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The Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

The Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry is a research institute of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. The seminary is located at 3939 Gentilly Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70126.

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

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Editorial Introduction

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Continuing the centennial celebration of volume 22 of the *Journal for Baptist Theology & Ministry*, this issue contains several highlights of twentieth century Baptist heritage. Specifically, the Cooperative Program provides a lens for continuing focus on doctrinal and missional cooperation. Recent annual meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention have centered on theological and practical concerns regarding local church leadership, financial transparency, and central representation amidst ethical grievances. With swirling winds of innovation, uncertainty, and economic sluggishness, the Convention's entities have seen further development of targeted giving. All these variables demonstrate the need for fresh considerations of why and how Baptists have prioritized cooperation in the past.

In the Fall 2025 issue of *JBTM*, we give special attention to practical, theological, and biographical examples of Baptist unity. First, Chris Shaffer unpacks the beginnings of the cooperative strategy of funding Southern Baptist enterprises such as missions and theological education. As an endeavor of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, *JBTM* is grateful for the historic commitment of Southern Baptist churches and families to preparing servants for kingdom work. Second, we are pleased to reproduce an essay originally published in *The Bulletin of the Baptist Bible Institute*, written by the first president of BBI, now NOBTS. Byron DeMent's article on the nature and implications of biblical inspiration is headed with an introduction by the ninth and current president of NOBTS, Jamie Dew. Dew highlights the context of DeMent's commentary on the Bible as the Word of God when questions were raised about faculty commitment on the truth of Scripture.

More articles support the success and challenge of continued cooperation through historical Baptist examples and doctrines.

Third, Landon Adams sketches a biographical background of William Ward, a key partner of William Carey in the Serampore mission. Before entering the mission field, Ward used his professional aptitude as a newspaper editor and his connections with Baptist colleagues in the fight for the abolition of slavery. Fourth, Shebuel Varghese furthers theological support for the practice of believer's baptism through devotional examples. Specifically, the exhortations to remember and reason through one's baptism can only be satisfactorily carried out by a Christian who assented to their baptism in the visible portrait of the gospel they had already embraced. Fifth, Jesse Nelson analyzes features of Martin Luther King Jr.'s preaching which can revitalize contemporary preachers sensitive to the Holy Spirit's work in their churches. Nelson connects history, theology, and rhetoric to offer constructive advice to ministers today.

A final segment of articles by rising scholars in Baptist life provides miscellaneous biblical, theological, and practical resources. Sixth, Cory Barnes and DeeDee Williams interpret the pseudepigraphal Book of *Jubilees* in its rewriting of the Genesis 1 creation narrative. With insight into the Jewish reading of Moses, pastors and Bible students today can decipher major theological assertions of creation and Sabbath in context. Seventh, Andrew Jennings connects several biblical commands and themes to argue for the importance of critical thinking in the Christian life. Drawing together wisdom and the tree of life, Jennings offers the imperative of critical thinking for the formation and practice of a biblical worldview. Eighth, Fabio Castellanos's article from the Spring 2025 issue of *JBTM* is reproduced in Spanish. Again, Castellanos beings his experience in Hispanic church leadership and theological education to bear on recommendations for continual discipleship.

JBTM is grateful for increasing support from book reviewers in a number of fields. In this issue, an unprecedented collection of theological, biblical, historical, and practical works are summarized with recommendations. Anticipating continual development in apologetics, missiology, and Christian leadership, our reviewers have provided even more attention to books on these topics. May the Lord bless the offering of these articles and reviews for the blessing and equipping of our readership.

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The Centennial Anniversary of the Cooperative Program

Chris Shaffer, PhD

Chris Shaffer serves as Chief of Staff and Assistant Professor of Theology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention was a stroke of genius when it was formulated and approved one hundred years ago. "The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' unified plan of giving through which cooperating Southern Baptist churches give a percentage of their undesignated receipts in support of their respective state convention and the Southern Baptist Convention missions and ministries."[1] Stated another way, the Cooperative Program is the mechanism through which the cooperating churches of the SBC support the missionaries serving on the mission field, support church planters, train men and women for the ministry that have been called to serve, care for collegiate students through Baptist Collegiate Ministries, support the work of local churches, and a multitude of other ministry opportunities.

The CP is the way Southern Baptists have determined to work together to support the work of proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel to a world in desperate need of the salvation offered through Jesus Christ. A portion of your tithes and offerings to your local church is forwarded to the local association and the state convention. Then your state convention sends a percentage, determined by the messengers at the state convention, to the Southern Baptist Convention to support the work of missions and ministries.

The CP is also one marker by which a local church is determined to be in friendly cooperation with a local Baptist association, a state Baptist convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. The amount of Great Commission giving, including Cooperative Program giving by a church, determines the number of mes-

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1 https://www.sbc.net/missions/the-cooperative-program/about-the-cooperative-program/.

sengers, or voting representatives, your church can send to meetings of the convention of your state and the SBC. These messengers determine, among a host of other business items, the percentage of Cooperative Program dollars sent to the SBC by the state convention or the amount of funds that will be received by the various entities of the SBC each year. At the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas, Texas June 10-11, 2025, messengers approved a CP allocation budget of $190 million. Cooperative Program giving to the national SBC is no small amount.

With such a large funding source (that does not include giving to the local church, associations, state conventions, or other giving to Great Commission causes within the SBC), why did the messengers determine this sort of funding source was necessary? Today, SBC-affiliated churches give billions of dollars in order to fulfill the Great Commission.[2]

Way back in 1925, and in the years preceding, the churches of the SBC were not giving in a unified manner except to the missions offerings.[3] At the beginning of the SBC in 1845, and continuing for decades afterwards, the work of the SBC was funded through societal giving. Agents from the various entities of the SBC, primarily the Foreign Mission Board and the Home Mission Board, would visit churches or associations and request that they support the work of that particular board in order to accomplish the task of Home or Foreign missions (or some other worthy cause).

This societal form of giving meant that on any given Sunday an agent from the FMB would be speaking in a church and asking the men and women of that congregation to give to the cause of taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The next Sunday an agent from the HMB might advocate for financial support to ensure that the work of sharing the Gospel here in North America was undertaken. The next Sunday an agent from another organization within Baptist life might be speaking in the same church asking for finan-

[2] https://www.sbc.net/about/what-we-do/fast-facts/.

[3] The Christmas Offering through the Women's Missionary Union to support the Foreign Mission Board began in 1888 and was named for Lottie Moon in 1918.The Easter Offering through the Women's Missionary Union to support the Home Mission Board began in 1895 and was named for Annie Armstrong in 1934.

cial support for another worthy cause to be supported by the men and women of that local church.

In 1917, Byron DeMent, then president of Baptist Bible Institute, lamented the necessity of agent work as he traveled constantly to secure funding for the newly established institution. In a letter to I.J. Van Ness, then president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, he noted, "We launched a campaign here last Sunday to secure $20,000.00 for the Institute plant. . . . Since Coming to New Orleans I spoke in every Baptist church from two to half a dozen times. Last Sunday I spoke in all six of our Churches. I took in two at the Sunday School hour, two at 11:00 am., and two at the night hour."[4]

This system was inefficient and exhausting for the churches and the agents visiting them.

> The system was laden with problems. In an exhausting rat race, agents hopscotched the Southland thwarting both internal forces including agents from other denominational boards, state Baptist conventions, sundry benevolent programs, and external factors of unpredictable weather, unpredictable roads, and varies modes of transportation. Agents who reached a church first and gave the most captivating, heartwarming appeal often reaped the highest offerings. The agency method was so disruptive, 'confusing' and 'overwhelming' for one early twentieth-century pastor he admitted that if he had allowed every agent who appealed to his church time to speak to his congregation, 'he could have occupied his pulpit only twice in the last year.'[5]

This method of raising support simply could not continue with any sort of efficiency. For Southern Baptists the intent was to ensure that the cause of Christ was sent forth to all the world. However, agents speaking in your church Sunday after Sunday was impossible to sustain.

In 1919, Southern Baptists recognized the need for a reimagining of the missions funding strategy. The convention president at the time J.B. Gambrell advocated for a change in the way South-

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[4] B.H. DeMent, Correspondence to I. J. Van Ness, December 4, 1917, Isaac Jacobus Van Ness Papers, SBHLA, Nashville, TN. Referenced by Taffey Hall in *A Unity of Purpose*, ed. by Tony Wolfe & W. Madison Grace II (Brentwood, TN: B&H Publishing, 2025), 81–82.

[5] Taffey Hall in *A Unity of Purpose*, 82.

ern Baptists support our missions and educational work urging the messengers "to adopt a program of work commensurate with reasonable demands upon us."[6] The messengers answered this call and approved by unanimous vote the creation of the $75 Million Campaign, calling on the churches of the Convention to ask their members to sign pledge cards and contribute toward the goal over five years. L.R. Scarborough, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, was appointed as executive-director to lead the charge.

Due to a variety of challenges, economic downturns, and controversies, the goal was not met. The convention had made funding commitments to the various entities based on the number of pledges, over $92 million. While the goal of the $75 million Campaign was not met, with roughly only $54 million received, the benefit of the campaign was a recognition that the churches of the Convention would support—in significant ways—the work of the Convention entities. The Convention revisited an organized funding mechanism at the 1925 annual meeting.

The messengers at the 1925 annual meeting approved the Cooperative Program at the Memphis Convention. M.E. Dodd, pastor of First Baptist Shreveport, Louisiana led the Committee on Future Program which proposed the Cooperative Program. The messengers approved this funding mechanism to provide a unified and structured funding source to support the work of the convention missions boards, seminaries, and other entities.

Since 1925, Southern Baptists have given $21,359,948,713.[7] That is over twenty-one billion dollars facilitated through the Cooperative Program.

The CP has helped to sustain the work of Southern Baptist around the world for a hundred years. The genius of the CP is that individual Southern Baptist churches are able to pool their resources and do more together than they could do separately. The normative church in the SBC has consistently been fewer than 100 members. A church of that size, while profoundly impactful, is not able to sustain the support necessary for hundreds of missionaries to serve on the international mission field. However, hun-

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[6] Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1919, 22–23.

[7] https://www.sbc.net/missions/the-cooperative-program/reports/contributions-by-state-conventions/.

dreds of normative size Southern Baptist churches cooperative together and pooling their resources together can send the largest missiological force in the world into the furthest reaches of the planet to proclaim the Good News.

Through the years, we have added more national entities—including seminaries—who now receive slices of the CP pie. However, the strategy has remained the same, individuals give to their local church. The local church gives to the associations and the state conventions, and the state conventions forward a percentage to the national CP in order to support the work of the entities of the SBC who have been tasked by the churches to fulfill the ministry assignments given to them by the messengers. (This is a profound oversimplification but is a straightforward explanation of how to follow a dollar from the offering plate to the mission field or the seminary classroom.)

The Cooperative Program is a strategic partnership opportunity for churches of every size to support seminary education for the men they hope to call as pastor, the women who are called to various ministry positions in the church, and missionaries serving around the world.

Nearly every church affiliated with the SBC has a student heading off to college at some point. The tithes and offerings that are forwarded through the Cooperative Program support the work of Baptist Collegiate Ministry leaders on thousands of campuses across the country. Those BCM and Baptist Student Union leaders, work to provide a support system and a connecting point for other Christ followers so that college student remains connected and growing in their faith during the college years.

Every church seeks to have a pastor that is well-prepared and well-trained for leading that church. The six seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention are among the largest and healthiest theological institutions across the globe. The seminaries of the train thousands of students every year for pastoring, service in local churches in a variety of ministry positions, chaplains for the military and hospitals, church planters, and missionaries on the international mission field. The theological institutions supported through Cooperative Program dollars are financially stable because of the CP, but they are also tethered to the SBC theologically. The six seminaries are committed to teaching in accordance with the text of Scripture and in keeping with the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, as amended. Financially stable, theologically commit-

ted, and producing hundreds of graduates ready for ministry each year are the markers of the six SBC seminaries because of the support of Southern Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

No one church could fund all of these ministries on their own, and certainly not to the scale of the SBC. This is what makes the Cooperative Program so important. The collective work of Southern Baptists through the Cooperative Program makes all of this ministry possible. Every ministry and entity are supported by men and women who faithfully give in their local church each week. That dollar makes its way to the entities of the SBC to support the work that has been assigned to each one by the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Cooperative Program has a direct impact on New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary every week. Each Tuesday funds that have been distributed through the Cooperative Program funding formula arrive at NOBTS. This deposit represents the NOBTS portion of the funds that have made their way from the offering plate into the daily expenses of providing theological education to NOBTS students. The average daily cost of fulfilling our ministry assignment at NOBTS is $68,000. NOBTS receives the CP funds and immediately applies them to the work we do every day of providing theological education to the men and women the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention send to us.

The data collected by the Executive Committee of the SBC shows that the Cooperative Program seems to have peaked in 2007–2008 at just over $540 million. According to the most recent data, the 2023–2024 total is just over $446 million. This is a decline of roughly $95 million in sixteen years.[8]

There likely are many reasons for this decline, denominational controversy and disagreement, economic concerns, decline in membership. Whatever the reason might be, it is necessary for the churches of the SBC to continue to support the Cooperative Program. (This might sound self-serving for someone employed by an entity supported by the CP.)

My intent for advocating for the continued support, health, and growth of the CP is not because of my employment at a CP entity. Rather, it is because I believe in the work we do together as Southern Baptists. Through the Cooperative Program thousands

[8] https://www.sbc.net/missions/the-cooperative-program/reports/contributions-by-state-conventions/.

of missionaries are currently proclaiming the Good News in the furthest reaches of the world, church planters are working to establish plants in hard to reach neighborhoods in the United States, men and women are currently receiving conservative theological education at a rate that does not drive them into impossible debt. We are able to do this because Southern Baptist church members give sacrificial each week to join in this one sacred effort to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel. Millions of Southern Baptists support this work.[9]

I owe a debt of gratitude to Southern Baptists who give sacrificially each week. I have been trained in an SBC seminary. I serve an SBC entity. I partner with SBC missionaries. I have been served by SBC disaster relief teams. I am a product and a recipient of the Cooperative Program. I am grateful.

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[9] For an excellent history in the funding efforts preceding, the development and launch, and this history of the Cooperative Program, see *A Unity of Purpose*. A number of Southern Baptist leaders contributed articles to the volume and have provided a valuable resource to Southern Baptists on the history of our cooperative efforts.

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Byron H. DeMent and the Baptist Bible Institute on the Word of God

James K. Dew, PhD, PhD, and Chris Shaffer, PhD

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In 1917, at their annual meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, Southern Baptists created a yet to be named theological institution—the first one created by direct action of the Southern Baptist Convention. Upon creation, the first Board of Directors set about finding a president to lead the charge, and they quickly determined that Byron, Hoover DeMent, then pastor of First Baptist Church of Greenwood, South Carolina was the best choice. Previously, DeMent had served on the theological faculty of Baylor University and as a member of the faculty at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. DeMent had also faithfully served as a pastor of several churches including Twenty-Second and Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville in Kentucky and the First Baptist Church of Waco in Texas. The Board of Directors unanimously agreed that this pastor and academician was the right man for the job as president of the fledgling institution.

DeMent was elected President of the Baptist Bible Institute (BBI) in the summer of 1917, officially beginning his position on October 1, 1917. He capably led the new institution, setting her on a path for health and longevity that continues 108 years later. Among many of his contributions to the institution, one of the most important was his commitment to sound doctrine.

From her founding, the institution has been centered on the study of God's Word and the preparation of men and women for the work that God has called them to do wherever He might lead. At the 1918 Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. DeMent and the BBI Board of Directors submitted a report that noted the "institution shall center around the study of the Bible as the Word of God . . . to secure training for service by training through service . . . [and] to strive to inspire [students] with a passion for souls and a willingness to yield themselves in sacrificial service to

Jesus Christ as Lord in the evangelization and upbuilding of the world of today."[1]

In April 1918, a committee of the Board of Directors was appointed to compose a statement of principles for the new institution. The resulting document, *The Articles of Religious Belief*, was approved by the trustees in May 1918 and has been the accepted statement of faith for the school since that time. Every person elected to the faculty of the institution has signed this document and committed to teach according the principles found therein. With the adoption of the *Baptist Faith and Message* at the 1925 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, every faculty member since then has signed their commitment to teach according to both of these adopted statements of faith.

Southern Baptist life and the faculty of Baptist Bible Institute have not been without their theological differences. While committed to teaching in accordance with the adopted statements of faith, the early faculty included two giants who were on opposite sides of the Whitsitt Controversy prior to the founding of BBI.[2] The first business manager and Professor of Biblical Synthesis, Dr. James E. Gwatkin was an ardent support of the Whitsitt perspective. He served as the business manager and an editor for *The Baptist Argus*, a newspaper founded as a counterweight to *The Western Recorder* which published articles critiquing the Whitsitt perspective. One of the most committed opponents of Whitsitt writing for *The Western Recorder* was John T. Christian, elected to the BBI faculty in 1919 as Professor of Church History.

DeMent brought these two men from opposite sides of one of the major Baptist theological disagreements onto the faculty of BBI where they served amicably and in real friendship. When asked about their service together, Dr. Gwatkin replied in laughter that he and Dr. Christian had shared many laughs together about their opposition. However, "no one who was in the heat of the Whitsitt Controversy could have believed that either Christian or

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[1] Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1919, 39.

[2] The Whitsitt Controversy was a theological debate that raged in Baptist life in the 1890s. The controversy centered on the writing of William H. Whitsitt, professor and president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. To over-simplify, Whitsitt suggested that the practice of baptism by immersion was reinstituted in England of the 1640s. This contradicted the Landmarkist perspective that the Baptist church dated back to the apostolic age in an unbroken succession.

Gwatkin would ever laugh again. It was a spiritual victory for Dr. DeMent when he brought these two men into fellowship and harmony in the launching of this new Seminary."[3]

With the adoption of the *Baptist Faith and Message* in 1925 the Convention clearly stated their theological position on various issues, partly in response to evolution and modernism that was perceived in the schools and churches of the convention. In 1926, the Convention adopted a statement on evolution insisting that "this Convention accepts Genesis as teaching that man was the special creation of God and rejects every theory, evolution or other, which teaches that man originated, or came by way of, a lower animal ancestry."[4] President DeMent announced in September of 1926 that "each faculty member had signed a personal statement affirming without mental reservation the resolution of the Convention."[5]

This era is replete with examples of broad controversies over Darwinism (the Scopes trail took place in 1925) across the modernist-fundamentalist controversies in various denominations (the argument can be made that the 1925 *Baptist Faith and Message* is a result of these controversies).

A few years later, another more localized controversy would occur among the early faculty of BBI. One of the first students to matriculate at BBI and then go on to earn the first Doctor of Theology from BBI was James Dean from Alabama. Upon his ThD graduation in 1924, Dr. Dean was added to the faculty as Assistant Professor of Old Testament and shortly thereafter became director of the Correspondence Department overseeing the distance education of the institution.[6]

In 1928, W. W. Hamilton assumed the presidency due to the resignation of President DeMent. Dr. DeMent announced his intent to resign in December 1927 due to poor health. He offered to the trustees that he would be glad to continue as professor of New Testament after a period of recovery. Dr. DeMent continued to serve in this capacity until his death in March 1933.

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[3] Park H. Anderson, *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary – A Brief History* (New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary: 1949), 17–18.

[4] Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1926, 18.

[5] Claude Howe, *Seventy-Five Years of Providence and Prayer (*New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary: 1993), 47.

[6] William A. Mueller, *The School of Providence and Prayer* (New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary: 1969), 42.

In 1929, Dean was promoted to Associate Professor and given a month sabbatical in order to complete his PhD studies at the University of Chicago. The following year, Dr. Hamilton began to receive reports from various students about Dean's theological views.[7] Additionally, a letter had been written to various "liberal elements in the North" expressing Dean's theological perspectives.[8] Dr. Hamilton and others warned Professor Dean that if the sentiments expressed in the letter indicated his personal beliefs then his position at the seminary may be untenable.

Dean appeared, at his request, before the trustee board to make a statement regarding his beliefs. From this meeting, it became clear that Dean's beliefs on various matters, particularly the inspiration of Scripture was not in keeping with the beliefs of the institution or Southern Baptists more broadly. The resolution adopted by the trustees indicated that Dean's views "were at variance with the views of Southern Baptists as interpreted by the Board of Trustees of Baptist Bible Institute . . . [and] that his teaching in matter and methods tends to unsettle the minds of students and to bring them to unwholesome conclusions."[9]

The trustees determined that Dean's service to BBI should cease immediately. Dean was removed from the classroom and his administrative responsibilities. However, his contract was paid through the end of the academic year expiring at the end of June 1931.

Hamilton reported to the messengers at the 1931 annual meeting in Birmingham, Alabama that the trustees had released Professor Dean at the January meeting. He compared the matter of Dean's dismissal to that of Crawford Toy at Southern Seminary in 1879. That dismissal was for Toy's views on the supernatural in the Bible that ran contrary to the *Abstract of Principles* and the broader perspectives of Southern Baptists.

Dean's dismissal was a significant event in the life of BBI. A gifted and respected faculty member had been dismissed by the Board of Trustees due to his teachings and beliefs being contrary to the beliefs of the institution and Southern Baptists. To offer reassurance to the faculty, students, and SBC at large the institu-

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[7] Howe, 57.

[8] W.W. Hamilton, *The Story of Child of Providence and Prayer,* Unpublished manuscript in the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary library.

[9] Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Baptist Bible Institute, January 1931.

tion turned to one of the most respected of family members to calm the mood and address any concerns that some might have about the doctrinal fidelity of Baptist Bible Institute.[10]

The article before you, "The Inspiration of the Bible" was written by Dr. DeMent and published in the October 1931 *Bulletin of The Baptist Bible Institute*. "The Inspiration of the Bible" by Dr. DeMent communicates a clearly conservative perspective on inspiration, inerrancy, and the authority of Scripture. The arguments you will find in this article, with small adjustments to language and terms we use today, are a clear expression of the beliefs currently held by Southern Baptists to this day.

What you find in this article by our first president is a foreshadowing of issues that would be addressed in the *Chicago Statement on Inerrancy* and the Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention.

As president of this institution in 2025, I am encouraged and grateful that for the past 100 years we have been an institution that was founded by men and women that held Scripture so dearly. They ensured and we remain an institution committed to the infallibility, inerrancy, and authority of God's Word.

No seminary leader should ever crave to wade into the fray of theological discord that necessitates the dismissal of a professor. However, every seminary leader should be ready to address inaccurate and wrong teachings and to take the necessary actions to protect the students of the institution. I am grateful for the men who led our institution to address theological controversies in the 1930s and in the decades following.

DeMent's "The Inspiration of the Bible" is a reminder that we must all continue to remain vigilant and committed to God's Word. As the president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, I am encouraged by Dr. DeMent nearly 100 years ago reminding us of the beauty and glory of Scripture and the faith we can place in God's Word.

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[10] We do not have an official statement or records indicating that President Hamilton or the Board of Trustees asked Dr. DeMent to address the broader issues that had been of concern in Professor Dean's teaching. However, we do know that Dr. DeMent was firmly committed to a conservative perspective on the inspiration of Scripture. The appearance of this article in October 1931 after the dismissal of Dean in January 1931 had been announced at the annual meeting in June 1931 and his teaching contract had expired at the end of June is not coincidental.

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The Inspiration of the Bible

Byron H. DeMent, ThD, DD, LLD

Byron Hoover DeMent served as the first president of the Baptist Bible Institute, now New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, from 1917 to 1928.

THE Inspiration of the Bible is a subject of vital and perennial importance. Misconception as to the true inspiration of the word of God inevitably leads to a depreciation of God himself and of the value and authority of his revelation to man. What we understand by inspiration according to the Bible is the purpose of this thesis to expound.[1]

I. The Meaning of Inspiration

It has been asserted that no absolutely logical definition of inspiration is possible, due to the fact that inspiration involves God, a writer and a scripture, and we cannot define God. Attempts at a definition are therefore mere descriptions, but in these descriptions the mind is drawn away from erroneous portrayals and centered upon certain groups of facts and arguments. Of course, man being finite cannot comprehend absolutely the infinite, nor can he fully explain and define the highest expression in human language of the character and will of God. Whereas a perfect definition of inspiration may not be attained by imperfect man, still an adequate conception of the Bible as the word of God may be presented and authenticated. Inspiration should be distinguished from certain activities with which it may be readily confused.

1. Inspiration is not a synonym of revelation. Revelation is an unveiling or lifting of the curtain from certain spheres or segments of truth before concealed from the eye of man, while inspiration is a divine urge to communicate the truth to man. Revelation is rather the in-flow of truth and inspiration the authoritative out-flow.

2. Inspiration is not identical with spiritual illumination. All believers, in the language of Paul, are to have the eyes of their heart enlightened, but all Christians are not inspired to write a portion

[1] This essay was originally published in *The Bulletin of the Baptist Bible Institute* 8, no. 4 (1931): 3–14.

of God's revealed will. This is not their prerogative to-day, nor was it their privilege and duty in the apostolic age. To-day believers are enlightened but not inspired, while Biblical writers were both enlightened and inspired.

3. Nor is inspiration the same as religious intuition. Human genius was not a necessary qualification for writing a booklet providentially incorporated into the Biblical library. Men of God rather than men of genius wrote the Bible, yet some of the authors possessed the highest talent, as Moses, David, Isaiah and Paul, but never did they claim acceptance of their messages on the ground of their own inherent or acquired greatness. The Bible was not written by men naturally gifted in the sphere of religion, as men are by nature endowed with a talent for music, art and poetry. Yet God used men with a variety of talents, ranging from the fisherman by the lake to the king on his throne.

4. Inspiration means the direct influence of God upon the thoughts and language of men which enabled them to speak and write without error what God wished to communicate to this world as his revealed will to man. Inspiration, therefore, has produced a library which is its own best interpreter. It is natural to argue a priori, or from intuition, what kind of a book God would write in case he chose to become an author. The final test, however, as to the meaning of inspiration must be determined finally by the kind of book God has actually produced. It is but reasonable however to infer that if God should see fit to reveal to mean truths not naturally attainable, he would—being perfect—plan to have such revelations recorded and perpetuated as his infallible declaration and manifestation of his guiding hand and unfolding providence. The inspiration of the Bible primarily applies to the original words and writings as they came forth from the mouth and hand of the inspired writers. We do not assert the infallibility of translations, traditional insertions, or division of the Bible into chapters and verses, but we do mean that if we had the books of the Bible in the very language in which they were written, they would be absolutely free from any error whatsoever. The enemy of the complete inspiration of the scriptures will reject this position as being deductive rather than inductive, as being inferred from what we think ought to be the scriptures rather than deduced from the scriptures themselves. But it is interesting to note that such opponents of inspiration are fond of a priori arguments in their own behalf. They infer that since to err is human, and the

writers of the Bible were human beings, therefore we cannot expect an infallible product. Human language has its limitations, and the age in which the Bible was produced had its peculiar ideas of God and man, therefore we cannot, they say, rationally expect a faultless revelation with final authority in even matters of creed and conduct. Thus they determine in advance the kind of revelation, if indeed it be a revelation from their point of view, the Bible must contain.

II. The Method of Inspiration

It might be well to consider some of the theories as to the method of inspiration, though from its very nature it is as mysterious as spiritual regeneration or as the action of God on the souls of men or of mind on mind. We may note these theories on the basis of the varying effects that the Spirit of God or other influence had on the individual and on the quality of his writing.

1. Some hold that there is in inspiration a complete suppression of the personality of the author. This is known as the mechanical theory of inspiration. It reduces man to a machine. The inspired writers, therefore, become pens rather than penmen, and unconscious instruments rather than throbbing personalities. But man is more than a statue, more than a mechanical contrivance; even when he does exactly what God wants him to do, he is still a human being and not an automation. Man is no more a passive, inert, irresponsive machine in inspiration than he is in salvation. There is nothing materialistic and coercive in either inspiration or regeneration. In inspiration God does not violate the freedom of the will, but he has the power so to influence men that they willingly and gladly obey the holy urge of his Spirit.

2. Some contend that inspiration is effected by universal Christian illumination. This would guarantee only a literature rising no higher than the individual believer would ascend in the normal development of his spiritual life. This theory eliminates the supernatural influence of the Spirit of God upon the mind of man in the production of the Bible. If this were all that the inspiration of the Bible really means, we would certainly have a multitude of contradictions in teaching about the character of God and the duty of man. This theory prevents our accepting the one supreme, inspiring author for all the books of the Bible.

3. There are others who believe that the Bible is supernaturally inspired in spots. The favorite assertion of the advocates of this

theory is, the Bible contains the word of God while they vigorously deny that the Bible is the word of God. Thus they divide the Bible into an inner Bible and an outer Bible. The outer Bible embraces the inner Bible and therefore contains the word of God, while the inner Bible is the word of God. However, they have never, with any degree of convincing unanimity, agreed upon the contents of the inner or shorter Bible.

Those who believe in the partial inspiration of the scriptures say that only certain portions of the Bible are inspired, such as its doctrines and matters supernaturally revealed to man, and the general teaching pertaining to human duty and destiny.

As against this conglomerate book of God we would place the divine and unbreakable unity of the sacred scriptures. We believe that all the Bible, every part of the Bible, and the combination of the parts into a whole, are given and arranged by superhuman wisdom and supernatural inspiration and control.

4. There are other students of the Bible that believe in DEGREES OF INSPIRATION. According to this theory, the degree of inspiration is determined by the supposed measure of the Holy Spirit required in the writing of that portion of the Bible. Revelation will therefore require the highest degree of divine operation, while spiritual elevation, suggestion, direction, restraint, selection, and inspiration, would require different degrees of divine assistance. The recording of the genealogies in Chronicles, Matthew and Luke, requires a lower degree, it is said, of inspiration than the writing of the eighth chapter of Romans. Such arguments do not bring satisfactory results. The question is not whether the Bible contains the record of events, which man by the minimum of divine aid might describe, but whether all the contents of the Bible, irrespective of their estimated value and ease or difficulty of apprehension, are divinely selected and correlated and recorded under the guidance and with the complete approval of the Holy Spirit. We contend that inspiration exists to the same degree throughout the Bible, just like every part of the history or scientific treatise written by man would be equally the work of the author, whether the simplest or the most profound subjects are treated; whether evident facts are recorded or most advanced theories are discussed.

3. Objections to the Inspiration of the Bible

Various objections have been urged against the adequate and plenary inspiration of the Bible.

1. It is argued that since human beings are writers of the Bible we may naturally expect and, as a matter of fact, find errors in the Bible to some extent at least, as we find them occurring in other literature. This is an a priori argument based on the fallibility of man from which is argued the fallibility of the Bible. But we must remember that the infinite God can so over-shadow, undergird, illuminate and guide a fallible human being in thinking and expression as to produce a perfect transcript of the mind and heart of God. God can, moreover, do a perfect piece of work through an imperfect agent.

2. It is argued that since the Bible is written in human language, which is evidently imperfect, that therefore the Bible itself is not a complete revelation and errorless record. The language of the New Testament is even condemned as falling below classic Greek. But this is establishing a human standard of style instead of accepting the thoughts of God expressed in the common Greek language of the day in which the New Testament was written. Of course it is impossible for a revelation to be made to all men except through human language, but this imperfect medium does not necessitate or imply an imperfect message or a fallible and erroneous expression of any part of the divine communication. We must not confuse errors with mere limitation. Because the Bible is limited to human language is no argument for its partaking of the fallibility of man. Grant the direct communication of the infinite God with finite man, and the control of imperfect man by the perfect God, then there will be no difficulty in accepting as errorless books written by man controlled by the Spirit of God.

3. It is contended that discrepancies, contradictions and errors, are so numerous in the Bible as to render it an unreliable guide in all matters that do not pertain directly to the religious life of man. This position seems to be far less dangerous than it really is, for if there are palpable errors in the Bible, where historical events are recorded and scientific suggestions are made, it is easy to infer—and generally is inferred—that it is not reliable in other realms of knowledge. It should be borne in mind that variety does not mean contradiction; that difference of narratives do not necessitate historic errors. Many of the alleged historical inaccuracies have, in the progress of archeological investigation, been removed, and we

have a well grounded hope that in the progress of knowledge it will continue to be shown that the word of God cannot be broken. For generations it was contended that Luke made a serious historic mistake when he referred to Quirinius as governor of Syria when Caesar Augustus issued a decree that all the world should be enrolled. But recent inscriptions in Asia Minor demonstrate the fact that Quirinius was twice governor of Syria, and have thus vindicated the veracity of Luke as a historian who evidently refers to the first term of the governor's office.

4. It is contended that the Bible is incorrect in its scientific allusions. Because the Bible was not intended primarily to teach science is no argument against the accuracy of its scientific references. One may well rejoice in the wisdom of God displayed in not writing the first two chapters of Genesis in scientific phraseology. Scientific theories are so numerous and transient that the adoption of the scientific language of any one generation would render the account almost useless, except as a relic, to future generations. If the scientific allusions found in the Bible were given in the terms of perfect science, who could understand them? Some of the so-called scientific errors found in the Bible are so superficial that they ought not to be perpetuated by thinking men. The cony if referred to in the Bible as chewing its cud and the sun as rising and setting, while the four corners of the earth would indicate that the ancients believed that the earth was flat and square. But the cony makes a movement similar to the chewing of the cud, and so with ease could be classified on the ground of its appearance. Even to this day we read and speak of the 'rising and setting of the sun,' using the language of appearance without any thought of being taken too seriously concerning our scientific position. We also use the phrase 'from the four corners of the earth,' knowing full well that the earth of is approximately a sphere.

Some apparently learned critics of the Genesis account of creation say that light was created on the first day while the orbs of light were not created until the fourth day. Two simple interpretations are possible: The lights may have been created on the first day and appointed to a special mission on the fourth day; or what is more probable, when God said: 'Let there be light, and there was light,' there came into being a generic, universal, diffused light without a central orb. If so, this is in perfect accord with what astronomers call cosmic light which preceded the concentration of light into special, illuminated centers.

The point has been frequently and superficially made that since the phrase 'firmament of heaven' is used to describe the place where the lights were placed to perform their mission, the ancients and even Moses believed that the heavens were spread out in the form of a solid ceiling in which the stars were hung like lamps in a cathedral. This may be harmless as a figurative expression for both the ancients and the moderns, but as a matter of fact, the Hebrew word for FIRMAMENT simply means an EXPANSE and gives a different conception from the English word 'firmament' or even from the Latin and Greek equivalent. It is easy to believe that superficial quibbling has often taken the place of honest and serious research in trying to show that the Bible is historically and scientifically inaccurate.

If the Bible record be inaccurate in the realm where we can test its truthfulness, it is scarcely reasonable to suppose that we can rely upon its teachings in other spheres of knowledge where it cannot be so rigidly tested.

5. It is contended by many that the Bible reflects the learning of the age in which the various writers penned their messages. If by this were simply meant that God adapted his teaching and revelation in some wise degree to the needs and capacity of the original recipients of his revelation, the position need not be opposed; but it usually means that not only in the realm of history and science but also in the sphere of ethical and religious ideals the same thing is true, and that therefore we have in the Bible a reflection of a civilization supposedly far below our own. Consequently it is said the Bible is out of date and its teachings and authority are rightfully rejected in the superlative light of our modern era.

No one contends that there has not been progress in divine revelation, but progressive revelation does not mean error in previous revelation any more than the development of Christ in Nazareth implies previous sins in his boyhood life. We have every reason to believe that, in the progress of all legitimate criticism of the word of God and the revelation of research, in the future—as in the past—every seeming discrepancy or inaccuracy found in the word of God will be cleared away by the ever-brightening light as we approach the perfect original scriptures as they came from the Spirit of God through men of God.

IV. Proofs of the Inspiration of the Bible

In obeying the Bible we are not following cunningly devised fables but the unchangeable word of the unchangeable God. Our position on the inspiration of the scriptures may be confirmed and authenticated from several considerations.

1. AS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT. With wonderful frequency we hear that the Old Testament prophets and writers received their messages from God. "He saith," referring to the Lord's communication to his authorized messengers, occurs approximately two thousand time [sic]. "The word of the Lord came unto me," is solemnly repeated by the prophets. The Lord promised the future prophet like unto Moses, "I will put my words into his month [sic];" and to Isaiah he said: "My words I put into thy mouth." David, in the Spirit, called Christ Lord and gave a prophetic utterance concerning the triumphant Jesus. "No prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." II Peter 1:21. Men did not evolve the word of God from their inner consciousness nor attain to the heights of divine wisdom by intellectual research. Men spake from God, not from themselves, being borne along by the Holy Spirit. The figure is that of the wind rushing with power as on the day of Pentecost. Personality is not obliterated but man is moved by the Spirit of God to think and express the thoughts of God. Matthew makes frequent reference to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in the life and teaching of Jesus. These predictions are represented as spoken "by the Lord through the prophet." The divine source was God; the human agent was a man of God. The numerous prophecies in the Old Testament and their recorded fulfilment in the New Testament constitute a convincing argument that the Old Testament is the product of super-human wisdom divinely communicated.

