develops a working definition of canon. He then explains Scripture’s testimony to the canon and considers extra-biblical sources that impact the understanding of the canon. He concludes this section by discussing how the Old and New Testament canons came to be recognized.

Feinberg’s objective in the fourth section, “The Usefulness of Scripture,” is to show “that Scripture can be understood, and does accomplish God’s intended purposes in the lives of those who obey it” (567). This section integrates five important elements—the illumination, perspicuity/clarity, animation, sufficiency, and preservation of Scripture—that impact the usefulness of Scripture. By animation, Feinberg means the power of Scripture to impact lives and most especially the power to transform people’s relationships with the one true God. He expounds on each of these elements and how they interact and support each other. His discussion is supported throughout with the teaching of Scripture.

In his conclusion, Feinberg asserts that the Bible is a “book that gives us God’s authoritative, inerrant instructions and answers to life’s most basic and important questions” (759). He offers his testimony as to how Scripture has provided light during critical times of his life. The book also includes Scripture and general indexes.

Feinberg’s work is a well-integrated, grounded, cohesive discussion on the doctrine of Scripture. The work is integrated in the sense that he not only explains the various facets that make up the doctrine but explains why they are important to other areas of theology. The doctrine is cohesive in that he discusses the relationship of the various factors to each other in a way that demonstrates how they support each other. For any valid doctrine, cohesion is necessary but not sufficient. Feinberg also grounds his doctrine in Scripture. He goes further than merely pointing out passages of Scripture that support his view. He also provides detailed exegesis that explains the facet under discussion. Another of Feinberg’s strengths is that he does not avoid those passages of Scripture that may seem to undermine his viewpoint. He shows that they may be reasonably interpreted and integrated into the doctrine. He also brings in the work of other scholars who provide alternate viewpoints and carefully discusses what they can add to the discussion and where they fall short. This approach assists the reader to evaluate Feinberg’s position.

Feinberg’s work attains the first part of his goal of resting “on the very best of scholarship” while falling short of the second of “being understandable to the beginner in theology” (15). Even though he does provide some background in footnotes to understand some of the academic concepts, the depth of this work would preclude its use by those beginning their study of theology. This book, however, would be an excellent research volume for the graduate theology student. Overall this book is recommended as an authoritative source for those who wish to delve deeper into the doctrine of Scripture.

- Robert Littlefield, independent researcher, Enterprise, Alabama

***The Lost World of the Israelite Conquest.* By John H. Walton and J. Harvey Walton. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017. 269 pages. Paperback, \$20.00.**

Few people have contributed as much to the study of the Old Testament and its context in the ancient Near East than John H. Walton. As a former professor at the Moody Bible Institute and a current researcher at Wheaton College, Walton's expertise in the realm of biblical studies has shaped minds for more than three decades. Outside of the classroom, he has written commentaries, textbooks, and a popular level series of books which includes *The Lost World of the Israelite Conquest*. His *Lost World* series will have its sixth volume published in 2019, and each new volume brings about a flurry of excited criticism. The series takes aim at various issues that trouble modern students of the Bible, seeking to place them in conversation with the archaeological evidence and literary discoveries that date to the same time period. But most of these sources come from outside of Israel, thus offering a wider view of the culture and society that thrived when the biblical authors penned the Old Testament. Three of the entries in this series have dealt with the first eleven chapters of Genesis by attempting to show how these texts should be understood in their proper historical context (*Genesis One*, *Adam & Eve*, and *the Flood*). Each entry, then, tackles a sensitive subject within biblical interpretation that is sure to provoke debate.¹

Under consideration currently is Walton's exploration of the *Israelite Conquest*. Though sometimes accused of playing loose with the text, Walton patently denies any such claim. As he writes with his co-author, J. Harvey Walton, "Central to our approach to how the conquest should be interpreted and understood is that the Bible, while it has relevance and significance *for* us, was not written *to* us" (7, emphasis in original). This forms the first proposition of the book, which is one of the unique elements in the *Lost World* series. Instead of chapters, the book contains twenty-one propositions which are broken up into six parts, with brief sections called excursus along the way to provide examples of particular points. This is more than mere semantics, though. Walton's use of propositions lays the foundation for what his books are achieving; there is a logical flow to the argument that must be followed step-by-step and should be seen as inseparable from one another. Each proposition builds upon the previous one and leads directly into the next. The parts offer a brief outline of how the argument in *Israelite Conquest* is laid out: 1) Interpretation, 2) The Canaanites Are Not Depicted as Guilty of Sin, 3) The Canaanites Are Not Depicted as Guilty of Breaking God's Law, 4) The Language and Imagery of the Conquest Account Has Literary and Theological Significance, 5) What God and the Israelites Are Doing is Often Misunderstood Because the Hebrew Word *Herem* Is Commonly Mistranslated, and 6) How to Apply This Understanding. While a full exploration of every part and proposition is not possible here, some highlights ought to capture the heart of Walton's work.

¹There are plenty of back-and-forth reviews of Walton's series available for perusal. But for a quick look at how these works stoke the fires of some Christians, see Steve Ham's "*The Lost World of Adam and Eve: A Response*," available at <https://answersingenesis.org/reviews/books/lost-world-adam-and-eve-response/>.

The first part, "Interpretation," is an attempt to lay out a hermeneutic. This new reading is necessary "because Christians view the Bible as intended to be prescriptive for today," which means that "reading it is different from reading something we view as merely descriptive" (13). This is the heart of Walton's book. While never denying the inerrancy of Scripture or its role in the life of the believer, Walton insists that an ancient document should be treated as such (14). Reading the Old Testament as a "how-to" guide for modern Christian living misses the point that "a good citizen of the ancient or classical world is not a good citizen of the modern world" (23). As such, interpretation should utilize archaeological and comparative literary discoveries to understand better what is communicated through the history of Israel's conquest of the Promised Land.

Parts 2–5 set out to overcome some common readings of the historical books of the Old Testament, each of which the Waltons assert are insufficient in some way. First, the idea that God used Israel to punish the Canaanites for their sin is handled with explorations of Numbers 31 and Genesis 15:16 as primary texts to undercut this view (47, 51). Second, the idea that the Canaanites were guilty because they did not follow the Mosaic Law is explored, where Walton shows that the Israelites often fell into idolatry along the same lines while also explaining the ancient Near Eastern view of law codes which argues that the Mosaic Law was not binding on the Canaanites (79). Third, Walton digs deep into the writing of the historical books, suggesting that the purpose and style serve to contrast the Israelites with the Canaanites, but not to condemn them (144–45). This is important to the next step in the argument, namely, that the use of *herem* to describe the conquest refers to cultural identity, not literal death (179). All of this builds up to the application of Part 6, where Christians are encouraged to employ an individual turn towards Christ, which means a turn away from cultural identification (244–52).