Christ said emphatically that he came not to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfil, to carry forward in the same direction and toward the same ideal the teaching of the Old Testament scriptures. Hence there is no chasm between the Old and the New Testament which the vitally linked together in the progressive revelation of God.

2. AS TO CHRIST'S PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE REVELATION, RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. Matthew 23:34, he said: "Behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes." That is, persons who, in the Christian era,

shall be prophets or spokesmen for God and wise men who will not possess the wisdom of the world, which is from beneath, but the wisdom of God which is from above, revealed by the Holy Spirit; and scribes, or writers of the divine message under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. To guarantee the perpetuity and completion of the divine message, Jesus says that when he leaves the Holy Spirit will come and bring all things to the remembrance of his apostles, and teach them things to come, and therefore in every way possible equip them for authoritative, declarative and predictive teaching under the fallible guidance of the Spirit of God.

3. AS TO THE NEW TESTAMENT. Paul claims to speak not in WORDS WHICH MAN'S WISDOM TEACHETH but which the Spirit teacheth (I Cor. 2:13). Thus not only the GENERAL IDEAS but the very WORDS of Paul's gospel and writings originated in the Spirit and not in the cultured mind of the apostle. Peter, after referring to his experience on the mount of transfiguration, say: (II Peter 1:19) "We have the word of prophecy made more sure (than mere human eyewitnesses can make by their testimony), whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts; knowing this, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." The Old Testament teaching—though coming from God—was a lamp shining in a dark place, while the New Testament teaching—which was the Old Testament teaching perfected—was like the dawning of a new day. No prophecy of authoritative teaching of scripture, whether in the Old or New Testament, is of private, special, individual interpretation, as a man would communicate his knowledge of common objects and events, but rather divine thoughts impressed upon the mind and expressed in the words which the Holy Spirit inspires. Thus the message of the Bible did not originate in the individuals who wrote the Bible but in God who, by His Holy Spirit, moved upon the minds and hearts of those who spoke and wrote his will. So the Bible is not inspired by human genius but by the Holy Spirit.

Peter witnesses to the inspiration of Paul's epistles. II Peter 3:15, 16: "Our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, wrote unto you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things (long suffering of God, etc.) wherein are some things hard to be understood which the ignorant and un-

steadfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." Peter recognizes, as we readily do, the difficulty of understanding all that Paul wrote. He also recognizes that Paul wrote according to a wisdom not his own but one that was revealed to him by the Lord. He also indicates that he is familiar with all of Paul's epistles, and that these belong to the sacred body of scriptures, all of the Old Testament and the portions of the New Testament written at that time. In writing to Timothy Paul says that: "From a babe thou has known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15). The sacred writings here refer primarily to the Old Testament, but evidently some of the teachings found in the New Testament are included from the simple fact that Timothy is able by them to be made wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Paul, in writing one of the latest books of the New Testament (I Timothy 5:18) quotes from both the old Testament and New Testament, thus linking the two portions of our Bible into an indissoluble unit: "The scriptures saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn" (Deut. 25:4). And the laborer is worthy of his hire." (Luke 10:&).

Peter (I Peter 1:10, 11) writes of "The salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow." Christ, on the day of his resurrection, taught his two sorowing disciples on their way to Emmaus, and beginning from Moses and from all the prophets he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. Thus Jesus is the center of both the old and the New Testaments, and the Spirit of Jesus inspired the prophets to write, and Jesus himself expounded the scriptures in their relation to his earthly ministry.

We now consider one of the most striking expressions on the inspiration of the Bible found anywhere in the word of God. II Timothy 3:16, 17: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching," etc., or as the original rendering has it in the revised version: "Every scripture is inspired of God and is profitable," etc. Though primary reference is made to the Old Testament writings, the context indicates that the New Testament books, written at that time, are also included. If we translate "ALL

scripture," the idea is the sacred writings in their totality, or if we translate "EVERY SCRIPTURE," we are taught that each particular book of the sacred collection is inspired. The idea conveyed is not that some scripture is inspired and some not inspired, as if we are to divide the sacred collection into inspired and uninspired portions, but it is evident that the apostles [sic] means to assert that every single writing is GOD-BREATHED, as the word "inspired" signifies, and not man-made. The thought is similar to that expressed concerning the creation of man when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. Man was created in the image and likeness of God and was thus differentiated from all other creatures. So the word of God has in it the breath and the life of God and is different from all other literary productions.

4. The unit of the word of God is a strong argument in favor of its divine origin. Though composed by more than forty writers, there is one sublime purpose constantly kept in view and perfect harmony in all the parts of divine revelation. The time in which the books of the Bible were written extended over a period of fifteen hundred years. Had it been possible for all the writers of the sacred scriptures to have lived at the same time and held daily conferences for a decade and discussed the various parts each one would write, it would even then have been impossible to preserve the unity and harmony that we find in the Old and New Testaments. There was evidently one all-pervading mind which comprehended and planned all the teachings and record of events from the first of Genesis to the close of Revelation. While the Bible is a library of sixty-six volumes, it is also one book with one great purpose, and all the several books fit into the divine plan as perfectly as the stones of Solomon's temple. Verily the Bible is unique, unapproached in its sublimity, its unity, its contents, and its power.

5. The UTILITY of the Bible is another evidence of its inspiration. It is God-breathed and is therefore profitable; that is, supremely useful for its purpose. Profitable for TEACHING—giving necessary instructions to men who do not know the best in life. Profitable for REPROOF—for showing defects in character and ideals and motives. Profitable for CORRECTION—for making straight or righting the crooked places in life and correcting its imperfections. Profitable for INSTRUCTION, which is in righteousness; that is, instruction embracing not only teaching but dis-

cipline, such as is given to children in their training for the highest ministry of life. The purpose for which the scripture was given is that the man of God or the man who wishes to do God's will, may be completely and not partially furnished unto every good work. The Bible contains the necessary equipment for a useful Christian life.

6. **The supreme and abiding authority of the Bible is a strong proof of its infallible inspiration.** Jesus said to his disciples (Matthew 28:18–20): "All authority hath been given unto men in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the World." He who is the Word of God incarnate also said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." And concerning the gospel of Christ Paul writes (Galatians 1:8, 9): "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema." Paul is thus very emphatic in declaring his faith in the DIVINITY, UNITY, and FINALITY, of the gospel which he proclaimed in the demonstration of the Spirit and power of God and which he committed to writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In I Corinthians 15:1–4 Paul says "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received; that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scripture." Here we have a brief outline of the permanent features of gospel doctrines according to the scriptures, namely, the sacrificial and atoning death of Jesus Christ, his actual burial and literal resurrection, according to the scriptures, and the glorious bodily resurrection of the righteous (II Cor. 15).

Peter asserts (I Peter 1:23–25): that believers are "begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth. For, all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth, but the word of the Lord abideth for ever."

The word of God abides as supreme and final authority because of its permanent and infallible revelation as to the creation and preservation of the universe; as to the origin, fall, nature, and redemption of man; as to the mission, character, and triumph of the Son of man, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; as to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in conviction, regeneration, guidance and sanctification; as to the conditions of individual and social regeneration and national and racial righteousness and prosperity. The inspiration of the Bible is opposed more vigorously because of the divine teaching than because of any supposed historical or scientific inaccuracy.

The Bible is the crown of all literature because of its unalloyed truth in every realm of research, and its simple, sublime and unparalleled expressions of thought, whether in history, poetry, prophecy, argument, exposition, sermons and addresses, biography, epistles or apocalyptic visions. The Bible stands as far above uninspired literature as snow-crowed mountains stand above extended plains; the Bible outshines all other literature as the stars of heaven outshine the glow worms of the meadows. I doubt if any one can honestly read the crass, fragmentary, and mythical account of creation found in Chaldean records and then come under the spell of the majestic, truth-revealing Genesis account of the origin of the the [sic] universe and not exclaim: "The hand that wrote the Bible is divine." This was my experience thirty years ago.

Christ is the word of God in human flesh; the Bible is the word of God in human speech. Christ is the perfect expression of the personality of God; the Bible is the perfect expression of the mind of God. All truth is self consistent and has as its center the God of truth. Science is systemized knowledge of nature; theology is systemized knowledge of God. Theories of science and theories of the Bible may contradict each other, but the corect [sic] interpretation of nature and the correct interpretation of the Bible are in perfect harmony. God's revelation in his world and God's revelation in his word are the two hemispheres of full orbed truth. Ps. 19. The heavens declare the glory of God but only the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. Only the docile student can arrive at the truth. Only the pure in heart can see God. Not the great in intellect but the honest in heart can find God in his word.

Jesus uttered a profound and universal principle of spiritual life and biblical research: "If any man wills to do my will he shall

know of the teaching, whether it be of God or whether I speak from myself." The earnest student with an obedient spirit will find that the Bible is as full of God as the world is full of sunlight. He will know that the word of God is uniquely divine; that it is "quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Thus we have presented, though feebly, a few of the many reasons that may be given to prove that the Bible came from God as the full, final, infallible, authoritative, expression of his will communicated in thought and word through men divinely chosen to speak and write in his name.

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"Formed by Nature for Kindness and Friendship": The Life and Work of William Ward (1769–1823)

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Hail, Friendship! Queen of earthly joys,
Without thee, diadems are toys,
And vain is Nature's store;
With thee I am supremely blest,
And with thee I would ever rest,
Nor ask the world for more.
—Achátes (William Ward)[1]

William Ward (1769–1823) made friends wherever he went. While editing his first newspaper, *The Derby Mercury*, he chose Achátes—meaning "faithful friend"—as his first pen name (Virgil, *Aeneid,* 1:494–578). Ward seems to have understood himself throughout life as a supporting companion in service to purposes much greater than his own self-interest. As he evolved from newspaper editor to preacher to missionary, Ward spent his life in search of ways to be of use. Plying his trade of printing in usefulness to the expansion of God's kingdom, he made friends wherever he went. These friends helped shape him along the way.

Friends in Low Places

One Saturday evening in the English village of Gildersome, a twenty-nine-year-old bachelor seminary student rested in the parlor of his host's home before preaching the next Sunday morning. The young minister in training had become accustomed to making the seventeen-mile trek across the Yorkshire countryside to preach three times on Sundays for a church that was without a pastor. One might think that he would have fallen asleep at a

[1] *The Derby Mercury* [*DM*], April 7, 1791; *Staffordshire Advertiser* [*SA*], May 30, 1795. *Hull Advertiser* [*HA*], July 22, 1797; Samuel Stennett, *Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. William Ward* (London: J. Haddon, 1825), 282–3.

modest hour with such a busy day of ministry ahead. On the contrary, he and his hosts joked late into the night about their theological differences and the difficulties involved in finding a pastor for a contentious group of Baptists!

As midnight approached, they sat and laughed beneath the portrait of the most theologically controversial English minister of their age, Joseph Priestley (1733–1804). Priestley had been chased out of Birmingham (1791) and eventually England altogether (1794) for his dissenting religious teachings and his revolutionary sympathy by overzealous loyalists to church and king. Perhaps displaying Priestley's portrait in one's parlor would have been controversial, but this was the home of both relatives and fellow dissenters in an out-of-the-way provincial village. While Priestley was regarded wrongly as a dangerous French spy, his odd assortment of extended Yorkshire relatives—and their interim pastor—had no reasons to be regarded by anyone of importance at all. From the safety of obscurity, Priestley's widowed sister Martha Crouch (1741–1812), his second cousin William Hudson III (1756–1829), and their interim pastor William Ward penned two facetious advertisements for a Liverpool newspaper:

Wanted Immediately,
At Gildersome, a pleasant village,
Near Leeds,
A Dissenting Minister, unmarried, or with a wife & no children.
He must be neither orthodox nor heterodox, Calvinist
nor Arminian,
Baptist nor Paedobaptist, Arian nor Socinian.
He must not preach particular nor universal redemption, election
nor free will apostacy from grace nor final perseverance, doctrines
nor morality.
He must have neither too much nor too little religion.
He must not be too vulgar nor too refined.
He must have a deal of patience, charity, meekness & fortitude.
He need not have <u>any</u> faith.
Anyone whom this <u>may suit</u> (& no other need apply)
will please to address a line to the Deacon of the said church.
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Run Away
A two-legg'd animal, called a parson.
He had on when he went away a black (turning gray) vest & waist-coat, corduroy breeches, plaid neck-handkerchief,
& broad-brimmed hat.
He has a scar on his forehead, walks very upright,
has short dark brown hair,
is about 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high.
It is supposed he took the road to Derby or Bengal.
Whoever will loose him in the workhouse at Gildersome, or in the chapel in that place, shall receive Thirteen pence half-penny reward.[2]

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Dear Sir,
You will have the goodness to get the above advertisement inserted in the next Liverpool Phoenix, & I will defray the expence when I see you. You will make any additions you choose. Mrs. Crouch is all gaiety. Though almost asleep, I can say heartily & sincerely, I am, your very affectionate obliged friend,

Wm. Ward,
Mr. Hudson's parlor, ¾ past ten o-clock, Sept. 29, 1798.

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William Ward would never have intended nor expected these jokes to be preserved for posterity in the Angus Archive at Regent's Park College, Oxford. The fact that this scrap of paper survived when so many other more worthy documents have perished is itself remarkable. More remarkable is the rich contextual details it reveals. In the "Wanted" advertisement above, Ward showcased his frustration with the theological divisions and personal preferences that might stymie the search for a pastor. Admittedly, there was far more at stake if a pastor was an Arian or a Socinian rather than a Calvinist or Arminian, but the humor still lands a punch. Moreover, Ward's attitude toward the theologically heterodox was

[2] William Ward's to John Merritt, editor of *The Liverpool Phenix*, September 29, 1798. This document along with three out of the four letters from Ward to Hudson belong to the Angus Library and Archive. The fourth letter from Ward to Hudson belongs to the Center for the Life and Work of William Carey at William Carey University.

never dismissive. He judged them based on the fruit of their Christian charity.

Ward called his host William Hudson III, "a Unitarian or something like it," yet Hudson had been a regular supporter of the struggling congregation of Baptists in Gildersome.[3] More than just a supporter of the church, Hudson was a pillar of the village community showering his charity on anyone in need. Undoubtedly, his lack of wife, children, or siblings gave him the means to provide for the poor out of his modest inheritance. He spent most Sunday evenings giving religious discourses in his home after providing a meal for attendees. He was in many respects a model of gentlemanly Christian charity despite his theological deficiencies. Taking a young minister into his large home on the weekends was the least that he could do.

In turn, Ward counted Hudson a friend long after they parted ways, but he continued to plead with him in letters to "make the death and obedience of Xt. his only hope."[4] Ward claimed in one letter to Hudson that "I know of no person who differed from me in any of the important doctrines of the gospel, for whose safety I feel a more ardent concern."[5] Despite his strong theological disagreement, Ward had developed an early conviction to "Let men be first of one heart, & then there is hope that they will soon be of one judgment."[6] Hudson demonstrated Christian charity that resonated with the young Ward who laid so much emphasis on faith in action. Such a pietistic impulse grew, not from his identity as a Particular Baptist, but from his early eclectic evangelical roots.

Ward had grown up in the neighboring county of Derbyshire where he had developed lifelong friendships with people unlike himself religiously, politically, and even socioeconomically. The first thirty years of Ward's life was a panoramic display of late eighteenth century English life from below.

Ward's father died sometime in the late 1770s leaving behind a grieving widow and six children—none of whom appear in the parish records. Ward's mother had been baptized in both the local

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[3] Stennett, 43; Philip Henry Booth, *History of Gildersome and the Booth Family* ([No Place]: [No Publisher], 1920), 86.

[4] William Ward to William Hudson, October 20, 1803.

[5] William Ward to William Hudson, June 23, 1802.

[6] William Ward to Andrew Fuller, December 15, 1807, in E. Daniel Potts, "'I throw away the guns to preserve the ship' A Note on the Serampore Trio," *Baptist Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (1963): 116.

English Presbyterian church *and* the established parish church as an infant. In the wake of her husband's death, she was converted to a more active faith under the influence of a Quaker before joining the Methodists. Ward credited her with his earliest spiritual formation, but he and his sister took their mother's eclectic dissenting heritage a step further to become Baptists.

During Ward's childhood and adolescence there had been no substantial Baptist presence in Derby. In fact, Ward's first experience among the Baptists was due to his cousin, the Rev. William Fletcher's ministry in the villages between Derby and Nottingham. Fletcher allowed his little cousin to tag along on Sundays to hear him preach at a house church in Codnor and a defunct Presbyterian chapel in Loscoe.[7] Beyond the confines of Derbyshire, Ward occasionally made the journey of eighteen miles to Nottingham to worship with the Baptists of Friar Lane where William Carey (1761–1834) preached his deathless sermon.[8] All the while, Ward never sought baptism for himself despite experiencing his own deepened religious convictions as early as nineteen years old.[9]

Outside of the context of his immediate family and early Baptist friends, Ward spent most of his time working first as an apprentice and then as a journeyman for the local printer John Drewry (1739–1794). Not much is known about Drewry's personality or opinions, but his newspaper—the most public facing aspect of his business—reveals much. Hailed erroneously by a nineteenth century historian as "the staunch upholder of 'Church and State'," *The Derby Mercury* was not an establishment print.[10] Carving out a space between the radical London newspapers who became targets for prosecution during Pitt's Terror (1790s) and the mere

[7] John Rippon, The Baptist annual register, for 1790, 1791, 1792, and part of 1793 (London: Dilly, Button, and Thomas, 1793), 4; The Baptist annual register, for 1794, 1795, 1796–1797 (London: Dilly, Button, and Thomas, 1797), 3, 186; The Baptist Magazine 23 (London: George Wightman, 1831), 72; Stephen Greasley, The Baptists of Derbyshire 1650–1914 (Derbyshire: Moorley's Printing and Publishing, 2007), 186–98.

[8] Stennett, 13.

[9] Joshua Marshman, *Divine Grace the source of all Human Excellence. A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of the late Rev. Wiliam Ward, on Friday, March 7th, 1823* (Serampore: The Mission Press, 1823), 41.

[10] Alfred Wallis, "A Sketch of the Early History of the Printing Press in Derbyshire." *Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* (1881), 150; Martin John Smith, "English Radical Newspapers in the French Revolutionary Era, 1790–1803" (PhD diss., University of London, 1979), 5–8.

copy-paste editing of Parliamentary discourse, Drewry and Ward made *The Derby Mercury* a palatable option for both apathetic and activist readers alike. Editing the newspaper required skill in producing what people were interested in reading, not what one party demanded to be published.[11]

Ward had been fascinated with the written word since he was a boy, and that early preoccupation with composition made him a natural fit for the printing trade.[12] When the opportunity to apprentice under Drewry coincided with his coming of age, Ward began his work creating every provincial Englishman's weekly treasure—the newspaper. William Carey's vision for the world expanded by reading about the voyages of James Cook, but Ward's weekly task of curating and reproducing information afforded a more vivid global imagination.

Derby may have been the most landlocked, insulated, and unlikely place for Ward to have become acquainted with and involved in world changing movements. Nevertheless, Ward's position at the printing shop allowed him to enlist in the two most important causes in the 1780s–1790s: the abolition of the slave trade and the petition for Parliamentary Reform. In both cases, the local newspaper was a crucial tool for promotion and dissemination of literature, and Ward was a willing participant.

As Ward passed from apprentice to editor, he flooded the newspaper with abolitionist and reformist literature. Through his acquaintance with the Rev. Dr. John Baker, Ward may have personally engaged Lord Scarsdale, Thomas Clarkson, and Olaudah Equiano before many other editors had the chance. Moreover, Ward's local friendships and associations drew him into the Derby Society for Political Information, which was one of the first organizations of its kind outside of London. Ward was ready and willing to do what he could do for both causes. In the air of optimism created by the abolition movement in 1787, the centenary of the Glorious Revolution in 1788, and then the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, Ward could have said with his con-

[11] D. A. "Joshua Drewry and the First Stafford Newspapers," in *Essays in Staffordshire History, Fourth Series,* 6, edited by M. W. Greenslade (Staffordshire Record Society, 1970), 192–3.

[12] Stennett, 10.

temporary William Wordsworth, "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive / But to be young was very heaven."[13]

For all the optimism that had built up in the minds of enthusiasts and activists like the young William Ward and his friends, the power of the status quo defended by Edmund Burke in 1790 and the defeat of Wilberforce's abolition bill in 1791 did much to slow the progress of sociopolitical reform.[14] Despite Thomas Clarkson's best presentation of evidence and Thomas Paine's best appeals to reason, many in England rallied against national repentance and called for loyalty to the church and king. As already mentioned above, Priestley's escape from the mob at Birmingham served as the ultimate example of the state's tolerance for political violence so long as it was channeled in the right direction.[15]

Despite such a series of defeats, Ward and his reformist friends increased the volume of their literary productions to push for Parliamentary reform until the spring Parliamentary session of 1793.[16] Timing was not on their side, however, and the news of regicidal terror in France prompted widespread changes in sentiment toward political change. As Ward began to distance himself from organized political activism, he also distanced himself from his assortment of Derbyshire friends entirely by moving to London. No longer would he enjoy proximity and familiarity with the Drewrys, Strutts, Darwins, or his Baptist friends.

Perhaps the move away from Derby was good for Ward, who needed to create healthy space between himself and more thoroughgoing Painite disciples. From London, he continued to sub-

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[13] William Wordsworth, "The French Revolution as It Appeared to Enthusiasts at Its Commencement," in *The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind; an Autobiographical Poem* (London: Edward Moxon, 1850), 299.

[14] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings of Certain Societies in London Relative to that Event. In a Letter Intended to Have Been Sent to a Gentleman in Paris*, 3rd ed. (London: J. Dodsley, 1790).

[15] Thomas Clarkson, *An abstract of the evidence delivered before a select Committee of the House of Commons in the years 1790, and 1791 ; on the part of the petitioners for the abolition of the slave-trade* (London: James Phillips, 1791); Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man: Being an Answer to Mr. Burke's Attack on the French Revolution* (London: J. S. Jordan, 1791).

[16] The information pertaining to Ward's involvement with the abolition movement and the Derby Society for Political Information is too voluminous to include here. See, G. Landon Adams, "Examining Intersections of Evangelical Christianity and Sociopolitical Reform in the Journalism of Wiliam Ward, 1787–1797," (PhD diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023).

mit his personal poetry for inclusion in *The Derby Mercury* under the new pen name Imperfectus. Evidencing a somewhat deeper feeling toward eternal matters, his "Sonnet to Religion," said "let Flippiants laugh, / I ask thy friendship and tenderest care; / I ask thy sorrow's and delights to share. / While they enjoy the wormwood and the chaff."[17] Several weeks later he expressed his longing for companions in a fresh poem entitled in which he invited "friendship" the "heavenly guest" to "dwell within his troubled breast."[18]

As if drawn by necessity, or perhaps just familiarity, Ward attempted to make friends among the Baptists of London. Not much is known about his life between 1793 and 1794, but one event is certain. After a Sunday service at John Rippon's church in May of 1793, Ward had the opportunity to interview William Carey who was awaiting passage to India. Despite Carey's suggestion that he come along in a few years to print the Bible for him, Ward shrugged off this comment at the time with ease not knowing that he was talking to his future friend and colleague.[19] Ward was a newsman, and he fully intended to continue in that line of work as a successful twenty-three-year-old despite his uncertain future. Still, the chances of becoming a successful printer in England might as well have been infinitely higher than Carey's chances of success in India given that no one had attempted what he was about to do.

After his London sojourn, Ward joined forces with one of the nephews of his former trade master John Drewry who died in the autumn of 1794. With Joshua Drewry's (1774–1841) inheritance money and seventeen years of combined experience with newspapers, the two of them set out to establish a new printing operation in Stafford in 1795. From all accounts, Ward was a faithful friend to Drewry and a successful first editor of the *Staffordshire Advertiser*, but he left Stafford printing office after only nine months. In the autumn of 1796, the owners of *The Hull Advertiser* hired Ward to become their full-time editor whose sole job was the superintendence of the newspaper. No longer would Ward have to help manage all the business aspects of a printing shop in addition to creating a weekly newspaper. For a newspaper editor, this was the dream.

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[17] Imperfectus, "Sonnet to Religion," *DM,* April 25, 1793.

[18] Imperfectus, "Invitation to Friendship," *DM,* August 1, 1793.

[19] Stennett, 49.

The Hull Advertiser (est. 1794) was a newer production unlike *The Derby Mercury* (est. 1732) had been, but Ward's recent experience in establishing the *Staffordshire Advertiser* (est. 1795) made him a desirable candidate.[20] Again, as in London and Stafford, Ward moved to a location with no prior family or friends. Again, Ward found the Baptists. Ward and his later biographer credited his Hull friends and church family as being the pivotal people that God used to turn Ward from printer to preacher.

Through the friendship influence of George Greenwood, James Carlil, and most of all William Sedgwick, Ward turned from generally evangelical attendant on the preaching of the Baptists to a full-fledged Particular Baptist.[21] Between his coveted editorship and newfound sense of belonging, Ward launched out in activism again in 1796. He began to push for abolition and parliamentary reform in the news for one final season, and he began to volunteer in ministry to the poor on the weekends. Ward had found his place and people, and he "thought [he] had been fixed at Hull."[22] He had everything that he could want up to that point in life, God wanted more of him.

In the autumn of 1796, the local Baptist church confirmed Ward's long-standing faith through adult baptism. That same autumn, he published his only full-length sociopolitical pamphlet entitled *The Abolition of the Slave Trade; Peace, and a Temperate Reform, Essential to the Salvation of England.*[23] These two events represented the rising of Ward's ministerial career and the twilight of his sociopolitical activism. He became increasingly effective in his gifts of preaching, and his friends noticed. Simultaneously, his sociopolitical reflections were wasted on an English public weary of war and taxation. In fact, increased taxation on newspapers would render the full-time editorship of *The Hull Advertiser* financially unfeasible for the owners by the end of 1797.

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[20] *The Hull Advertiser* owners said as much in their address to the public, January 2, 1796.

[21] HA, February 11, 1797; Stennett, 25; William Ward, *The Blessedness of the Righteous Dead: A Sermon, Preached at the Mission House, Serampore, Bengal; on Lord's day, April 12, 1806, after Receiving the Afflictive Intelligence of the Death of Mr. William Sedgwick, deacon of the Baptist Church, Meeting in George Street, Hull, who Died February 14, 1805, Aged Forty-one Years* (Dunstable: J. W. Morris, 1807).

[22] Stennett, 32.

[23] *The Abolition of the Slave Trade; Peace, and a Temperate Reform, Essential to the Salvation of England* (London: B. Crosby, 1796).

Providentially, Ward's friends took his future destiny into their own hands by applying to a wealthy Yorkshire Baptist, Richard Fishwick, for funds to send Ward to study under John Fawcett (1739–1817) at Ewood Hall (the equivalent of seminary). Ward's local church affirmed his calling into gospel ministry and forced him to reconsider his entire life's direction. In summing up this season of his life, Ward was resolved stating in a letter to a friend, "Conscience commands me to go—to enter on a new line of life."[24]

In September of 1797, Ward left behind his friends in Hull to live with and to study under John Fawcett. At Ewood Hall, he made a lifelong friend of his earliest biographer, Samuel Stennett, in addition to many other Yorkshire Baptists who respected Fawcett and his academy. Fawcett had turned down the prospect of succeeding John Gill in London in 1771, and he distanced himself from that brand of Particular Baptist theology and culture. There is no doubt that Fawcett was a better fit for Ward than a more Calvinistically rigid mentor would have been. Although he was no Arminian, Ward's "Fullerite" credentials have not been satisfactorily established—especially regarding closed communion.[25]

After a full year of ministerial studies, Ward was preaching as far west as Gildersome, which brings this narrative back to the original scene in 1798. As Ward sat with Hudson and Mrs. Crouch on that September night, he had evolved from a bookish little boy of Derbyshire into a "proud little man" whose preaching was more dynamic and memorable than any of his sociopolitical writings had ever been.[26] Ward had finally found that his effectiveness in making a difference in God's world was through gospel ministry thanks to all of the friendships that he had formed along the way.

What has remained unaddressed in this essay was the second advertisement in which Ward described himself in vivid terms. Tipping his hat to his peculiar scar over his right eye, Ward provided the only extant full-length description of himself. Most notably, he referred to himself as an imaginary runaway pastor whose

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[24] Stennett, 33.

[25] E. Daniel Potts, "'I throw away the guns to preserve the ship' A Note on the Serampore Trio," *Baptist Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (1963): 115–17.

[26] Ward refers to himself as "your 'proud little man'" to Hudson who must have called Ward by that epithet; see, Ward to Hudson, Dec. 21, 1799, and Oct 20. 1803.

future was unknown. Would he end up back where he started in Derby, or would he "take the road . . . to Bengal"?[27]

Being away from the printing press for over a year, Ward had not lost his taste for what was interesting for provincial English readers. While studying at Ewood Hall, he had kept up his submissions of original poetry to all the newspapers within his printing network. Sustaining an interest in his first trade was surely the reason for his selection by the Baptist Missionary Society [BMS] to go to Bengal and support William Carey. Carey had been pleading with Andrew Fuller and the rest of the committee for a printer since 1796, so that his translation of the New Testament could be published.[28] In Fuller's words to Carey in September of 1797, no "suitable" candidates could be found. That same month, Ward was in transit to Ewood Hall.[29] Now, in the autumn of 1798, the BMS had found Ward, who had been Carey's suggestion all along.

From Hudson's parlor beneath the portrait of Priestley, Ward gave his first written declaration that he was hoping to join Carey in Bengal. A few weeks later, he was officially examined by the BMS committee and accepted for missionary service on October 16, 1798.[30] In his interview, he made plain to them that he considered missionary service to print the Bible as his duty, and that he had not or expected any direct revelation from God concerning his going to India. From Ward's point of view, his entire life had been leading to this moment. Having forsaken his attempts to shape popular opinion on weighty matters such as political reform and social activism through the press, he complied with the providential opportunity to publish the good news of peace for a heathen nation.

Friends Wherever He Went

Ward's passage to India took 140 days from London to Serampore, and his journal recounts the voyage in vivid detail.[31] He and the other missionaries, when not seasick, ministered

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[27] Ward to Merritt, September 29, 1798.

[28] William Carey to Andrew Fuller, November 16, 1796.

[29] For a detailed description of Carey's and Fuller's correspondence, see G. Landon Adams, "Reevaluating William Ward's (1769–1823) Early Radicalism: An Archival Assessment of the 1797 Thelwall Riot in Derby and the Parties Responsible," *Midland History* 50, no. 1 (2025), 25–35.

[30] *Baptist Missionary Society Minutes*, 1792–1799, 99–100.

[31] *William Ward's Missionary Journal* [*Journal*], 1799–1811.

among the sailors teaching them gospel truths and how to read. Furthermore, the long voyage gave the missionary party a chance to get acquainted with the personalities and temperaments of one another. None of them could have guessed that within four years, two of them—Grant and Brunsdon—would die, and two of them—William Ward and Mary Tidd—would end up married.[32] Had they known what they were about to experience, they might have headed back to England. Despite the dangers, toils, and snares that lay ahead, their confession and hope were in God as they sang their own version of a popular hymn:

Guide us, Oh! thou great Jehovah!
Pilgrims on the boisterous sea;
We are weak, but thou art mighty,
Thou cans't make each danger flee.
Bread of heaven, &c.
When we see the shores of India
Bid our anxious fears subside,
Let each heart be friendly towards us
Land us safe by Carey's side.
Songs of praises, &c.[33]

On the ship they cultivated regular worship services although they strongly disagreed over the propriety of the Lord's Supper. Joshua Marshman questioned whether they should be performing the ordinance at all outside of a regular church state, and he was perturbed at Ward for insisting that Captain Wickes, their American paedobaptist ship captain, could join them. Despite this initial disagreement, Ward and Joshua Marshman became life-long friends and missionary colleagues. They could not have been more different in temperament or personality, but they each found their usefulness in concert with Carey and the other missionaries to make their mission settlement work.[34]

The next two decades of missionary life were full of successes and at times failures. Death was an ever-present cloud hanging

[32] Mary Tidd initially married John Fountain who died leaving her with a newborn son. Ward married her May 10, 1802.

[33] *Journal*, July 18, 1799.

[34] By January 18, 1800, they had adopted a set of rules for the Mission Family.

over them through the loss of children, wives, colleagues, and native brethren. Their novel settlement in the Danish trading enclave of Serampore proved to be strategic haven. There they were enabled to make friends of native converts and pundits and some East India Company officials. Most surprising to Ward was the number of serious Christians among some of the European merchants such as Mr. Fernandez who was "one of the most active and successful coadjutors of the Serampore Mission . . . for more than thirty years."[35]

During a particularly difficult season of loss, Ward had to part for a time with Fernandez, who was compelled to move for his trade. Ward reflectively asked, "Is it that we may set a proper value on friendship, that we are called to part with friends, in some such way as this, that we love spring better because we have passed through a hard winter?"[36] Soon after, news reached him concerning his best friend from Hull, William Sedgwick, who had met an early death to which Ward exclaimed, "Oh! that God may prepare me to follow him. To me the world gets poorer every day, when my friends are gone & my work is done, all the rest is dung & dross."[37]

All was not loss for Ward in moving to India. He gained a wife, a stepson, and two daughters—Aemelia and Hannah—in due course. He exercised his preaching gifts to their fullest extent in Serampore, the surrounding villages, the Calcutta jail, and several places of worship set up specifically for the missionaries. One of the most important of these places was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Derozio where Ward and his colleagues first met for worship in Calcutta. They ate, slept, preached, and baptized at their home before acquiring the Lal Bazar Chapel property. On several occasions, the Derozio home became the location of great parties among friends of the mission where they would read letters from home aloud and listen to the young Miss Maria Derozio play the piano. On one special occasion, they gathered on a Sunday evening and "sang the old year out and the new year in."[38] Ward's

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[35] John Clark Marshman, *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward* (London: Longman, 1859), 140.

[36] *Journal*, February 26, 1806.

[37] *Journal*, April 13, 1806, and January 1, 1807: "I have been peculiarly affected by the solemn events of the last year: the deaths of several friends; the struggles of the mission with the Company's Government; &c."

[38] *Journal*, September 10, 1809, and December 31, 1809.

journal contains copious notes on the friendships that they cultivated, and there is no denying that without them the mission would have suffered.

Ward was a constant observer of humans and human nature, and he recorded his own judgments regularly. He was a meticulous journal keeper until 1806 when he decided that he would sequester most of his notes on the Hindus into a separate book. From 1806–1811, his journal became an emaciated shell of what it once had been; but by 1811, he had four volumes comprising his ethnographic notes on the Hindus of Bengal.[39] Between 1811–1818, Ward continued to plug away at preaching, pastoring, mentoring, fathering, authoring, editing, printing, and negotiating with junior missionaries who were cocksure about their own missionary philosophy. In two decades, Carey, Marshman, and Ward had made the Serampore Mission a viable model and launching pad for future missionaries, but such hard work and expansion took its toll on some harder than others. By 1818, Ward needed a break for his own health which had deteriorated undoubtedly due in part to the stress of the mission. When he landed in Liverpool in June of 1819 for a health recovery holiday, he was hailed as a hero by some who regarded him as the first missionary returned from the east.

Friends in High Places

Standing beneath the blazing star of providence painted on the ceiling of Freemasons' Hall in London in 1820, William Ward addressed the nobility, clergy, and some members of the parliament of Great Britain on behalf of the Serampore Mission at the sixteenth anniversary meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Perhaps Ward contemplated God's guiding hand as he took his place on the floor of the grand basilica following the speeches of the Duke of Gloucester and Lord Teignmouth. According to the London newspapers, Ward appeared "learned" as he gave "an animated" report to the committee chaired by the former Governor General of India. Certainly, the gravity of this moment was not lost on Ward who had entered the world as a working-class nonconformist middle child destined for nothing higher than the print

[39] William Ward, *Account of the Writings, Religion, and Manners, of the Hindoos: Including Translations from their Principal Works, In Four Volumes* (Serampore: Mission Press, 1811),

shop. Thanks to friends in high places like Lord Teignmouth and Charles Grant, Ward presented to the pinnacle of British society a report of his and his friends' most worthy accomplishments.

Ward had not been directly involved in the actual translation efforts, but his superintendence of the press secured the physical publication of these Indian language Bibles. As he once remarked to Andrew Fuller, Carey was good at one thing, but the "100 little things belonging to a Mission Settlement" generally devolved upon himself.[40] While Ward was the least qualified of the Serampore Trio to remark upon the quality of the translation efforts, he was the most fitting person to address the King's son-in-law, the nobility, and the high clergy. After all, he had been the spokesman for the Serampore Mission for twenty years.

Ward was in many ways out of his element as he returned to England. He left behind his most faithful friends in India and found that some of his British friendships among the Baptists had grown cold. He had returned to England for several reasons, and the most unpleasant reason of all was to salvage the relationship between the BMS committee and the Serampore Mission. The public sentiment and respectability of mission increased following the East India Company's loss of monopoly rights over India in 1813. Since then, every denomination wanted to have their own missionaries if they wanted to stay relevant to the British public in the evangelical nineteenth century. Those motivated by such respectability sough to administrate souls into the kingdom of God through efficiency and obedience to home command. The Serampore Missionaries would have none of that. Despite his irenic nature and hopes for peace, Ward was ultimately unsuccessful in mediating between the personalities on the committee and in the field. Fortunately for Ward, Serampore's separation from the BMS did not occur in his lifetime.

When Ward originally left behind his lowly Baptist friends in England in 1799, the idea of standing before princes, bishops, and presidents would have been as preposterous as Carey's invitation to print the Bible in India had seemed in 1793. Now, the entire Christian world had eyes and ears turned toward Serampore. As Ward toured England, Holland, and America, he championed the missiological principles he and his colleagues had developed as

[40] William Ward to Andrew Fuller, October 7, 1805.

early as 1805.[41] They were convinced that India would not be won by administration, nor missionary work in the Europeanized urban centers, but by native Indian friends who had believed the gospel and were willing to be trained for ministry throughout Bengal.

Conclusion

After a successful fundraising tour for the new Serampore College (est. 1818) among the Americans, Ward headed home for India. On the way, he produced not one, but two, new books for publication that contained his most mature reflections on the Bible and missionary theory and practice. Unsurprisingly, the title of his final production was *Farewell Letters to a Few Friends in Britain and American on Returning to Bengal in 1821*.[42] He could not have known that although he recovered his health while traveling, the first cholera pandemic would claim his life within two years' time. He died unexpectedly and quickly in the presence of his family and surrounded by his friends.

In his funeral sermon for Ward, Joshua Marshman characterized him as "formed by nature for kindness and friendship" who had the "peculiar" habit of treating "with the utmost kindness persons whose characters he regarded with contempt."[43] Ward was not one to give up on friends or to render final judgment on someone based on disagreements. Marshman could testify to this personally since he had been the one to cause Ward to famously quip, "I throw away the guns to preserve the ship."[44]

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[41] Samuel E. Masters and Peter de Vries, eds., *The Serampore Form of Agreement: A Commentary* (Ontario: Hesed and Emet, 2025).

[42] William Ward, *Farewell Letters to a Few Friends in Britain and America, on Returning to Bengal in 1821* (New York: Bliss and White, 1821).

[43] Joshua Marshman, *Divine Grace the Source of All Human Excellence* (Serampore: Mission Press, 1823).

[44] Ward to Fuller, December 15, 1807.

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Memory, Reason, and the Baptism Debate

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Introduction

John Calvin identified two necessary practices of the church: the preaching of the Word of God and the administering of the sacraments.[1] For Christians, the sacrament of baptism has its mandate found in the words of Jesus before his ascension in Matthew 28: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:18–20, ESV). Consequently, baptism is vital to Christian faith and practice, and pastors cannot neglect the place of baptism in the life of the church as they minister to the people of God.

Historically, there have been two main views concerning the beneficiaries of baptism. First, many Christians throughout the history of the church have affirmed paedobaptism. Paedobaptism (or infant baptism) simply means that baptism can be administered to infants and that it is good to do so.[2] Paedobaptism has

[1] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion Vol 2* ed. John T McNeil and trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 1278.

[2] The term "paedobaptism" might also merely refer to the baptism of infants. In its strongest form, paedobaptism might mean infants ought to be baptized, but this strong definition is difficult to clearly find in historical confessions or in contemporary practice. For example, the language of the Westminster Confession is ambiguous as it states that baptism is "rightly administered" to "Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized." See "The Westminster Confession of Faith A.D. 1647," Creeds of Christendom, Vol III, May 1, 2021, https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds3.iv.xvii.ii.html. Additionally, the Reformed theologian, Guy Richard says, "We wholeheartedly affirm that baptism is rightly administered to adults (never before baptized) when they profess faith in Christ. The term ***paedobaptist*** is thus something of a

been practiced by Christians from different traditions throughout church history such as Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, and Presbyterian. Thus, paedobaptism has a robust standing in the history of the church which cannot be readily dismissed.

The second main view regarding baptism is credobaptism. According to credobaptism, baptism is reserved only for those who have placed their faith in Christ as Lord. Credobaptism (or believer's baptism) is practiced within Baptist, Pentecostal, and Anabaptist traditions. It is worth pointing out that the two positions here are not infant baptism versus adult baptism. Rather, the alternative view to infant baptism is believer's baptism.[3]

The disagreement over the beneficiaries of baptism is a disagreement between brothers and sisters. There are reasonable and faithful Christians of goodwill on both sides of this debate. Nevertheless, Christian leaders ought to seek clarity on matters like this if they are going to function as servants of the church. Moreover, this question directly impacts families with children as to how or whether they should proceed with presenting them for baptism. So, the question regarding the subjects of baptism bears significant ecclesiological and pastoral weight and deserves our attention.

Although there are some interesting biblical-theological arguments for paedobaptism, there are three practical-philosophical arguments that demonstrate that it is better to practice credobaptism. The first two arguments consider significant goods infants fail to receive if they are "baptized" and the final argument takes a Pascal's Wager approach to the discussion around the proper subjects of baptism. After briefly laying out the first two arguments, I will engage with a possible objection from the Reformed tradition and conclude with the wager argument then address a final potential objection.

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misnomer. We don't merely baptize young children; we baptize both professing believers and their young children, and, in that sense, we are both credobaptist and paedobaptist. What distinguishes us from our credobaptist brothers and sisters is the word ***only***. Credobaptists baptize professing believers ***only***, whereas we baptize professing believers and their children." See Guy Richards, "Paedobaptism," *Tabletalk,* May 1, 2021, https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2020/04/paedobaptism/.

[3] David Wright, *What Has Infant Baptism Done to Baptism: An Enquiry at the End of Christendom* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2005), 35.

Memory and Reason

One way to judge an idea or practice is to look at its practical outworking (including its abuses). There are two brief anecdotes about baptism I would like to share, followed by two corresponding arguments.

Within my local Anglican church, there attends a godly elder man in his late seventies who served as the chair of the church vestry. He loves the Lord and has been a faithful follower of Christ for most of his life. In spite of his deep commitment to Christ, he had one problem: he possessed no recollection of his baptism. He may or may not have been baptized as an infant, but his parents are not alive to confirm whether he was baptized as an infant and he could not find any church records to point to his baptism. So the case before us is this: a man in his late seventies, faithfully walking with the Lord, and even a leader in the church is unsure of whether he had been baptized and needing to receive baptism! Indeed, even if he had been baptized as an infant, he would not personally know it since infants cannot remember their own baptism. That is to say, infants that are baptized literally cannot follow the admonition to remember their baptism.[4] Barring conditions such as Alzheimer's or traumatic brain injuries, such a situation would likely never happen within the framework of credobaptism. From this story, we can articulate the following argument:

1. Memory is a gift of God.
2. Memories of good events, people, places, etc. are a good thing.
3. It is better to remember a good event than to not remember a good event.
4. Baptism is a very good event.
5. It is better to remember one's baptism than to not remember one's baptism.
6. Infants are unable to remember good events.
7. Non-infants are able to remember good events.
8. Infants are unable to remember their baptism.
9. Non-infants are able to remember their baptism.

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[4] Throughout both testaments, the exhortation to "remember" and "not forget" is given to the people of God [Exodus 13:3; Deut. 5:15; Deut. 9:7, Psalm 119:61; Luke 24:6; John 15:20 (ESV)]. So, plausibly it is expected or at least encouraged that Christians remember their baptism [Romans 6 (ESV)].

10. Therefore, it is better to receive baptism as a non-infant than an infant.

I take for granted that premises 1–9 are relatively uncontroversial. If that is true, then the conclusion follows.

The second story comes from a college classmate. He was a committed Presbyterian, and in a theology class we shared, he gave a presentation on paedobaptism. He comedically shared that although he was baptized by his parents as an infant, he later had to explain to his parents as an adult why they baptized him as a newborn. Though we all found it amusing, we should agree it is less than ideal. Sadly, this is an all-too-common phenomena in which people baptize their babies without any good reasons, and children grow up to become nominally Christian. This is a serious concern, and it is voiced by the twentieth-century Swiss Reformed theologian, Karl Barth, who saw the cultural impact paedobaptism had on "Christian Europe" as it decimated the faith of the continent creating a civil, nominal, religion.[5] Once again, this story illustrates why it is better to wait on baptizing infants. We can develop the following argument:

1. Human beings are rational animals by divine design.
2. It is better to personally have reasons for participating in some action than not having reasons since an action can be better understood and appreciated if one has good reasons for why he participated in the action than if he did not have good reasons.
3. So, whenever possible, it is better to personally have good reasons for our actions.
4. Baptism is better enjoyed and appreciated if one has good reasons for why he is receiving baptism.[6]
5. Infants cannot have reasons for receiving baptism.
6. Non-infants can have reasons for receiving baptism.

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[5] See Karl Barth's *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1948).

[6] Gary Selby refers to the work of Kenneth Burke, to contend that the human mind possesses "'potentialities of appreciation'" for various processes of arrangement or structure in artistic works such as …drama." See his essay, "(Em)Bodying the Faith: Baptism as Ritual Communication" *Restoration Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2006): 1–10. Undoubtedly, baptism is a ritual performance in an ecclesial-liturgical drama as Paul describes baptism as a reperformance of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

7. Baptism cannot not be better understood and appreciated by infants than by non-infants.
8. Therefore, it is better to receive baptism as a non-infant than as an infant.

Again, I take for granted that premises 1–7 are true. On the whole, reason is a good.[7] What both of the above arguments demonstrate is that even if one can show that paedobaptism is not biblically prohibited, it still would not necessarily follow that we should baptize our babies.[8] In other words, a Christian could think that infants might be the recipients of baptism because Scripture does not forbid infant baptism, but still have philosophical or prudential reasons for withholding baptism from them.

Objections

The paedobaptist might respond that the good of being baptized is so great regardless of whether one is mindful during baptism or not. With the regard to the arguments specifically, a critic might claim that having reasons for baptism and remembering baptism do not sufficiently outweigh the benefit of simply receiving baptism. A parody argument might demonstrate that though to partake of food is a good event, from the fact that infants cannot possess reasons for eating or remember eating, it does not follow that children should not be fed. In other words, the mental state of the recipient of baptism is irrelevant; regardless of whether the subject is conscious or not, baptism bestows benefits of such importance that they must be received immediately.

Hence, in order to respond to the arguments from memory and reason the defender of paedobaptism would need to show act of receiving baptism is like the physical act of eating food in its urgency and significance for our well-being. The basis for such a claim could be grounded in one of two ways. First, a commitment to baptismal regeneration (as in the Lutheran tradition) might give one reason to think the benefits of baptism outweigh the goods of memory and reason. Second, more broadly because conscious

[7] Consider how the Bereans are commended as being "more noble" because they studied the Scriptures to see for themselves if what Paul said was true [Acts 17:11 (ESV)].

[8] A parallel argument could be made that even if Scripture permits the marriages of fourteen-year old persons, there might be good philosophical/prudential reasons to delay such a marriage.

faith is not considered a necessary condition in baptism in order for God's covenantal blessings to be bestowed, as in the Reformed tradition. For the purpose of this article, I will not address the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Instead, I will restrict my focus on the Reformed objection which claims that the baptized infant receives the benefits of covenant membership apart from conscious faith. Two responses can be made to the objection from Reformed theology. First, the goods of divine blessing, church participation, anticipation of faith that paedobaptists traditionally associate with baptism can be accomplished through infant dedication rather than baptism. At an infant dedication, the parents with the church call upon God to bless their child, include her into the life and activity of the local church, and hope that the child will give her allegiance to Christ as the parents instruct her in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Second, to claim that conscious faith is not a necessary condition for baptism's benefits and therefore receiving baptism as an infant or consciously is of no difference to the significance and meaning of baptism is dubious.

The Biblical Argument

Why think that conscious faith is not necessary in order to baptized? The primary argument in the Reformed tradition typically rests upon the practice of circumcision in the Old Covenant. Sinclair Ferguson correctly points out that, "Throughout the history of redemption, God's dealing with his people have always included the use of emblems. His epochal promises were illustrated and confirmed physically and visually as well as verbally."[9] He then goes on to say, "In a word baptism has the same symbolic significance in relationship to fellowship with God as did circumcision."[10] In other words, for Reformed paedobaptists, there continues to exist significant continuity between the old and new covenants regarding the inclusion of children. As Gavin Ortlund points out, among the European Reformed tradition the appeal to continuity with circumcision "drove the whole paedobaptist

[9] Sinclair Ferguson, "Infant Baptism View" in *Baptism: Three Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 84.

[10] Ibid., 87.

framework."[11] Why the connection between circumcision and baptism? The answer is found in Paul's letter to the Colossians. He writes, "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:11–12). John Calvin writes, "What do these words mean, except that the fulfillment and truth of baptism are also the truth and fulfillment of circumcision, since they signify the one and the same thing?"[12]

So, in Colossians 2 we see an apparent connection between circumcision and baptism. In the Old Covenant, circumcision functioned as a sign or seal of belonging to the covenant community. Moreover, this sign was applied even to newborn babies; infants were recipients of the sign. In the Old Testament, small babies (or other older males) were not asked to confess their faith in Yahweh prior to circumcision. Rather, simply belonging to the household of Abraham warranted circumcision. As God says to Abraham, "You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner" (Gn 17:11–12). In other words, the children of Abraham received the seal of the covenant.

In the new covenant, the paedobaptist argues, circumcision fades away, but the sign/seal of the covenant remains. The new sign of the covenant is now baptism. Thus, even as Abraham's sons were circumcised before they could speak or exercise faith, so too baptism should be applied to children who are not yet capable of conscious faith.[13]

The second biblical argument for infant baptism usually draws upon the household conversion narratives in Acts.[14] Charles Hodge writes, "When, therefore, the Apostles baptized a head of a family, it was a matter of course, that they should baptize his in-

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[11] Gavin Ortlund, "Why Not Grandchildren? An Argument Against Reformed Paedobaptism," *Themelios*, 45.2 (2020): 345.

[12] Calvin, *Institutes, Vol 2*, 1333.

[13] Richard Pratt Jr., "Reformed View" in *Understanding Four Views on Baptism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 71.

[14] There is also a reference to a household baptism in 1 Cor. 1:16.

fant children."[15] Hodge points out that throughout the book of Acts, we find the gospel message proclaimed and entire families coming to Christ at once (cf. Acts 10:44–48; 16:13–15, 30–34). For example, in Acts 16:15, after Lydia responds to the gospel, we are told that "she and the members of her household were baptized." The presumption is that among these households, there would have been very small babies. As Jason Helopoulos says it is "unlikely that none of the households that were baptized contained children."[16] Therefore, when the text says that the whole household was baptized, there must have been babies that were baptized as well.

The Philosophical Argument

In addition to the biblical arguments for no need of conscious of faith for baptism, there is at least one philosophical argument. Suppose a faithful and loving Christian family gives birth to a child with a mental disability. She is born unable to think and speak coherently. However, she is born into a Christian home with godly, Christian parents. What are her parents supposed to do? They are instructed by God to love her and raise her. Scripture also commands baptism, but the young girl seemingly cannot confess faith in Christ. Is she not allowed baptism? If the credobaptist answers no, then it appears cruel and unfair. But if the credobaptist answers yes, then it reasonably follows that a conscious profession of faith is unnecessary and small children can receive baptism and. So, the paedobaptist can argue that such a scenario demonstrates that a credobaptist view does not account well for cases like these, and children can therefore receive baptism, since it does not make sense to withhold baptism from this disabled child.

Response to the Biblical Argument

What should we make of the biblical arguments that conscious faith is not necessary in baptism? Consider first the argument from circumcision. It is undoubtedly true that there is some conti-

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[15] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology: Vol 3* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2013), 556.

[16] Jason Helopoulos, *Covenantal Baptism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing 2021), 47.

nuity between circumcision and baptism. However, there is also significant discontinuity. For example, the most obvious point of difference is that in the old covenant only males received the sign of the covenant. Yet, in the new covenant this is no longer the case. If one is to rest the baptism argument on circumcision, then why should baptism be administered to females? The answer is, as Paul says concerning those who are called to be in Christ, "But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:25–28). In other words, here is a way that baptism is unlike circumcision. It is precisely because of one's baptism through faith in Jesus, that a person is now in Christ.[17] That is to say, faith is not exclusive to males, but Old Testament circumcision was. This is a way baptism stands in discontinuity with circumcision: males and females can receive the seal, because baptism is received in faith. So, as John Piper explains, "under the New Covenant the people of God are not determined at all by physical descent, but by spiritual transformation, evidenced in faith."[18] Similarly, Karl Barth says, "This, then, is the situation in which a man who is awakened to Christian faith by Him in whom he believes asks for and actually receives Christian baptism . . . But he does it in obedience, as the first exemplary work of faith, of faithfulness to God."[19] In sum, God's purpose for humanity was never ultimately about physical circum-

[17] Some may object to this based upon the language of sacrament that the act of baptism is the work of divine grace and not the human person. Christ's atoning work on the cross is objective and universal. This is true, but such dichotomies between divine action and human action are unnecessary. The NT witness is clear that salvation is a gift received through allegiance to Christ alone. God's gift calls for the response of faith. Baptism is the work of God, but it is also man's "yes" in obedience to God. God is working in the one baptized confirming his gospel promises, but the person being baptized is also an active agent as he confesses his faith visibly. If this were not so, there would be no reason not to baptize anyone and everyone. Such a theological framework in which the human person is completely passive carries with it inevitable undertones of universalism.

[18] John Piper, "Infant Baptism and the New Covenant Community" *Desiring God,* 13 Feb 1993, https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/infant-baptism-and-the-new-covenant-community

[19] Karl Barth, *CD* IV.4 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1956), 44.

cision, it was about obedience—allegiance; it was about circumcision of the heart (Jr. 4:4).

Furthermore, Protestant theologian Gavin Ortlund points out another serious problem with the argument from circumcision. He writes,

> The lines of covenant throughout the Old Testament were not drawn around particular believing households within Israel, but around the national family of Abraham that comprised an intergenerational people. It was not the spiritual or covenantal status of the mother and/or father of an infant Israelite boy, in itself, that established their right to circumcision, but rather their identification as the spring"(זֶרַע)of Abraham.
>
> This raises the question: if the basis for infant baptism is infant circumcision, and infant circumcision was practiced intergenerationally, should not infant baptism be practiced intergenerationally as well? In other words, why should the grandchildren of believers not be considered eligible for baptism?[20]

Consider that in the Old Testament, if Joe was an Israelite and someone discovered that he was a descendant of Abraham, it would not matter whether Joe's father was a believer in Yahweh or not, he would need to be circumcised. Ortlund invites us to picture a parallel scenario in which John Sr. is a devout Christian, his son John Jr. is not, and John III is a newborn child. According to the argument from circumcision, John III should be eligible for baptism since what matters was that one was a descendant of Abraham.[21] However, if John III should not be considered as a proper candidate for baptism, why not? What is the difference here? The credobaptism answer as previously alluded to is that entrance into the covenant is through faith. This poses a significant problem for the paedobaptist position.[22]

Finally, consider again the Colossians passage on which the link between baptism and circumcision rests. When Paul describes the circumcision that we have undergone, he describes it as a circumcision "made without hands" (i.e. not physical) that was made

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[20] Gavin Ortlund, "Why Not Grandchildren," 336.

[21] Ibid., 335.

[22] Ortlund offers three possible answers the paedobaptist can give in response to this objection.

possible through the "circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11–12). In other words, the circumcision Paul describes here refers to a spiritual reality in which one is united with Christ. How is one united to Christ? Through the cutting off of Jesus Christ which is to say Christ's crucifixion and death. Paul connects circumcision to our union with Christ through our uniting with the cross of Christ. As David Garland writes, "It is a circumcision experienced by Christ, thus referring metaphorically to his death."[23] Put simply, the circumcision of Christ is more likely the crucifixion of Christ. Interestingly, Paul goes on to say that we die with Christ, but then he explains how we are raised with Christ: *through faith*. So, in the same verse that Paul mentions baptism as a sign of dying with Christ, Paul also speaks of faith in God as our resurrection with Christ. Hence the Colossians 2 passage is too ambiguous to be used as a proof text to link baptism and circumcision. In fact, James Dunn writes, "the new covenant equivalent of old covenant circumcision is the circumcision of the heart . . . not baptism; and membership of the new covenant is through faith in Christ Jesus."[24] Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the connection between baptism and circumcision in the New Testament is not strong enough to warrant infant baptism.

What about the second biblical argument from the household conversions? There is simply no evidence that the families described in those New Testament passages had babies, and to assume so is arguing from silence. As Dunn notes regarding infant baptism in the early church, "the case is hardly proved, since it is far from certain that the households included small children."[25] If anything, from a probability perspective it is far more likely that there were *not* people under the age of two than there were human persons above the age of two. As a matter of fact, there are many households, even large households, that do not have infants in them. Instead, what we do find explicitly repeated in Acts is the pattern of gospel proclamation, repentance, followed by water baptism, and this is consistent with Paul's teaching on baptism as enacted in faith. As Robert Gagnon writes,

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[23] David Garland, *Colossians and Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 148.

[24] James Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 161.

[25] Ibid.

> Every mention of water baptism in Acts indicates that it is something done on the spot, immediately upon some concrete indication of faith in Christ: the 3000 in Jerusalem (2:41); the Samaritans (8:12-13); the Ethiopian eunuch (8:36, 38); Paul (9:18; 22:16); Cornelius and his household (10:47-48); Lydia and her household (16:15); the Philippian jailer and all who were his (who were baptized 'at once'; 16:33); "many of the Corinthians" (18:8); and the disciples of John the Baptizer (19:5). Basic repentance and acceptance of the gospel were the sole preconditions.[26]

G.R. Beasley Murray similarly says that the New Testament writers' theology of faith and baptism is constructed "on the presupposition that baptism is administered to converts."[27] So, given the explicit evidence of the repeated sequence of baptism after repentance in contrast to the assumption that babies were baptized in household conversions, it is wiser to go with the explicit evidence. Even Richard Pratt Jr., a defender of paedobaptism, concedes the point: "Reformed commentators readily admit that the NT does not explicitly or indisputably illustrate the baptism of children."[28] Consequently, Dunn writes, "For it has to be recognized that infant baptism can find no real support in the theology of baptism which any NT writer can be shown to espouse."[29] So, this turns out to be an unconvincing argument. Hence, Karl Barth appropriately concludes, "One can hardly come to any other conclusion but that the case for a New Testament proof of infant baptism is more than weak."[30]

Response to the Philosophical Argument

The argument for paedobaptism based on children with mental disabilities also raises within in us our sympathies. This is undoubtedly a difficult situation for all the people involved. Given a revealed theology of nature, as Christians have traditionally af-

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[26] Robert Gagnon "Baptism" in *Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization Vol 1*, ed. George Thomas Kurian (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 200.

[27] G.R. Beasley Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 274.

[28] Richard Pratt Jr. "Reformed View" in *Understanding Four Views on Baptism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007),71.

[29] Dunn, *Unity and Diversity*, 160.

[30] Karl Barth, *CD* IV.4 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1956),45.

firmed, we might gain further clarity in this case. In asking the question what does it mean to be human, we can answer theologically by saying that it means to be an image bearer of God, and we can answer philosophically: human beings are potentially rational animals. Though this definition can be traced back to Aristotle, it is picked up by later Christian thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas. They point out that our unique characteristic activity as human beings is our rational function.[31] Humans beings not only can taste, smell, and count, but we can actually form abstract thoughts and freely choose to love someone based upon reasons we might develop.[32] Ecclesiological theology, like moral theology, should be constructed upon that which is normative, not that which is the exception, and teleology is the basis on which we can properly adjudicate what is normative. If there is a created human nature that is aimed at a proper end, and if some human being cannot actualize that end, she is still human, but her ability to actualize her potential created end is frustrated. The characteristic activity of humans is to reason, and when actualizing that end is frustrated, there is something broken. We should be hesitant about extrapolating a rule based upon that which is broken or upon exceptions to some prior well-established rule. In the same way that it is good to feed the hungry, or abstain from lying, there might be aberrant situations in which we are called to do the opposite. Similarly, a mentally impaired person presumably could not follow several instructions found in Scripture, like meditation on God's Word, prayer, and evangelism, yet we do not conclude that such instructions are therefore no longer binding to those who can obey those instructions (i.e. those for whom their reason is not impaired). A revealed theology of nature from Scripture and reason demonstrate that such mental disabilities are not normative. God is gracious to such persons, but we must be careful to develop theological structures based upon those human persons which are not normative as revealed in creation.

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[31] See Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* Books I and II. See Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* I 75:3.

[32] Even if one denies Aristotle's definition of a human, we cannot deny the central and unique function of reason as a good within created humans gifted to us by God. Perhaps we are more than potentially rational animals, but we are not less than that.

The Wager Argument

This leads us to conclude that the claim that conscious faith in the subject being baptized is not necessary to receive baptism's benefits lacks strong warrant. Nevertheless, suppose still one remains agnostic about the issue of baptizing infants, what is he supposed to do? Maybe he feels that the paedobaptism/credobaptism debate has gone on for a long time, with each side unable to demonstrate through biblical-theological evidence that their position is correct. So, to the person who feels like he is at an impasse on this issue, what ought he to do? According to the paedobaptist understanding of baptism, it is not that there is anything unbiblical with being baptized as an older person who has put conscious faith in Christ, rather the Church should include infants for baptism; the paedobaptist simply extends the sacrament to infants. At most the paedobaptist might say to someone who has waited to receive baptism, "It's unfortunate that you were not baptized sooner since you could have been baptized as an infant." But the baptism is not void because someone waited until he had conscious faith. As Presbyterian scholar Sinclair Ferguson says, "In fact we are all Baptists. Furthermore, paedobaptists baptize believers and their children, including infants."[33] On the other hand, if credobaptism is correct, then infant baptism is at best a defective form of baptism and at worst not true baptism at all since the credobaptist believes baptism ought to be accompanied by conscious faith of the one being baptized. Therefore, if after one weighs the evidence for and against paedobaptism/credobaptism, and he finds the evidence inconclusive, he is justified to become a credobaptist as a matter of practical caution.

The Historical Argument

In response to this argument, the paedobaptist might respond, "Why not place one's bet with the consensus of church tradition as a matter of practical caution?" As previously mentioned, infant baptism has been the predominant practice of the church for centuries across almost all Christian traditions: Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant. Significant thinkers and saints throughout the church from Augustine to Thomas Aquinas to Martin Luther all

[33] Sinclair Ferguson, "Infant Baptism View" in *Baptism: Three Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 78.

affirmed the practice of baptizing infants. Gregg Allison points out that, "Infant baptism continues to be practiced among Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican/Episcopalian, and other evangelicals."[34] The strong historical tradition offers a compelling reason to hesitate before abandoning infant baptism. Kevin DeYoung notes, the "weight of church history" encourages paedobaptism.[35] Humility compels the contemporary orthodox believer to stay with where the church has always been on an issue rather than to move away.

Response to the Historical argument

The historical argument for paedobaptism is perhaps the most persuasive argument. The near uniformity of the Christian church on this position is compelling and should give one serious pause before dismissing it. Nevertheless, our theological convictions should first and foremost be grounded in Scripture. Church tradition can still serve as a guide, even an important guide, but it cannot be the ultimate authority. As the Anabaptist martyr, Balthasar Hubmaier says, "I will trust Cyprian, councils, and other teaching just as far as they use the Holy Scripture, and not more."[36]

That being said, there is good evidence that infant baptism was not practiced in the very early church. As already noted, there is not a single instance of a baptism of a baby in the New Testament. Furthermore, in the *Didache*, one of the earliest apostolic documents which can be dated back to the first century, there are no instructions concerning baptism for infants.[37] This seems odd if infant baptism was observed, considering the *Didache* was a sort of apostolic manual for Christian life and it includes many directions in case of certain contingencies. But nowhere does it give instructions about how infants are to be baptized. Rather the instructions

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[34] Gregg Allison, *Historical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 633.

[35] Kevin DeYoung, "A Brief Defense of Infant Baptism" *Gospel Coalition* March 12, 2015 https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/a-brief-defense-of-infant-baptism/.

[36] Balthasar Hubmaier, "On Infant Baptism Again Oecoloampad," *Balthasar Hubmaier* trans and edited by H Wayne Pipkin and John H. Yoder (Herald Press, 1989), 280.

[37] The Greek text of the *Didache* had been lost and was discovered in the 19th century.

presume that only adults are the recipients of baptism. The *Didache* provides these directions about baptism:

> Concerning baptism baptize as follows: after you have reviewed all these things [with those who are about to be baptized], baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" in running water. But if you have no running water, then baptize into some other water; and if you are not able to baptize in cold water, then do so in warm. But if you have neither, then pour water upon the head three times "in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit." And before the baptism, let the one baptizing and the one who is to be baptized fast, as well as any other who are able. Also, you must order the one who is to be baptized to fast for one or two days beforehand.[38]

Given how specific the instructions are, it is strange that there is no mention of how to baptize infants if infant baptism was practiced. Indeed, the instructions presuppose that only non-infants are baptized. In the directives, there is room for flexibility but there is an order to the one being baptized to fast for a day beforehand. This raises the question, how might a newborn baby fast for one to two days beforehand? It is implausible the apostles were issuing such a command. Moreover, not only was fasting in preparation for baptism but so was ceasing of sins and renouncing evil. Gregg Allison points out, "It goes without saying that only people who were willing to break with theirs sins while learning the teachings of the Christian faith could be catechumens, preparing themselves for baptism. This practice seemed to rule out infants and little children from participating."[39] Steven McKinion also writes, "had the Didache conceived of an instance in which infant baptism would be practiced the instructions for such a ceremony would most certainly have been included in the manual. The absence of specific instructions for baptizing infants in the baptismal liturgies and church orders long into the fourth and fifth centuries imply that the infant baptism was a liturgical innovation that did not find universal acceptance."[40]

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[38] "Didache" *New Advent* April 7, 2025 http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0714.htm

[39] Gregg Allison, *Historical Theology,* 618.

[40] Steve McKinion, "Believers' Baptism in the Patristic Writings" *Southeastern Theological Review*, 14.2 (Fall 2023), 81.

Additionally, we have evidence of the controversy around paedobaptism from the early church father Tertullian who is critical of offering baptism to infants. Church historian Gregg Allison writes, "One of the most important developments in the early church's view of baptism was its switch from baptizing people who could consciously participate in the rite to baptizing infants."[41] Tertullian, living during this transition, writes, "According to everyone's condition and disposition, and also his age, the delaying of baptism is more profitable, especially in the case of little children."[42] This is the earliest explicit reference to child baptism in the church. Evidently, the practice of infant baptism was not a given in the early church, and according to Beasley-Murray, there was "wide-spread hesitation about infant baptism" even until the fourth century.[43] In fact, St. Basil of Caesarea and his brother St. Gregory of Nyssa, both champions of orthodox faith, living in the fourth century were not baptized until their adulthood, though they grew up in a Christian household.[44] Thus, while paedobaptism has been practiced by the majority of Christians in the past, it is highly questionable whether it was in fact practiced by the early church. So, church historian David Wright concludes, "The baptismal experience of the church of the early Fathers was largely believer's baptism, or perhaps better conversion-baptism. Historical study is steadily consolidating the conclusion that infant baptism did not really come into its own as the common practice until after Augustine, perhaps in the sixth century."[45]

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Tertullian, "On Baptism" *New Advent* May 1, 2021, https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0321.htm.

[43] G.R. Beasley Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 306.

[44] Robert Gagnon, in *Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization Vol 1*, ed. George Thomas Kurian (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 201.

[45] David Wright, *Infant Baptism in Historical Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 367. Steve McKinion also says, "Due to the dual pressures of infant mortality and evolving views of the sinfulness of even newborn infants, the novel practice of baptizing infants became widespread by the third century. This practice was not accepted as universal even by the fourth century, as infants' need for forgiveness continued to be questioned. In both the third and fourth centuries theologians continued to argue for only the baptism of believers." "Believers' Baptism in the Patristic Writings" *Southeastern Theological Review*, 14.2 (Fall 2023), 96.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are significant goods infants cannot possess if they are baptized, namely having reasons for their baptism and remembering their baptism.[46] While the Reformed paedobaptist can respond that conscious faith is not essential for the benefits of baptism, the biblical and early historical record for infant baptism is questionable at best and weak at worst. As Robert Gagnon explains, "The main problem with proponents of infant baptism is that conscious faith in Jesus Christ is everywhere viewed in the NT as the main prerequisite for water baptism."[47] Philosophers of knowledge recognize that beliefs are first person subjective. The simple truth is that nobody can believe for you; beliefs are located in individual subjects. Beliefs cannot be transferred from one person to another by proxy alone. In fact, Scripture describes families being divided as a result of Christ's authority (Lk 12:53). Therefore, God will judge each of us on an individual basis as to how we responded to His revelation (Ez 18:2; Rom 2:6). Christian ministers cannot ignore this as they administer the sacraments. Baptism must be treated with the utmost seriousness. It is an act that demonstrates our allegiance to King Jesus and entrance into the covenant community, and therefore this cannot be done lightly. People should be given the right opportunity to participate in its fullness— to remember this sacred act and have reasons for undergoing it, and therefore infants should not be baptized.

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[46] To be clear, young children need not undergo an intense spiritual experience prior to baptism. But it is good that they remember it and have reasons for it.

[47] Robert Gagnon, in *Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization Vol 1*, ed. George Thomas Kurian (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2011),

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Effective Preaching in the 21st Century: Lessons Gleaned from the Sermons of Martin Luther King Jr.

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Introduction

> The record of Christian history has been that the strength of the church is directly related to the strength of the pulpit. When the message from the pulpit has been uncertain and faltering, the church has been weak; when the pulpit has given a positive, declarative message, the church has been strong. The need for effective preaching has never been greater.[1]

During the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, America was embroiled in a war on racism and battles for justice and equality. Effective preaching was needed because preaching does what politics cannot do, that is, transform the hearts of the people. I believe the most effective preacher in this era was Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. Often called a "drum major," Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a general. He led his troops of Christian soldiers to non-violently protest the unfulfilled promises of constitutional civil liberties for America's Black citizens, namely, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."[2]

Though Dr. King's ministry and life was short-lived, he had a significant impact on American history.[3] King was selected as one of the *Ten Greatest Preachers of the Twentieth Century* by Preaching

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[1] John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons,* ed. Vernon Stanfield, 4th ed. (San Francisco, FL: HarperCollins, 1979), 7.

[2] Martin Luther King Jr., "I Have A Dream," accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.npr.org/2010/01/18/122701268/i-have-a-dream-speech-in-its-entirety.

[3] Martin Luther King was 39 years old when he was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

Magazine in 2010.[4] John Henry Williams Jr., professor of religion at Selma University,[5] stated, "the test of the Black sermon's veracity is the outcome or effectiveness of its application in the life of the congregation."[6] The desegregation of buses in Montgomery, Alabama, people marching over fifty miles from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery, Alabama, and the tens of thousands of people gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., are symbols of Dr. King's effectiveness as a preacher. So why was Dr. King an effective preacher? How is his preaching relevant for the twenty-first century preacher? This article is an endeavor to answer these questions. In this article, I will introduce the reader to Dr. King through a brief biographical sketch. Then I will identify several characteristics of Dr. King's preaching, which made him an effective preacher. The article will conclude with practical guidelines for preaching effective sermons in the twenty-first century based on the elements identified in Dr. King's preaching.

A Biographical Sketch of Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. King's father, also called "Daddy" King, was the pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church of Atlanta, Georgia. Martin King grew in his understanding of Christianity by studying and graduating from Morehouse College (BA), Crozer Divinity School (BDiv), and Boston University School of Theology (PhD). After matriculating at Boston University, he served as pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. While pastoring Dexter Avenue, he was a primary spokesperson for the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which began December 5, 1955. For more than a year, the Black citizens of Montgomery, Alabama, did not ride public transportation. Previous boycotts failed, but this boy-

[4] Michael Duduit, "The Ten Greatest Preachers of the Twentieth Century," *Preaching Magazine,* accessed June 2, 2025, https://www.preaching.com/articles/the-ten-greatest-preachers-of-the-twentieth-century/.

[5] Selma University is a historical Black college and university founded by the Alabama State Missionary Baptist Convention in 1878 to train Black Baptist ministers.

[6] Jesse Lawrence Nelson, "Equipping Selected Ministers of Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church, Panama City, Florida with Essential Expository Preaching Skills" (DMin proj. rpt., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018),16.

cott led to the desegregation of buses and economically crippled the busing system.[7]

Dr. King's voice for social justice and racial equality in America grew stronger and louder over the next thirteen years of his life. He received the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in bridging the gap between Blacks and Whites in America. Dr. King went to jail, led marches for freedom, and delivered hundreds of speeches about love, peace, respect, equality, harmony, and justice.