While all of this makes an interesting exposition, it does not necessitate the conclusion. Walton's exegesis of *herem* is compelling, and it offers a biblically faithful way of wrestling with the Israelite wars of Joshua and Judges (see particularly 169–72). But even if this way of reading the Old Testament is accepted, the conclusion that "participation in the purposes of God that are carried out through the [church], means the setting aside of all other identities" is not the only logical conclusion to draw (247). And this perhaps identifies the weakness of the *Lost World* series as a whole. Though full of excellent scholarship and ideas regarding biblical interpretation, the final note often sounds discordant. Although it is true that membership in the body of Christ means a prioritization of this spiritual family (as Paul describes in Eph 4), the idea that the *herem* motif applies only to Christians does not have to follow from Walton's argument (243). It is easy to see how the Israelite conquest, as Walton defines it, might still apply to cultural renewal *outside* of the church as well. In fact, recognizing that *herem* is suggestive of putting off an idolatrous identity can have great impact on the unbelieving world as well as within the church.

The Waltons have certainly done good work in *The Lost World of the Israelite Conquest*, offering an excellent resource for handling issues of war and the problem of evil in understanding the Old Testament. The book stands as a welcome contribution toward understanding the relationship between the Israelites and the Canaanites. But like many new hermeneutical offerings, the conclusions leave a bit to be desired.

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***The Message of Women: Creation Grace and Gender.* By Derek and Dianne Tidball. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012. 300 pages. Paperback, \$21.99.**

The Message of Women is co-authored by Derek and Dianne Tidball. Given the modern concern with women's rights within American society and church life, such dual authorship appears to almost be a requirement. Generally, many women's ministry books written solely by males are normally accused of being patriarchal, while those written solely by women are labeled as feminist. As such, *The Message of Women* avoids such designations by means of its co-authorship. While Derek Tidball is known for his numerous works (such as *The Message of Leviticus*, 2005; *Ministry by the Book*, 2009; and *The Voices of the New Testament*, 2016), Dianne may be less known (see, *Esther, A True First Lady*, 2001).

The Tidballs have divided this work into four parts. Part one is entitled "foundations" and provides the reader with a detailed exegesis of Gen 1-3. Part two is a topical analysis of women under the old covenant. Part three describes the nature of women during Jesus's earthly ministry. And lastly, part four is a discussion of the role women in the New Testament community.

Before seeking to provide an evaluation of the book, it seems best to note some of the concerns of the Tidballs. Ultimately, they argue for an "egalitarian perspective," which was not the "original starting point of one of the authors, who has come over the many years to change position through the reading of Scripture and observation of what God is doing in his church" (26). Even so, they are aware that any discussion of women's roles within the church leads to contention and they "hope to not lose friends because of what" they have written (10). Instead, their goal is to provide a means of dialog "and to encourage" their "readers to study the texts again for themselves" (284). As such, the evaluation that follows will primarily be critical of this work but is meant to be received in a spirit of "love, patience and mutual submission" in Christ (26).

The Tidballs begin by making a compelling case for Gen 1-3 as laying the foundation for any discussion of women in God's creation. They correctly argue that the woman, Eve, cannot be considered to have been created inferior or in subordination to the man, Adam, simply because she is called his helper (see Gen 2:18). In their words, "to call Eve Adam's helper carries no overtones of her being the weaker partner in the relationship"

(37). Instead, Eve's status as helper implies her equality to Adam since he would have been unable to fulfill the cultural mandate of Gen 1:28 without her.

Less convincingly, the Tidballs continue this train of thought and argue that while Adam's naming of the animals (Gen 2:20) implies he had authority over them, his naming of Eve (Gen 3:20) was simply a result of the fall, an expression of God's curse in Gen 3:16. This argument rests on their affirmation that Eve's first naming in Gen 2:23 was simply a "label that speaks of her gender" while her second naming in Gen 3:20 is where she receives a "personal name" (40). Even so, this understanding of *qara* ("he named") does not fit with the literary exchange between Adam and God found within Gen 1–3: God names the light, night, sky, dry ground, and the sea (Gen 1:5, 8, 10); Adam names the livestock, birds, every living creature, and the woman (Gen 2:20, 23). Thus, God who has authority over all creation names the foundations of the world in Gen 1, while Adam (God's image) names everything that lives in the world in Gen 2–3. As such, it seems more likely that Adam's naming of Eve—who is made in Adam's flesh or image, Gen 2:23—in Gen 3:20 is for the purpose of softening his dominance over Eve—which existed before the fall according to God's design—more so than asserting a new-found dominance created in light of the fall.¹

The Tidballs' denial of Adamic headship in Eden also seems to contrast their exegesis of Gen 2:24. They argue that while Gen 2:24 calls a man to leave his parent's home, "we might expect to read that 'woman leaves her father and mother and is united to her husband'" (41), since this is what happens most often in the Old Testament (see, for example, Gen 24:61). They conclude that Gen 2:24 "surprisingly" calls for the man "to pay the greatest cost in forming the marriage relationship" (42). This comes as surprising only if one equates headship/leadership with seeking to curtail women of "their freedom and devalue their role," as the authors claim of patriarchy in general (195). Instead, it seems the male leadership in Eden (Gen 2:24) is just as sacrificial as leadership in the kingdom of heaven (see Mark 10:42–45; James 4:10).

Such an understanding of male headship within Genesis helps one to evaluate the rest of *The Message of Women*. One of the authors' most frequent dialog partners is *Rediscovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. Sadly, the Tidballs' interaction with *Rediscovering* is very selective, just as the other parts of their work. For example, they chose to discuss the literary portrayal of Rebekah but not of Rachel, Leah, or Sarah. Though the Tidballs are correct in asserting that the story of Rebekah is the "most extensive accounts we have of a wife and a mother in the early books of the Bible" (70), this does not dismiss how Rebekah's story ought to be nuanced by the stories of other biblical women. This is especially true in light of the literary foreshadowing among Rebekah, Sarah, Rachel, and Leah through the mention of barrenness (see Gen 11:30; 25:21; 29:31, 35). The Tidballs' selectivity is also found in their omission of any discussion of women within the prophetic writings (see, for example, Isa 3:12).

¹See David W. Cotter, *Genesis*, Berit Olam (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2003).

Returning to the Tidballs' engagement with *Rediscovering*, in their discussion of 1 Tim 2:11–15, they quote Piper and Grudem as affirming that God does not call women as pastors (263). While the Tidballs do provide three critiques of Piper and Grudem's statement (263–67), many of these arguments are very weak. For example, the Tidballs argue that an egalitarian interpretation of 1 Tim 2:11–15 is to be preferred to the traditional complementarian interpretation, but while citing Douglas Moo's article in *Rediscovery* within the chapter's opening footnotes, they do not engage directly with any of Moo's arguments. They conclude their exegesis of 1 Tim 2:11–15 by arguing that "today, Paul is likely to argue that the refusal to permit women to exercise leadership in the church is what brings the gospel into disrepute" (267). But, once again, they can only affirm this statement by assuming that Paul is only prohibiting women from teaching false doctrine because of a lack of education (266), which ignores Moo's arguments against such an understanding of 1 Tim 2:12.

One must also note some faulty understandings of the New Testament authors' reading of the Old. An example of this is found in Tidball's analysis of 1 Pet 3:5–6. They argue that since nowhere in Genesis does it specifically state that Sarah obeyed Abraham, "Peter's words" seem to "reflect the Jewish literature of his day, such as the *Testament of Abraham*, more than Genesis" (246, 78). But if one follows the context of Peter's quotation from Gen 18, one finds that Abraham speaks to Sarah (Gen 18:6), Sarah obeys (Gen 18:8), and then calls Abraham her lord (Gen 18:12). Thus, Tidball's analysis of this passage is somewhat arbitrary.