Dr. King delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech to tens of thousands of Americans while he stood on the footsteps of the Lincoln Memorial in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. Though he stood in the shadow of a giant statue, Dr. King was a giant in his own right. He had a giant belief that all people are created equal. He had a giant heart to love those who hated him. He had a giant vision to see a different America.[8]

In his last speech, Dr. King mentioned being on the mountain top and seeing the other side of the African American travail for freedom and equality. Tragically, Dr. King did not make it to the other side. He was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee, on the balcony of the Lorraine Hotel.[9] However, his dream of little Black boys and Black girls joining hands with little White boys and little White girls in the state of Alabama is becoming a reality. Therefore, his dream did not die. The dream took root and blossomed in the hearts and minds of many Americans.

Close Reading: A Research Methodology for Sermon Analysis

In preparing this article, I identified seven characteristics of King's preaching which made him an effective preacher through a close reading of his sermons. "Close reading is the mindful, disciplined reading of an object [text] with a view to deeper understanding of its meaning."[10] A close reading consists of three steps:

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[7] Clayborne Carson, "Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968)", *Blackpast.org*, accessed May 31, 2025, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/king-martin-luther-jr-1929-1968/.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Martin Luther King Jr., "I've Been to the Mountaintop", *Blackpast.org,* accessed May 31, 2025. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/1968-martin-luther-king-jr-i-ve-been-mountaintop/.

[10] Barry Brummett. *Techniques of Close Reading* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2019), 2.

1. Establish the text's readability and the reason for reading it, 2. Identify the type of text for reading and explore the text through observing information of interest, and 3. Conclude the reading by interpreting the observation, analysis, and presentation of the text.[11]

Close reading is a methodology used for historical, cultural, literary, and rhetorical studies. Close reading is historically associated with the development of hermeneutics, which is used by pastors to interpret the biblical text for sermonic presentations.[12] In the past twenty years, close reading has been utilized in homiletical studies for sermon analysis. *God for Us: An Analysis and Assessment of Dutch Reformed Preaching during the Apartheid Years* is a close reading published by Johan Cilliers, a South African practical theologian and retired professor of Stellenbosch University in South Africa. Frank Thomas, Professor of Homiletics at Christian Theological Seminary, analyzed a Gardner Taylor sermon using close reading in his *Introduction to the Practice of African American Preaching.* Earle J. Fisher, a PhD student at the University of Memphis, analyzed Albert Cleage's sermons and published it in his article, "Brother Malcolm, Dr. King, and Black Power—A Close and Complimentary Reading."[13]

For this study, I conducted a close reading of Martin Luther King's sermons. I selected five sermons preached in the last year of King's life.[14] I selected this period because it was the pinnacle of King's preaching ministry. From my close reading of King's sermons, I identified seven primary characteristics. His sermons were biblical, dialogical, ethical, practical, rhetorical, theological, and visual.

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[11] Ane Ohrvik 2024, "What Is Close Reading? An Exploration of a Methodology." *Rethinking History* 28 (2): 248–250. doi:10.1080/13642529.2024.2345001.

[12] Ohrvik, "What is Close Reading? An Exploration of a Methodology." 242.

[13] Fisher's article was published in Black Theology 18, no. 3 (2020): 263-87, https://doi.org/10.1080/14769948.2020.1833968.

[14] "Three Dimensions of a Complete Life" (April, 1967), "Why Jesus Called a Man a Fool" (August, 1967), "The Drum Major Instinct" (February, 1968), "Unfulfilled Dreams" (March, 1968), and "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution" (March, 1968) are the sermons analyzed for this close reading. The sermons are archived at Stanford University as part of the Martin Luther King Jr. Papers Project.

Martin Luther King's Homiletical Method

Many people acknowledge Dr. King as an exquisite orator, but he was also an excellent preacher. So what made Dr. King an effective preacher? My close reading of his sermons notated seven homiletical characteristics which made him an effective preacher.

Biblical

First, Dr. King's sermons were biblical. According to Dr. King, the preaching of the twentieth century did not address biblical doctrines like the Trinity or the virgin birth. The preaching of his era focused on social problems and adjusting individuals to the complex issues of modern society.[15] Instead of deriving sermons from Scripture, some sermons were based on a novel or newspaper article.[16] However, the Bible was the source of King's sermons. I observed that each sermon in this close reading was developed from a biblical text.[17] As a paragon of the Black preaching tradition, the Bible influenced the shape, content, images, and stories of King's sermons.[18]

Robert Smith Jr., Distinguished Professor of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School, stated the following about the biblical nature of King's preaching:

> Though his theological training was provided in a context of theological liberalism, as King's ministry progressed — as pastor of Montgomery's Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, then Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church — his preaching grew increasingly more evangelical and biblical. His sermons became more Christ-centered, with a growing emphasis on the cross.[19]

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[15] Martin Luther King Jr., "Preaching Ministry," accessed May 31, 2025, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/preaching-ministry.

[16] King, "Preaching Ministry."

[17] The following is the title of the sermons and the biblical text for each sermon:"Three Dimensions of a Complete Life" (Revelation 21:16), "Why Jesus Called a Man a Fool" (Luke 12:13-21), "The Drum major Instinct" (Mark 10:35-44), and "Unfulfilled Dreams" (1 Kings 8:1-21), "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution" (Revelation 21:5).

[18] Jesse L. Nelson, "A Grounded Theory Analysis of three African American Expository Preachers of the Baptist Tradition in the Twenty-First Century" (PhD diss., Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa, 2025), 195.

[19]Duduit, "The Ten Greatest Preachers of the Twentieth Century."

Dialogical

Dr. King's preaching was also dialogical. When reading a King sermon, one will note two responses. One may observe the audience speaking back to King by saying: amen, yes sir, talk sir, speak doctor, and that's right. Black homileticians refer to this as "call and response."[20] However, one may also notice the silence. The audience responded to King's statements because King said something relative or simple to intellectually digest. When the audience was silent, the people were thinking about King's words. They were processing his statements. They were silently dialoguing with him.

Dr. King's sermons were engaging. He would ask the audience questions as a form of dialogue and interaction.[21] James Forbes, pastor emeritus of Riverside Church of New York, stated,

> Dr. King's style actually has probably impacted all of us preachers here in the United States of America. The first impact was that he always combined a kind of approach to thought and to feeling. He addressed your head. You had to think in a King sermon, but you also were going to feel.[22]

Ethical

In addition to being dialogical, King's sermons were ethical. He addressed the moral issues of his congregation and the community. James Forbes stated,

> Yes, I think the fact that almost always he was addressing issues that were current in the day, social, economic and political. But he brought the biblical story to bear and often would tell the story and then apply it, or sometimes would describe the nature of the crisis and then bring a biblical image to bear on it.[23]

Dr. King viewed preaching as a dual process. He preached to change the soul of the people, so society may change. On the oth-

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[20] Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art,* (Nashville, Abingdon Press), 92-93.

[21] Forbes, Interview.

[22] Ibid.

[23] *James A. Forbes Jr., interview by Phillip Martin, NPR News and Notes, January 16, 2006, accessed May 31, 2025,* https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5159329.

er hand, King attempted to transform society to change individual souls.[24] According to Robert Smith, Dr. King was a pastor and prophet in the pulpit. He saw no difference between preaching the Bible and addressing [ethical] issues in society. Smith also stated, [King challenged] "Christians to blend their theology with their ethics, and to translate their faith in God in the social, economic and political struggle, while not being afraid to use philosophy and formal reasoning."[25]

Practical

Dr. King's sermons were also practical. King's sermons made a practical application of Christianity to the contemporary audience.[26] Some of the sermon content was "how-to," while other content was "hands-on." The sermon "Loving Your Enemies" included "how-to" content. First, one must analyze self. Second, they must discover the element of God in their enemy. Third, they cannot defeat the enemy, even if they have the opportunity to do it. The "hands-on" content of King's sermons called the audience to action. In the following excerpt from "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution," is a call to action,

> We are coming to ask America to be true to the huge promissory note that it signed years ago. And we are coming to engage in dramatic nonviolent action, to call attention to the gulf between promise and fulfillment; to make the invisible visible. Why do we do it this way? We do it this way because it is our experience that the nation doesn't move around questions of genuine equality for the poor and for black people until it is confronted massively, dramatically in terms of direct action… And I submit that nothing will be done until people of goodwill put their bodies and their souls in motion. And it will be the kind of soul force brought into being as a result of this confrontation that I believe will make the difference.[27]

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[24] King, "Preaching Ministry."

[25] Duduit, "The Ten Greatest Preachers of the Twentieth Century."

[26] Mervyn A. Warren, *King Came Preaching: The Pulpit Power of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), 169.

[27] Martin Luther King Jr., "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution," accessed May 31, 2025, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/publications/knock-midnight-inspiration-great-sermons-reverend-martin-luther-king-jr-10.html.

Rhetorical

Dr. King's sermons were also rhetorical. Ralph West stated, "When you listen to the 'Preacher King's' speeches or sermons, the elements of rhetoric are distinguishable: ethos, pathos, and logos."[28] Mervyn A. Warren, author of *King Came Preaching*, noted several elements of Dr. King's ethos. First, Dr. King lived by his convictions. Second, King was competent to deliver on his promises. Third, he had a reputation for being a persuasive preacher. Finally, King possessed goodwill and considered a 'helping hand for humanity.'[29] Dr. King's ethos was solidified as he risked his life to lead a revolution for justice.

In regard to Dr. King's logos, West also stated, "The logos was always there, the cry of all the biblical prophets concentrated into one voice."[30] King's logos made sense of the sermon's content. He integrated logos in three ways. Dr. King reasoned from example or generalization. He used analogy. King also integrated causal relation, which is, cause to effect or effect to cause.[31]

Dr. King's pathos may be the most noted element of his rhetoric. "The pathos of his memorable cadences reflected the cry of 400 years of injustice articulated in the voice of one chosen man."[32] Dr. King stirred audience's hearts and moved them to action. His passion made him one of the most compelling preachers of the twentieth century.[33] His sermons appealed to the intellect, imagination, and heart.[34] For King, the minister must be sincere and intelligent. The preacher needs more than charisma. An effective preacher must be filled with the Spirit.[35]

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[28] Ralph West, "How Martin Luther King Jr., has influenced my preaching," *Preaching Today,* accessed August 1, 2018, https://www.preachingtoday.com/skills/2016/january/reflections-on-martin-luther-king-jr.html.

[29] Warren, *King Came Preaching*, 78-79.

[30] West, "How Martin Luther King Jr., has influenced my preaching."

[31] Warren, *King Came Preaching*, 87-90.

[32] West, "How Martin Luther King Jr., has influenced my preaching."

[33] Duduit, "The Ten Greatest Preachers of the Twentieth Century."

[34] Warren, *King Came Preaching*, 91.

[35] King, "Preaching Ministry."

Theological

Dr. King's sermons were also theological. The concept of a personal and knowable God was foundational to King's preaching. King described God as,

> A personal God, who's concerned about us, who is our Father, who is our Redeemer. And this sense of religion and of this divine companionship says to us . . . that we are not lost in a universe fighting for goodness and for justice and love all by ourselves."[36]

Through preaching, King encouraged individuals to know God for themselves. He made the Incomprehensible comprehensible. King asserted that the knowable God desired a personal relationship with each individual, and God could be known through Jesus Christ.[37] King's sermons also addressed the nature of God, for example, His love, mercy, righteousness, and justice. King's sermons elucidated the idea that a genuine encounter and relationship with God would cause one to be compassionate towards humanity and their socioeconomic-political plight.[38]

Visual

Finally, Dr. King's sermons were visual. The audience could feel King's sermons because they could see his sermons. King's sermons painted a portrait enabling people to see love, justice, racial equality, and freedom. According to Forbes,

> His messages had images, but the images always were muscular; by that, I mean his images required you to think about what action is necessary in order to rise to the occasion. Whatever he said, the image managed to get both into your mind and then it would, in a sense, trickle down into your soul and eventually it would be down to your feet where you were ready to take some action about what he said.[39]

The follow excerpt from the sermon "Why Jesus Called a Man a Fool" is an example of visualization in King's sermons.

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[36] Martin Luther King Jr., Encyclopedia, s.v. "Personalism," accessed May 31, 2025, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/personalism.

[37] King, "Personalism."

[38] Warren, *King Came Preaching*, 169.

[39] Forbes, Interview.

> So many people become so involved in looking at the man-made lights of the city that they forget to think about that great cosmic light that gets up early in the morning in the eastern horizon and moves with a kind of symphony of motion like a masterly queen strolling across a mansion and paints its technicolor across the blue as it moves—a light that man could never make. Some people have become so involved in looking at the skyscraping buildings of the cities that they've forgotten to think about the gigantic mountains, kissing the skies, as if to bathe their peaks in the lofty blue—something that man could never make. So many people have become so involved in televisions and radar that they've forgotten to think about the beautiful stars that bedeck the heavens like swinging lanterns of eternity, standing there like shining silvery pins sticking in the magnificent blue pincushion—something that man could never make."[40]

Guidelines for Effective Preaching

After identifying the seven characteristics that made Dr. King an effective preacher, I will now answer the question: what lessons can a preacher glean from the sermons of Dr. King for effective preaching in the twenty-first century? In correspondence to the seven characteristics, I will provide seven principles for effective preaching. First, effective preaching is biblical. The preacher must preach Bible-centered messages. This means the biblical text is the foundation of the sermon. The preacher must exegete the passage to understand the text in its original setting and explain the passage in a manner that the contemporary audience can understand and apply the preaching text to their modern context. Therefore, the main idea of the text must be the main idea of the sermon. The points of the sermon should reveal to the congregation how the main idea of the sermon is connected to the text and how they can live the text every day.

Second, effective preaching is dialogical. How does the preacher integrate dialogue into the sermon? Kenton Anderson provides

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[40] Martin Luther King Jr., "Why Jesus Called a Man a Fool," accessed May 31, 2025, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/why-jesus-called-man-fool-sermon-delivered-mount-pisgah-missionary-baptist.

nine ways to engage in dialogue through preaching: (1) preach inductive sermons, (2) answer questions the audience may ask, (3) application, (4) interviews and testimonies during the preaching event, (5) collaborative sermon preparation, (6) conversational delivery, (7) note-taking with fill-in-the-blank handouts, (8) sermon evaluation by listeners, and (9) being accessible to the audience.[41] Of the aforementioned suggestions, which ones can you integrate into your sermon this Sunday? Answering questions the audience may ask, practical application, providing the audience with a fill-in-the blank handout, and being available to the audience post-sermon are four simple techniques you can employ in your next sermon.

Third, effective preaching is ethical. The ethical preacher must be pastoral and prophetic. Pastorally, the preacher must exegete the congregation to understand their ethic. According to Matthew Kim, the preacher exegetes the congregation by understanding their beliefs, rituals, idols, dreams, theology, and experiences. The preacher should also engage the congregation in their context by attending events and fellowshipping with them.[42] While preparing the sermon, the preacher should consider the various questions the audience may ask about the text in relation to their ethics and culture.[43]

Prophetically, the preacher addresses the issues of society impacting the congregation. Effective preaching will contend with local and global concerns, whether religious, social, political, financial, cultural, or racial.[44] The effective preacher needs to speak prophetically to the problems in society and in the church using the word of God for correction and direction. However, moral change will not occur without society embracing and reflecting the

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[41] Kenton C. Anderson, "Preaching as Dialogue," *Preaching Magazine,* accessed August 25, 2018, https://www.preaching.com/articles/preaching-as-dialogue/.

[42] Matthew D. Kim, *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence: Understanding the People Who Hear Our Sermons* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics), 18-19.

[43] Ibid., 17.

[44] Clayton J. Schmit, "Key Principles of Preaching," *Fuller Studio*, accessed May 25, 2025, https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/key-principles-of-preaching/.

values of Jesus Christ.[45] Therefore, the gospel is central to prophetic proclamation.

Fourth, effective preaching is rhetorical. The preacher's rhetorical trinity, also called the rhetorical triangle, includes ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos refers to the preacher's moral character. With the increase of immorality and infidelity among clergy, ethos is essential. The preacher's charisma gains the audience's admiration, but the preacher's character earns the audience's respect and attention. They will listen to him because of his integrity not intelligence. Three keys for ethos are the preacher's walk with God, study of the word, and the preacher's public life.[46]

Pathos is the preacher's emotion or passion. The pathos must be in the messenger before it is in the message. The preacher must study the text until it becomes a part of him. He must exegete and experience the Word personally before he can preach it to his audience. The preacher must be the stone that killed Goliath, walk with Jesus in Galilee, think like Paul on Mars Hill, and see John's heavenly vision on the island of Patmos. The preacher's pathos gives him the potential to persuade the audience to allow God's Word to transform their heart and mind.[47]

Logos is the preacher's sermon. The message should be delivered in a logical manner. He may do this inductively or deductively. He must focus on a central truth and aid the congregation in understanding the truth by explaining, illustrating, and applying that truth as it relates to the preaching text.

Fifth, effective preaching is practical. Applying the text will build a bridge from the biblical world to the preacher's modern-day context. The preacher's applications should be Bible-based and Christ-centered. The application should be stated in the form of a universal principle. The preacher can make applications to the audience's life in several ways. He can apply the Scriptures to their personal life, family life, church life, work life, and community

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[45] Jim Shaddix, "Changing the World with God's Word," Intersect Project, March 13, 2017, accessed May 25, 2025, http://intersectproject.org/faith-and-culture/jim-shaddix-preaching-cultural-engagement/.

[46] Paige Patterson, "Ancient Rhetoric: A Model for Text-Driven Preachers," in Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David L. Allen, and Ned L. Mathews (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2010), 11-36.

[47] Ibid.

life.[48] Sermon applications can be derived through a series of questions. For example, what is the example to follow? What is the sin to avoid? What is the promise to claim? What is the command or principle to obey?[49] Like Dr. King, the modern preacher's applications should be "how-to" or "hands-on."

Sixth, effective preaching is theological. The preacher must view himself as a theologian. Jim Shaddix suggests asking the following questions to identify the theological implications of the text: 1. What is God doing in the text? 2. What does the passage teach about the person or Character of God? 3. What does it say about the nature and need of man? 4. What about God's activity with humanity? [50] Additionally, the preacher may ask what the Scripture teaches about Christ or the Holy Spirit? The preacher may also consider how the passage answers worldview questions or current theological questions.

Seventh, effective preaching is visual. According to Wayne McDill,

> Your best way to appeal to the imagination of your audience is to use vivid language, to draw pictures. Your material is vivid when it brings strikingly real or lifelike images to the mind of the hearer. These images give life to the ideas of your text. They leave an impact on the imagination so that the concepts will not be easily forgotten.[51]

Illustrations are one way to help the audience visualize the text. Illustrations should help the audience remember the central truth and main points of the sermon. The Bible can be a primary resource for finding illustrations. The preacher can use personal illustrations, biographies, autobiographies, articles, Facebook posts, Google searches, ChatGPT, or the preacher's imagination. The preacher should tell the audience if his illustrations are fictional.[52]

So after employing these seven principles, how does one assess the effectiveness of the sermon? The following seven questions

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[48] Nelson, "Equipping Ministers," 84.

[49] Ibid., 83.

[50] James L. Shaddix, *The Passion Driven Sermon: Changing the Way Pastors Preach and Congregations Listen* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003). 123.

[51] Wayne McDill, "How to Balance Four Critical Elements of Preaching," Preaching, January 1, 2014, accessed June 30, 2025, https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/pastor-balance-four-critical-elements-preaching.

[52] Nelson, "Equipping Ministers," 84.

may be asked before the sermon is delivered to measure its efficacy: 1. Does the sermon explain, illustrate, and apply the main idea? 2. Does the sermon address the needs of the congregation (pastoral) and their community (prophetic)? 3. Does the sermon engage the hearers emotionally and intellectually through a form of dialogue? 4. Does the sermon provide a "how-to" or "hands-on" application? 5. Will the sermon persuade the listeners to obey the biblical truth conveyed in the message? 6. Does the sermon discuss any theological doctrine or implication? 7. What images will the listener see while hearing the sermon?

Conclusion

The homiletical methodology of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is the quintessence of effective preaching. "Steeped in the rhetorical traditions of the African-American church, King displayed gifts in the pulpit and the political arena that made him one of the most compelling speakers of the [twentieth] century."[53] Although remembered for his activism, King was first and foremost a preacher of the Word. Dr. Robert Smith said, "It is important to remember that the leader of the most profound American social movement of [the twentieth] century described himself as 'fundamentally a clergyman, a Baptist preacher.'"[54] King's sermons transformed the hearts and renewed the minds of his listeners. His strategy for changing the moral landscape of America was preaching biblical truth regarding justice, kindness, equality, and love for humanity.

Many preachers deliver ineffective sermons every Sunday. The uprising of racial conflict and religious disbelief in American culture proves the need for effective preaching in the twenty-first century. Many messages are devoid of the essential elements for effective preaching.

Therefore, the church and society suffer from spiritual malnutrition and transformation. The elements or characteristics of King's sermons must be integrated into the modern preacher's message if one desires to be effective within their context. In this article, I identified seven elements in King's preaching which made his sermons effective. The twenty-first century preacher should strive to preach like Dr. King. His sermons were biblical,

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[53] Duduit, "The Ten Greatest Preachers of the Twentieth Century."

[54] Ibid.

cultural, dialogical, practical, rhetorical, theological, and visual. Hence, King's preaching was transformational. These characteristics are fundamental for effective preaching. Though it may be challenging for a preacher to ensure all the elements exist in the sermon, Paul's words to Timothy should encourage the preacher to pursue this laborious endeavor. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15, NASB).

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Recreating Creation Narratives: The Reinterpretation Of Genesis 1 in *Jubilees* 2

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Introduction

Getting Genesis right is central to living in conformity to God's self-revelation of himself through the Scriptures. While Christians confess that all of Scripture is "God breathed," Genesis—especially Genesis 1–3—holds a unique place in shaping our understanding of reality. Genesis offers answers to the most vital questions we may pose: Who am I? What does it mean to be human? What is the purpose of the cosmos? Who is this God who has created all things? R. R. Reno captures the vitality of Genesis to understanding the world: "Genesis tells of the origin of reality."[1]

Because Genesis is the basis for the biblical portrayal of reality, misinterpreting Genesis is particularly consequential. Misinterpreting Genesis is also especially tempting. If an interpreter can convince an audience, which confesses Genesis to be God's word, that Genesis upholds a particular worldview, then they shape the reality of that audience. It is no surprise, therefore, that the conversations about what Genesis means often follow contemporary cultural concerns. Our contemporary, Western culture is heavily influenced by a scientific culture that, for nearly two centuries, has raised questions about the relationship between the Genesis account of creation and scientific facts. We are also experiencing a seismic shift in how the surrounding culture understands gender and sexuality. Unsurprisingly, we look to Genesis to understand how God's design in creation should inform what Christians should believe about these important cultural issues.

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[1] R. R. Reno, *Genesis*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2020), 19.

To be clear, looking to Genesis for clarity on contemporary issues is a justified and necessary task.[2] The challenge is understanding what Genesis is saying rather than just what a given community wishes it to say. To protect against misinterpreting Genesis through a skewed cultural lens, contemporary readers can look to the past. The author or authors of the pseudepigraphical *Book of Jubilees* reinterprets the Genesis 1–Exodus 19 in a way that focuses on contemporary concerns. Understanding their hermeneutical approach offers insight into how cultural concerns can dominant influences in interpretation to such a degree that the message of the biblical text is obfuscated and altered.

Author and Audience

The book of *Jubilees* was written between 167 B.C.–100 B.C. in Hebrew and was presented as a revelation received by Moses at Mt. Sinai. *Jubilees* is a retelling of the biblical narrative from creation to after the giving of the law at Sinai in Exodus 19.[3] This retelling is situated in a specific historical context where the author's agenda was rooted in the community's ideological and theological concerns of that period. The date of *Jubilees* provides a starting place to begin examining interpretive methods and social settings that would affect the author's understanding of the creation narrative.

Ancient sources were rarely concerned with preserving the name of their human authors, however, as pseudepigrapha, *Jubilees* is imminently concerned with claiming a well-known ancient author to give the work credibility.[4] *Jubilees* identifies its author as Moses, who wrote the words spoken by YHWH (*Jubilees* 1:5–15) and the "angel of the presence" (*Jubilees* 1:26–29). *Jubilees*' description of Moses as the author of material associated with Genesis is

[2] Both authors of this article are interested in how the Bible speaks to contemporary ethical and theological issues. See Cory Barnes "Procreation as a 'Good' of Marriage according to Genesis 1–2" *Presbyterion* 50.2 (2024): 85–96. DeeDee Williams "How Leviticus's 'Do Not Touch' Prepares Us for Christ," The Gospel Coalition, accessed October 29, 2025, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/leviticus-touch-prepare-christ/.

[3] J.T.A.G.M. Van Rutten, Primaeval History Interpreted: The Rewriting of Genesis 1–11 in the Book of Jubilees (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 2.

[4] See Joyce Baldwin, "Is There Pseudonymity in the Old Testament?," *Themelios* 4 (1978), https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/is-there-pseudonymity-in-the-old-testament/.

the earliest non-canonical written allusion to Moses as the author of Genesis.[5] *Jubilees* follows one of the most foundational premises of pseudepigraphic literature by claiming Moses as the author of the work.[6] Attributing authorship to Moses is clearly a literary device used to inject a sense of authority from Israel's past into a document that reinterpreted that past based on the present. Though the pseudo–Mosaic authorship of *Jubilees* is of great value for the below discussion on the genre of *Jubilees*, one must look elsewhere for the author who penned the text.[7]

Associating *Jubilees* with a historical figure as the author of the original document is a futile task. As with the majority of texts from the ancient world, the author is now lost to time. Several general observations, however, can be made concerning the author of *Jubilees* based upon the work itself and the social setting in which it was written.

The writer of *Jubilees* was likely a sectarian Jew. Luis Finkelstein observed the sectarian nature of *Jubilees* decades before the Qumran fragments of the book were discovered.[8] The proclivity for a solar calendar and overarching aim to make all of the biblical narrative apply exclusively to Jews—even the primeval history of Gen 1–11—suggests *Jubilees* is a sectarian work. Despite its inclusion in the texts found at Qumran, *Jubilees* should not be assumed to be definitively Essene, but it likely is a part of a sectarian tradition of which the Qumran community was one manifestation.[9]

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[5] VanderKam, "Gen 1 in *Jubilees* 2." Dead Sea Discoveries 1 (1994) 304.

[6] See Emil Shurer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (vol. 3 part 1; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), edited and translated by Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Martin Goodman, 308–09.

[7] It is possible that the author of Jubilees likely viewed himself as transmitting an authoritative oral tradition that he genuinely believed was handed down from Moses on Sinai. The author who used Moses as the pseudonymous author of his work did so because he felt the material was essentially Mosaic in theme, not to nefariously deceive the community for whom the document was intended. See R. H. Charles, *The Pseudephigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1913): viii–x.

[8] Luis Finkelstein, "The Book of Jubilees and the Rabbinic Halaka." *Harvard Theological Review* 16 (1923), 9–40.

[9] The broad nature of the roots of the theology of the Qumran sectarians should be kept in mind. The tendency to make all of the works found at Qumran reflect one monolithic branch of Jewish theology is not helpful. Gabriel Boccaccini has produced an insightful hypothesis that demonstrates how the Qumran community may have fit into a broader picture of Jewish sectarianism.

The writer of *Jubilees* was familiar with the text of the Old Testament as well as oral traditions and other Second Temple writings. *Jubilees* expresses not only a superior grasp of the text of Genesis and Exodus, but also of the nuances of the solar calendar and halakhic traditions of his community. Whoever wrote *Jubilees* was a literary savant, joining together ancient narrative with current tradition to create a literary work which brought ancient authority to contemporary traditions.

Although this research refers to *an author* for the book of *Jubilees* there may have been multiple *authors* who contributed to the work. Davenport's theory of multiple stages of authorship fails to provide a cohesive argument for the date of *Jubilees*, but the idea of multiple stages of composition for the text is legitimate.[10] *Jubilees* may well have had more than one author and was, perhaps, edited by a sectarian community over a broad period of time. The below discussion of the hermeneutics of *Jubilees'* author references a singular author, but this is not to rule out the possibility of community authorship.[11]

The earliest fragments of the book of Jubilees are those found at Qumran. These fragments provide valuable witness to the Hebrew text in which the book was originally composed. The Qumran community serves as a valuable reference point when considering the audience of the book of Jubilees. While the origin of the book is not known, the message of *Jubilees* shows close affinities with the broader values of the Qumran community.[12] Understanding why *Jubilees* was valuable for the readers at Qumran gives the best insight into the reception of the original audience of the work.

The Qumran community is often associated with the Essenes, though the community may have comprised various Jewish sects with differing beliefs and theological nuances during the Second

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See *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

[10] G.L. Davenport, *The Eschatology of the Book of Jubilees*. Studia Post–Biblica 20. (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 10–18.

[11] For a thorough discussion of specific time periods and authors see Michael Segal, *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 35-40.

[12] Michael Heiser and Ken Penner, *Old Testament Greek Pseudepigrapha with Morphology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2008).

Temple period.[13] The Qumran corpus is rooted in these distinctive sectarian groups.[14] The various Dead Sea Scrolls discovered portray a community with diverse agendas and interpretations; not every scroll discovered is a representative of one Essenic community.[15] A broad consensus on the major ideological and theological issues represented in the Qumran community includes a sectarian, apocalyptic, and a priestly purity worldview response to the historical situation of the time.

While all held the Torah as authoritative, the competing sects diverged sharply in interpretation, often condemning opposing views as heretical.[16] Although, the various sects held differing views on many issues, one central point of contention was the calendar.[17] The calendar was one of the cornerstones of Qumran's sectarian schism.[18] Sacha Stern argues that the Qumran sect was formed because of its adoption of a deviant calendar of 364 days, which forced it to break off from mainstream Jewish society.[19] Significantly, the use of the correct calendar used by Jews during this period runs as a leitmotif in the Qumran scrolls.[20]

The Qumran scrolls frequently emphasize the importance of using the correct calendar, portraying it as a marker for covenantal faithfulness. Schiffman notes that many Qumran writings use harsh language for groups celebrating festivals on incorrect

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[13] See, Timothy Lim, www.asor.org/anetoday/2017/03/dead-sea-scrolls. March 2017, Vol. 5, No. 3. Lim finds that John Collins argues that there are many communities of the Essenes, and Lawrence Schiffman argues for leadership by Zadokite priests, and Rachel Elior contends the Essenes never existed and instead ties the Qumran community to Sadducean-priestly factions.

[14] Lawrence Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, and the Lost Library at Qumran*, (Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 65.

[15] Timothy Lim, www.asor.org/anetoday/2017/03/dead-sea-scrolls. March 2017, Vol. 5, No. 3.

[16] Lawrence Schiffman, 73.

[17] Schiffman, 73.

[18] "Qumran and Calendar and Sectarianism" by Sacha Stern in Timothy Lam and John Collins, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford: University Press, 2010), 232.

[19] Sacha Stern, *Calendars in Antiquity: Empires, States, and Societies* (Oxford: University Press, 2012), 357.

[20] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, The Background of Christianity, and the Lost Library* (Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 301.

dates.[21] For example, the *Zadokite fragment* instructs members "to observe the Sabbath day according to its specification and the Festivals and the day of the fast according to that derived by the members of the new covenant in the land of Damascus."[22]

Jubilees and *Enoch* each refer to a specific solar calendar. The earliest scroll to ascribe to a three-hundred-sixty-four-day solar calendar is *Enoch*; later, *Jubilees* refers to a solar calendar with an emphasis on certain days and fifty-two weeks, which is absent in the book of *Enoch*.[23] The *Pesher Habakkuk* 11:4–8 also references calendar disputes, highlighting that sacred days could fall differently depending on the calendar followed by the community. Schiffman states that the calendar consisted of a three–hundred sixty–four–day solar calendar, divided into twelve months of thirty days each. The months were calibrated according to the cycle of the sun.[24] In contrast, Pharisaic tradition used the lunar calendar. This calendar consisted of twelve lunar months. This fundamental disagreement led to intense debate over which group preserved the original, divinely ordained calendar.

Hermeneutics of *Jubilees*

Establishing the genre and hermeneutical method of *Jubilees* provides the interpretive framework necessary to understand the adaptations and changes in Jubilees 2. Several excellent studies have paved the way for current scholars by addressing these issues.[25] The genre of the rewritten Bible and the halakhic method is discussed below.

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[21] Schiffman, 301.

[22] *Zadokite Fragments 6:18–19,* Schiffman, 301.

[23] "Qumran and Calendar and Sectarianism" by Sacha Stern in Timothy Lam and John Collins, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford: University Press, 2010), 234.

[24] Schiffman, 304.

[25] See George W. E. Nickelsburg, "The Bible Rewritten and Expanded," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (ed. Michael E. Stone; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 89 – 130; John C. Endres*, Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees* (CBQMS 18; Washington, D. C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1987); Sidnie White Crawford, "The Rewritten Bible at Qumran," in *Scripture and the Scrolls* (ed. James Charlesworth; Waco, Tex., 2006), 131 – 47.

The Genre of Rewritten Bible

The genre of *Jubilees* is clearly that of rewritten Bible.[26] Rewritten Bible is the rewriting of the biblical text—whether specific passages or entire books—with a specific purpose and intent in mind.[27] VanderKam and Flint note, "in [rewritten Bible] the writer may adhere more or less strictly to the text of Scripture, but will supplement or in other ways modify it, presumably to achieve some ends he has in mind."[28] *Jubilees* is one of several works of rewritten Bible from the Second Temple period. Other works of rewritten Bible include the Temple Scroll, the *Genesis Apocryphon*, the Enochic Books (the Book of the Watchers in particular), and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. The fact that all of these works are present among the Qumran library demonstrates that the genre was well known to the Qumran sectarians. Works of rewritten Bible—including *Jubilees*—are also well attested outside of the Qumran community demonstrating that the genre was widely known throughout Second Temple Judaism.

One of the chief purposes of rewritten Bible was to solve difficulties presented by the biblical text.[29] Readers of midrashic literature are familiar with this practice as it is a commonly used device in the Targums and *Rabbah*.[30] *Jubilees* often has the goal of explaining difficulties in the biblical text as the chief force driving the narrative. For example, *Jubilees* 2:2 demonstrates this tendency. The creation narrative is expanded to detail the creation of the

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[26] The phrase "rewritten Bible" was originally coined by Shurer. See the updated edition of his 1885 text: Shurer, 308. J.C. VanderKam has suggested it is better to use the words "Rewritten Scripture" rather than "Rewritten Bible," for a less suggestive term. "Questions of Canon Viewed Through the Dead Sea Scrolls, (Bulletin for Biblical Research 11, 2001, 292.")

[27] Endres, 15.

[28] VanderKam and Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity.* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 298.

[29] Ida Frölich, "Narrative Exegesis in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *in Biblical Perspectives: Early Use and Interpretation of the Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature* (STDJ 21; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 82.

[30] See, for example, the well-known account of Abraham smashing his father's idols in Genesis Rabbah 38. By expanding the narrative of Gen 11 to include this narrative of righteous action before Abram's election in Gen 12, the Rabbis answer the difficult question of why Abram was elected by YHWH when the text offers no apparent reason.

angels of the first day. By specifying when angels were created the author of *Jubilees* answers a common theological question of his day.[31]

Jubilees follows the typical pattern of rewritten Bible by following the chronology of the biblical narrative with few exceptions.[32] Also, like other works of rewritten Bible, the author of *Jubilees* takes great liberty within the rough framework presented by the OT text. Shurer notes,

> Wishing to recount earliest history in the spirit of his own age, the author handles the biblical text very freely. Much of what was of no interest to him, or appeared scandalous, is omitted or altered; other passages are lengthened and enriched by the addition of numerous details. . . All of these embellishments and enrichments faithfully reflect the spirit of inter-Testamental Judaism.[33]

Rewritten Bible, therefore, should be expected to follow the biblical narrative except when editing the text in order to make the author's point. Herein lies one of the chief precepts to understanding rewritten Bible: the message the author of rewritten Bible wished to convey is found in the changes made to the biblical text—be they omissions, expansions, or changes in chronological or narrative sequence.[34]

The genre of rewritten Bible offered the author of *Jubilees* a way to rewrite the creation narrative of Genesis to fit his unique theological leanings. Hindy Najman states, "on the one hand, they retold biblical stories in ways that resolved inconsistencies or solved puzzles for their readers. On the other hand, they wove their own versions of the law, temple, ritual, calendrical system, and covenant, along with the very words of already authoritative traditions, into a single seamless whole."[35] At times the author of *Jubilees'* re-

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[31] See VanderKam and Flint, 300–301.

[32] W.E. George Nickelsburg, "The Bible Rewritten and Expanded," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus,* Edited by Michael E. Stone, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 97.

[33] Shurer, 310.

[34] John Endres *Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees,* The Catholic Bible Quarterly Monograph Series 18, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Bible Association of America, 1987), 15.

[35] Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 45.

writing of the creation narrative involved making deliberate changes to the text of Genesis to suit his purposes.[36] More often, however, the process involved expanding the narrative based on some "trigger" word, phrase, or theme in the biblical text in a way that suited the author's purposes.[37] The next section discusses the role halakhic interpretation played in Jubilees by adding, omitting, or changing the text with their own version of the law.

Halakhic Interpretation

Many of the methods found throughout the genre of rewritten Bible and in *Jubilees* in particular, demonstrate rabbinical hermeneutical methods of halakah and haggadah.[38] Some of the halakhic methods found in *Jubilees* also show strong affinities with the formal Rabbinic interpretive methods found in the *Rabbah*. One of the chief interests of the author of *Jubilees* is fundamentally halakhic in nature. The author of *Jubilees* is eminently concerned with presenting all of Jewish history in such a way that all of the biblical narrative, particularly the patriarchal narratives, reflect unimpeachable protagonists who uphold the Mosaic law in exactly the form prescribed by their community.[39]

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[36] An example would be the deliberate change of Gen 1:13 in Jubilees 2:9-10 to advocate only the sun as a sign by which time can be measured. Gen 1:13 clearly supports both sun and moon as instruments by which time is to be measured. See the below discussion as well as VanderKam, "Genesis 1 in *Jubilees* 2," 313

[37] Ibid., 311. The creation of Angels in Jubilees 2:2 likely responds to the "trigger" word רוּחַ in Gen 1:2. The word is catapulted out of its context and is used to justify the discussion of the creation of the "spirits" or angels in Jubilees

[38] Distinguishing between halakah and haggadah is a difficult, if not impossible task. Rather than attempting to distinguish between the two types of material, halakah is used from this point forward for material reflecting either Rabbinical method. The only terse, yet somewhat helpful, distinction to that may be made concerning the two interpretive methods is that haggadah typically denotes non-legal material, whereas halakah denotes legal material. The value of this distinction is limited because of the overlapping nature of legal and non-legal material, particularly in the interpretive methods of the Second Temple period. Two useful articles should be consulted on haggadah and halakah: Gary G. Porton, "Haggadah," *ABD* 3: 19–20 and Ibid., "Halakah," *ABD* 3: 26–27.

[39] Nickelsburg, 97–100. Charles demonstrates the way in which Jubilees postpones all accounts of sacrifice until the Aaronic priesthood has been established. Charles, 7.

The halakhic interpretation of *Jubilees* arose from an organic process of striving to live all of one's life in absolute obedience to Torah. Communities such as Qumran, and many other Second Temple communities and sects developed halakhic interpretations of Scripture by constantly attempting to apply the precepts of the OT in their everyday lives. Such an application raised new questions, and communities were confronted with new contexts not addressed by the OT text. The halakhic interpretive methods grew organically out of these new situations. The need for answers to these new questions drove these communities to produce "fuller smoother, and doctrinally more advanced forms of the sacred narrative."[40]

Some of the halakhic methods found in *Jubilees* have direct parallels in the *Genesis Rabbah*; one such similarity is the concept of rewritten Bible itself. The *Genesis Rabbah* often records oral traditions that expand the narrative of Genesis. Some of these same oral traditions were incorporated into *Jubilees* centuries before they were recorded in the *Genesis Rabbah* Another common theme between *Jubilees* and the *Genesis Rabbah* is the use of interpreting one text in light of another text. This method, called "intersecting verse" by Jacob Neusner, is one of the most common interpretive methods used in the *Genesis Rabbah.*[41]

By citing an "intersecting verse," the Rabbis changed the context of a passage and, therefore, the interpretation of the passage. *Jubilees* uses a form of "intersecting verse" when making chronological deviations from the biblical texts of Genesis and Exodus. Just as in the *Genesis Rabbah* the new text changes the context of the original text and turns the interpretation of the passage to the author's desired subject matter. *Jubilees* 2 demonstrates such an "intersecting verse" when the text of Exod 20:8 and 31:13 interrupts the retelling of the creation narrative of Genesis.

Unveiling Halakhic Hermeneutics in the Narrative Reconstruction of Jubilees 2

The halakhic hermeneutics of the author of *Jubiliees* helps explain the reinterpretation of Genesis 1 in *Jubilees* 2. While *Jubilees* contains multiple ideological concerns, the primacy of the solar

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[40] Shurer, 308.

[41] Jacob Neusner, *Confronting Creation: How Judaism Reads Genesis* (Columbia, S. C.:University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 1–27.

calendar takes precedence in *Jubilees* 2.[42] The divinely inspired calendar rooted in creation underpins the book's broader chronological framework. While other ideological themes appear throughout the book, it is the focus on the Sun and the Sabbath that most significantly shapes the hermeneutical revisions and insertions in *Jubilees* 2.

A comparative analysis of Gen 1:1–2:4a and Jubilees 2

Jubilees 2 does not focus on the creation of light and darkness on day 1 of creation. Unlike Genesis 1, where the creation of light and darkness is the main focus of day 1, *Jubilees* 2 includes only a passing mention of the creation of darkness and night. In *Jubilees* 2, God's creative focus is the heavens, the earth, the waters, and the spiritual powers. Rather than including the creation of light and the separation of light and darkness on the first day, the author of *Jubilees* transfers this material to the fourth day after the creation of the sun, moon, and stars. The creation of light is not included in the *Jubilees* creation narrative. The fourth day of creation in *Jubilees* is the theological center of the entire narrative. Not only does it contain the creation of the sun—an event of utmost importance to the author of *Jubilees*—day four also falls at the center of the seven-day creation sequence. By transferring the separation of light and darkness to day four of creation, the author of *Jubilees* ensures that the reader understands no time, not even the turning of a single day, can be measured without the sun.

The most significant difference between the Genesis and *Jubilees* creation narratives is the elevation of the sun as the sole means by which time was to be measured. The movement of the separation of day from night from the first to the fourth day has been discussed above, yet this only scratches the surface of the message the author of *Jubilees* intended to convey in his account of the fourth day of creation. The Genesis creation narrative presents the sun and moon in measuring time. "And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give

[42] See Michael Segal, *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 5–11. In addition to calendrical concerns, Segal finds that other ideologies include: (1) the giving of the law prior to Sinai, (2) angelology, and (3) a priestly outlook.

light upon the earth." And it was so" (Gen 1:14–15). The author of *Jubilees*, however, makes a notable change to this text to support an exclusively solar calendar, only promoting the Sun. "On the fourth day the LORD made the sun, the moon, and the stars. He appointed the sun as a great sign over the earth for days, for Sabbaths, for months, for festivals, for years, for the weeks of years for jubilees, and for all the seasons of the years" (*Jubilees* 2:8–9).

One glaring omission is the mention is the moon as a sign in Jubilees 2. The author has taken the liberty to rearrange, add, and omit, creating an emphasis on the Sun. This is the nature of the genre of the Rewritten Bible. The author of *Jubilees* rewrites the Genesis creation narrative in such a way that his readers understand the text—with all the force infused by the work's self-proclaimed author and setting—to advocate a solar calendar and nothing but a solar calendar. The author of *Jubilees* attempts to settle the Second Temple calendar controversy by creating a text that firmly establishes the solar calendar as being divinely mandated since the creation of the sun.[43]

Two Great Lights	*One Great Light That Acts as a Sign*
Genesis 1:3–5a And God said, "Let there be light!" Then there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light and the darkness. And God called the light "day" and the darkness he called night.	Jubilees 2:8-9 And on the fourth day He created the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon all the earth, and to rule over the day and the night, and **divide** the light from darkness.
Genesis 1:14 "Then God said, "Let there be light in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be useful for signs and for marking seasons, days, and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth". And it was so. And God	Jubilees 2:9–10 And God appointed the **sun** to be a **great sign** on the earth for days and for sabbaths and for months and for feasts and for years and for Sabbaths of years and for jubilees and for all seasons of the years.

[43] Bilha Nitzan, "The Idea of Creation and Its Implications in Qumran Literature," in *Creation in Jewish and Christian Tradition.* Journal for the Study of the Supplement, (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 242.

made **two great lights**–the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night–and the stars."	

The second significant interpretive change concerns the Sabbath. The Book of *Jubilees* begins and ends with a focus on the Sabbath, emphasizing its central role. In *Jubilees* 2, the Sabbath is described as a sign for all of God's works, and in verse 2:9, it is linked to the Sun, which was created to serve as a sign for marking the Sabbath. *Jubilees* 2 links both festival days and the Sabbaths to the Sun–reflecting the common understanding during that period that the Sabbath was observed from sunset to sunset.[44] The moon plays no role in Sabbath observance; it is the sun that governs its timing. As mentioned above, *Jubilees* employs a method of interpretation known as "intersecting verse," which introduces chronological adjustments from the biblical texts of Genesis and Exodus. This is evident in *Jubilees* 2, where the Sabbath language of Exod 20:8 and 31:13 permeates the text. The passage not only exemplifies this hermeneutical approach but also presents the Sabbath–central to the solar calendar's divine order–as a clear example of halakhic interpretation rooted in covenantal faithfulness.

The Sabbath in *Jubilees* 2 is not portrayed just as a day of rest, as it is in Genesis; it is presented as a calendrical anchor.[45] By inserting material from Exodus into the creation account, the author of *Jubilees* changes the context of the narrative. This intersecting text catapults the reader into the full legal implications of the rewritten creation narrative.[46] The mention of the Sabbath instructs the calendar by adhering it to the first day of the week. This sanctification of the seventh day influences the structure of the calendar.

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[44] J. Amanda McGuire, "Evening or Morning: When Does the Biblical Day Begin?," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 46, no. 2 (2008).

[45] The Sabbath as a sign of the covenant makes the creation narrative a specifically Jewish text. The Sabbath is mentioned fourteen times in *Jubilees* 2.

[46] The use of intersecting text by the author of Jubilees is substantially different from the use of intersecting text in the Rabbah. The main difference is the intersecting text is not cited, but to do so would violate the genre of rewritten Bible. The intersecting text is, itself, rewritten Bible and not a direct citation of the biblical text. The function, however, is the same. By looking to another OT passage, the author of Jubilees develops a new interpretation of the material from the Genesis narrative.

The connection between the sun and the Sabbath illustrates a divine calendar where the Sabbath holds a central position. The hermeneutic of the Rewritten Bible and the intersective verse in Jubilees 2 concerning the Sabbath, demonstrates that the "world and its events are running on a very strict calendar that are preordained and engraved on tablets in heaven."[47]

The Ideological Agenda of the Author of Jubilees

The most obvious interpretive agenda of the author of *Jubilees* is to present the solar calendar as the exclusive calendar for correctly observing the Mosaic Law. The author of *Jubilees* creates a text in which, "The solar calendar has the force of law because it is rooted in the created structure of the universe, and the chronological framework demonstrates the proper observance of the religious feasts in accordance with the solar calendar."[48] The creation narrative of *Jubilees* is, therefore, a calendar text. The author of *Jubilees* filters the creation narrative of Genesis through the calendar theology of his own sectarian community into the genre of rewritten Bible. The result is *Jubilees* 2, a solar calendar text *par excellence*. The priority of the sun for measuring time—and, more importantly, seasons, Sabbaths, and festivals—is at the heart of the narrative both compositionally and thematically. Even the narrative formula "וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים" is abandoned for "וביום" yet another way to ensure that the readers of *Jubilees* 2 understood the calendric nature of the text.[49]

Jubilees is driven by one of the primary schisms between the Jewish sects—the solar vs. the lunar calendar. The book commands obedience to the 364-day calendar, issuing repeated warnings that any deviation will disrupt the proper order of years, new moons, and seasons (6:33–34), and lead to the celebration of festivals on the wrong days (6:37–38).[50] *Jubilees* 6 records

> There will be people who carefully observe the moon with lunar observations because it is corrupt with respect to the seasons and is early from year to year by ten days. Therefore, years will come about for them when they will disturb the

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[47] Amanda McGuire, "Sacred Times: The Book of Jubilees at Qumran," 5.

[48] Nickelsburg, 100.

[49] VanderKam, "Gen 1 in Jubilees 2," 304.

[50] Sacha Stern, *Calendars in Antiquity: Empires, States, and Societies* (Oxford: University Press, 2012), 375.

> year and make a day of testimony something worthless and a profane day a festival. Everyone will join together both holy days with the profane and the profane day with the holy day, for they will err regarding the months, the sabbaths, the festivals, and the jubilee. (*Jubilees* 6:36-37)

The author of *Jubilees* situates the solar calendar from the time of creation, which supports the idea that this calendar is divinely established, with no human involvement. This supports the dogmatic polemic found in *Jubilees* 6.[51] The difference between the Sabbath focus of Genesis and *Jubilees* is that Genesis is concerned with Sabbath as the culmination of the cosmos. Sabbath in Genesis informs readers that God has fashioned creation for his own enjoyment, a temple for his worship.

The *Jubilees* text, however, has a more rigid halakhic goal in mind. The *Jubilees* narrative is surrounded by Sabbath concerns.[52] The narrative is introduced with a mention of Sabbath (*Jubilees* 2:1) and concludes with a lengthy commentary on Sabbath (*Jubilees* 2:17–33). This saturation with Sabbath concern is not for establishing the theological import of the general practice of Sabbath, rather it is to demonstrate that one can only observe Sabbath by observing the solar calendar. The parallel between the sun and the Sabbath both serving as "great signs" make the parallel between solar calendar and observance of Sabbath obvious (*Jubilees* 2:9; 17).

The author of *Jubilees* interpreted Genesis as a Sabbath text by employing the "intersecting verse" using the Sabbath commands in Exodus 20 and 31, thereby changing the context of the narrative. The author identifies the concern with the Sabbath present in the creation narrative of Genesis and expands the narrative to address his halakhic concerns. In the rewritten text of *Jubilees* the halakhic concerns of the role of the solar calendar for Sabbath observance is of utmost importance for covenant faithfulness.

Conclusion

Understanding the interpretive approach *Jubilees* 2 takes to Genesis 1 illuminates Christian interpretation for a variety of reasons. First, *Jubilees* 2 clarifies some of the instances where Sabbath concerns are addressed in the New Testament. In a broader way,

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[51] Michael Segal, https://www.thetorah.com/article/jewish-calendar-in-jubilees-a-solar-year.

[52] VanderKam, "Gen 1 in *Jubilees* 2," 302.

Jubilees 2 serves as a warning to contemporary interpreters of Scripture about the limits to which the creation account in Genesis can be used to shape their understanding of contemporary issues.

The evidence gleaned from examining the use of the Genesis creation narrative in *Jubilees* 2 illuminates one way in which the Genesis creation narrative was interpreted in the Second Temple period. Understanding that Genesis was read by some as primarily a Sabbath text gives interpreters of other Second Temple writings a better understanding of how to approach references and allusions to creation. This interpretation sheds an interesting perspective on Jesus' response to the Pharisees in Mark 2. When questioned about his adherence to Sabbath law Jesus replies, "The Sabbath was made for humankind, not humankind for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). However, we know from the text of *Jubilees* that one of the prevailing ideas of Second Temple Judaism was that the creation narrative was a Sabbath text.

Jews of the late Second Temple period who adhered to the teaching of *Jubilees* would have found in Jesus' words a teaching directly contrary to that of *Jubilees* Although the Pharisees who asked Jesus the question, which began the dialogue, would not have accepted the teaching of *Jubilees*' due to disagreements with the calendar model of *Jubilees*, other Jews of the period—perhaps even some of Jesus' own disciples—would have considered *Jubilees*, as well as its interpretation of Sabbath observance, authoritative.

The interpretation of the Genesis creation narrative found in *Jubilees* should serve as a warning to modern interpreters of Genesis. The interpretation of the Genesis creation narrative found in *Jubilees* 2 demonstrates an interpretive method that strips the text of its original context and rewrites the text to suit the theological concerns of the author and his community. Although there is no current genre directly parallel to that of rewritten Bible, interpreters of the Genesis creation narrative often follow in the footsteps of the author of *Jubilees* and inject their own theological, cultural, or scientific concerns into the OT narrative. These methods may not always result in a rewritten Bible, but they will always result in a repurposed Bible—an interpretation which relies on the authority of the community that produced the interpretation, rather than the authority intended by the author of the OT text.

Heeding such a warning does not require interpreters to surrender the message of the Genesis creation account to the annals

of history and abandon any notion that Genesis addresses contemporary concerns. The communities that valued *Jubilees* were concerned about the message of Genesis for valid and theologically necessary reasons. Whatever the book of Genesis is saying, it shapes our worldviews at a foundational level. The motive of looking to Genesis for clarity on contemporary issues is not wrong, but the hermeneutical methodology of the quest is of paramount importance. The author of *Jubilees* reshaped the message of Genesis to such a degree that it obscured the message of Genesis when read in its historical context and, more importantly, the message the Divine Author of the text communicated through that context. Contemporary readings of Genesis must avoid similar pitfalls and allow the message of Genesis to shape our lives and worldviews rather than allowing our worldview to shape the message of Genesis.

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Wisdom, Worldview, and Critical Thinking

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The state of the contemporary Christian mind has been subjected to several critical treatments over the past few decades. Mark Noll sounded the alarm on what he saw as a steep decline in evangelical mental activity when he claimed that "the scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind."[1] J. P. Moreland wrote his now-standard text, *Love Your God with All Your Mind,* on the necessity for Christians to individually and collectively cultivate minds that engage reason as they deal with the world and with the Bible.[2] Many other works can be cited as well, all of which push Christians to practice an active mental life as part of discipleship and Christlikeness.[3]

The Christian mind is the connection between a biblical worldview and biblical wisdom. Scripture begins with humanity created in God's image and meant to follow God's wisdom. The serpent then offers a test, an alternative source from which Adam and Eve can supposedly derive the wisdom necessary to carry out their tasks of dominion and fruitfulness. The couple's failure to pass the test by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree introduces noetic problems that the scriptural theme of wisdom cultivation is designed to help correct. How does one gain biblical wisdom? The answer appears to be by the application of critical thinking skills to a biblical worldview. This paper will argue, using the tree of life metaphors in Psalm 1 and Proverbs 3, that the development of discernment through critical thinking methods is a primary biblical means for achieving human flourishing.

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[1] Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Eerdmans, 1994), 3.

[2] J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, rev. ed. (NavPress, 2012).

[3] For examples, see A. G. Sertillanges, *The Intellectual Life: Its Spirits, Conditions, Methods*, trans. Mary Ryan (Catholic University of America Press, 1998); James Sire, *Habits of the Mind: Intellectual Life as a Christian Calling* (Intervarsity Press, 2000); and Travis Dickinson, *Logic and the Way of Jesus* (B&H Academic, 2022).

Proverbs 3 – Wisdom is a Tree of Life

The study of metaphor, both in Scripture and in language more generally, has experienced a rich treatment in recent scholarship. Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* seeks to create a linguistic theory based on metaphors, which the authors claim is better than other, propositionally based theories in semantics (i.e., the formal study of meaning in language).[4] They claim, "it is because we understand *situations* in terms of our conceptual systems that we can understand *statements* using that system of concepts as being *true*, that is, as fitting or not fitting the situation as we understand it."[5] The universality of this claim can be debated—whether it can sufficiently circumscribe the concepts of truth and meaning within Lakoff and Johnson's proposed metaphorical framework—but it does seem to strike a biblical chord. When one considers the means by which wisdom literature conveys its concepts, metaphors represent a sizeable portion. As Bartholomew and O'Dowd observe in their work on biblical wisdom literature, "an ordered life is one that navigates changing circumstances, dilemmas and quandaries with wisdom. The proverbs supply basic instructions and extended metaphors to help us interpret these constantly changing events and respond well."[6] Comparisons and contrasts

[4] The authors present a theory of language built on metaphors to provide an alternative to what they see as a false dichotomy between an objective theory of meaning and a subjective (i.e., relativistic) theory of meaning. They say, "subjectivism is not the only alternative to objectivism, and we have been offering a third choice: the experientialist myth, which we see as making possible an adequate philosophical and methodological basis for the human sciences." George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (University of Chicago Press, 2003), 223.

[5] Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 179.

[6] Craig G. Bartholomew and Ryan O'Dowd, *Old Testament Wisdom Literature: A Theological Introduction* (IVP Academic, 2011), 93. Roland Murphy gives a similar assessment: "But the true subtlety of the book [Proverbs] is seldom recognized in its popular usage. A moral code undergirds it, but the real intent is to train a person, to form moral character, to show what life is really like and how to best cope with it. The favored approach is to seek out comparisons or analogies between the human situation and all else (animals and the rest of creation). It does not command so much as it seeks to persuade, to tease the reader into a way of life." Roland E. Murphy, *The Tee of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature* (Eerdmans, 2002), 15.

between everyday observations and the ways in which humans should live pervade the statements of scriptural wisdom literature.[7]

While wisdom literature in the Bible regularly uses metaphors when describing specific wise concepts (a fact that will be considered below), it also uses metaphors to describe wisdom itself, especially regarding its value to the one who holds it. The tree of life provides one such metaphor in Prov 3:18—"She [wisdom] is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who hold fast to her."[8] What might such a statement mean, and what purpose would a tree of life serve given its inaccessibility in the days of Solomon or any of the other sages who contributes to the book of Proverbs?

Tree of life imagery appears in many contexts in the ancient world. Michael Fox claims the tree of life was originally a mythological concept in the ancient Near East in his commentary on Proverbs, and he points out that the Torah itself was given the moniker.[9] It is commonly depicted as something to be grasped so that one may go beyond *merely* living to having *full* life. Regardless of its commonality in other cultures, the tree in the Hebrew scriptures takes on a more specific function from the start. It provides a source of life within the context of humanity's original state. The biblical question of where one might find such a source of life now ties directly to the exclusion humans experienced from the original tree in the Garden of Eden in Gen 3:22–24. Something else must act as a surrogate for the tree until the paradigm shifts again when humanity regains access to it (c.f. Rev 2:7; 22:2).[10] This

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[7] For a longer exposition about the use of metaphors in biblical wisdom literature, see Edward M. Curtis, *Interpreting the Wisdom Books: An Exegetical Handbook*, Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis (Kregel, 2017), 36–45. Biblical wisdom literature usually comprises the books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. Some deuterocanonical works like Sirach and Wisdom of Solomon also fit the larger genre of Jewish wisdom literature.

[8] Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are taken from the NASB (New American Standard Bible) Copyright 1971, 1995, 2020 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved. The 1995 edition is used throughout.

[9] Michale Fox, *Proverb 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible 19A (Yale University Press, 2000), 158–59.

[10] It is worth noting how Jesus takes on the role of the Tree of Life in places like John

tenson finds its resolution, according to Prov 3:18, in the locus of godly wisdom.[11]

Proverbs 1–9 is couched as a father's plea that his son seek wisdom and live in accordance with its teachings. Note that Prov 3:18 does not limit its audience to kings, scholars, or some elite class. All humans should seek to take hold of wisdom in order to find the life-giving attributes it provides. Consequently, every human should strive to cultivate mental skills and body of knowledge that adhere to reality, bring together concepts of truth and meaning, and apply those concepts appropriately to individual circumstances. Though Proverbs often presents wisdom as something that comes with age, one would be mistaken to suppose wisdom comes *automatically* with the passage of time. Wisdom comes to the one who seeks it. It can be grasped by the young, and it can be overlooked by the aged.

Recall the context-dependent aspects of meaning and truth that Lakoff and Johnson cited. Their theory may be too restricted on its own to provide a comprehensive semantic theory, but a person's ability to realize truth and meaning does require a previously developed framework in which to make sense of the concepts being presented as wisdom. That is to say, recognizing a claim as wisdom or folly requires having both the mental context and the mental tools to analyze it properly. Derek Kidner, in describing the character of the "fool" in Proverbs, says that such a person "has no idea of the patient search for wisdom: he has not the concentration for it . . . but imagines it can be handed out to him over the counter," and as a result the fool "'laps up' his opinions unreflectingly . . . for he cannot imagine himself mistaken."[12] The fool's mental framework centers on ego and fails to engage the tools required for discernment. Where can a person begin to build a correctly grounded context for discernment? If one expands the context out to all of reality, the result would be a full-fledged worldview—the collection of answers to foundational questions

[11] The development of the biblical narrative sets Jesus as the true embodiment of godly wisdom (c.f. Luke 2:52), because Jesus takes on the life-giving role previously symbolized by the tree in the New Testament. For an exposition on the supersession of Christ to Solomon and to Lady Wisdom, see Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapter 1–15*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Eerdmans, 2004), 126–33.

[12] Derek Kidner, *Proverbs*, Kidner Classic Commentaries (IVP Academic, 2008), 37.

like how the world began, what human life means, what has gone wrong in the world, and where everything is headed.

A great deal depends on the framework a person works within. Statements that count as wisdom in one worldview will be at odds with those that count as wisdom in another. Proverbs assumes the worldview of Torah-observant Judaism.[13] Its wisdom does not derive simply from natural phenomena observed over time, but from observations together with the version of reality provided by the Hebrew scriptures. The book of Psalms opens with this very theme, and it also uses tree imagery to make its point clear.

Psalm 1 – Becoming the Tree of Life

Psalm 1 acts both as a preface to the psalter as a whole and as a poem about wisdom.[14] It urges its readers to avoid the counsel of the unrighteous and instead to immerse themselves in the teachings of Israel's God. It connects back to the first chapter of Joshua by repeating the admonition to meditate "day and night" on those teachings, and both passages promise success and prosperity to the one who engages in such meditation.

The opening psalm differs from Joshua 1 by providing a metaphor for the success brought by meditation on the teachings of God and connecting that success to the type of life the person who meditates will exhibit. It describes this person as "blessed" or "happy," the typical opening word of a beatitude. Jonathan Pen-

[13] This axiom carries forward into the New Testament, where paradigmatic passages like 1 Cor 1:18–3:23 press the same worldview-dependent concept of wisdom. Paul there provides an extended discussion about the contrast between worldly wisdom, which is foolishness in a gospel-oriented worldview, and the wisdom of God, which is foolishness in a human-oriented worldview. As with Proverbs, 1 Cor shows how what counts as wisdom flows out of one's worldview by applying critical thinking skills to confirm or refute a concept, which in Paul's case is salvation through Christ. Special thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out this New Testament connection.

[14] According to Kidner, "It seems likely that this poem was specially composed as an introduction to the whole Psalter . . . The tone and themes of the psalm bring to mind the Wisdom writings, especially Proverbs, with their interest in the company a man keeps." Derek Kidner, *Psalm 1–72*, Kidner Classic Commentaries (IVP Academic, 2008), 63. See also, Peter C. Craigie, *Psalm 1–50*, vol. 19, Word Biblical Commentary (Word Books, 1983), 58; and Nancy DeClaisse-Wolford, Rolf A Jacobson, and Beth Laneel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Eerdmans, 2014), 55–57.

nington summarizes the meaning of the underlying Hebrew term as "true happiness and flourishing within the gracious covenant God has given."[15] The blessing of the one who meditates on God's teachings day and night is a fulfilled life, not as though the term "blessed" were a passive verb with God as the implied actor pouring out blessings, but in the sense that the person can be content because he or she is living life correctly.[16]

The psalm's metaphorical connection to the tree makes the image concrete. Meditation on God's teachings matches to the image of a tree's being plated by a stream. Unlike the unstable water sources in so many parts of the Middle Eastern climate, a stream provides dependable, non-stop nourishment so that a tree can flourish even in an arid environment.[17] The visible manifestations of the tree's flourishing are its healthy leaves and regular bearing of fruit. As with the metaphor in Proverbs 3, one may easily reflect on the tree of life from the Genesis 2, with its position in the middle the Garden and the stream beside which it was situated.[18] In Revelation 22, the tree of life reappears with a stream, and its fruit and leaves are specifically mentioned. The fruit occurs in twelve kinds, each produced in its appropriate month, and are leaves are for "the healing of the nations" (Rev 22:2).

How does constant meditation on God's teaching turn a person into something resembling the tree of life? The psalmist does not indicate that mere memorization of the scriptures produces success. Instead, saturation with the scriptures' teachings will result in a transformation within the person who meditates. One who shapes his or her worldview according to the foundational truths of the scriptures will live in contrast to the wicked, who entice others toward exile from the "assembly of the righteous" (Ps 1:5). Such a person has the toolkit necessary to discern between

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[15] Jonathan Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Baker, 2017), 44.

[16] "The state of blessedness or happiness is not a *reward*; rather, it is the result of a particular type of life. Just as a tree with a constant water supply *naturally* flourishes, so too the person who avoids evil and delights in Torah *naturally* prosper, for such a person is living within the guidelines set down by the Creator. Thus the prosperity of the righteous reflects the wisdom of a life lived according to the plan of the Giver of all life." Craigie, *Psalm 1–50*, 61.

[17] A very similar poem to Ps 1:1–3 occurs in Jer 17:7–8.

[18] See Jacobson's comments to this effect in DeClaisse-Wolford, Jacobson, and Tanner *The Book of Psalms*, 64.

good and bad due to the inconsistency of bad choices with the axioms of the scriptures. It would be a mistake to think that such discernments will occur absent some ability to size up a situation and evaluate its consistency or inconsistency with the scriptures.

One whose entire view of the world is shaped by God's instruction will have the potential to become what the original humans were meant to be. By engaging scriptural instruction in every moment of every day, they walk with God as Adam and Eve were meant to, learning and growing in their understanding of the world as God would have them to do.[19] This lifestyle stands in contrast to those who walk in the way of the wicked (which parallels the pseudo-wisdom of the serpent in Genesis 3). While the scriptures do not present a *comprehensive* set of instructions—meaning they do not give the exact behavior one ought to follow in any given circumstance—they do provide a *sufficient* body of instruction (as Paul indicates in 2 Tim 3:16–17). Together with the mental exercises of deduction, induction, and other reasoning skills, the teachings of Scripture lead a person to success.

Worldview and Flourishing

Constant mental engagement with the teachings of Scripture results in the bending and molding of one's mind toward an overarching set of assumptions about the world. No one can consider the narratives, commands, wisdom, and poetry of the Bible meditatively without starting to look at the world with a Bible-filtered lens. The metanarrative of Scripture gives humans an all-encompassing story for reality from beginning to end, in which every human experience can be interpreted. The scriptural worldview is not the only one available, though, and many competing worldviews have their apologists in the current cultural environment.[20]

The starkest competitor with a biblical worldview is the naturalistic worldview. It claims that the natural order of things—the physical cosmos and any emergent aspects within it, such a consciousness—compose all actuality. No supernatural entity exists beyond the cosmos, and no phenomenon requires supernatural

[19] The need for a consistent practice of meditation is reflected in Deut 6:4–9 as well.

[20] A helpful treatment of competing worldviews can be found in James Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalogue*, 6th ed. (IVP Academic, 2020).

explanation. Human understanding about reality comes solely from human mental powers applied to natural phenomena. Within such a worldview, hope for comprehensive knowledge requires a degree of trust that enough time and effort by humans will produce an answer to any given question. For the current moment, the question becomes what can be said about reality *now* as humans continue to uncover its mysteries.

The Logical Positivists of the early twentieth century fully embodied this worldview. They worked to reduce meaningful statements about reality to those that could be verified either logically or scientifically. Logical Positivism came from the combination of the 19th-century positivist turn that put its sole authority for knowledge on scientific inquiry, and the logic revolution of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[21] For logical positivism, any statement about reality that could not in principle be verified as a truth of logic or a result of scientific inquiry, including all statements of metaphysics and theology, is meaningless.[22] Logical Positivism died out because its central tenet was self-undermining. The claim, "Only verifiable statements are meaningful" is not itself verifiable and thus is meaningless when applied as a rule to itself. A new iteration of the positivist perspective has emerged, though, where the hope is to expand the scope of verifiability and the domain of science to encompass all kinds of statements the positivists rule out of bounds. The term "scientism" describes this movement, which is guided by "the doctrine that the hard sciences alone have the intellectual authority to give us knowledge."[23]

Both Logical Positivism and scientism acknowledge the importance of human critical thinking skills. In fact, they elevate that importance above all else since scientific and logical inquiry are some of the most direct applications of critical thinking and prob-

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[21] A multifaceted investigation of Logical Positivism's views by those who were involved or tangential to it can be found in A. J. Ayer, ed., *Logical Positivism* (Free Press, 1959).

[22] More specifically, statements that are not verifiable have no underlying proposition that they express and therefore are neither true nor false but void of propositional meaning.

[23] J. P. Moreland, *Scientism and Secularism* (Crossway, 2018), 23. Moreland differentiates between "strong" and "weak" scientism, the former allowing *only* scientific knowledge to me meaningful and the latter holding that scientific knowledge provides the highest quality knowledge (*Scientism and Secularism*, 29–30).

lem solving. One must ask in a naturalistic perspective, though, what grounds a person's confidence in the human mind's ability to find truth through the process of critical thinking. C. S. Lewis, and later Alvin Plantinga, argued that naturalism actually undermines such confidence because there exists no reason to think that an organ like the human brain, if it were the product of natural evolutionary processes, would be a truth-oriented thing.[24] It would be a survival-oriented thing, but survival and truth are different objectives. The end result is that trying to connect the naturalistic worldview with livable principles results in incoherence for the naturalist because he cannot trust that he has truth at either end.

By contrast, the biblical worldview presents human thought as an outpouring of the image of God. It provides a grounding for trust in human intellectual powers. The noetic effect of sin must be accounted for; nevertheless, passages like Psalm 1 assure readers that a human mind saturated with Scripture is capable of producing human flourishing.[25] Such a mind becomes accustomed to seeing the world in a particular way, as though a filter were placed over the human experience that removes the glare of alternative interpretations of the world and clarifies the proper perspective. As Von Rad says, "In it [biblical wisdom literature], the responses are laid down in rules which worshippers of Yahweh, challenged by the world around them and confronted by 'life', have made for themselves. The presupposition for being allowed to speak on this matter was knowledge of Yahweh. The presupposition for coping with life was trust in Yahweh and in the orders put into operation

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[24] See both extended arguments in C.S. Lewis, *Miracles* (HarperCollins, 2001), 17–36; and Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (Oxford University Press, 1993), 216–37. Plantinga's argument is intended to be the more philosophically rigorous since Lewis was writing for a more popular audience. Yet, a parallel strand of thinking can be found in both that shows naturalism cannot truly depend on the truth-oriented aspect of the human brain (or mind).

[25] By the "noetic effects of sin," I mean the impact that the sin nature has on the ability for humans to form proper beliefs based on the reality in which we live. For example, Paul claims in Rom 1:18–23 that humans do not have an excuse for failing to believe proper things about God because his nature and attributes are made clear in creation. If our minds were not clouded by the compulsion to repeat the sin of Eden and make ourselves to be like God, we would see him clearly through his creative work. Importantly, Paul says that our inherent refusal to believe properly about God causes people to become fools while professing to be wise, which strongly echoes the mistake of Adam and Eve in Eden (Gen 3:6).

by him."[26] The meditative principle of Psalm 1 undergirds both the ability of and confidence in human rational activities to properly analyze patterns in nature and human experience with an eye toward flourishing in both spheres.

The Role of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking comprises the acquisition and use of mental tools that allow a person to analyze, make proper deductions or inductions, and arrive at defensible conclusions. The thing being analyzed may be a specific situation together with its context, or it may be the general behavior of humanity across the epochs. The person doing the analysis may seek solutions to moral problems, academic problems, theological problems, or practical problems. The method is common across the board. Critical thinking is not merely an academic practice; it is a lifestyle practice that allows a person to move through the world accurately and successfully. In short, it connects the concepts of biblical wisdom and biblical worldview.

J. P. Moreland, in *Love Your God with All Your Mind*, bemoans what he sees as the escapism and isolation that characterized early 20th-century American evangelicalism. His solution includes the cultivation of intellectual virtues, one group of which is "truth seeking, honesty, and wisdom."[27] He defines wisdom as "the wise use and application of knowledge" that "involves knowing how to use good means to accomplish worthy ends in a skillful manner."[28] While Moreland's definition fits within the broader biblical concept of wisdom by highlighting actions, it does not account for the inherent value of wisdom itself, especially for the inner well-being of the individual.[29] He separates out wisdom from "theoretical

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[26] Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, trans. James D. Martin (Abingdon Press, 1972), 307.

[27] Moreland, *Love Your God*, 122.

[28] Moreland, *Love Your God*, 123. Note that Moreland uses the word "wise" in his definition of "wisdom." I do not take him to have presented here a rigid, academic definition of wisdom since he is writing for practical discipleship and not to a primarily scholarly audience.

[29] A reviewer raised the question whether critical thinking itself is an intellectual virtue. Another way to word this question would be whether critical thinking can be an end or must always be a means to some other end. The answer (as a corollary to what this paper argues) is that, while intellectual virtue is not possible without cultivating critical thinking, mere cultivated ability to think

knowledge" by limiting it to the "application of knowledge." Yet, wisdom literature in Scripture tends to categorize the two together.

Von Rad provides examples in Proverbs of "the almost playful coordination of the terms 'wisdom', 'understanding', 'knowledge', 'prudence'."[30] He also points out how his examples of that coordination "have much to do with human intellect" because "[t]hey point to something which one can teach and which the pupil has to make his own."[31] A student of a wise teacher must apply his or her intellectual capabilities to the information received from the teacher to grasp its quality. The student's goal is to hear the teacher's wisdom, to internalize it, and then to live out its principles by applying the newly gained understanding to novel situations. Especially when one considers *biblical* wisdom literature, the objective cannot be to decide whether a statement Solomon or Agur or any other sage makes is true: the truth comes automatically with the inspired nature of biblical statements. Instead, the objective is to meditate on the underlying reasons for *why* a particular statement is true and through that process to become wise oneself. Wisdom becomes a life-giving possession for the person who finds it, but finding it is not simply a matter of memorizing biblical passages. The wisdom literature of Scripture is not comprehensive in the sense that it does not provide a pithy saying for all situations one might encounter. The wisdom that Scripture seeks to impart is more nuanced and results from a combination of factors.