In conclusion, *The Message of Women* only fulfills its purpose of creating a "dialog" between egalitarians and complementarians in a limited sense. There are moments where the work provides an honest critique of the traditional view but their lack of direct engagement with numerous passages and scholars leaves one to wonder about the book's conclusions. In all, this book is only recommended as a complement to *Rediscovery* in the hopes of providing any reader with a balanced understanding of the role of women in Scripture.

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***The New Chosen People: A Corporate View of Election*, revised & expanded edition. By William W. Klein. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015. 352 pages. Paperback, \$43.00.**

The first edition of Klein's classic manifesto asserting that election to salvation is primarily corporate was first published in 1990. The present volume is not a mere reprint; rather, it is a significantly revised and expanded edition. For example, the questions he addresses in the final section increase from six to twenty-five, and the bibliography reflects more than 200 works published since the original edition. Klein engages the new material listed in the bibliography, as evidenced in the body of the text as well as the footnotes.

Klein argues that although God elects individuals to Christian service, the view of salvation presented in both the Old and New Testaments is primarily corporate. In support of his thesis, Klein surveys exhaustively all the significant references to election in the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, the Qumran writings, the Rabbinical writings, and the New Testament. The New Testament documents are examined carefully with separate chapters on the Synoptic Gospels, the Johannine literature, Acts, the Pauline Epistles, Hebrews, and the General Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude. Klein's argument cannot legitimately be charged with cherry picking the Scripture passages that best support his thesis because he deals carefully with every significant text that addresses the topic of election and related issues.

Although Klein's early theological training was Calvinistic in orientation, his reading of the New Testament led him to believe that some things he had been taught were not consistent with Scripture. The first edition of this book was prompted by the rise of Calvinism, but in it and this revised edition he is not interested in debating theologians. His only intent is to examine the Scriptures like the Bereans to discover the truth of God's Word.

Klein sees the election of Israel in the Old Testament to be primarily an election to service because not all Israelites were saved but within the nation was a remnant elect to salvation made up of those who lived by faith. Some individual Israelites were appointed to serve in various roles, but that did not necessarily involve salvation (indeed, some of those appointed were pagans, such as Cyrus the Persian). The church in the New Testament is elect in Christ, consisting of all those who are baptized believers. When the term "elect" appears in New Testament passages that clearly refer to salvation, the term almost invariably refers to a group—rather than individuals—or utilizes the plural number. However, the New Testament also references individuals being "elect" or "appointed" to perform various roles in the providence of God. Klein's sustained argument for corporate election is comprehensive, Bible-centered, and convincing. While not being argumentative in his presentation, Klein patiently builds his view one Scripture at a time for chapter after chapter until his conclusion appears to be inescapable.

My only concern with the book arose with some of the new material addressing questions at the end of the book. Klein gives a backhanded slap to some of his would-be advocates, those he describes as Calminians. Oddly, this discussion is placed in the midst of answering a question about double predestination, a view which Calminians also unanimously abhor. Unfortunately, Klein does not seem to understand what Calminians believe.¹ He asserts that

¹The so-called Calminian perspective is articulated succinctly in the "Neither Calvinists, Nor Arminians, But Baptists" statement by a group of Baptist scholars, posted online in September 2010 by the Center for Theological Research at http://www.baptistcenter.net/papers/Neither_Calvinists_Nor_Arminians_But_Baptists.pdf. This perspective is discussed in greater detail in Steve Lemke and David Allen, eds., *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism—Reflections from the John 3:16 Conference* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2010), and in David L. Allen, Eric Hankins, and Adam

they are either advocates of “full-fledged Calvinism” or “a hybrid that deletes the limited atonement as objectionable” (296). This is incorrect. Calvinists who deny the limited atonement are usually labeled as Amyraldian Calvinists, not Calminians. Full-fledged five-point Calvinists disagree with Calminians as much as five-point Arminians do.² In fact, Calminians are always in the crossfire between Calvinists and Arminians who insist that all five of their points about soteriology must be affirmed as all-or-nothing, and there is no middle ground. I have argued that this sort of thinking commits the logical fallacy of false alternatives.³ As the “Neither Calvinists, Nor Arminians, But Baptists” statement affirms, I argue for a middle way between these two contrary positions.⁴

Klein might be pleased to know that many Calminian leaders endorse his own view of corporate election.⁵ We are not a minor sect. Calminians represent the majority view in the nation’s largest Protestant denomination. It is not the case that Calminians “cling to Calminianism in a benighted effort to be faithful to Scripture” (297). In Klein’s opinion, Calminians “have misinterpreted what Scriptures teach about God’s will and the nature of his sovereignty” (297), referring to his earlier discussion of these topics. However, one would be challenged to find any substantial differences between Klein’s view of God’s will/sovereignty and the Calminian perspective⁶ or to explain how Calminians misinterpret Scripture when affirming the same essential view he affirms.

These remarks, however, quibble with two paragraphs in an excellent book. *The New Chosen People* is a biblical and theological classic for evangelical theology. This volume

Harwood, eds., *Anyone Can Be Saved: A Defense of “Traditional” Baptist Soteriology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016). See also James Leo Garrett Jr., *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), xiv, who defines Calminianism as “any set of doctrines that involves a mixing of the teachings of the Synod of Dort and the teachings of Arminians, or Remonstrants.”

²Klein references Roger Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 61–77 as evidence for this critique. Olson dedicates an entire chapter to debunk the “myth” that “a hybrid of Calvinism and Arminianism is possible.” However, in the Preface to Olson’s *Against Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 10, Michael Horton (author of the companion volume *For Calvinism*), notes that he and Olson both agree, “There is no such thing as ‘Calminianism.’”

³Steve Lemke, “Using Logic in Theology: The Fallacy of False Alternatives,” *Before It’s News*, June 4, 2011, available at <http://beforeitsnews.com/christian-news/2011/06/using-logic-in-theology-the-fallacy-of-false-alternatives-687827.html>.

⁴Steve Lemke, “The Middle Way,” *SBC Today*, June 7, 2011, available at <http://sbctoday.wpengine.com/the-middle-way/>.

⁵For a couple of examples, see Eric Hankins, “Beyond Calvinism and Arminianism: Toward a Baptist Soteriology,” in *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 89–100, available at http://baptistcenter.net/journals/JBTM_8-1_Spring_2011.pdf#page=90; and Eric Hankins, “Commentary on Article 6: Election to Salvation,” in *Anyone Can Be Saved*, 90–111.

⁶Steve Lemke, “Commentary on Article 7: The Sovereignty of God,” and “Five Theological Models Relating Determinism, Divine Sovereignty, and Human Freedom,” in *Anyone Can Be Saved*, 103–117 and 169–78.

should be required reading by every evangelical theologian, biblical studies scholar, and pastor. One who has not read *The New Chosen People* does not know a crucial perspective about what she or he needs to know about election in the Bible.