Observation is one crucial factor for developing wisdom. Empirical knowledge combines with other intellectual capacities to extract the general principles of life by which one should live. Edward Curtis points out that the gathering of data—"empiricism, carefully observing life and struggling with its anomalies and enigmas"—acts as the "methodology for wisdom."[32] As an example of this principle, consider the paradigm of wisdom in the Old Testament: Solomon. His wisdom was measured not only by the

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critically does not count as a virtue. Wisdom is the appropriate end of properly oriented critical thinking flowing out of a Torah-observant worldview (see note 13 above), so wisdom is a virtue as Moreland notes. Critical thinking fits better into Moreland's category of spiritual disciplines (see Moreland, *Love Your God*, 127–28).

[30] Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, 53.

[31] Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, 54.

[32] Curtis, *Interpreting the Wisdom Books*, 28.

abundance of proverbs and songs he produced, but also by his encyclopedic knowledge about the natural world (1 Kgs 4:30–34). The phrasing in 1 Kgs 4:33 carries allusions to Gen 1:26, specifically in the mention of the animal categories of fish, birds, and creeping things. The indication would seem to be that Solomon had achieved an approximation of God's original intent for humanity because he could properly have dominion over the natural world due to his understanding of its inhabitants.[33] As was stated in the introduction above, there exists a strong biblical connection between gaining wisdom and successfully carrying out the mandates God gave humanity at creation.

Moving between empirical observation and wisdom about human behavior requires a noetic toolkit that can make connections between abstract concepts and concrete experiences: that is to say, wisdom results from critical thinking properly applied to everyday life within the context of a biblical worldview. The kind of wisdom found in Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes utilizes a playfulness of mind that goes beyond the bare facts of the natural world, which are not always proper guides to discernment of the good over against the bad.[34]

Consider two examples: Solomon's wisdom shown in discerning a child's true mother, and Solomon's wisdom in pointing to the ant as a proper metaphor for diligent wisdom. The first case, in 1 Kgs 3:16–28, finds two women quarrelling over the identity of a child. The author of Kings presents this story immediately after God promises to make Solomon wise (1 Kgs 3:10–14), and it becomes the evidence that God has indeed kept his promise to Solomon. The flow of the story is easy to follow, and the wisdom of Solomon's actions becomes obvious upon reading it. He presents a gambit to the women to see how they react. The sacrifice

[33] For further exploration of the connection between Solomon and Adam, see John A Davies. "'Discerning between Good and Evil': Solomon as a New Adam in 1 Kings," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 73, no. 1 (December 31, 2011): 39–57. https://research-ebsco-com.aaron.swbts.edu/linkprocessor/plink?id=77cbb52a-6ade-3941-8ba3-57b9359e7c91.

[34] Von Rad describes something similar when discussing the parallelisms in Proverbs: "[t]wo facts are placed side by side. The facts seem to be widely separated. What has the distance between heaven and earth to do with the mind of a king? Nevertheless, something links these two widely separated statements, what we would call their unpredictability. And it is this, the making obvious of what links two totally different phenomena, that is seized upon by the sentence as a gain in knowledge." Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, 119.

he recommends is nothing less than the life of the child, but Solomon expects that the child's true mother would react in a defensive way while the imposter would react dismissively. Exactly that outcome occurs, and Solomon discerns the true mother to be the woman who is willing to give up the child rather than see him killed.

The story ends with the claim that the people in Israel "feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice" (1 Kgs 3:28). In what way is Solomon's gambit an example of wisdom aimed at justice? Despite the threat of death for the child, Solomon's action fits into a category that brings life and flourishing to his people (c.f. 1 Kgs 4:25 and its descriptive statement of peace and plenty). In that first paradigmatic instance, Solomon takes the observable behavior of mothers—the tendency to love their children enough to do virtually anything for them—and puts it to a test that aligns with a situation. The story does not present the test as a repeatable method for discerning truth generally but as an applied instance of observed general behavior to remedy a specific problem. Solomon seeks to bring justice to a seemingly intractable case. Continued questioning will not reveal which woman is the liar, but actions speak louder than words. He connects Scripture's call to achieve justice and the regular patterns of life to arrive at a wise course of action.

As a second example, return to the concept of metaphors. Prov 6:6–11 calls attention to the behavior of an ant that stores away provisions for the winter, and then calls out the "sluggard," who needs to awaken and emulate such diligence. Why should one consider an ant's storage tendencies to be a model of wisdom that humans should emulate? It cannot be merely from the fact that the event occurs in nature. Job points to the behavior of an ostrich toward her eggs, and he states that "God has made her forget wisdom, and has not given her a share of understanding" (Job 39:17). To give another contrasting example, the biblical sages would certainly consider it folly to emulate a mockingbird's tactics. A mockingbird female lays her egg in the nest of another bird, among the eggs already there, and leaves it. The mockingbird chick then hatches early, and it pushes the other bird's eggs or already-hatched chicks out of the nest. The maternal instinct of the other bird species drives that female to raise the mockingbird chick as if it were her own, resulting in successful reproduction by the mockingbird mother without any further effort on her part. Is

this not behavior worth imitating? Based on passages like Prov 1:8–19, the answer would be a resounding no. The reason lies in the connection between the object used as a metaphor for wise action and underlying, immutable principles of justice known by the sage due to consistent meditation on Scripture. The ant's behavior aligns with general scriptural principles; the mockingbird's and ostrich's run contrary to them. The accuracy of a metaphor requires a context, a framework of the biblical worldview. The conduits for the connection between the object being considered for a metaphor and the framework are the very aspects of critical thinking.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that critical thinking provides a necessary component for wisdom in that the practices of critical thinking like deduction, induction, comparing, and contrasting connect experiences to the foundational truths of God's word in order to produce wisdom. Prov 3:18 makes wisdom to be the tree of life, providing flourishing for the person who takes hold of it. Psalm 1 declares the person to be a tree of life who meditates on and finds his or her delight in loving the law of the Lord. The connection between the biblical worldview that one develops through consistent meditation and the application of wise behavior to a given life situation will not happen by accident. It occurs as a process of cultivated mental exercise and honed critical thinking skills pressed into service to produce flourishing.

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Un Viaje hacia el Crecimiento Espiritual: Un Modelo para el Discipulado de Comunidades con Inmigrantes Hispanos

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Introducción

Uno de los desafíos más significativos que enfrenta Estados Unidos es el masivo influjo de inmigrantes hispanos indocumentados que cruzan la frontera sur del país. Este grupo se ha integrado progresivamente a la comunidad hispana ya establecida, la cual se ha convertido en la minoría étnica más grande de la nación. Tanto las iglesias cristianas de habla inglesa como las de habla hispana han sido profundamente impactadas por este fenómeno migratorio. Miles de migrantes que han llegado a Estados Unidos son ahora participantes activos en estas comunidades cristianas.

Un desafío clave para estas iglesias surge cuando personas de diversos contextos culturales se integran a sus congregaciones en busca de un lugar donde adorar y crecer espiritualmente. ¿Cómo puede una iglesia apoyar la formación espiritual de estos inmigrantes en un país donde la cultura, el idioma y la cosmovisión les resultan completamente ajenos?

Este artículo tiene como propósito explorar los aspectos fundamentales de la inmigración hispana, su cultura y el proceso de formación espiritual desde una perspectiva tanto pastoral como académica. Su objetivo final es presentar un modelo para discipular de manera efectiva a la creciente población de creyentes hispanos en las iglesias estadounidenses, ya sean de habla inglesa o española.

Rastreando la Inmigración Hispana

Hace aproximadamente cuarenta años, el activista por los derechos civiles en Estados Unidos, Jesse Jackson, dijo,

> Estados Unidos no es como una manta, una pieza de tela continua del mismo color, la misma textura y el mismo tamaño. Estados Unidos se parece más a un edredón—muchos retazos, muchas piezas, muchos colores, muchos tamaños, todos entretejidos y unidos por un hilo común. El blanco, el hispano, el negro, el árabe, el judío, la mujer, el nativo americano, el pequeño agricultor, el empresario, el ambientalista […] conforman el edredón estadounidense.[1]

Las palabras de Jackson reflejan una verdad que la mayoría de los estadounidenses han reconocido desde la fundación de la nación: Estados Unidos es un país construido por migrantes. La historia de la migración en los Estados Unidos es tan extensa como diversa. Mohamad Moslimani y Jeffrey S. Passel identifican tres grandes oleadas migratorias hacia los EE.UU., comenzando en 1840.[2] La ola europea (1840-1889), la ola suroriental (1890-1919) y la era moderna (1965-2024). Esta última refleja un cambio drástico en la composición de los migrantes, con un 50% procedente de América Latina y un 25% de Asia.[3] La inestabilidad política y social en Centroamérica y Sudamérica desencadenó migraciones masivas en los últimos cuatro años, lo que ha hecho que estas cifras sean altamente volátiles.

La inmigración legal e ilegal ha sido un tema polémico para el gobierno nacional de los Estados Unidos durante décadas. A pesar de los esfuerzos de administraciones sucesivas, el flujo continuo de inmigrantes y el crecimiento de la población nacida en el extranjero en el país siguen aumentando rápidamente. En 2022, Moslimani y Passel informaron que 47.9 millones de inmigrantes (residentes nacidos en el extranjero) vivían en los EE. UU. De estos, 11 millones (23%) eran inmigrantes no autorizados.[4] El pasado octubre, Jeanne Batalova estimó el número total en aproxima-

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[1] Jesse Jackson,"1984 Democratic National Convention Address," en *American Rhetoric* (18 July,1984). Disponible en: https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/jessejackson1984dnc.htm. A menos que se indique lo contrario, todas la citas y menciones en otros idiomas serán traducidas por el autor.

[2] Mohamad Moslimani y Jeffrey S. Passel, "What the data says about immigrants in the U.S.," in *Pew Research* (Septiembre 27, 2024). Disponible en: https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/09/27/key-findings-about-us-immigrants.

[3] Moslimani y Passel, *about immigrants*.

[4] Ibid.

damente 47.8 millones.[5] Sin embargo, el número podría ser aún mayor, considerando que durante la administración de Joe Biden, 1.9 millones de personas ingresaron con estatus temporal. Además, un número indeterminado de inmigrantes no autorizados cruzó la frontera sin ser entrevistado ni detectado por los agentes de la patrulla fronteriza.[6]

En 2020, Jonathan Vespa, Lauren Medina y David M. Armstrong, al actualizar las Proyecciones de Población para el período 2020-2060, estimaron un crecimiento más lento de la población hispana, pasando de 57.4 millones en 2016 a 111.2 millones en 2060.

En un reporte relativamente reciente, la Oficina del Censo de los Estados Unidos (USCB) confirmó que "los hispanos de cualquier raza crecieron a poco más de 65 millones, un aumento de 1.16 millones (1.8%) con respecto al año anterior […]. Los hispanos de cualquier raza representaban casi una quinta parte (19.5%) de la población de EE. UU. en 2023, convirtiéndose en el segundo grupo más grande después de la población blanca no hispana."[7]

Estos informes ilustran el crecimiento constante de la comunidad hispana en los Estados Unidos, acompañado de una mayor visibilidad, influencia cultural, contribuciones económicas y protagonismo en los asuntos políticos del país. Sin embargo, la inmigración hispana y sus aportes a los EE. UU. no son un fenómeno reciente. M. Daniel Carroll señaló que el Tratado de Guadalupe Hidalgo en 1848 marcó un punto de inflexión en la inmigración hispana.

Desde 1848, millones de inmigrantes de Centroamérica y Sudamérica han ingresado al país a través de la frontera sur, con la intención de establecerse de manera permanente, con o sin la autorización de las autoridades migratorias. La búsqueda del llamado

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[5] Jeanne Batalova, "Mexican Immigrants in the United States," en *Migration Policy Institute.* (Octubre 8, 2024). Disponible en: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/mexican-immigrants-united-states-2024.

[6] Muzaffar Chishti y Kathleen Bush-Joseph, "In the Twilight Zone: Record Number of U.S. Immigrants Are in Limbo Statuses," en *Migration Policy Institute* (Agosto 2, 2023). Disponible en: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/twilight-immigration-status.

[7] US Census Bureau, "New Estimates Highlight Differences in Growth Between the U.S. Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Populations," en *Census.gov* (Junio 27, 2024). Disponible en: https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2024/population-estimates-characteristics.html.

Sueño Americano ha seguido siendo la principal motivación para que millones arriesguen sus vidas.[8] En este sentido, la Oficina de Estadísticas de Seguridad Nacional informó que, para 2022, 10.99 millones de inmigrantes no autorizados residían en los Estados Unidos, de los cuales el 69.3% eran hispanos, principalmente de México, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Venezuela y Colombia. Sin embargo, la Federación para la Reforma de la Inmigración en América (FAIR) estimó una cifra mucho mayor de inmigrantes indocumentados para junio de 2023, aproximadamente 16.8 millones.[9]

La inmigración, tanto legal como ilegal, ha generado desafíos complejos en la sociedad estadounidense. La salud pública, la educación, la seguridad y la política son algunas de las áreas más afectadas. Las iglesias cristianas hispanas no han permanecido ajenas a este fenómeno migratorio; por el contrario, han sido profundamente impactadas, ya que miles de inmigrantes han conocido a Dios durante su travesía y tras su llegada al país. Muchos de ellos se han convertido en participantes activos de las comunidades cristianas locales.[10] Sin embargo, el desafío para estas comunidades

[8] Bajo esta afirmación general subyacen varios factores, entre ellos la crisis económica interna en América Latina, que se agravó exponencialmente durante la pandemia, así como la falta de cambios políticos en Venezuela, Cuba y Nicaragua. En el año 2000, Juan González señaló que la población hispana seguiría migrando en el siglo XXI debido a tres factores principales: 1) la necesidad de los Estados Unidos de cubrir puestos de trabajo, 2) el envejecimiento de la sociedad estadounidense y 3) el carácter laboral de las migraciones hispanas. Juan Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2000), 200-5.

[9] Office of Homeland Security Statistics, "Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States," (Abril 18, 2024). Disponible en: https://ohss.dhs.gov/topics/immigration/ unauthorized-immigrants/estimates-unauthorized-immigrant-population-residing. See also: FAIR, "How Many Illegal Aliens Are in the United States? 2023 Update," (Junio 22, 2023). Disponible en: https://www.fairus.org/issue/how-many-illegal-aliens-are-united-states-2023-update. En un informe reciente, el Pew Research Center presentó una estimación conservadora del número de inmigrantes no autorizados que residen en los Estados Unidos, considerándolo inferior a los 12.2 millones registrados en 2007. Consulte: Jeffrey S. Passel y Jens Manuel Krogstad, "What we know about unauthorized immigrants living in the U.S." en *Pew Research Center* (Julio 22, 2024). Disponible en: https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/07/22/what-we-know-about-unauthorized-immigrants-living-in-the-us.

[10] Consulte los trabajos de Moises Sandoval, *On the Move: A History of the Hispanic Church in the United States* (New York: Orvis Book, 1990), y Juan Francisco Martinez, *The History of Latin Protestants in the United States* (Grand Rapids:

surge cuando personas de distintos países, culturas, edades, niveles educativos y antecedentes religiosos convergen en busca de un lugar de adoración. ¿Cómo puede una iglesia ayudar a este grupo heterogéneo a superar el choque social, cultural y religioso? ¿Cómo puede una iglesia apoyar la formación espiritual de estos inmigrantes en un país donde todo les resulta desconocido y ajeno, desde la cultura y el idioma hasta la cosmovisión?

Explorar las características clave de la cultura hispana y los factores involucrados en el crecimiento espiritual puede proporcionar elementos valiosos para formular respuestas a estas preguntas.

Contexto y Cultura Hispana

Numerosos estudios y debates se han llevado a cabo para determinar el término más adecuado para describir a las personas provenientes de América Latina.[11] Este artículo adopta la definición proporcionada por la Oficina de Administración y Presupuesto de los Estados Unidos y la Oficina del Censo de los EE.UU., que define a hispano o latino como "una persona de origen cubano, mexicano, puertorriqueño, sudamericano o centroamericano, u otra cultura u origen español, independientemente de su raza."[12] Para mantener la coherencia, este artículo utiliza el término "Hispano" tanto como sustantivo como adjetivo.

Los hispanos no constituyen una raza, sino que representan la minoría étnica más grande en los Estados Unidos, caracterizada por un rico mosaico de cultura, herencia y diversidad hispanohablante. Este artículo explora algunas de las características religiosas, sociales y educativas clave de la comunidad hispana.

Eerdmans, 2018), para estudios detallados sobre la historia de los protestantes latinos en los Estados Unidos.

[11] Por ejemplo, Daniel Rodríguez, *A Future for the Latino Church: Models for Multilinguals, Multigenerational Hispanic Congregations* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2011).

[12] US Census Bureau, "Hispanic Origin" (n.d). Disponible en: https://www.census.gov/data/ academy/resources/one-pagers/hispanic-origin.html https://www.census.gov/data/academy/ resources/one-pagers/hispanic-origin.html. Recientemente, The Pew Research Center publicó un análisis actualizado y conciso sobre el término "hispano." Consulte para más información a Mark Hugo López, Jens Manuel Krogstad y Jeffrey S. Passel, "Who is Hispanic?" en *Pew Research Center* (Septiembre 12, 2024). Disponible en: https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/09/12/who-is-hispanic.

Religión

Dada la influencia histórica de la conquista española, iniciada en 1492, sobre el idioma y la religión en el Caribe, Centroamérica y Sudamérica, el catolicismo sigue siendo la fe más practicada entre los hispanos hasta el día de hoy. Por ello, no es sorprendente que la mayoría de los inmigrantes hispanos sean católicos. Sin embargo, el Pew Research Center ha reportado un descenso constante del catolicismo entre los hispanos en los Estados Unidos, representando actualmente el 43%, en comparación con el 15% que se identifica como evangélico y el 42% que se considera no afiliado religiosamente o seguidor de otras creencias.[13]

El catolicismo ha influido significativamente en la cultura hispana. Desde el nacimiento hasta la muerte, el sacerdote (*padre*) es una figura central, presidiendo bautizos, fiestas de quince años (*quinceañeras*), primeras comuniones, bodas, aniversarios, funerales e incluso bendiciones para hogares, automóviles y negocios.

En los hogares tradicionales, sigue siendo común pedir la bendición de los padres antes de salir de casa, casarse o retirarse a descansar por la noche. Este vínculo familiar se extiende a la comunidad, la cual suele aceptar la participación de la Iglesia Católica en asuntos políticos y sociales. La Iglesia ha mediado en conflictos de paz, abogado por la liberación de rehenes y realizado una amplia labor social en favor de los más necesitados. Como resultado, los hispanos están culturalmente vinculados a su fe y son sensibles a las cuestiones espirituales.

Familia

La familia sigue siendo la piedra angular de la vida hispana. Los hogares hispanos suelen incluir no solo a los miembros inmediatos, como padres e hijos, sino también a parientes extendidos, como primos, tíos y abuelos. Además, los amigos cercanos, aunque no tengan lazos familiares, son frecuentemente acogidos con calidez como parte del hogar.

Los roles de género tradicionales siguen profundamente arraigados en la cultura hispana. Los hombres suelen ser vistos como

[13] Pew Research Center, "Among U.S. Latinos, Catholicism Continues to Decline but is Still the Largest Faith," (Abril 13, 2023). Disponible en: https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/04/13/among -u-s-latinos- catholicism- continues-to-decline-but-is-still-the-largest-faith.

el *paterfamilias*, responsables de proveer para la familia y ejercer autoridad. Sin embargo, este rol puede, en ocasiones, implicar disciplina física e incluso, en ciertos casos, violencia, fenómeno conocido como *machismo*. Por otro lado, las mujeres son consideradas el corazón del hogar, desempeñando funciones como educadoras, guías morales y cuidadoras. En los hogares sudamericanos, las mujeres a menudo ejercen incluso más autoridad que los hombres dentro del ámbito familiar.

Comunicación

Los hispanos priorizan una comunicación cortés y respetuosa. Suelen ser cálidos, amigables y sociables, favoreciendo gestos físicos como apretones de manos o abrazos. A los niños se les enseña a saludar a los adultos como muestra de respeto, y no hacerlo puede ser percibido como una falta de educación o cortesía.

La comunicación no verbal también juega un papel crucial. El contacto visual prolongado puede interpretarse como un desafío o una señal de agresión entre hombres, o como un gesto de coqueteo en el caso de las mujeres. Aunque el español es el idioma predominante en los hogares hispanos, el dominio del inglés ha aumentado significativamente entre los hispanos en los Estados Unidos. Según el Pew Research Center, en 2022 el 72% de los hispanos de cinco años o más tenía dominio del inglés, en comparación con el 59% en el año 2000.[14]

Educación

La educación entre los hispanos en los Estados Unidos ha mejorado significativamente en la última década. En 2022, el 45% de los adultos hispanos de 25 años o más tenía al menos alguna experiencia universitaria, en comparación con el 36% en 2010. Asimismo, el porcentaje de quienes poseen una licenciatura o un título superior aumentó del 13% al 20%.

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[14] Jens Manuel Krogstad, Jeffrey S. Passel, Mohamad Moslimani, y Luis Noe-Bustamante, "Key facts about U.S. Latinos for National Hispanic Heritage Month," en *Pew Research Center* (Septiembre 22, 2023). Disponible en: https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/09/22/key-facts-about-us-latinos-for-national-hispanic-heritage-month.

Las mujeres hispanas han mostrado mayores avances en la educación superior, pasando del 14% al 22%, en comparación con los hombres, cuyo porcentaje creció del 12% al 18%.[15]

Sin embargo, los inmigrantes no autorizados enfrentan barreras significativas en el acceso a la educación, ya que la ayuda financiera federal solo está disponible para residentes legales o ciudadanos estadounidenses (excluyendo a los beneficiarios de DACA y TPS). Muchos inmigrantes no autorizados reportan haber alcanzado únicamente un nivel de educación secundaria o preparatoria, y algunos carecen por completo de habilidades de alfabetización.

Comida

La comida desempeña un papel fundamental en la sociedad hispana. A pesar de las diferencias propias de cada país en cuanto a las preferencias en el uso de ciertas especias, hierbas, recetas o la temperatura de los alimentos, el común denominador es que los hispanos hallan en la comida una razón para compartir con propios y extraños. Por ello, la falta de apetito puede interpretarse como un signo de mala salud. Generalmente, cuando una persona llega a un hogar hispano, recibe una invitación a comer. A menos que la familia enfrente dificultades económicas, casi siempre se comparte la comida en un hogar hispano.[16]

Recreación

Por lo general, el domingo se observa como un día de descanso y dedicado a la familia. Asistir a la iglesia, visitar a los padres, celebrar cumpleaños y participar en otras actividades sociales suelen llevarse a cabo desde el atardecer del sábado hasta el domingo. Dada la amplia difusión del fútbol en Centro y Sudamérica, los eventos deportivos captan especialmente la atención de los hom-

[15] Ibid.

[16] Conozca más sobre la historia e influencia de la comida hispana en los Estados Unidos al consultar: Jeffrey Pilcher, "Coming Home to Salsa: Latino Roots of American Food"en American Latino Theme Study: Food. (n.d). Disponible en: https://www.nps.gov/articles/latinothemefood.htm. Algunas recetas y festividades relacionadas con comida son presentadas por el grupo de museos Smithsonian. Ver: National Museum of the American Latino, "Latino Food: Hispanic Heritage Month," (n.d), Disponible en: https://latino.si.edu/learn/latino-history-and-culture/latino-culture/latino-food.

bres. A pesar del cansancio tras la jornada laboral, muchos se reúnen durante horas por la noche para jugar con amigos y vecinos.

En general, los hispanos conforman una comunidad alegre que, como se mencionó anteriormente, mantiene numerosas celebraciones religiosas (por ejemplo, el Día de los Muertos, la Semana Santa), políticas (como el Día de la Independencia y batallas históricas) y familiares (bautismos, primeras comuniones). Dado que se ha establecido un perfil cultural hispano, la siguiente sección explorará los fundamentos para una vida espiritual fructífera.

¿Qué Significa Crecer Espiritualmente?

¿Qué es la Espiritualidad Cristiana?

Durante los últimos setenta años, numerosos académicos han intentado establecer una definición clara del término "espiritualidad". Dos figuras destacadas del siglo pasado, Bernard McGinn y Walter Principe, señalaron en sus obras que Gustavo Vinay fue el primero en iniciar un debate académico con el propósito de definir el término *Spiritualità* o espiritualidad.[17] Sin embargo, la tarea ha resultado ser más compleja de lo que parece, en gran parte debido a la dificultad de expresar con precisión aquello que se comprende intuitivamente pero que es difícil de definir en un concepto exacto. Algunos académicos, como Lucy Bregman, han minimizado la búsqueda de una definición concreta, argumentando que "la búsqueda del verdadero significado esencial de la espiritualidad es una 'tarea inútil'".[18] Tal vez sus palabras reflejen la frustración ante la imposibilidad de expresar en lenguaje aquello que muchos experimentan y practican, pero que les resulta difícil definir. Principe definió la espiritualidad en términos generales como "la manera en que una persona comprende y vive, dentro de su contexto histórico, aquel aspecto de su religión, filosofía o ética que considera más elevado, más noble y más orientado hacia la plenitud del ideal o la perfección que se busca".[19] Adam McClendon estuvo de acuerdo con Principe, pero amplió el alcance de la definición, identificando

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[17] McGinn, Bernard. "The letter and the Spirit: Spirituality as an Academic Discipline." *The Cresset 6* (1993):13. W. H. Principe, "Toward defining spirituality." *Studies in Religion 12* (1983): 127-141.

[18] Lucy Bregman, "*Defining Spirituality:* Multiple Uses and Murky Meanings of an Incredibly Popular Term." *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 58 (2004), 157.

[19] Principe, 136.

como "dios" cualquier religión, filosofía, ética o fuente de la cual los individuos derivan su sentido último de valor en la vida.[20]

Principe define la espiritualidad cristiana como la "vida en el Espíritu como hermanos y hermanas de Jesucristo e hijos e hijas del Padre […] esforzándose por una unión cada vez más intensa con el Padre a través de Jesucristo, viviendo en el Espíritu."[21] Esta definición resalta elementos clave que están alineados con el evangelio, entre ellos, la vida en comunidad, la obra transformadora del Espíritu Santo, el desarrollo espiritual como un proceso y el reconocimiento de Jesús como el Hijo y de Dios como el Padre.

En lugar de promover la inclinación posmoderna hacia la individualidad y la subjetividad, Principe enfatizó que la espiritualidad debe vivirse en comunidad, no en aislamiento. Su perspectiva resulta convincente: ¿cómo pueden refinarse y desarrollarse las virtudes morales, fundamentales para el carácter cristiano, en la soledad de una vida ermitaña?[22]

Aunque definir la espiritualidad cristiana de esta manera puede parecer redundante, la rápida proliferación de enfoques teológicos moldeados por hermenéuticas que responden a agendas y movimientos con intereses no bíblicos ha llevado a algunos estudiosos a delinear un área distinta dentro de la espiritualidad cristiana: la espiritualidad bíblica. McClendon definió la espiritualidad bíblica como "el proceso de la espiritualidad cristiana arraigado en el estándar normativo de la Palabra de Dios".[23] Sin embargo, esta separación no es más que un intento de abordar el problema subyacente: los marcos hermenéuticos que influyen en la interpretación y aplicación bíblica. El desafío radica en lograr un enfoque de la espiritualidad que sea tanto tangible como, en cierta medida, más objetivo.

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[20] Adam McClendon, "A. Defining the Role of the Bible in Spirituality: 'Three Degrees of Spirituality' en American Culture." *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care 5*, (2012): 207.

[21] Principe, 139.

[22] Justo González observó que los monjes ermitaños (anacoretas), como Antonio y Pacomio, que se retiraron a vidas solitarias en el campo, fueron la excepción más que la norma. No obstante, la espiritualidad de estos anacoretas fue ampliamente reconocida y, a menudo, sirvió tanto de ejemplo como de fuente de inspiración para la Iglesia católica en momentos históricos clave. Por ejemplo, Pietro Angelerio, mejor conocido como el papa Celestino V, fue llamado de su vida solitaria para asumir el papado en 1294. Justo González, *Historia del Cristianismo*, vol. 1 (Miami: Unilit, 1994), 72.

[23] McClendon, 221.

Basándome en los elementos identificados por Principe y McClendon, propongo una definición operativa de la espiritualidad cristiana como *el proceso de apropiación e incorporación de las enseñanzas de Cristo en la vida privada y comunitaria de los creyentes, unidos al Padre y al Hijo por el poder del Espíritu Santo.* Esta definición reconoce la subjetividad de las experiencias personales, al tiempo que enfatiza la dimensión litúrgica y la importancia de la vida en comunidad. Por su naturaleza, la espiritualidad cristiana es intrínsecamente dinámica.

¿Cómo Crece Espiritualmente una Persona?

La literatura sobre la formación espiritual cristiana es extensa, lo que refleja la preocupación constante de la humanidad por el crecimiento espiritual. Sin embargo, aunque definir la espiritualidad sigue siendo un desafío, las prácticas y hábitos que fomentan el crecimiento están más claramente articulados, a menudo derivados de las Escrituras. Los estudiosos han propuesto diversas perspectivas sobre el crecimiento espiritual, cada una enfatizando distintos elementos del proceso.

Klauss Issler y Nevin Harner adoptan definiciones sistemáticas, equiparando el crecimiento espiritual cristiano con la semejanza a Cristo—un proceso ordenado divinamente.[24] Ellos enfatizan tanto la cooperación divina como la humana: la intencionalidad humana en la práctica permite que la acción divina transforme en última instancia. Barton encapsuló esta sinergia al afirmar: "No podemos transformarnos a nosotros mismos a la imagen de Cristo; pero podemos crear las condiciones en las que ocurre la transformación espiritual."[25] Esto resalta la interacción entre el esfuerzo humano y la soberanía divina.

Desde esta perspectiva, el crecimiento espiritual puede entenderse a partir de tres elementos fundamentales que se repiten en distintos enfoques: *naturaleza*, *propósito* y *metodología*.

- **Naturaleza:** El crecimiento espiritual implica tanto acciones naturales como sobrenaturales. La dimensión natural incluye los esfuerzos intencionales del ser humano, como la práctica de disciplinas espirituales y la disposición para el

[24] Klauss Issler, "Theological foundations of Christian Education." Michael J. Anthony, ed., en *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty-first Century.* (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 20; Nevin Harner, *The Educational Work of the Church.* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1939).

[25] Barton, 243.

crecimiento. La dimensión sobrenatural es la obra transformadora de Dios a través del Espíritu Santo. La metáfora de Pablo en 2 Timoteo 2:20-21 ilustra esta asociación, enfatizando la preparación humana y el uso divino.

- **Propósito:** La meta del crecimiento espiritual es la semejanza a Cristo, como se destaca en las Escrituras, por ejemplo, en Romanos 8:29 y Gálatas 4:19. Académicos como Diane Chandler y Kenneth Boa han propuesto modelos holísticos que subrayan "la centralidad de Cristo y su relevancia para cada aspecto de nuestras vidas".[26] Chandler identifica siete dimensiones principales de la vida en las que se desarrolla la imagen de Cristo: espíritu, emociones, relaciones, intelecto, vocación, salud física y administración de recursos.[27] Estos académicos critican la espiritualidad compartimentada, es decir, la creencia de que seguir ciertas prácticas (como asistir a la iglesia o participar en estudios bíblicos) produce automáticamente a una persona espiritual. Argumentan que un énfasis excesivo en el crecimiento espiritual individual e aislado puede generar ideas erróneas, tales como: a) equiparar la participación frecuente en actividades espirituales con una mayor cercanía a Dios, b) asumir que las disciplinas espirituales inevitablemente resultan en un carácter semejante a Cristo, y c) creer que el compromiso con actividades espirituales garantiza una identidad altamente espiritual. En su lugar, abogan por un enfoque de vida integrado, donde todos los aspectos de la vida reflejen de manera consistente el carácter de Cristo.
- **Metodología**: Las metodologías de crecimiento espiritual pueden clasificarse en enfoques impulsados por la espiritualidad y enfoques impulsados por la razón.
    - ***Impulsado por la espiritualidad***: Se centra en disciplinas como la oración, el ayuno y la adoración comunitaria. Whitney y Foster las categorizan de manera diferente, pero ambos coinciden en su papel en la preparación de los individuos para la transformación divi-

[26] Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 201.

[27] Diane Chandler, *Christian Spiritual Formation: An Integrated Approach for Personal Relational Wholeness.* (Lisle, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 19.

na.[28] Dallas Willard y Boa las clasificaron como "disciplinas de abstinencia" (por ejemplo, la soledad) o "disciplinas de compromiso" (por ejemplo, el servicio).[29]

- ***Enfoque basado en la razón***: Destaca el conocimiento, las relaciones y la reflexión. Richard y Shera Melick subrayan la necesidad de comprender las Escrituras y aplicarlas en la comunidad, aunque corren el riesgo de restarle importancia al papel sobrenatural del Espíritu Santo.

James C. Wilhoit conecta estas perspectivas al destacar el contexto comunitario de la formación espiritual. El afirma que las disciplinas preparan a los individuos, pero el verdadero crecimiento se desarrolla dentro de la comunidad de fe, donde los creyentes experimentan y practican la gracia, el amor y el servicio.[30] Dado que el crecimiento espiritual ocurre en comunidad, es esencial considerar cómo este proceso se desarrolla en contextos específicos, como el de los inmigrantes cristianos hispanos y sus comunidades locales.

El crecimiento espiritual cristiano se revela como un proceso dinámico que involucra tanto elementos divinos como humanos. El objetivo final es reflejar el carácter de Cristo en cada área de la vida del creyente, lo cual es posible gracias a la obra capacitadora del Espíritu Santo. Las metodologías pueden variar, pero deben enfatizar la centralidad de la gracia de Dios en la transformación de vidas. Aunque la buena voluntad de Dios es constante e inmutable, es fundamental considerar las circunstancias y necesidades únicas tanto del inmigrante cristiano hispano como de su comunidad cristiana local para catalizar eficazmente su crecimiento espiritual.

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[28] Whitney hizo una distinción clara entre aquellas disciplinas espirituales que se encuentran en las Escrituras y aquellas que están ausentes en ellas. Foster las clasificó como "disciplinas internas", "disciplinas externas" y "disciplinas comunitarias". Foster, 4.

[29] Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding how God Changes Lives*. (New York: Harper Collins, 1999).

[30] James Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Matters: Growing in Christ Through Community*. (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 92.

Un Modelo para Apoyar el Crecimiento Espiritual de los Inmigrantes Cristianos Hispanos

Este modelo, diseñado para apoyar el crecimiento espiritual de los inmigrantes cristianos hispanos adultos, asume la disposición e iniciativa divina, al tiempo que considera las principales características de la comunidad hispana que influyen en la cosmovisión del individuo.

Al igual que cualquier adulto, el proceso de aprendizaje de un inmigrante hispano difiere significativamente del de un niño. En 1980, Malcolm Knowles acuñó una definición concisa de la andragogía como "el arte y la ciencia de ayudar a los adultos a aprender."[31] Knowles argumentó que los adultos que aprenden poseen características específicas que influyen no solo en la manera en que son comprendidos como aprendices, sino también en la forma en que se estructura el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. Estas cinco características incluyen:

- **Autodirección:** Un aspecto natural de la maduración es la transición de la dependencia hacia una mayor autodirección.
- **Experiencia como fuente de aprendizaje:** A lo largo de los años, los adultos acumulan un vasto conocimiento experiencial, que se convierte en un recurso de aprendizaje cada vez más valioso.
- **Disposición para aprender:** Al enfrentarse a situaciones cotidianas de la vida real, los adultos están más dispuestos a adquirir conocimientos que atiendan sus necesidades inmediatas o resuelvan problemas específicos.
- **Orientación al aprendizaje:** Los adultos perciben la educación como una herramienta necesaria para alcanzar su máximo potencial, centrándose en resultados prácticos y metas concretas.
- **Motivación:** Los aprendices adultos suelen estar impulsados por incentivos internos, metas personales o curiosidad.

Estas características del aprendizaje en adultos también se reflejan en la comunidad cristiana hispana, la cual, además de ser diversa en su composición, presenta desafíos particulares que influyen en la manera en que sus miembros aprenden y crecen espiritualmente. Entre estos desafíos, la iglesia local debe gestionar la

[31] Malcom Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy* (New York: Cambridge, 1980), 43.

convivencia de diversas nacionalidades (como mexicanos, guatemaltecos, salvadoreños, colombianos, cubanos, entre otros), razas (personas blancas y negras), estatus migratorios (ciudadanos, residentes legales, inmigrantes no autorizados), tradiciones religiosas (católicos, pentecostales, bautistas, Asambleas de Dios, cristianos no denominacionales), niveles educativos (desde educación superior hasta personas analfabetas), niveles de dominio del inglés, variaciones lingüísticas del español, costumbres y circunstancias económicas (incluyendo empresarios, amas de casa, trabajadores de la construcción).

Esta riqueza cultural, junto con el potencial de la iglesia para cumplir su misión, es tan notables como los desafíos que esta diversidad implica en la promoción del apoyo mutuo. No obstante, la iglesia debe responder a la vulnerabilidad de aquellos que buscan formación espiritual, ya sea debido a barreras lingüísticas, adaptación cultural o limitaciones económicas, al tiempo que enfrenta retos internos, como presupuestos limitados y la falta de instalaciones dedicadas.

A pesar de estas dificultades, un estudio realizado en 2023 por Lifeway Research, en colaboración con dos docenas de organizaciones religiosas, describió a la iglesia hispana como joven, vibrante y en crecimiento. Según el informe, el 58 % de sus miembros son estadounidenses de primera generación nacidos fuera de los Estados Unidos, el 24 % son de segunda generación con padres nacidos en el extranjero, y el 17 % nació en EE. UU. de padres también nacidos en el país. En consecuencia, el 53 % de estas iglesias llevan a cabo sus servicios exclusivamente en español, mientras que el 22 % son bilingües, reflejando así la importancia del idioma en la identidad y la vida comunitaria de estas congregaciones.[32]

Comprender la naturaleza, el propósito y la metodología del crecimiento espiritual, junto con los elementos que intervienen en el proceso de aprendizaje en adultos, proporciona la base para un *Modelo de Apoyo al Crecimiento Espiritual de los Inmigrantes Cristianos Hispanos* (Fig. 1). Este modelo consta de cinco componentes interconectados:

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[32] Lifeway Research, "Study shows Hispanic churches are young, vibrant, and growing," en Illinois Baptist: IBSA News Journal (Marzo 24, 2023), Disponible en: https://illinoisbaptist.org/study-shows-hispanic-churches-are-young-vibrant-and-growing.

- **El Individuo:** Se refiere al creyente que, como adulto, asume responsablemente su papel en el proceso de aprendizaje, práctica y vida en comunidad. Como seguidor de Cristo, el individuo toma la iniciativa de crecer en su relación con Dios y, con automotivación, toma las decisiones necesarias para alinear su carácter con el de Cristo. Dado que la cultura hispana enfatiza la vida en comunidad, las emociones sobre la razón y el hacer sobre el ser, cultivar una disciplina espiritual personal es uno de los desafíos clave para los creyentes hispanos.[33]
- **La Práctica:** Se refiere a las actividades, tanto individuales como comunitarias, orientadas a materializar el conocimiento adquirido de Dios. La práctica funciona como un laboratorio donde se pone a prueba el aprendizaje, se enfrentan desafíos y se identifican necesidades. Uno de los malentendidos heredados del trasfondo católico es la creencia de que una alta participación en eventos eclesiales y un intenso involucramiento en sus actividades conducen inevitablemente al crecimiento espiritual y a una relación cercana con Dios. Los creyentes hispanos necesitan desarrollar una comprensión más profunda de que las actividades no son el objetivo final de la iglesia, sino una herramienta para cumplir su propósito.
- **La Comunidad:** Consiste en todos los adultos creyentes en conjunto. Existe como el cuerpo de Cristo para brindar apoyo mutuo entre los individuos, compartir conocimientos y experiencias colectivas, y definir estrategias para cumplir el propósito divino.
- **La Teoría:** Hace referencia al marco teológico y doctrinal que se enseña tanto de manera individual como colectiva. Su propósito es instruir, capacitar, equipar, establecer, clarificar, edificar y profundizar el conocimiento bíblico del creyente.
- **Dios:** Dios es el facilitador de este proceso de crecimiento espiritual. Como la piedra angular de este camino y aquel

[33] Según un estudio realizado por Pew Research, la población hispana muestra un bajo nivel de compromiso con la lectura de la Biblia, siendo superada significativamente por la población blanca y ligeramente por la población negra. Pew Research Center, "Frequency of Reading Scripture" (n.d). Disponible en: https://www.pewresearch.org/religious-landscape-study/database/frequency-of-reading-scripture/#demographic-information

que le da sentido, Dios sostiene, dirige, guía y fortalece el proceso de aprendizaje colectivo.

Fig. 1. Modelo para Apoyar el Crecimiento Espiritual de los Inmigrantes Cristianos Hispanos

Dado el contexto de la comunidad hispana, los cuatro elementos del modelo pueden incluir los siguientes aspectos:

El creyente debe:

- *Aprender y practicar:* Cultivar la intencionalidad en el desarrollo de disciplinas espirituales personales.
- *Buscar preparación académica:* Demostrar disposición para recibir formación teológica (por ejemplo, asistir a un seminario, capacitarse como misionero o prepararse para ser plantador de iglesias).
- *Participar en el servicio comunitario:* Tomar la iniciativa de identificar y actuar sobre oportunidades para servir eficazmente a la comunidad.

La relación entre el individuo y la comunidad debe fortalecerse a través de:

- *Talleres de ESL (Inglés como Segundo Idioma):* Ofrecer clases de inglés para mejorar las habilidades comunicativas de los participantes.

- *Participación en misiones y evangelismo:* Fomentar la involucración en viajes misioneros y en esfuerzos de evangelización.
- *Asesoría legal y apoyo en inmigración:* Brindar orientación y asistencia en asuntos legales e inmigratorios, protegiendo a los inmigrantes de fraudes que se aprovechan de su estatus migratorio vulnerable.
- *Servicios de consejería:* Ofrecer apoyo psicológico y emocional a personas en situaciones vulnerables o difíciles.
- *Distribución de alimentos a la comunidad:* Coordinar esfuerzos para proveer alimentos a quienes lo necesiten dentro de la comunidad.
- *Celebración de eventos comunitarios:* Organizar celebraciones colectivas para ocasiones significativas, como el Día de la Madre, el Día del Padre y las quinceañeras.
- *Apoyo económico y espiritual:* Extender ayuda a aquellos que viven en condiciones de pobreza, abordando tanto sus necesidades materiales como su crecimiento espiritual. Aunque los hispanos son reconocidos por su fuerte ética de trabajo, la falta de documentos de identificación legal dificulta que muchos accedan a empleos estables.

La comunidad debe facilitar:

- *Mentoría personal:* Construir confianza a través de conversaciones individuales que demuestren interés genuino, compromiso y reconocimiento, complementando la base establecida en reuniones grupales y celebraciones.
- *Estudios bíblicos en pequeños grupos:* Fomentar un acercamiento más profundo a la Escritura en un entorno íntimo y de apoyo.
- *Adoración corporativa:* Promover la adoración comunitaria e implementar estrategias para empoderar a la próxima generación, como la realización de servicios bilingües en inglés y español.
- *Práctica de disciplinas espirituales comunitarias:* Incentivar el desarrollo de disciplinas espirituales dentro de la comunidad para fomentar el crecimiento colectivo.
- *Desarrollo de liderazgo:* Apoyar la formación académica y ministerial de líderes emergentes y actuales.
- *Evaluación y crecimiento comunitario:* Realizar evaluaciones colectivas para medir el cumplimiento del propósito comunitario e identificar áreas de mejora.

- *Nuevas oportunidades:* Motivar a los individuos a compartir sus habilidades con otros miembros de la comunidad y a estar dispuestos a apoyarlos.

La teoría debe centrarse en:

- *Enseñanza bíblica equilibrada*: Proporcionar contenido teológico sólido que también aborde los desafíos prácticos de la vida cotidiana para garantizar un crecimiento espiritual integral.
- *Talleres prácticos:* Ofrecer sesiones sobre temas relevantes para la comunidad hispana, como el matrimonio, la crianza de los hijos y la administración financiera.
- *Corrección de malentendidos bíblicos:* Explorar y aclarar interpretaciones erróneas de las Escrituras para profundizar en la comprensión y fortalecer la fe.

Conclusión

Henry Nouwen dijo una vez que el mundo está lleno de desconocidos: personas reservadas, cada una con su propio recorrido personal, caminando a su manera. Él creía que era necesario crear espacios para los desconocidos, aquellos cuyas necesidades aún no han sido satisfechas. Los anfitriones, recordando la sed y el hambre espiritual que alguna vez experimentaron, buscan servir a sus invitados de tal manera que estos se sientan saciados. No permitirán que su huésped se marche con el estómago vacío. [34]

La Iglesia cristiana enfrenta una situación similar. Multitudes de desconocidos cruzan la frontera cada día; muchos de ellos visitan nuestras comunidades con una sed que solo Dios puede saciar. Es deber del anfitrión servir a estas almas con excelencia, pues, sin duda, lo que se haga por ellas, se hace por el mismo Jesús (Mateo 25:40).

Este artículo ha revisado, de manera breve, el presente y el futuro de la comunidad hispana inmigrante, ha caracterizado su cultura y valores, y ha resaltado elementos clave para atender la necesidad intencional de formar espiritualmente a los cristianos hispanos que se integran a nuestras comunidades. Considerando el estado actual de la comunidad hispana, fortalecer el crecimiento espiritual de los inmigrantes hispanos no solo representa una opor-

[34] Henry Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual life.* (New York: Doubleday, 1975).

tunidad para cumplir la Gran Comisión (Mateo 28:18-20) en el corto plazo, sino también una inversión en el futuro del cristianismo.

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Book Reviews

Beholding the Triune God: The Inseparable Work of Father, Son, and Spirit. By Matthew W. Emerson and Brandon D. Smith. Wheaton: Crossway, 2024. 152 pages. Paperback, $18.99.

In an era when theological discourse often becomes overly academic or disappointingly shallow, Matthew Emerson and Brandon Smith have successfully bridged the gap between rigorous scholarship and accessible devotion. In their work, *Beholding the Triune God: The Inseparable Work of the Father, Son, and Spirit*, they offer readers a comprehensive yet approachable exploration of one of Christianity's most profound doctrines: the inseparable operations of the Trinity. The authors define this doctrine as the teaching "that you cannot separate the acts of God between the persons of God. Every act of God is a singular act of Father, Son, and Spirit" (6). The author's self-identified burden of the book is to defend this definition from "Scripture, theological reason, and Christian tradition" (7).

Emerson and Smith structure their exploration of inseparable operations through a carefully planned progression that builds understanding chapter by chapter. Beginning with revelation, the planned progression appears naturally as it addresses the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the ways they have revealed themselves throughout Scripture. Put simply, revelation "describes the way in which God reveals knowledge of himself and his salvific will to humankind" (15). However, when considering the three persons of the Trinity, the doctrine of revelation takes on a new form. As the authors note, "the biblical description of God's revelation of himself is much richer and more beautiful than this. . . . the triune God's communication of himself reveals both something about his perfect being and life (*ad intra*) and something about his redemptive work in creation for us and our salvation (*ad extra*)" (16). This definition of the doctrine of revelation is paramount for the remainder of the book. The following chapters defend inseparable operations by visiting various categories in which the economic Trinity reveals the imminent Trinity.

Theologically, Emerson and Smith are careful in their articulation of how the eternal processions of the Son and Spirit relate to

their temporal missions while remaining within the framework of inseparable operations. They demonstrate how the Father's eternal generation of the Son and the spiration of the Spirit established the divine order that governs all Trinitarian activity, yet never compromises the essential equality or unified operation of the three persons. Furthermore, the authors demonstrate that recognizing distinct roles in salvation history (the Son as sent, the Spirit as proceeding from the Father and the Son) does not violate inseparable operations but rather expresses how the triune God's unified external works are appropriated according to eternal relations. This theological precision prevents both modalistic confusion and subordinationist error while maintaining the mystery of divine unity-in-distinction.

Throughout the content of the work, Emerson and Smith supplement their work with biblical foundations, historical doctrine, and practical applications for the Christian life. They trace the doctrine of inseparable operations from its biblical roots through the patristic period, medieval synthesis, Reformation clarifications, and into contemporary discussions. This historical grounding prevents the common mistake of treating theological concepts as abstract propositions divorced from the church's lived experience across centuries. This approach allows readers to grasp both the biblical, historical, and contemporary relevance of the doctrine.

The theological content of this work is robust, demonstrating the authors' mastery of both classical and contemporary Trinitarian scholarship. As they engage biblically and historically, their treatment is informed and systematically precise, showing how this doctrine addresses fundamental questions about divine unity and distinction. The authors navigate complex debates about eternal generation, procession, and appropriation with theological sophistication, yet always in service of their central thesis about inseparable operations. This theological richness ensures that readers encounter not merely popularized concepts but substantive doctrinal content that will deepen their understanding of God's triune nature and unified work in creation, redemption, and sanctification.

Perhaps the book's greatest strength lies in its ability to serve both the academic and practical audiences simultaneously. Seminary students will find rigorous engagement with primary sources and contemporary scholarship, while the layman will find valuable information pertinent to their pursuit of God. The glossary of

terms alone makes this an indispensable reference tool for anyone working in theological education, pastoral, or lay ministry. In this, Emerson and Smith have achieved something remarkable: a work that advances scholarly conversation while remaining accessible to practitioners. Their treatment of inseparable operations demonstrates how proper theological method can produce resources that serve the entire church rather than isolated academic communities.

Emerson and Smith have provided the church with an exceptional primary on inseparable operations that will serve pastors, students, and thoughtful laypeople for years to come. This book deserves a place on the shelf of anyone serious about understanding Trinitarian theology. Whether you are a seminary student grappling with systematic theology, a pastor seeking to deepen your congregational teaching, or a committed Christian wanting to better understand the God you worship, this work will prove invaluable.

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The Moral Vision of Proverbs: A Virtue-Oriented Approach to Wisdom. By Timothy J. Sandoval. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2024. 432 Pages. Paperback, $49.99.

Timothy J. Sandoval, associate professor of Hebrew Bible at Brite Divinity School (TCU), provides a thorough evaluation of the relationship between the book of Proverbs and virtue-ethics. In *The Moral Vision of Proverbs*, he claims the theological ethics of Proverbs have been portrayed often in ambiguous terms due to attempts to interpret the book through modern moral orientations (i.e., deontological and utilitarian). Sandoval proposes to clear up this ambiguity by reading Proverbs as ancient virtue-oriented moral discourse (7). He reads the book of Proverbs as a "whole utterance" with consideration of historical-critical observations when applicable. His main interlocutors are Aristotle, Alasdair MacIntyre, Martha Nussbaum, and Julia Annas (15–16). Sandoval's ultimate argument is that "because Proverbs reveals genuine concern with matters of character ethics, one is warranted in studying the book's wisdom–its moral vision–and analyzing its discourse features in light of and in terms of virtue-oriented moral discourse" (16).

Sandoval's book is divided into two sections. Part 1 argues for the legitimacy of reading Proverbs as a virtue-oriented moral discourse. In chapter 1, Sandoval begins by arguing that Proverbs has yet to receive its proper appreciation as a constructive ethical text for the modern world (23). He describes the conditions that have led to the neglect of Proverbs and suggests a virtue-oriented approach may provide the necessary tools for understanding the book's ethical contribution to modern contexts. For Sandoval, the prologue (Pr 1:2–7) provides the hermeneutical key for reading the book, describing the categories of virtues that are the focus of Proverbs and suggesting that much of the book is not meant to be read literally but figuratively (53). Moving on, Sandoval seeks to discern the anthropology of Proverbs, a vital aspect of virtue-oriented moral traditions as they determine what might contribute to human happiness (69). He claims that Proverbs articulates a view of humans in which they require both virtue and some degree of external good to be truly happy. This happiness, however, is always subject to human vulnerability by means of unfortunate circumstances or the viciousness of others (76–79). With Proverbs' version of human happiness defined, Sandoval moves on to consider the role of moral agents who do not merely adhere to rules but cultivate virtuous character. The moral agents' cultivation of virtue pairs with the development of desire to live a life of virtue (109).

Sandoval also considers the role of knowledge and intellectual ability in pursuing wisdom and the role of virtue to promote the good of society in Proverbs. In the final two chapters of part 1, Sandoval argues for the existence of Practical Wisdom, a key element of virtue-oriented systems, in the book of Proverbs. In Proverbs, Practical Wisdom includes the integration of intellectual, practical, and moral-social virtues and the application of those virtues to real-life situations (180). Proverbs, however, does not provide any clear moral exemplars to emulate, a departure from classical expressions of virtue-oriented moral discourse (213).

In part 2, Sandoval works out the implications of reading Proverbs as a virtue-oriented moral discourse. Chapter 10 is focused on shared moral discourse in Proverbs and Amos. Sandoval argues that both books draw on a shared moral-theological vision mediated by the educational institution of ancient Israel (221). He builds on this conclusion to suggest that a virtue-oriented approach to wisdom may be more influential in the production of

the Hebrew Bible than previously thought (245). In chapters 11 and 12, Sandoval focuses on the relationship between morality and creation in the book of Proverbs. He reads Pr 8:22–31 with a focus on the created nature of human beings who engage in moral thinking (247). After engaging with various cosmological traditions, he offers the depiction of the divine creating through Wisdom as support for his claim that Proverbs is best read as a virtue-ethic (307). In chapters 13 and 14, Sandoval compares the use of the term "wisdom" (in Hebrew *ḥokmāh* and other words derived from the root *ḥkm*) to the MacIntyrian concept of a practice. In virtue ethics, the concept of practice relates to the practical application of theory that may be revised by its practitioners. Additionally, those who participate must engage in significant training, those who excel gain satisfaction from the actions, and institutions develop to support the practice (320). Sandoval categorizes the Practical Wisdom of Proverbs as a prime example of the MacIntyrian concept of practice which offers the possibility of new appropriations of Proverbs' ethical tradition (328).

In his conclusion, Sandoval claims that, when taken at face value, the ethical application of Proverbs is limited by its historical setting in a hierarchical society that prioritized wealthy men over others (349–50). His solution is to reject the abusive ideologies he identifies in the text to engage with and revise the ethical tradition of Proverbs so that more people may flourish. He recognizes that this is no insignificant step for those who view Proverbs as part of the Word of God (356). Nonetheless, he argues that moving beyond the historically contingent aspects of Proverbs is encouraged and necessitated by the book's nature as virtue-oriented moral discourse (380). Sandoval's concern to understand the text on its own terms and develop the wisdom of Proverbs based on the type of moral system presented therein is commendable. However, if Sandoval wishes to develop this argument further, and to interact with those who are concerned with the Bible's nature as Scripture, he may need a more robust account of Proverbs as a part of the entire Word of God. Considering Proverbs as part of the full witness of Scripture may further inform the prophetic critique of unjust systems that he hopes to develop. However, as his proposal stands now, it is not clear how the tradition of Proverbs is able to preserve its own witness while also being applied to modern contexts.

Overall, Sandoval makes a compelling case for viewing Proverbs through a virtue-oriented moral framework. Part 1 offers thorough argumentation for his thesis, moving skillfully between the exegetical, philosophical, and theological aspects of his study. Taking the current state of scholarship on Proverbs into consideration, he not only diagnoses a problem but also constructs a path forward. In part 2, Sandoval argues a variety of theses based on his identification of Proverbs as an example of virtue ethics. His arguments are wide-ranging and may not be convincing to all; however, his interpretations merit consideration in several key areas in the study of "wisdom literature" (a category he acknowledges is currently in a state of debate).

Sandoval writes for an academic audience. Those who study the Hebrew Bible, ethics, and/or theology may all be interested in the book's content. This book would also serve well as a textbook in a master's level course on the book of Proverbs. The minister or layperson with a special interest in the philosophical underpinnings of the ethical application of the Bible may find the book valuable as well. In *The Moral Vision of Proverbs*, Sandoval has made a significant contribution to the study of Proverbs and his observations are likely to find further application in biblical scholarship.

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World Mission: Theology, Strategy, & Current Issues. Scott N Callaham and Will Brooks, eds. Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2019. 278 pages. Paperback, $24.99.

World Mission: Theology, Strategy, & Current Issues is edited by Scott N. Callaham and Will Brooks. Callaham earned an MDiv and a PhD from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. As the Dean of the Institute of Public Theology, he draws on his life experience, having served as a missionary, Bible translator, chaplain, and educator to train ministers. He contributed to multiple publications related to biblical languages, biblical theology, and a wide range of pastoral ministry, including *Biblical Aramaic for Biblical Interpreters*.[1] Brooks earned a PhD from Southern Baptist Theo-

[1] Institute of Public Theology, "Scott N. Callaham," accessed on June 18, 2025. https://iopt.org/about/#Faculty.

logical Seminary and serves in different capacities at two seminaries in Asia. He authored *Love Lost for the Cause of Christ* (2018) and *Interpreting Scriptures across Cultures* (2022).[2]

The contributors unapologetically adopt a textual approach to the Scriptures to define the scope of God's mission and the church's responsibility to fulfill her divine purpose of discipleship among the nations. Callaham loses no time in stating the "burden of this book [as] to call the church to return to a thoroughly biblical ethos for all aspects of world mission" (xi, 3). The volume divides into three parts: a "biblical theology of world mission," the Great Commission as "World Mission Strategy," and "Current Issues in World Missions" (v–vi, xi–xii).

In the first part, three chapters explore the relationships between the Old Testament, the New Testament, and biblical theology in ascribing a theological foundation for world mission. Callaham initiates the reflection on three bases: that missions is a derivative theological idea dependent on (a) a robust Scripture-exegesis influencing (b) the "center of Christian life itself . . . [as a] whole-life devotion [to] God himself" in (c) "acceptance of the entire canon of Scripture as authoritative" (4-6). He then deploys a case for the Old Testament foundation of world mission within the biblical themes of "creation, election, judgement, and new creation" (11–20, 23–30). Wendel Sun argues that Christ "came as a missional messiah and that his people are to be a missional people" (33). He points to Jesus as the "last Adam," the "seed of Abraham," and a "prophet like Moses" who ultimately is the "Messiah who creates the new people of God" (34, 38, 42, 46). Sun continues in the third chapter to define how "Mission starts in the being of God" and aims at "the magnification of his glory" (67-69). He subsequently employs a biblical theology of covenants throughout Scripture to develop a paradigm of the mission of God and the mission of God's people as they indwell covenant unity and proclaim the gospel.

The second part explores the concept of "World Mission Strategy" to uncover the meaning of disciple-making through the Great Commission (v, 103). Stephen I. Wright narrows down that a "disciple's identity [is to be] called to the service of God's kingdom" (107). He then deploys a contemporary view of a pilgrim

[2] Wipf and Stock, "Will Brooks," accessed on June 18, 2025. https://wipfandstock.com/author/will-brooks/

community living out authentically and radically divine grace (128–29). Jarvis J. Williams and Trey Moses examine the biblical thematic terminology of *panta ta ethne* as translated to "all people" and argue that God plans to redeem and assemble people "without ethnic distinction" before his throne (147). John Massey and Callaham then describe in chapter 6 the integrality of baptism in the mission of the church by defining its underlying theology, symbolism, and its contribution to ecclesiology before addressing current issues such as "churchless Christianity" (150, 159, 161, 169). Lastly, Sunny Tan and Brooks develop a chapter on the imperativeness of "theological education" into "equipping people to think biblically" and interpret the Scriptures in their language (182). A sub-part in this chapter reverses the paradigm to explore how mission ought to shape theological education toward "wisdom for living and doing" and insists on "the proper use of words as tools" for God's mission (194–203).

In the latter part, contributors focus on "current issues," most of which relate to linguistic and hermeneutical matters. In chapter 8, Callaham develops a biblical theology of the communication of God's Word and hence of the use of accurate language learning to ensure the health of the growing churches (208, 215, 230). Brooks then uncovers how the grammatical-historical exegesis method is the superior hermeneutical strategy to equip the locals to determine and "communicate biblical truth in a culturally appropriate way" (239, 265). Jackson W. answers the challenge to develop a "biblical theology for oral cultures" by promoting a narrative-based approach to Scripture that ensures faithful development of the whole of Scripture (269–81). In the final chapter, somewhat *ad hoc*, Brooks examines the current conversations regarding the development of a missionary task for the church through the lens of Paul's apostolic and pastoral ministry (299).

This volume highlights how the church, its pastors, and missiologists benefit from contributors who are academically trained in disciplines relevant to missions and who also have field experience. Undoubtedly, the theological perspective of Christians falling under a broader tent, such as evangelical, and a narrower theological tent, such as Reformed, is crucial in modern mission conversations. At the same time, *World Mission* suffers from a limitation. While contributors may have leveraged a compelling framework, they are focusing on only a limited number of strings on the harp of missiology. One does not undermine the authority of the Bible

when encompassing the full scope of the missiology discipline, which includes not only "biblical and theological foundation," but also "historical perspective, cultural analysis, and strategy and methodology formation."[3] Hence, this volume is limited in its comprehensive claim to address the scope of the "theology, strategy, and current issues" of "World Mission" in a time of world Christianity (iii). In sum, *World Mission* is a welcome graduate and postgraduate-level volume that emphasizes the necessity of a biblical and theological foundation for missionary engagement in the context of global Christianity. Faced with a scarcity of evangelical influences in the missiological field, the contributors' voices are attuned to their theological family and develop a coherent summons to world engagement.

Notably, the applications the contributors draw have serious commendation for promoting meaningful reflections. Key chapters provide numerous insights on how individuals ought to view baptism or theological formation within a global context. Likewise, the third part effectively discusses some of the linguistic challenges faced by missionaries. Callaham wisely emphasizes how "missionaries should intentionally train to be 'bilingual' in both the common language of the people and the spiritually shaped language of the church" (237). Similarly, Brooks's compelling argument for the employment of the grammatical-historical exegesis method provides tools to help local believers interpret the Scriptures for themselves and develop a culturally relevant expression of the community of the people of God. Alike, Jackson W. tackles the orality challenge by posing a question similar to the one Kevin J. Vanhoozer asked in *Globalizing Theology*. Separately, they reflect on the biblical canon's narratives, where the "dramatic direction" perspective can guide eager readers and practitioners in a suitable direction to bring the gospel to those who primarily learn through

[3] This missiological disciplinary matrix is developed by Gregory Mathias, while being inspired by Gailyn Van Rheenen, "The Missional Helix," *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2014).

oral communication.[4] With this in view, this volume becomes a long-term resource that ought to find its place on the bookshelf.

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Trinitarian Dogmatics: Exploring the Grammar of the Christian Doctrine of God. By D. Glenn Butner Jr. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022. 270 pages. Paperback, $29.99.

In *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, Glenn Butner sets out "to write a systematic account of the Trinity that is normed by Scripture and shaped by centuries of polemical debates going up to the present, my purpose being to create instruction that benefits the church" (3). Butner is Associate Professor of Theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He has earned degrees from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (BA), Duke Divinity School (MDiv), and Marquette University (PhD).

Butner handles the doctrine of the Trinity in a progression of key concepts. His method "moves from more basic and logically prior concepts to more complex ones" (10). These concepts are consubstantiality, processions and personal properties, simplicity, persons and relations, perichoresis, missions, inseparable operations, and communion. Butner begins with the nature of Scripture: "a specific canon of texts viewed as uniquely communicating God's knowledge of God in a manner appropriate to human knowledge" (6). Butner is cautious about overemphasizing either the oneness of God or the threeness of God, and so he intentionally alternates his chapters between divine oneness and divine threeness.

Butner's first chapter discusses the biblical roots and historical explanations of consubstantiality. He defines consubstantiality: "To say that Father, Son, and Spirit are consubstantial is to affirm that each has what is necessary to count as fully and equally divine" (43). Butner's second chapter on processions and personal properties describes eternal generation in the Christian tradition as well

[4] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "One to Rule Them All?," in *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, eds., 1st ed (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 85-126, 108. By the same author: Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*, 1st ed (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

as the exegetical foundations for divine processions. Butner distinguishes between what is communicable and incommunicable. For example, he writes, "The Father communicates the divine essence to the Son by generation but does not communicate the personal property of being generated to the Son, for that it eternally the Son's incommunicable property" (72). Butner's third chapter on simplicity further clarifies what it means to say that the Father, Son, and Spirit are one. Simplicity is "the belief that God is not composed of parts" (75). He concludes, "Simplicity is the dogmatic safeguard of the unity of God despite generation and spiration, of the full deity of the Spirit and Son, and of the denial of any hierarchy of divinity" (96). Butner's fourth chapter on persons and relations explains six criteria for divine personhood: rationality, dissimilarity, Christological compatibility, relationality, unity, and uniqueness (106-127). Butner argues that a divine person is "a unique subsistence of the singular and rational divine nature that is distinguished from yet inseparably united with the other divine persons by the divine relations" (127).

Butner's fifth chapter discusses perichoresis by means of various metaphors and with regards to salvation. Perichoresis is a way of affirming distinction within the Godhead without separation and a way to clarify "consubstantiality by implying a spatial coinherence and mutual indwelling" (145). Butner's sixth chapter covers the divine missions of the Son and Spirit, the economic and immanent Trinity, and the divine economy. Butner attempts the careful balancing act of "not allowing the distinctiveness of the missions to undermine the unity of the Trinity and not allowing the inseparable operations of God to hide the persons" (164). A divine mission is "a voluntary expression of the divine processions into creation through the assumption of a created form" (153). Butner's seventh chapter elaborates on inseparable actions, personal distinction, and divine appropriations. There is a linear ordering of actions of the Trinity "from the Father, through the Son, to the Holy Spirit" (190-191). At the same time, "if a particular act or attribute more closely resembles the unique hypostatic mode of a divine person, then we can appropriate that act or attribute to that person" (194). In his final chapter, Butner describes koinonia and the different models for communion. The focus is "how Christians are intended to experience the triune God to whom we are united in salvation and whom we address in worship" (199).

These two concepts, salvation and worship, are by far the greatest strengths of *Trinitarian Dogmatics* and the most relevant topics for practical ministry issues. Butner has chosen the logical progression of Trinitarian concepts in order to "create instruction that benefits the church" (3). He argues that the formulation of Trinitarian doctrine "is a means of fulfilling the evangelistic work of the church, since we may use the doctrine to describe the God whose mercy and grace and the trinitarian structure of God's self-giving for our salvation" (1). Butner also highlights how "salvation is fundamentally a participation in the life of God" and how "salvation is rooted in the Spirit's incorporative work, through which communion with the Father and Son is made possible" (167, 215). Trinitarian doctrine is also a means of ensuring proper worship. Butner is concerned about "many local congregations whose Sunday worship is filled with prayers, hymns, liturgy, and rites that are directed to one divine person and do not reference the others" (39). For Butner, the concept of consubstantiality is a correction to this erring tendency because the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are "correlatives, subsistent relations that simply are the divine substance" (39). No two concepts are more practically relevant to believers than evangelism and worship.

One can see in Butner's discussion, however, contention with Fred Sander's *The Triune God.* Butner defines the way of discovery (diachronic) as that which "explores the manner in which biblical foundations of the Trinity unfold into increasingly sophisticated dogmatic formulations," and he chooses rather the way of teaching (10). Fred Sanders advocates for the order of discovery, and he argues that "Scripture does not begin by instructing us on the eternal relations of origin in God and then supplementing that instruction with the account of the sending forth of the Son and the Holy Spirit." Rather, for Sanders, "God made it known that his unity was triunity precisely when the Father sent the Son and the Holy Spirit, in fulfillment of the promise of redemption."[5] Butner hesitates with the doctrine of missions: "we cannot thereby claim that the missions exhaustively reveal God, who exceeds the missions that were freely and graciously undertaken" (168). For Sanders, the missions of the Son and Spirit are "revelatory or communicative missions" and "the only source of our knowledge

[5] Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, New Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 94, 37.

of the Trinity."[6] A question that would need to be posed to Butner is the following: "What about the nature of God was not revealed in the missions of the Son and the Spirit?" On the one hand, all believers must humbly admit that God's ways and thoughts are higher than man's ways and thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9) and that God's judgments are unsearchable and His ways are unfathomable (Romans 11:33). On the other hand, the fullness of God dwelt in Christ Jesus (Colossians 1:19) and Christ Jesus is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God's nature (Hebrews 1:3). Butner suggests that the Son and the Spirit have not fully revealed the nature of God.

Even with this contention noted, Butner's *Trinitarian Dogmatics* is recommended to learners of the Bible and theology. Butner's method of describing Trinitarian concepts and building on these concepts, all the while maintaining the tension of oneness and threeness, is as helpful as it is instructional.

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1 & 2 Kings: A Commentary for Biblical Preaching and Teaching. By David B. Schreiner and Lee Compson. Grand Rapids: Kregel Ministry, 2022. 315 pages. Hardcover, $32.99.

David B. Schreiner and Lee Compson's commentary on 1 and 2 Kings is the eighth volume in the *Kerux Commentary Series*, which aims to bring out the "big biblical idea" of a passage in its historical time and place to bear upon the contemporary situation (7). The series brings together biblical exegetes and homileticians to produce a commentary that moves from exegesis of the text to the delivery of a sermon. David B. Schreiner, the biblical exegete for this volume, is associate professor of Old Testament at Wesley Biblical Seminary. His area of interests lies in biblical history and interpretation. Schreiner's homiletician counterpart, Lee Compson, is senior pastor at Milford First Brethren Church in Milford, Indiana.

The laser focus of Schreiner and Compson to aid the teaching and preaching of Scripture is illustrated by the very first section: "Overview of All Preaching Passages." Here, they give the break-

[6] Ibid., 20-21.

down of all of 1 and 2 Kings into twenty-three preaching passages. Each passage includes the exegetical idea, theological focus, preaching idea, and preaching pointers. This section alone may become the most regularly consulted portion by users of this commentary.

The framework in which Schreiner and Compson understand the book of Kings has to do with *choices*, which they call the book of Kings' "enduring theological value" (9). They do not explain if this is the book's "big biblical idea," which the Kerux series is meant to apply to the contemporary situation. The connection, however, seems clear enough to assume that it is indeed the same. Choices, they say, have consequences for individuals and for the believing community. Bad choices, however, do not eliminate God's grace or stop God's plan of salvation, as 1 and 2 Kings shows (9). Thus, Schreiner and Compson take a salvation-history approach, understanding the book of Kings in its larger history-of-redemption context.

Since Schreiner and Compson aim to cover the book of Kings in twenty-three preaching passages, they avoid going into great detail. In the Introduction, for example, there is a fair amount of engagement with the Deuteronomistic History. While the possibility of greater engagement with research on the DH was certainly available, they refrained. Instead, highlights of the history of DH research are relegated to sizable footnotes. The introduction covers the author, date, occasion, the compositional history, historical setting, theological emphases, the role of prophets, and chronology—all in seventeen pages!

Schreiner and Compson do not wade into technical discussions or scholarly debate but keep the explanation of the passage at the forefront. Even when the opportunity for greater precision or technical language is afforded, the opportunity is declined. For example, Schreiner leans on the works of both John A. Cook and Robert Holmstedt (121) for Hebrew grammar, as well as Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi (122) for Hebrew syntax. These works are cited to support Schreiner and Compson's assertion, not to engage with the scholarly conversation of Hebrew grammar or syntax. Furthermore, alternative views are only rarely provided, and any defense of why the authors' view is preferred compared to alternative views is not normally given. Such an approach, once again, preserves the purpose of the *Kerux Commentary Series*: applying the biblical big idea to the contemporary situation. So, while

Schreiner and Compson avoid in-depth conversation with scholarship, their exegesis of each passage is by no means thin. They include summaries, syntactical considerations, background studies (e.g., the cosmic mountain, 120), word studies, characterization (e.g., the Shunammite woman in 1 Kgs 4:8–13, 222–23), and more.

The remaining sections that follow exegesis are "Theological Focus" and "Preaching and Teaching Strategies." Beginning with the latter, this section offers helpful moves from the exegesis of the text to contemporary significance. Illustrations can become powerful vehicles for communication, and Compson provides the reader with a generous amount of illustrations. Beyond this, he even offers further creative ways to bring the message across, such as involving members, including songs, or even using lighting to make the point (106).

The section "Theological Focus" follows the exegesis section, summarizing the findings, and often highlighting the action, character, or nature of God in one sentence. For example, the theological focus of Solomon's indictments in 1 Kgs 11:1–43 is "The Lord is both just and gracious in his interactions with his people and their leaders" (152). Sometimes, though, the focus is not so theological. For example, 1 Kgs 5:1–18, where Solomon makes a treaty with Hiram that supports Solomon's building projects, has the theological focus of "Day-to-day encounters offer evangelistic opportunities" (104). This idea certainly extends from the exegesis, but it is more application than theology. Most statements about the theological focus, however, are indeed theological.

For those who teach and preach through Scripture, Schreiner and Compson's commentary on 1 and 2 Kings is a valuable resource. It accomplishes its purpose to take big biblical ideas and timeless principles and apply them to the contemporary situation via exegeting, summarizing, illustrating, and applying the Scriptures of 1 and 2 Kings.

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Deep Peace: Finding Calm in a World of Conflict and Anxiety. By Todd Hunter. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021. 272 pages. Paperback, $18.99.