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***No God but One: Allah or Jesus?*. By Nabeel A. Qureshi. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016. 320 pages. Paperback, \$17.99.**

Born in California to Pakistani immigrants, Nabeel Qureshi was an Ahmadi Muslim like his parents. He first questioned Islam as an undergraduate student at Old Dominion University. After a four-year investigation, Qureshi at age 22 became a Christian. *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus: A Devout Muslim Encounters Christianity* (Zondervan, 2014) details his religious pilgrimage. As a Christian, Qureshi redirected his schooling. His bachelor's degree had led him to Eastern Virginia Medical School, but before completing the MD, he enrolled at Biola University to earn an MA in Christian apologetics. He then earned an MA in religion at Duke University and an MPhil while pursuing a doctorate at Oxford University.

From 2013–2016, Qureshi worked for Ravi Zacharias International Ministries. He also wrote two more books, both published in 2016, *Answering Jihad: A Better Way Forward* and *No God but One*. On the day the later book launched, Qureshi posted on Facebook that he had stage 4 stomach cancer. He died on September 16, 2017.

No God but One addresses the following two questions:

1. What are the differences between Islam and Christianity?
2. Can we know whether Islam or Christianity is true?

Qureshi writes this book for people like him, who need answers to these questions. “Christians who enjoy criticizing Islam” or “Muslims who want to argue but do not want to learn” (21) are not his intended audience. Tackling both questions respectfully, logically, and thoroughly, Qureshi fulfills two purposes, demonstrating “that the differences between Islam and Christianity have great implications” and “that the evidence of history strongly supports the Christian claims” (13).

Answering Question 1, Qureshi contrasts Islam and Christianity in five areas.

Part 1: Sharia or the Gospel?: Two Different Solutions

Part 2: *Tawhid* or the Trinity?: Two Different Gods

Part 3: Muhammad or Jesus?: Two Different Founders

Part 4: The Quran or the Bible?: Two Different Scriptures

Part 5: Jihad or the Crusades?: Two Different Holy Wars

Qureshi begins by comparing worldviews. Islam identifies ignorance as mankind's problem. Hence, Allah sent prophets as guides. Muhammad, the greatest prophet, conveyed the Quran from which *sharia*, regarded as law, derives. He embodied *sharia*, which means "way" in Arabic. Christianity identifies sin as mankind's problem. Only God could solve it and he did through his Son. Jesus is the way of salvation.

In Part 2, Qureshi focuses on *tawhid*, the doctrine that Allah is absolutely one. Muslims contest its theological implications; for instance, debating if Allah has attributes. Because he is immutable, any attribute would be eternal; which is why most Muslims assert that the Quran, a manifestation of his speech (attribute), is eternal. Unlike *tawhid*, the Christian doctrine of Trinity teaches that God is one nature but three persons. Therefore, he is relational intrinsically, not dependent upon creation.

Part 3 assesses the significance of Muhammad and Jesus. Qureshi notes, "As Jesus' deity is fundamental for Christian theology, Muhammad's prophethood is fundamental to Islamic theology" (79). In Islam, the prophet is more status than a role. It designates an individual who is greater than the average person. Muslims emulate Muhammad because they esteem him as the best man. Meanwhile, Christians worship Jesus because they regard him as the God-man.

In Part 4, Qureshi reveals that the differences between the Quran and the Bible transcend content. "Their uses are different, their histories are different, and, indeed, their very natures are understood differently" (104).

QURAN	BIBLE
eternal expression of Allah	not eternal
spoken to Muhammad (genre)	many literary genres
recited by Muhammad	multiple authors

Over a twenty-three year period, the angel Gabriel dictated Allah's words piecemeal to Muhammad, which were compiled after his death. Later revelations sometimes canceled earlier ones, a phenomenon called abrogation. To discern how each section of the Quran applies, Muslims consult *hadith*, the records of Muhammad's life. "The Quran is, to Muslims, the eternal Word of Allah himself. It is the closest thing to God incarnate. To Christians, the eternal Word of Yahweh is Jesus. The Quran holds in Islam the place that Jesus holds in the Christian faith" (105).

Part 5 presents a balanced account of the crusades. Qureshi bares the sins of Christians (e.g., First Crusade) as well as Muslims (e.g., Amr ibn al-As' conquest of Northern Egypt, Baybars' slaughter of Christians at Antioch). Qureshi debunks the modern notion that Jihad has just been defensive; in fact, the First Crusade countered the capture of Nicaea by Seljuq Turks.

To get a proper perspective, Qureshi does not judge either religion by the actions of a few followers. Rather, he refers to the founders. “Violent jihad is a result of strict adherence to the life and teachings of the historical Muhammad, whereas strict adherence to the life and teachings of the historical Jesus results in pacifism and sacrificial love for one’s enemies” (140).

Answering Question 2, Qureshi reduces Christianity and Islam to their essence. Romans 10:9 encapsulates Christianity: 1. Jesus’s death by crucifixion, 2. Jesus’s resurrection from the dead, and 3. Jesus’s claim to be God. The *shahada* encapsulates Islam: 1. The prophetic authority of Muhammad and 2. The divine inspiration of the Quran. Each set of points represents why a person believes Christianity or Islam. As important as the Bible is, it enumerates what Christians believe, not why they believe. Qureshi’s approach effectively bypasses the denominational differences within Christianity and Islam, thus making a valid comparison possible.

The three points that distinguish Christianity also pit Christianity against Islam. The Quran forthrightly denies Jesus’s death (by implication, no resurrection) and divinity. Both religions, therefore, cannot be true.

For each point (Parts 6–8), Qureshi reaches a conclusion after weighing the evidence (biblical, non-biblical, historical), giving the Islamic response, and assessing the Islamic response. In doing so, he wields proficient research skills. He admits his biases (156–57). His exegesis is sound (e.g., 67 [Deut 6:4], 141–42 [Matt 10:34; Luke 22:35–38], 202–3 [Matt 5:17], 219 [Dan 7:13–14]). He is gracious, not pompous.

Regarding the crucifixion, some Muslims insist that it never happened because Allah miraculously rescued Jesus. Most Muslims prefer the Substitution Theory that Jesus’s face had been superimposed on Simon of Cyrene or Judas Iscariot. Nothing corroborates either view.

Regarding the resurrection, Qureshi addresses three New Testament facts: 1. Jesus died by crucifixion, 2. Jesus’s followers truly believed the risen Jesus appeared to them, and 3. People who were not Jesus’s followers (e.g., James, Paul) truly believed the risen Jesus appeared to them. The resurrection best explains these facts. Muslims, on the other hand, attribute these heresies to Paul. Imams teach that “it was Paul who took the religion taught by Jesus and turned it into the religion about Jesus” (197).

Regarding Jesus’s divinity, the Quran refutes it by quoting Jesus, who allegedly declared that only Allah was Lord (Surah 5). It threatens hell to all who would worship Jesus as God. Qureshi shows that Jesus professed to be God and that New Testament writers hail his deity. He also relies upon the Messianic Secret and the doctrines of Trinity and hypostatic union to rebut the Muslim argument that Jesus’s divinity is a post-biblical corruption.

Regarding the linchpins of Islam (Parts 9–10), Qureshi wades through idealization. Muslims respect Muhammad as Allah’s prophet whom the Bible foretells (e.g., Deut 18:18–19; John 16:12–14). Muslims revere the Quran as the Word of God. Literary quality, fulfilled prophecies, pre-scientific insights, mathematical patterns, and perfect preservation prove its excellence. As a result, Muhammad and the Quran have been unassailable.

Qureshi offers a more realistic assessment of Muhammad. He cites the Quran and *hadith* to depict the prophet as a good man with a low view of women and a penchant for violence. The Bible, properly interpreted, does not herald him. Qureshi concludes, “Perhaps he was a great seventh-century general and one who adhered to the cultural standards of his day, but he certainly was not the greatest moral exemplar of all time” (264).

Qureshi handles the Quran in a similar manner, circumventing its adulation with critical analysis. The book’s fulfilled prophecies, pre-scientific insights, and mathematical patterns do not pass objective tests (e.g., literary context, literal reading, independent verification). Its perfect preservation was coerced by Caliph Uthman; to establish an official edition, he had recalled all Quranic manuscripts and burned every variant. Concerning its beginnings, Qureshi cautions, “With an oral text that is being recited in portions, repeated in different ways, abrogated at times, and never publicly read in full from start to finish, it is difficult to determine what the exact contents are” (285).

No God but One would be a suitable textbook for a world religions class, but it has greater applicability. The book should be required reading for missionaries to Muslims. For all Christians, it will aid interfaith dialogue. Qureshi provides answers to questions that Muslims typically ask about Christianity. As a byproduct, Christian readers will understand their own faith better. Open-minded Muslim readers will also appreciate what Qureshi has written; consequently, it shall be a boon for evangelism. A glossary of Islamic terms and a pronunciation key would improve this excellent resource.

- Ivan Parke, Mississippi College, Clinton, Mississippi

***Old Testament Theology for Christians: From Ancient Context to Enduring Belief.* By John H. Walton. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017. 302 pages. Hardcover, \$30.00.**

John Walton’s penchant for producing challenging contributions to the field of Old Testament (OT) studies is well established in his scholarly level works such as *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* and popular level works like *The Lost World of Adam and Eve* and *The Lost World of Genesis One*. These more controversial monographs make up only a portion of Walton’s work, which includes monographs and articles spanning multiple subjects within the field of OT and ancient Near Eastern (ANE) studies. Walton’s recent work *Old Testament Theology for Christians* brings together much of his past work to offer readers a distinct way to think about the message of the OT and its role in Christian theology.

Walton structures his work by taking several theological topics pertinent to Christian theology and exploring how the OT develops each of these topics. Each chapter in the body of *Old Testament Theology for Christians* examines a pair of theological themes. Walton surveys the following topics: Yahweh and the gods, cosmos and humanity, covenant and kingdom, temple and Torah, sin and evil, and salvation and the afterlife. He brackets the body of his work with an introductory chapter, which lays out his methodology, and a concluding chapter, which contains a summary of his findings and their implications for a Christian theology.

Often works of biblical theology are most easily distinguished by the central theme the author identifies in the OT. Walton argues that the most prominent theological theme in the OT is the presence of YHWH, though he rejects the notion that such a theme is the theological center of the OT. Instead, he posits that this theme “spans the entire scope of Scripture and provides the glue that holds it all together” (7). While Walton’s identification of YHWH’s presence as a unifying theme of the OT is intriguing, the unique aspect of his OT theology is his methodology. Walton proposes that the “theology of the Old Testament cannot properly be understood without taking the ancient Near Eastern cognitive environment into account” (15). The consideration of the ANE context of the OT is the driving force to Walton’s theological method. He uses the contrast and comparison of between the OT and the broader ANE world to understand how the OT presents theological truth. The ANE world, therefore, acts as a control on a modern understanding of the theology of the OT. Walton explains this by using the metaphor of a cultural river that shapes the meaning of a passage. Rather than encouraging one to cross the cultural river, he insists, “Our interpretation of the authoritative message of Scripture must derive from the biblical text on the basis of its own cultural river” (77).

Walton’s understanding of how the OT can inform a biblical theology differs from many Christian biblical interpreters and theologians. Instead of understanding the OT as a text that foreshadows God’s future work in the new covenant, Walton understands the old and new covenants to be in discontinuity with one another regarding God’s salvific activity (53). The OT can, however, inform a Christian biblical theology by offering Christians the opportunity to “derive limited inside knowledge about the God whose purposes and plans are revealed” (282).

Because Walton sees the ANE context of the OT as essential to forming an OT theology, readers will find that he looks horizontally to ANE parallels to inform his theology of the OT more often than he looks ahead to the NT (New Testament). ANE literary references pepper *Old Testament Theology for Christians*. Walton interprets sacred space, not through Jesus’s NT references to the temple, but through the ANE concept of space as the center of order in the cosmos (145). The commands of the Torah are not put into dialogue with the Sermon on the Mount but instead with the role of covenants in the ANE (158–67). To understand sin in the OT, Walton argues that you must first jettison NT understandings of sin and instead understand the ANE way of thinking about ritual offenses (186–88).

Old Testament Theology for Christians is an engaging work of biblical theology. Works of biblical theology, particularly those from predominantly evangelical publishers, often contain a minimum of original content. Walton's contribution to the field of OT theology is unique in that it goes beyond arguing for a particular theme that unites the Bible. Rather than arguing for the primacy of a particular theme, Walton is arguing that the theological message of the OT is best found when Christians understand the OT through the lens of ANE culture. He is serious about understanding the OT in its ANE context and challenges readers to consider how this context affects biblical theology and not only biblical exegesis.

Walton's methodology overshadows his conclusions in *Old Testament Theology for Christians*. While his understanding of the prevalence of the presence of God in the OT is intriguing, the authority he gives to the ANE in his theological method is the most serious proposition he makes in his work. Evangelicals must consider the implications of Walton's methodology. For Walton, the ANE context becomes the theological key for understanding the OT. Consider his treatment of the OT theology of Satan and demons. Walton argues "the Bible does not step far enough away from its cognitive environment to give us any insight into the metaphysical reality" (219). Walton's assertion here bears tremendous implication for the sufficiency of the OT itself for doing OT theology. Walton's methodology implies that the task of biblical theology is dependent upon contrasting ANE literature. If theologians apply this model when doing biblical theology, then the inherent message of the OT is locked and requires ANE literature as an interpretive key.

Old Testament Theology for Christians is an important work of biblical theology because Walton's mastery of the ANE literature and willingness to apply this knowledge to the task of biblical theology creates a fresh approach in the field. Evangelicals must scrutinize the authority Walton places on the ANE texts. While all may agree that these texts are valuable—and overlooked—tools in the task of OT theology, the degree of authority Walton vests in these texts raises concern.

- Cory Barnes, *Shorter University, Rome, Georgia*

***Preaching by the Book.* By R. Scott Pace. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2018. 126 pages. Hardcover, \$19.99.**

R. Scott Pace is associate professor of preaching and pastoral ministry and associate director for the Center for Preaching and Pastoral Leadership at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) in Wake Forest, North Carolina. Previously, he served as the Reverend A. E. and Dora Johnson Hughes Chair of Christian Ministry at Oklahoma Baptist University (2009–2018). He earned a bachelor's degree from North Carolina State University (1997), the master of divinity degree from SEBTS (2002), and the doctor of philosophy (applied theology) from SEBTS (2007).

Pace's monograph is part of the Hobbs College Library series. The focus of the series is in the areas of Bible, theology, and ministry. Pace's book addressed each of those areas. His purpose for this book was to help preachers develop and deliver text-driven sermons, which are faithful to the Bible. A summary of the book will help to understand Pace's purpose and direction.

Pace divided the book into three main parts: The Foundation (chapters 1 and 2), The Framework (chapters 3 and 4), and The Finishing Touches (chapters 5–8). In the first chapter, the author reminded the readers of Phillips Brooks's definition of preaching as "truth through personality" (3), a definition which recognizes God's role and man's responsibility. Preaching is grounded in doctrinal convictions about God, Scripture, the church, the pastorate, and preaching. Theology of preaching should inform the praxis of preaching, and Pace argued the appropriate praxis of preaching should be textual preaching.

Pace introduced his seven-step process to interpret Scripture and prepare sermons in the second chapter. The first step is to begin with prayer (19). Prayer is a means of preparing our heart and relying upon God's help more than our own abilities. The second step is to read the biblical passage (21). To begin, the preacher should read the passage casually and try to avoid sermonizing the text; next, the preacher may read to determine the historical, literary, immediate, and biblical contexts.

The third chapter included Pace's third, fourth, and fifth steps to interpret Scripture and prepare sermons. The third step is to determine the point of the passage (33). The preacher should strive to understand the authorial intent of the passage, summarize it, and simplify it. The fourth step involves studying the parts (38). A study of the significant words and concepts will help identify the thrust and structure of the passage. The fifth step is to discern the precepts (42). He described this as identifying the theological truths, identifying the doctrinal truths, and identifying the spiritual truths. The author summarized his three-fold process of discerning the precepts, "If theological truths teach us who God is, and doctrinal truths reveal what God does, spiritual truths complete the statement, 'Therefore, we should. . .'" (45).

The author introduced step six, apply the principles, in the fourth chapter (50). Pace believed Scripture is not interpreted fully until it is applied. The preacher should derive the application of the sermon from the text. In other words, the application should have a connection with the central point of the passage. He also wrote that application must focus on truth, encourage our trust, and suggest steps to take. He expanded this idea with an overview of Ramesh Richard's application arenas of life.¹ The five application arenas are personal life, home life, work or study life, church life, and community. Pace acknowledged

¹Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 117.

that not every text will apply to all those five areas, but this is a helpful way for the preacher to establish practical steps for the hearers to take. The seventh step is to develop a plan (55). The preacher's plan should take into consideration contextual issues related to preaching, such as the age of the congregation, the setting of the preaching event, and any other special circumstances. Whether a preacher has many or few years of experience, the preacher should seek to develop and enhance his style of sermon construction. The outline of the sermon should be theologically grounded, textually structured, thematically designed, and thoughtfully arranged.

The last three chapters cover one formal element, one functional element, and the invitation of the sermon. The author addressed ways to improve introductions in chapter 5. The introduction should draw the listeners in and set the tone for the rest of the sermon. Chapter 6 is dedicated to illustrations. The author provided some principles to help deliver illustrations. He noted how illustrations could be used to apply biblical truth and grab the listeners' attention. Pace focused on the sermon's invitation in chapter 7. He argued that a preacher should prepare the invitation time much like a surgeon prepares for an operation. He concluded, though, "Our preparation must also acknowledge our complete inability to manufacture authentic decisions or produce spiritual formation" (98). The eighth chapter is a brief conclusion and a recapitulation of the seven steps the author presented in the book.

Pace's book does not present groundbreaking material about developing or delivering sermons. The author excelled in the writing of this book through his selection and presentation of the material. A book two or three times larger could have been written about the subject, but the author chose a succinct approach. Due to its brevity, this book may prove to be a valuable resource for the pastor who needs a homiletical primer to remind him of the joys and tasks of preparing and delivering sermons. The author presented his material in a way that will resonate with many pastors. Most of his principles follow the trusted homiletical style of alliteration. For instance, Pace presented his section on the invitation with phrases beginning with the letter I. Some people may recognize the elaborate alliteration through the book and believe it to be contrived. Others may notice the alliteration and appreciate the time and attention the author placed on the details of the book. Overall, the book is a worthy inclusion to the field of homiletics and may be a helpful resource for pastors.

- *Thomas Magers II, Holly Baptist Church, Corinth, Mississippi*

***Sanctification.* By Michael Allen. New Studies in Dogmatics. Edited by Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017. 286 pages. Paperback, \$34.99.**

Michael Allen currently serves as John Dyer Trimble Professor of Systematic Theology and academic dean at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. Allen (PhD, Wheaton College) is presently co-editing two book series with Scott Swain, New Studies

in Dogmatics (in which the present work is included) and T&T Clark's International Theological Commentary. He has published several other theological monographs, including *The Christ's Faith: A Dogmatic Account* (T&T Clark, 2009), *Justification and the Gospel: Understanding the Contexts and Controversies* (Baker Academic, 2013), and *Reformed Catholicity: The Promise of Retrieval for Theology and Biblical Interpretation* with Scott R. Swain (Baker Academic, 2015).

Sanctification joined the first two volumes in Zondervan's New Studies in Dogmatics series as an attempt to renew contemporary Christian theology by retrieving the insights of Christian tradition. Allen primarily drew from patristic and Reformed perspectives to build his remodeled doctrine of sanctification. Throughout the work, Allen was concerned to present sanctification, or holiness, in broad strokes with "a steady focus upon the holiness of God, that is, the holiness of the inner-triune life, so that its communication to creatures can be registered as truly gracious, that is, miraculous and free" (23). In doing so, Allen shifted the contemporary focus on sanctification as change in human individuals' moral condition to the holiness wrought by union with Christ. The author intentionally highlighted, however, that a christological approach to sanctification does not limit an individual's holiness to the work of Christ in the past. Instead, the ontological sanctification of the believer accomplished by Christ is exhibited in the continual moral sanctification of the believer in experience.

Allen began his exposition on sanctification with the following thesis: "*The gospel is the glorious news that the God who is himself holy freely shares that holiness in covenant with us and, when we refuse that holiness in sin, graciously gives us holiness yet again in Christ. While justification is the ground of this participation in God, sanctifying fellowship is the goal of the gospel*" (34, emphasis his). The terms of this thesis were then outlined in each of the next six chapters. God is holy (set apart, unique) by nature, but this holiness is in some sense communicable to humans because humans are capable of living according to God's moral order. The doctrines of creation *ex nihilo* and the image of God demonstrate humanity's ontological dependence on God, and thus that holiness is communicated *to* humans rather than produced *by* them (88).

Scripture and the Reformed tradition indicate that God has chosen to communicate holiness through covenant. First, the covenant of works displays God's intent to fellowship with humans. Second, the covenant of grace actually accomplishes that same intent, although humans violated the terms of the first covenant (179). The twofold obedience of Christ and the condescension of the incarnate Son provide humans with the fulfillment of covenant righteousness (128–29). The patristic doctrine of participation in God's divinity was reformed, "not rebuked or replaced," by the Reformation emphasis on union with Christ (157). When justified by the work of Christ, human nature is "graced" in such a way that an individual's nature is transfigured (225). The moral change that is developed by this change still maintains human responsibility and requires discipline and training.

Allen's monograph is a welcome corrective to the modern relegation of sanctification to moral growth. An emphasis on sanctification as both accomplished and begun by the work of Christ in an individual centers the doctrine in the gospel. Allen successfully presented his approach in biblical terms and gave massive support from both catholic and Reformed historical perspectives. The chapters on God and creation alone demonstrate the all-encompassing nature of the gospel of Christ and help to prepare readers to embrace the doctrine of divine participation presented in the second half of the book. Theologians will benefit from Allen's commitment to the interrelated nature of doctrine and his emphasis on God's gracious sanctification of believers. Holiness is not achieved by moral striving (so that legalism might win the day) but is graciously given in the work of Christ. Personal holiness, however, is also not unnecessary (so that antinomianism might win the day) because God has called human beings with the responsibility to fulfill the *telos*-oriented covenant of communion.

In *Sanctification*, Allen did well to emphasize human vocation in God's creation intentions and covenantal promises. By demonstrating that Scripture maintains an active purpose for humanity, Allen did not leave room for holiness to remain simply a benefit of salvation which is passively received by human individuals. By grounding human vocation in covenantal communion, Allen also introduced evangelical readers to a doctrine of divine participation which may have been downplayed in the past due to a western wariness of the doctrine of deification. Another benefit of Allen's focus on vocation is the realization that the new covenant intends to provide a positive effect beyond forgiveness. Allen pointed to the double grace of the new covenant as distinct promises of God, forgiveness of sin *and* purification for communion with God. A christologically-centered doctrine of sanctification drives theologians to classify salvation as more than the judicial rectification of fallen human beings; the gospel points to a renewed creation in which humans are changed in their nature so that they may properly fellowship with God.

Allen's work exhibited two omissions which hampered his constructive account. First, little was written about the local church's role in preaching or encouraging sanctification. While this application point may be deduced by readers who lead in the local church, the book itself did not take up issues of appropriate discipline in the visible body of believers. Surely, one way that personal holiness can be fostered in an individual so that she images Christ is for the church to help to fashion that individual in Christ's image. Likewise, the church's ability to image Christ in the world is directly impacted by the obedience of individual believers. Second, the monograph suffers from the avoidance of Pietist, Wesleyan, and Pentecostal voices. Allen is obviously committed to "Reformed catholicity" and should be celebrated for his contribution of retrieval theology. On the subject of sanctification, however, to stop short of including evangelical theologians who reasonably emphasized the subjective experience of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives is to ignore a major influence on most readers' conception of holiness. Surely Wesley and others could have been included as voices "from the wider catholic resources that depict the means and instruments by which that grace can be communicated" (45).

Pastors and theologians will benefit greatly from Allen's monograph on holiness. Exposure to Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, the Protestant Reformers, and the doctrine of participation will provide substantial terms of engagement when "thinking the holy" (Allen's phrase). *Sanctification* can be summarized and evaluated by Allen's repeated references to the transfiguration of Christ and believers (96, 136, 225). A holistic doctrine of sanctification is the transfiguration (not transubstantiation) of human nature whereby an individual remains definitively human but bears witness to a greater presence. "Personal union—the stuff of covenant and of communion—marks the sanctified life, and here we see that, adapting the words of the Psalmist, grace and nature meet, as the indwelling of God and the definitive shape of human nature kiss each other" (225).

- Thomas G. Doughty Jr., *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana*

***The Soul: How We Know It's Real and Why It Matters.* By J. P. Moreland. Chicago: Moody, 2014. 201 pages. Paperback, \$11.99.**

The topic of the soul is often ignored in contemporary science and psychology (which is ironic, since the word "psychology" is based on *psuche*, the Greek word for "soul"). Moreland provides in this volume a much-needed defense of the biblical view of the soul that is accessible for ministers and informed laypersons alike.

The first two chapters introduce key vocabulary terms related to the soul, words such as substance, property, knowledge, events, physicalism, and dualism. While some of the language is technical, Moreland defines these terms not only in the text itself but also in definitions of key vocabulary words at the end of each chapter. Also, he includes a glossary of terms at the end of the book. Also, Moreland explains why the findings of neuroscience are irrelevant to the discussion about the soul, namely because neuroscience deals with the *physical* world.

Moreland then surveys the words and key texts dealing with the soul in the Old and New Testaments. As part of this discussion, he also addresses the relation of the intermediate state to the discussion of the soul. Moreland favors the view that the soul is disembodied while it awaits the resurrection, citing supportive texts such as 2 Cor 5:1–10 and Phil 1:21–24. He allows the possibility of the "intermediate body view," in which a temporary body is provided until the full resurrection. However, Moreland gives four arguments against the intermediate body view. Unfortunately, space did not permit Moreland to deal more thoroughly with these texts. Moreland briefly attributes the scriptural accounts describing souls after death as symbolic language. However, this does not adequately explain the numerous accounts describing souls after death to be wearing robes, holding palm branches, singing, desiring water, reaching out with hands, etc. (Luke 16:19–31; Rev. 6:9–11; 20:4–6). The more serious issue is Jesus's own pre-ascended resurrected body, which bore the marks of the crucifixion, in which he ate food and spoke (John 20–21). Surely Moreland is not describing those events as being merely symbolic.

After dealing with the scriptural texts, Moreland addresses the more straightforward philosophical and anthropological issues dealing with the soul. This might be more challenging material for the non-specialist, but it is crucial in dealing with this issue. Moreland defends the reality of both consciousness and the soul and describes each of these concepts carefully. As he has done elsewhere, Moreland offers a convincing defense of the substance dualism view. In so doing, he brushes against what is known as the mind-body problem. Although space limitations did not allow the author to explore this issue in greater detail, it would have been a valuable addition to the book.

The volume concludes with Moreland's exploration of the future of the soul. He provides a convincing defense of the reality of hell, answering questions about how it is fair for people to go there who have not been presented with the gospel and addressing the view that those in hell experience annihilation rather than eternal punishment. Moreland also provides an encouraging presentation about the future life of the believer.

This book is a significant contribution to a crucial topic that is readable by ministers and laypersons. Many persons in the church have questions about these issues surrounding the topic of the soul. Laypersons are bombarded by the popular media and much of secular education with views that challenge the reality of the soul, so this volume addresses a great need. The soul is a crucial element of the biblical view of personhood, and contemporary Christians should be trained to defend this key belief. *The Soul* provides helpful arguments for this defense. Highly recommended.

- Steve W. Lemke, *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana*

***The Story of Scripture: An Introduction to Biblical Theology.* By Matthew Y. Emerson. Hobbs College Library. Edited by Heath A. Thomas. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017. 95 pages. Hardcover, \$19.99.**

Matthew Emerson (PhD, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary) serves as the Dickinson Associate Professor of Religion at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Emerson's academic contributions include *Between the Cross and the Throne: The Book of Revelation* (Lexham, 2016), and *Christ and the New Creation: A Canonical Approach to the Theology of the New Testament* (Wipf & Stock, 2013). Heath Thomas serves as Dean of the Hobbs College for Theology and Ministry, Associate Vice President for Church Relations, and Professor of Old Testament at Oklahoma Baptist University. Thomas's academic contributions involve numerous publications, including *Poetry & Theology in the Book of Lamentations: The Aesthetics of an Open Text* (Sheffield Phoenix, 2013) and *Faith Amid the Ruins: The Book of Habakkuk* (Lexham, 2016).

In a concise, eighty-seven pages of content, Emerson successfully summarizes the purpose and theme of the sixty-six books that compile the Old and New Testaments.

Beginning with a definition of biblical theology, Emerson states, “biblical theology exists to explain the unity and distinctions between the biblical books” (1–2). The development of this simple definition is crucial for the remaining pages of the book. The primary emphasis of the work is the evolution of biblical theology and the manner by which the entirety of Scripture is unified. Within the introduction, Emerson draws the reader’s attention to the progression of biblical doctrine through the work of Johannes Gabler, Geerhardus Vos, and Irenaeus. Through a survey of the differing theologians, Emerson establishes commonality in the approaches given their pursuit of unity as “grounded in what the Bible is. It is the Spirit-inspired, Son-centered, Father-revealing Word of God” (9). The unity of Scripture, in which it promotes one ongoing story, is demonstrated in its typology, intertextuality, and theme of covenant. In summation of the introductory chapter regarding biblical theology, Emerson writes, “Whatever metaphor we use, the point is the same: the whole Bible is one book inspired by one author with one story that culminates in one person, the God-man Jesus Christ. Biblical theology is the attempt to read the Bible in this structurally and conceptually unified fashion” (16–17).

Emerson divides the story of the Bible into three parts. Parts one and two follow the storyline of the Old Testament. The overarching theme throughout Emerson’s understanding of the biblical narrative is one of redemption. As quickly as humanity falls into sin, the promise of redemption follows. In humanity’s rebellion, God could have destroyed Adam and Eve with the rest of his creation. However, “because the Lord is merciful, kind, and gracious, he gives Adam and Eve hope in the midst of administering punishments for their sin” (26). The remaining pages of sections one and two encompass the nature of redemption as displayed through God’s people beginning with Adam’s descendants, Abraham, and David. Emerson’s emphasis is drawing the reader’s attention to the cohesion of the promised Messiah through events, prophecies, and typological figures.

Upon establishing the Old Testament theme of redemption as promised through the Messiah to come, part three of Emerson’s biblical storyline shifts to the New Testament, where redemption is accomplished. Establishing Jesus as God incarnate, Emerson accentuates the perfect obedience of Christ fully displayed in the crucifixion. Having established the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, Emerson demonstrates that the application of Christ’s work in humanity has been restored to “the four tasks and purposes God gave them in the garden: ruling and dwelling, obeying, cultivating, and multiplying” (57). The attention given to the application of redemption toward the people of God takes place in the already and not yet. While accomplishing their God-given tasks and purposes during their lives on earth, the ultimate hope of God’s people is in the consummation of the coming kingdom, the new heaven and new earth that will be established in accordance with Rev 21. Where Adam and Eve rebelled in the original Eden, the storyline of the entirety of Scripture is leading to the new heaven and new earth in which “God restores what Adam and Eve lost in the garden” through the work of Christ (68).

Emerson concludes the work with two final chapters. First, he maps a structure of biblical theology surrounding the ideas of covenant and kingdom. He highlights the Old Testament covenants made between God and his people, ranging from his covenant to redeem through the seed of Eve as well as the covenants with Noah, Abraham, and David. The Old Testament covenants were then fulfilled in the new covenant ushered in through the person and work of Jesus. For Emerson, “Covenants, thus, form the backbone of the biblical material” (70). Second, Emerson closes the book with application. He examines how biblical theology might be applied in preaching, teaching, pastoral counseling, and Christian living. Emerson’s underlying purpose for the work is seen in this chapter. His desire is not only for the reader to gain knowledge regarding biblical theology for the purpose of knowing, but to be better equipped with biblical knowledge that manifests itself in Christian practice.

Matthew Emerson has manufactured a concise, clear, and constructive resource for both the practitioner and the academician. A strength of the work is Emerson’s ability to capture the grand narrative of Scripture, from the creation to the second coming, with clarity and brevity, for anyone seeking further understanding of the Bible. Because of the simplicity of the work, the possibilities are endless when establishing a target audience. From teenagers, adults, Bible studies, small groups, pastors, and teachers, Emerson’s work can be utilized in extending one’s knowledge of the whole of Scripture.

- Andy Baker, *First Baptist Church Oloh, Sumrall, Mississippi*

***A Student’s Vocabulary for Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic: Frequency Lists with Definitions, Pronunciation Guide, and Index.* By Larry A. Mitchel. Updated by Nancy Erickson. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017. 125 pages. Paperback, \$16.99.**

As Nancy Erickson states within the publisher’s preface, Larry Mitchel’s *A Student’s Vocabulary for Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic* “has been a standard and accessible resource for Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic language acquisition for the past few decades” (13). As such, Zondervan Academic has produced an updated version of Mitchel’s work that only increases the work’s accessibility. This is done in several ways.

First, the work has been completely restyled. Instead of following the old method for phonetic spelling of Hebrew/Aramaic words, the work now follows the *SBL Handbook of Style*. Where lexical entries had little space between them in the original, the new edition has provided them with adequate space. The font used in the updated version is more appealing than before, which aids readability.

Second, certain sections of the work have been changed. The selected bibliography has been updated as to remain relevant to modern students. Works which are currently outdated—such as Karl Feyerabend’s *Langenscheidt’s Pocket Hebrew Dictionary* (1961)—have been removed from the bibliography, while more modern works—such as David J.

Pleins's *Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary by Conceptual Categories* (2017)—have been added. Also, numerous abbreviations have been added, such as the abbreviation for *pual* (Pu). There is also some clarification to Mitchel's discussion of the *furtive patach*. Whereas Mitchel originally stated that some Hebrew words ending in guttural letters sometimes contain a *furtive patach*, the new edition clarifies that this takes place only after certain gutturals, *het* (ח) and *ayin* (ע).

Still, this revision does have a few shortcomings. Mitchel's original discussion of the half-open syllabus is skipped entirely. While numerous reasons might be given for this omission, it is an omission all the same. Also, there are at least two places (see 28 and 32) where the lexical forms are only partially pointed. In light of the necessity to retype Mitchel's original work for this revision, these two instances of partial pointing are somewhat negligible.

Overall, this revised version is a refreshing sight for those who have utilized the older version. Even so, given the plethora of modern methods for studying biblical Hebrew—software tools, videos, phone applications—one must question whether this revision was necessary. While time will reveal the answer to this question, an argument can be made for the influence of tradition on modern generations. Many pastors and professors might experience flashbacks as they see modern students utilizing the same book they were given when they first began to learn biblical Hebrew.

-Ron Lindo, *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana*

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