Todd Hunter was foundational in the formation of the Diocese of Churches for the Sake of Others, a church planting effort that started across the United States in 2009.[7] Todd Hunter, both an author and adjunct professor, has published eight books as well as various articles and taught at six institutions including Wheaton College, Western Seminary, and Fuller Seminary.[8]

Hunter wrote *Deep Peace* amid the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, when anxiety and world conflict were in abundant supply. The purpose of this work cannot be better explained than through Philippians 4:6-7: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." In his work, Hunter addresses the sources of anxiety Christians face by taking a non-judgmental approach and guiding Christians through a biblical understanding and response to anxiety and conflict, leading to a sense of deep peace (3).

Deep Peace approaches the challenging task of finding a sense of peace amongst an environment of anxiety and conflict in five sections: (1) ten common things that kill peace, (2) how peace is reflected in each part of the trinity, (3) how to cultivate and understand peace from within, (4) how to find peace with others, and (5) how to practice peace. Each chapter concludes with thought-provoking reflection questions that prompt readers to examine their lives for areas where peace is absent. The book maintains the theme that God is the only source of deep peace.

One weakness in the book was the lack of practical ways Christians can find peace. While the reflection questions at the end of each chapter were practical and impactful, and the author excelled in the philosophical realm of his topic, he struggled to provide tangible steps for finding deep peace within the text of his work. The author made many attempts at incorporating practical steps

[7] "About Todd Hunter," C4SO: Churches for the Sake of Others, accessed June 28, 2025, https://c4so.org/structure-governance/about-todd-hunter/.

[8] "Who Is C4SO?," C4SO: Churches for the Sake of Others, accessed June 28, 2025, https://c4so.org/who-is-c4so/.

readers could work through while seeking peace, but he often strayed into theory and biblical views on peace instead.

The book's strengths were demonstrated in the author's knowledge, biblical foundation, and engaging writing style. Most of the author's points were accompanied by personal examples that made the concepts relatable to readers. The focus of each chapter was supported by scripture from both the Old and New Testaments. As for something missing in the book, the author did not address any of the array of diagnosable anxiety disorders in his topic; he stayed in the realm of the feelings of anxiety instead. Hunter is careful not to place blame or shame on readers who are struggling with a biological condition leading to anxiety. Despite a more biblical approach, the book would still apply to those struggling with diagnosed anxiety disorders. As for conflict, Hunter takes a gentle and grace-filled approach for any readers who have experienced trauma at know fault of their own and struggle to feel peace as a result. This leaning towards a biblical approach versus a clinical approach makes the book unique in the field of mental health and kept the topic within the author's field of expertise.

The field of psychology offers a broad range of books and podcasts addressing topics of anxiety and ways to cope with conflict. In the sphere of religious psychology writing, a wide range of Christian books on anxiety have been written as well. However, *Deep Peace* takes a unique approach from other works in the field by challenging Christians to consider how their response to anxiety and world conflict should differ from secular approaches. Christian responses should reflect a Christian's theological foundation and strength derived from God. As with any diagnosis or response to global conflict, a Christian should reflect a deep peace that surpasses all understanding made possible through God alone. While this work is filled with grace towards sufferers, Hunter sets a scriptural standard for Christians to strive toward.

For integrative counselors, *Deep Peace* provides an excellent referral resource for Christian clients struggling with anxiety or a general lack of peace in their lives. The questions at the close of each chapter provide an opportunity to dig deeper in individual or group counseling. While the book leans towards a nouthetic counseling approach, Clients who enter counseling desiring an integrated approach to counseling may benefit from a blend of this book and counseling techniques and skills, creating a holistic approach to their care. Counselors may also benefit from reading this book

because it addresses the extensive conflicts a counselor must face when hearing their clients' stories from day to day. A great challenge for counselors is maintaining a sense of deep peace while listening to the worst moments in clients' lives. This book provides an excellent reminder of who the true source of peace is and can provide an anchor in a world of anxiety and conflict.

For ministers, this work provides an excellent bridge between mental health and the church. A congregation's need for peace may not be evident from a glance across the sanctuary on Sundays. With further discussion, a minister may find that the anxieties and fears of the world do not stop at the church doors. Each chapter in this book holds biblical truths applied with care to a struggle common amongst church members. Many who struggle may not realize they are not the only ones feeling the upheaval of world conflict and anxiety in their lives, leading them to feelings of isolation. *Deep Peace* provides an excellent resource for an adult Bible study to form unity, accountability, and relationships in the church and challenge church members to draw closer to God as a source of deep peace.

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Family Discipleship That Works: Guiding Your Child to Know, Love, and Act Like Jesus. By Brian Dembowczyk. Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2024. 160 pages. Paperback, $19.99.

Brian Dembowczyk is a respected voice in the fields of Christian education and family ministry, having devoted his career to equipping parents, church leaders, and educators for effective discipleship. Prior to his work in publishing and editing, he served in various church staff roles, with a focus on children's and family ministry. Dembowczyk's writing reflects both his theological training and his practical engagement with families navigating the challenges of faith formation in contemporary culture. A commitment to biblical fidelity, accessibility, and empathy for the struggles of everyday Christian parents characterizes this work. Rather than positioning himself as an expert dispensing formulaic advice, he writes as a fellow traveler who understands the doubts, failures, and insecurities parents experience. The tone is encouraging, root-

ed in grace rather than guilt, and the advice is designed to be realistic and actionable.

Each chapter of *Family Discipleship That Works* is structured to maximize accessibility and practical application. Chapters begin with a "big idea," proceed through clear explanations and relatable anecdotes, and conclude with questions for reflection and discussion. This format makes the book suitable not only for individual reading but also for use in small groups or church-based parenting classes.

The book begins by delineating the poor state of discipleship while addressing some of the guilt that may weigh on parents. He then focuses on the core idea that Christians are both image bearers of God and, through the gospel, are remade to live in and like Christ. Dembowczyk employs a theatrical metaphor throughout, inviting families to see themselves as participants in God's ongoing story and to "act out" Christlike character in their daily routines. The final chapters offer a practical blueprint for discipleship, outlining how to identify the characteristics of Jesus that children can emulate, establish regular and structured times for discipleship, and integrate spiritual identity into everyday family routines. Chapter 7 is the lynchpin of this section, and the genius of the book – the A (analyze the passage), C (connect the passage to Jesus), T (translate it to your context) method for Bible study.

Family Discipleship That Works distinguishes itself from many other Christian parenting books by actively modeling the very process of discipleship it teaches. Instead of offering parents a prescriptive checklist or a system of "cut and paste" to-do lists, Dembowczyk walks beside his readers, actually discipling them by inviting them into a transformative journey through God's Word. This journey closely mirrors the kind of transformational growth he hopes parents will foster in their own children.

A significant way Dembowczyk disciples readers is through relational engagement. He writes with both empathy and openness, frequently sharing his own struggles and doubts as a parent. This level of vulnerability helps build trust with readers and underscores a vital truth: discipleship is not about perfection. It is about faithfulness, growth, and the courage to persist through struggles and setbacks.

Rather than rigidly prescribing a single template, Dembowczyk invites families into what he calls a narrative approach to discipleship. He frames family discipleship as active participation in God's

ongoing story, urging parents to see themselves and their children as unique actors with distinct roles to play. This narrative perspective encourages improvisation and flexible responses to the changing realities of daily life, empowering parents to find faithful paths tailored to their own circumstances.

Dembowczyk also places strong emphasis on practical imitation. Consistently pointing his readers to the person of Jesus, he urges parents to model Christlike character in everyday life. Ordinary family routines, such as mealtimes, conversations, and bedtime rituals, become opportunities for formative spiritual engagement. Rather than following a fixed script, the focus is on embodying faith in real, unscripted moments, making spiritual growth a natural part of daily living.

This model of discipleship offers more than the typical "to-do" list approach in several key respects. For one, Dembowczyk aims for sustained transformation rather than fleeting compliance. While checklists may produce short-term results, genuine discipleship arises when parents are internally motivated and continually growing, able to adapt principles to the ever-shifting context of their family lives. Additionally, the book's approach nurtures adaptability and resilience. Since life with children rarely goes exactly as planned, this flexible model helps parents discern and respond to the Holy Spirit's leading in real time, rather than feeling defeated when their best-laid plans falter. Such adaptability is crucial for maintaining consistency in the unpredictable rhythms of family life.

This approach does have its limitations, and applications for various age groups would have been advantageous. Some readers will be disappointed by the lack of detailed routines, age-specific goals, or troubleshooting guides for different challenges. There is undoubtedly a place for books that contain ideas and "how-to" lists, and these books can be very helpful for parents.[9] However, Dembowczyk's emphasis on spiritual formation and improvisational faith equips parents for the long haul, encouraging them to develop habits that endure beyond any single season or crisis. He

[9] Parents looking for resources with more detailed action steps or goals, or age-specific language should consider *Family Discipleship: Leading Your Home Through Time, Moments, and Milestones* by Matt Chandler, Adam Griffin, and Jen Wilkin (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), and *Raising Disciples: Guiding Your Kids into a Faith of Their Own* by Teresa Roberts (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2024).

draws readers' attention to the question of who they are becoming, not just what they are doing, reinforcing a vision of transformation that is both deep and lasting.

Family Discipleship That Works will be a great help for parents who want more than a list of spiritual activities to check off. The model of discipling the reader by offering encouragement, reflection, and a vision for lifelong growth provides a sustainable and grace-filled path for nurturing faith at home. Parents, church leaders, and educators looking to move beyond formulaic approaches will find in this book a wise and compassionate guide for the journey of family discipleship.

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The Priesthood of All Students: Historical, Theological and Missiological Foundations of a Global University Ministry. By Timothée Joset. Carlisle, UK: Langham, 2023. 430 pages. Print. $24.99.

The International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) is "a movement of students sharing and living out the good news of Jesus Christ" locally, nationally, and globally.[10] While IFES has ministered on campuses in over 180 countries, few have discussed the historical and theological foundations beneath its work. Timothée Joset, a product of IFES, attempts to fill this gap in the literature. Joset joined the fellowship in high school and currently serves as its Engaging the University Global Team Coordinator along with teaching at Vaux-sur-Seine Evangelical Seminary and leading within the local church. With his book (revised from his dissertation),[11] Joset seeks to demonstrate the priesthood of the believer as a key tenet of IFES belief and practice through the lenses of immediacy, mediation, and participation. In doing so, Joset reimagines the role of the "parachurch" ministry. Rather than isolated entities that are disconnected from the work of the church, Joset portrays organizations like IFES as birthed out of the church and as necessary participants in the *missio Dei*.

[10] See IFES, accessed June 16, 2025, https://ifesworld.org/en/.

[11] See Timothée Louis Joset, "The Priesthood of All Students?: Historical, Theological and Missiological Foundations of a University Ministry, the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES)" (PhD diss., University of Durham, 2022).

Joset begins his work with an overview of the historical background of IFES. In the early part of the twentieth century, issues like higher criticism and the social gospel threatened the Western Church and its missionary efforts across the globe. IFES was formed in response to these movements, displaying a conservative evangelical theology that fostered personal faith and evangelistic fervor. Joset documents the organization's history as it expanded from Europe and the United States to become a worldwide movement. IFES benefitted from a decentralized approach and elevated the voice of both students and Majority World leaders. Notably, IFES provided a platform for René Padilla (1932–2021) and Samuel Escobar (1934–2025), who would become prominent figures in evangelical missions strategy.

After his historical summary, Joset describes the activities of IFES that exhibit its commitment to the priesthood of the believer. The organization encourages all students to prioritize evangelistic witness, personal devotion through Bible study, and fellowship with other believers. Joset then explains the doctrinal basis (DB) of IFES that grounds its practice. While the DB does not explicitly mention the priesthood of the believer, various IFES leaders have demonstrated its implications by emphasizing students' lay ministry outside of church walls.

Joset then turns to a theological discussion which comprises the main argument of the book. He claims that the history and work of IFES display the priesthood of the believer as an underlying tenet of the organization. Joset discusses three aspects of the doctrine, including immediacy (access to God), mediation (speaking on behalf of God), and participation (involvement in God's mission) to show how students exemplify this priesthood in their personal ministries. Joset also outlines various positions of parachurch ministries in relation to the church before arguing for a "missional ecclesiology" whereby organizations like IFES are an incarnation of the universal church's mission. Through their efforts on college campuses, students partake in the *missio Dei* and mediate between God and their classmates. Joset sees the campus as a unique training ground for ministry and even as a mission field where the gospel is expressed in new contexts. Joset concludes that IFES is not *against* or *beside* the church but *within* it. The church nourishes and strengthens ministries like IFES and allows students to expand its reach as God's priests on the campus.

Joset correctly acknowledges the value of the priesthood of the believer in evangelical missiology. In a Western culture that values education and professional credentials, the doctrine can remind the church of the essential power of the Holy Spirit that cannot be taught in the classroom. Moreover, it helps believers see their need to participate in God's mission. Just as the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to witness to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), so he empowers all believers today, even those on the college campus. Joset successfully intertwines these theological truths with the history of IFES to tell the organization's story in a compelling way. Joset's description of familiar figures like John Stott, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, René Padilla, and Samuel Escobar highlights the significance of IFES within the broader scope of evangelical missions.

While they strongly affirm the priesthood of the believer, Baptist readers might have hesitations with Joset's ecclesiology related to parachurch ministries. Joset compares the nature of the church to Christ's hypostatic union, arguing for a dual—universal and local—ecclesiology (288). Student organizations like IFES are not under any local ecclesial structure, but, Joset argues, they are inside the catholic church. As a result, he prefers to orient parachurch organizations *within* the church rather than *beside* it. Joset is right to recognize the parachurch ministry's role within the scope of the universal church, as IFES empowers and equips students across the globe for gospel ministry. However, he prioritizes this universal nature over the parachurch's work with local bodies of believers. Joset's dual nature analogy could be extended further to show that the parachurch ministry can simultaneously operate both *within* the universal church and *beside* the local one.

Joset claims that parachurch ministries are conjoined to the universal church even if they do not have a formal relationship to local expressions of faith. This "missional ecclesiology" values believers' participation in the *missio Dei* over the specific structures of the church body, leading him to affirm: "A missional Christian student group is closer to being a faithful church than a local church without a missionary orientation" (359). Here Joset confuses the *nature* of the church with the *actions* that it performs. Though the church should have a local and global missionary orientation, its successes or failures in mission do not alter the unique nature it has been given by God. Characteristics like leadership, identity, ordinances, and discipline differentiate the local

church from other Christian groups. Christian students are a part of the universal church, and their missional groups should contribute toward it. Yet, the local church is the primary means through which God is building his universal one.

At times, structural issues prevent Joset from making his case in a convincing way. In his historical overview of IFES, Joset relies on large block quotes that can obscure his voice and distract readers from his main argument. Moreover, the major sections of the book are imbalanced, with some parts above a hundred pages and others below twenty. Joset also waits to give the definitions of major terms (missional ecclesiology, parachurch, apostolicity) until the back half of the book. He could have reorganized some of the material to present his findings more coherently.

Nonetheless, Baptist readers have much to reflect on and gain from this book. They might overlook some of the history of IFES, but the theological sections provide important considerations for those in local church or parachurch ministry. For example, pastors should examine how they might encourage those in their churches to pursue strategic gospel engagement on college campuses. Likewise, college ministers or others in parachurch organizations should assess the goals of their ministries to see how they contribute to the mission of the universal and local church. In either setting, leaders should acknowledge the priestly role that students play in the *missio Dei* and inspire them to act in accordance with it, on the campus and among the nations.

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Karrer, Martin, Darius Müller, Marcus Sigismund, Holger Strutwolf, Annette Hüffmeier, and Gregory S. Paulson, eds. *Novum Testamentum Graecum Editio Critica Maior VI: Die Offenbarung / Revelation*. 4 vols. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2024. *Teil 1. Text / Part 1. Text*: xii pp. + 61* pp. + 492 pp.; *Teil 2. Begleitende Materialien / Part 2. Supplememntary Material*: x pp. +426 pp.; *Teil 3.1. Studien zum Text / Part 3.1. Studies on the Text*, xiv pp. + 506 pp.; *Teil 3.2. Studien zu Interpunktion und Textstruktur / Part 3.2. Studies on Punctuation and Textual Structure*, x pp. + 465 pp. Hardcover, €329.00.

The *Editio Critica Maior* (ECM) of the New Testament "provides the full range of resources necessary for scholarly research in establishing the text and reconstructing the textual history of the New Testament text during its first thousand years" (Part 1, p. 25*). Previous publications have covered the Catholic Epistles (a second edition in 2013), Acts (2017), and Mark (2021), as well as a small volume on parallel pericopes mostly in the Gospels (2011). Revelation has now been published, edited by a team lead by Martin Karrer.

Teil 1 / Part 1. The first volume is the edition of the Greek text of Revelation with an introduction printed in both German and in an English translation. The presentation of the edition is substantially the same as that of the other ECM volumes though with a few important innovations. The earliest recoverable text is at the top of each page, and each word in the verse is numbered sequentially using even numbers. The apparatus identifies variants using both odd and even numbers to identify where in the verse each respective reading occurs (e.g. "1" for an addition to the text in some manuscripts that occurs *before* the first word [numbered "2"] in the verse at the top of the page). The apparatus gives information for 110 manuscript witnesses as well as patristic citations and versional evidence. One welcome innovation of the Revelation volume is the inclusion of early and important later printed editions in the apparatus, including some of the editions edited by Erasmus, Beza, Colinaeus, Stephanus, Bengel, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, von Soden, Westcott and Hort, a few editions in the Nestle/Nestle-Aland tradition, and the Complutensian Polyglot. The apparatus also documents some conjectures "that have become editorially relevant" such as Theodore Beza's conjecture at Rev. 16:5, which became the reading translat-

ed in the King James Version (p. 40*). There are 84 changes to the text of the Nestle-Aland 28th edition and 106 "split guiding lines"—places where the editors were unable to decide which reading of a finite number of possibilities (almost always only two) is the earliest recoverable text (p. 47*). These changes and split guiding lines are listed on pp. 48–50 and pp. 51–58, respectively. Another welcome change is the edition's presentation of abbreviations. In the manuscript tradition, a number of "sacred names" (e.g. God, Jesus, Lord, Christ, Israel, David, Spirit, etc.) were abbreviated, but scarecely any printed edition of the Greek text reflects this phenomenon. The ECM Revelation prints these words in full but adds parentheses to show the abbreviation (e.g. θ(εό)ς for θεός [*theos*, "God"]). Additionally, there is a segmentation apparatus that identifies how a selection of witnesses employs segmentation/punctuation, which can be relevant for exegesis.

Teil 2 / Part 2. Almost all of this volume of supplementary material is printed in both German and English. The editors provide a list of all the singular readings (i.e. readings attested by only a single manuscript) among the manuscripts used in the edition on pp. 16–66, which will certainly be helpful for those who study scribal habits. Müller observes: "According to all selected witnesses, the list indicates — as far as singular readings are concerned — that omissions (om.) and contractions of readings occur far more frequently than additions (odd word addresses) or expansions)" (p. 16). This observation is consistent with the conclusions of others who have studied scribal habits via singular readings. The wealth of information in Part 2 also includes data for orthographic matters, patristic citations, translations of Revelation into other ancient languages, and paratextual features, among other things.

Teil 3.1 / Part 3.1. The "Studies" volume contains the textual commentary and other works on the text of Revelation, covering even conjectures (readings without manuscript support) proposed by earlier editors, ancient translations of Revelation, and even minerals and the spelling of city names in the book. The textual commentary in German is an invaluable resource that explains the editorial decisions for some of the readings adopted in the text. In some cases, it gives nuance to the decisions themselves. For example, at Rev. 1:5, the editors print two readings as split guiding lines (places where the editors were unable to decide which reading is the earliest recoverable text), the one translated in the KJV ("Unto him that loved us, and *washed* us from our sins"), and the

one translated in the CSB ("To him who loves us and *has set us free* from our sins"). However, the commentary (pp. 234–35) explains that the six editors disagreed on what to print here. Half of them opted for the split guiding line, but the other half preferred the reading "*washed* us." Although on the surface it looks like both readings are equally plausible as the original text, the traditional reading might be very slightly more likely to be the correct one here.

Teil 3.2 / Part 3.2. Perhaps the most innovative aspect of the ECM Revelation is Teil 3.2 / Part 3.2—the punctuation volume. Karrer's editorial report explains the rationale behind the punctuation in ECM Revelation and traces the history of punctuation marks in printed editions of the Greek New Testament and explains the relevance of manuscripts for punctuation and segmentation of the edited text. All non-fragmentary manuscripts of Revelation dating up to AD 800 and a few later manucripts are taken into account for the punctuation used in ECM Revelation (p. 45). At the end of Teil 3.2 is a *Lesetext* (translated by Peter Malik as "Reader's edition," but it is not an edition of the text for which uncommon words are glossed at the bottom of the page) that "showcases the features that are poorly visible or imperceptible in the layout of the edition proper" (p. 411). These features include not only line breaks and line endings that are not apparent from the edition proper but also historical divisions that go back to the early and late Byzantine periods (pp. 411–12), shedding light on how earlier Christians understood the flow of the text. The "Commentary on Punctuation and Textual Structure" (in both German and in an English translation by Juan Hernández, Jr.) also has some exegetical insights. To give one example (pp. 309–310), at Rev. 12:9 the Devil and Satan *could* be understood as a single entity acting in two different ways, or they could be understood as two different entities, depending on how the verse is punctuated. Was the dragon, called the Devil, cast out and Satan also cast out, or was the one who was cast identified as the dragon who is called the Devil and Satan? Earlier manuscripts tend to have punctuation that would lean toward an interpretation that distinguishes between two entities, but in the Middle Byzantine period (10th–12th centuries), manuscripts tend to be punctuated in a way that agrees with Andrew of Caesarea's interpretation that Devil and Satan are the same entity.

Many of the changes to the text introduced in this edition are minor and not necessarily translatable differences (e.g. using numerals instead of writing out the words for numbers at 4:4, 11:2, 13:5 and 13:18, or adopting ἀπό instead of ἐκ at 21:4, both of which can be translated "from"). A few are, however (e.g. "fire came down *from God* out of heaven" [KJV] instead of "fire came down from heaven" [CSB]). Additionally, one should remember that this edition only reflects a particular editorial team's identification of the correct text of the text of Revelation. To affect the person in the pew, any translatable changes would have to be adopted by a translation committee for a new translation of the Bible or a revision of an existing one.

As a tribute to J.K. Elliott (1943–2024), it seems fitting to list a few typos and errors. Typos include (square brackets used here to delineate the typo and the presumably-correct form) [*previously*] for [*previous*] on Teil 1, p. x, [*outputs*. .] for [*outputs*.] on Teil 1, p. xii. [*N25A*] (p. 11*) and [*NA25*] (p. 34*) should both be [*NA25A*], as cited correctly in the apparatus at 7:16/16. A few typos in Teil 2 seem to be the result of an uncorrected find-and-replace of "vid" with "V": [*subdiVed*] (p. 112), [*proVes*] (p. 123), [*proVes*], [*indiVual*], and [*proVed*] (p. 124). The apparatus has an error at Rev. 2:4—it reports 01 for αφηκες, but the manuscript has a correction there: 01* has αφηκες; 01^{c} has αφηκας. There is an interesting non-error at Rev. 7:14. The editors report a correction in a printed edition, which on the surface is a logical impossibility. Erasmus' 1516 edition has στολας αυτας corrected to στολας αυτων. Consultation of images of Erasmus' 1516 edition shows that there is a page break at this spot, and the catchword at the bottom of the Greek column before the break is αυτας, but the first word in the Greek column of the following page is αυτων. Such attention to detail is greatly appreciated.

Readers will need to be able to work in both German and English to be able to make full use of this edition. Much of the content is given both in German and in an English translation. The textual commentary is among the sections printed only in German. Two chapters in the *Studies* volume are printed only in English.

Hearty thanks and congratulations are due to Karrer and his team for this outstanding edition.

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Life on the Altar: The Life We Are Called to Live. By James B. Law Jr. Fulton, KY: Master Design Publishing, 2022. 298 pages. Paperback. $14.95.

James B. Law Jr. has served as the senior pastor of First Baptist Church Gonzales in Ascension Parish, Louisiana, since 1993. He earned an M.Div. and Ph.D. from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. In 2010, "Dr. Jim" became director of Advance International, an initiative that seeks to provide accredited theological education to pastors in the global church. In many ways, *Life on the Altar: The Life We Are Called to Live* is a culmination of biblical insight and pastoral wisdom gleaned from decades of vocational ministry.

The concept of an "altar" might be unfamiliar or seem old-fashioned to contemporary churchgoers. Some may think of the Old Testament sacrificial system, while others might recall evangelistic services that invited repentant listeners down to the front after a gospel message. In his book, Law places the image of an altar at the center of the Christian life by unpacking the themes of Romans 12. He leans away from the notion of a physical altar in a temple or building by saying that Christians are "summoned to the altar of God's presence" and called to be living sacrifices "every moment, of every day, all the days of our lives" (xiii). For this reason, the central aim of the book is to depict what it means for believers to consistently live out the gospel in light of the finished work of Christ.

Law writes for a broad audience with evangelistic intent. His book is for those who wish to "align, or realign, their life commitments with the purposes of God" (xiii). Law claims the church is "barnacled by many distractions" and "shackled by uncertainty, confusion, and carnality" (xiv). To fulfill God's mission, there is a need to recover the truth of God's Word to "clear the spiritual fog" and help Christians courageously "stand against the cultural winds howling for compliance" (xiv). He contends the Christian life is not possible without surrender, stating, "*Life on the Altar* is an ur-

gent reminder that we are not our own…we have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20)" (xiv). Throughout each chapter, readers are alerted to the adversaries and distractions that threaten to keep them off the altar.

The book contains four parts, each focusing on different aspects of presenting oneself to God. Part 1 discusses the saving power of the gospel and the motivation for Christian obedience. Romans 12:1-2 uses "therefore" to pivot from gospel exposition in the first eleven chapters to subsequent application and appropriate response to the gospel. Part 2 concerns the church and the role of the body of Christ in the life of a believer. Romans 12:3-8 displays the commitment to spiritual community and opportunity to use gifts to minister to an imperfect but unified group of Christ followers. Part 3 reflects the commands found in Romans 12:9-21 to demonstrate Christian character even in the midst of various trials. Part 4 connects the idea of being a living sacrifice with the universal command to be a witness for Christ until the final consummation. The last chapters of Romans demonstrate that life on the altar cannot be separated from missional action and the advance of the gospel. Additionally, Law includes "altar moments" at the end of each chapter with questions and a suggested prayer to spur reflection and application.

After reading *Life on the Altar*, it is clear that Law's personal faith journey and substantial experience over the last forty years come together to shape, embody, and enhance the content of this book. The work is very personal and readable. Often drawing from his church experiences, Law takes a more thematic approach to address the topic rather than an exegetical one (87, 165, 229, 241). The book contains minimal footnotes and no bibliography or index. While the book is "non-academic," laymen and scholars alike can profit from the rich content. Law's teaching is biblically saturated and theologically sound. He integrates quotes from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, R. C. Sproul, and Thomas Schreiner. He further avoids the errors of legalism and licentiousness in his explanation of what it means to be a "living sacrifice." Law calls out the widespread absenteeism, cancel culture, and nationalism that seem to creep in and plague many churches (118, 194-198). He also rebukes pain-free, comfortable Christianity, reminding believers to "rejoice in hope" (Rom. 12:12) and patiently endure trials and tribulation (152).

Life on the Altar is likely best read as a personal devotional or in a small group setting. If the idea of an "altar" is being lost in churches today, this book is a timely reminder that the altar is a biblical concept that should be preserved in Christian thought and practice. Law does not employ a tone of defeat, simplicity, or overbearing authority. He writes with pastoral grace and discernment, being well aware of the "mind-numbing distractions" in American culture (268). Readers will come to understand that Christian living involves many choices and much nuance. Law says the issue is often "not between good and evil, but between better and best, good and excellent" (216). Daily surrender, ongoing repentance, and unfading hope in Christ seem to make up the essence of being a living sacrifice. Correspondingly, presenting one's life on the altar is not easy, but it is the threshold for spiritual vitality. This book offers more than a litmus test for faith; it provides a wide-angled lens to help churches and Christians envision gospel-centered living and so become the aroma of Christ in the world (2 Cor. 2:15).

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Politics after Christendom: Political Theology in a Fractured World. By David VanDrunen. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020. 400 pages. Paperback, $29.99.

Since the fall of Christendom, Christians in the West have been wrestling with their relationship to politics and political authority. The Christendom that emerged in the Medieval period maintained technical distinctions between the church, the state, and other institutions. However, a common devotion to a type of Christian culture still linked them. The Enlightenment opened the way for pluralism within political communities, and this pluralism has led contemporary Christians to seek out how they should relate to new institutions that do not share a common devotion to Christian values. In *Politics after Christendom,* David VanDrunen argues that this problem and its solution are not as new as they seem. Instead, he argues that the Noahic Covenant in Gn 9:1–17 both anticipates pluralistic political communities and authorizes the formation of societies that allow for human flourishing.

Readers should be aware that VanDrunen does not use the word "politic" solely in reference to affairs of the state and governance. Rather, VanDrunen uses "politic" in the more classical sense to refer to the *polis* or "the larger community in a geographical region in which individuals and smaller communities interrelate" (17). Governments are only one of the many institutions present in a political community or the social life of the *polis*. Furthermore, readers should also be aware that VanDrunen does not present or argue for any specific public policies throughout his book. Instead, he seeks to present the Noahic Covenant as the basis for understanding political institutions as legitimate, provisional, common, and accountable.

VanDrunen's first part of the book is an argument for a theological vision for political communities in line with the Noahic Covenant. The second part is a general description of the implications for various categories that are a part of every political community. These categories include such things as religious liberty, family, commerce, authority, and justice, among others. Because VanDrunen discusses these categories in a way that logically follows the implications of the Noahic Covenant, I will mainly focus my review on his arguments for a theological vision based on the Noahic Covenant and include a few comments on his discussion of pluralism and religious liberty because of their importance to Baptist identity.

VanDrunen argues for the authorization of three main political institutions through the Noahic Covenant: familial, enterprise, and judicial institutions. In the Noahic Covenant, God once again commands humanity to be fruitful and multiply, which is fulfilled through the establishment of familial institutions. God also authorizes animals in addition to plants as food. VanDrunen argues that since food is a basic fundamental need and the multiplying of humanity is anticipated, enterprise is implied in order to meet the needs of an expanding society. Finally, the Noahic Covenant calls for a rule of law akin to the *lex talionis,* but this rule of law requires a judicial system in order to enforce the law and punish those who break it. Governments or judicial institutions require families and enterprises in order to have a legitimate reason for existing and protecting people. Meanwhile, familial and enterprise institutions need governments in order to protect them from violence and promote the flourishing of the institutions.

VanDrunen relies on elements of Augustine's two-cities theology and a Reformed two-kingdoms approach (as opposed to Luther's two-kingdoms approach) supplemented with Kuyperian approaches to sphere sovereignty. However, the strongest influence that comes through in his writing is his reliance on natural theology. As VanDrunen argues, the Noahic covenant is grounded in general revelation and natural theology rather than special revelation and the new covenant (64–5). Unlike the New Covenant, which is made for those who receive salvation, the Noahic Covenant bestows a very limited blessing on all of creation. This blessing is for the purpose of preserving the created order, but is only temporary (62). The Noahic Covenant will only remain in effect until Christ returns. For these reasons, the three institutions that VanDrunen describes are to be open to free participation by all people and free from any type of discrimination. Christians are encouraged and expected to participate in these institutions and to act in such a manner that all others, including those from different religions are allowed to participate in the institutions of family, enterprise, and government.

One contribution that VanDrunen makes in the realm of natural theology could be incredibly important for discussion on the nature and grace relationship. Two primary camps argue for a formula to describe the relationship between nature and grace: the Thomistic position argues that "grace perfects nature" and the neo-Calvinist position argues that "grace restores nature." VanDrunen believes these formulas are inadequate and, in reality, not that different in meaning from each other. The discussion of the relationship between nature and grace is more complicated and requires more nuance than a single verb can give it (76). Instead, Van Drunen argues for the formula that "(common) grace preserves nature and (saving) grace consummates nature" (76). In this formula, VanDrunen captures the importance of God's preserving of nature and the inherent goodness of nature, while also arguing for a view that takes nature beyond a mere restoration to Eden. God has given nature a purpose which has not yet been realized and will not be realized until Christ returns.

VanDrunen's argument for religious liberty is also particularly strong. He recognizes the Noahic Covenant as God's authorization for all people to live peaceably without the expectation of worship. This is not to say that VanDrunen opposes evangelistic efforts or does not desire people to become Christians. Rather, he

is arguing that the Noahic Covenant does not grant anyone the right to restrict a person's participation in common political communities based on religion. Neither should those of other religions have fewer protections or be treated differently by the civil government. People from any religion can participate in the government, but the government is not authorized to show special favor to any particular religion. The Noahic Covenant is focused on peaceful living and the preservation of creation, not on proper worship. In this argument for religious liberty, VanDrunen displays his adherence to a more limited government, and though he does not explicitly rely on Kuyper in his discussion on pluralism, his argument position bears resemblance to a Christian Pluralism of Kuyperian origin.[12] In his argument for political communities from the Noahic Covenant, he sees Civil Governments as limited and primarily focused on protecting citizens from violence. Governments, in this case, should have no laws favoring or discriminating against a certain religion. Rather, at a political level, Christians should support a pluralistic society and the rights of others to practice their faith peacefully. Furthermore, Christians should defend the rights of people of other faiths to participate in common political communities.

One minor weakness of VanDrunen's argument could be the occasional appearance of a type of idealism with regard to enterprise. For example, when discussing to what extent governments should provide services, he argues, "Goods that are necessary for a community to carry out its Noahic commission and that are truly nonexcludable seem to leave us no choice: if the state alone can provide goods the community needs to fulfill God's calling, it must be proper for the law to authorize the state to do so" (344). He, however, goes on to question how many nonexcludable public goods exist and implies that a service such as roads may even be better left in the hands of the private sector. His points on the inefficiency of government and the temptations of power are well taken. Although, these same suspicions of governments may also be applied to enterprises as well. If private companies are provided with more power to provide goods and services and develop technologies that become increasingly necessary for human life,

[12] For a Kuyperian argument for Christian Pluralism, albeit with a heavier focus on Islam and immigration, see Matthew Kaemingk, *Christian Hospitality and Muslim Immigration in an Age of Fear* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018).

then the risk of exploitation and the exclusion of individuals at the hands of private companies becomes greater as well. Admittedly, there are no great answers to this dilemma, and VanDrunen himself argues against greedy companies and a materialist society (231–2). However, there are times when he seems to have less suspicion of enterprises acting for the good of all people than governments, when he should perhaps be equally suspicious of both.

VanDrunen's book is a great foundation for understanding how the bible speaks on politics and to what level God authorizes political communities in scripture. All of VanDrunen's arguments are based on the implications of the Noahic Covenant, and he makes a considerable effort to avoid straying beyond those bounds. For this reason, readers should not expect this book to provide ideas for public policy or specific action. Rather, VanDrunen sets a biblically and theologically grounded foundation for Christians to begin to think about their interactions with their non-Christian neighbors and their interactions with government. VanDrunen sets up a strong political theology and provides an outline by which Christians can navigate a pluralist society without sacrificing their faith.

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Loving God and Neighbor: A Guide to Reading, Teaching, and Preaching Deuteronomy. By George Van Pelt Campbell and Derek Van Pelt Campbell. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2024. 212 pages. $29.00.

Laws in the Old Testament tend to have a bad reputation. People often view them through purely negative lenses, reducing them to a list of "dos and don'ts." Positive portrayals of God's laws are then met with confusion or frustration. The New Testament's emphasis on grace sometimes overshadows any potential positive interpretation of Old Testament laws. Is the Old Testament truly without grace and love? In *Loving God and Neighbor*, professor of biblical and religious studies George Van Pelt Campbell (PhD, Pittsburgh) and pastor Derek Van Pelt Campbell (DMin, Gordon-Conwell) desire to "help God's people 'choose life' through seeing the beauty and grace of God shining forth in the

pages of Deuteronomy" (46). For Campbell and Campbell, Deuteronomy "goes beyond Exodus" (18), functioning as an explanation of the Ten Commandments and exemplifying how one ought to love God and neighbor. The laws, as such, are not fodder for frustration and confusion; they are fuel for faithful devotion to God.

While not exhaustive to the argument's scope, the following provides a brief look into some of its most important characteristics. First, they use the Jewish numbering of the commandments, believing that it best illustrates how "the love of God . . . is the foundation of [the Israelites'] loving response to him" (22). That said, they continue using the term "command[ment]" instead of "word" (cf. 22). Dt 5:6 is present in each of the numbering systems but categorizing it as the first commandment draws attention to its centrality. Second, the commandments are seen to all have a threefold nature: a negative minimum, negative maximum, and positive maximum (5). Third, the fifth commandment not only transitions into the second table of the commandments but also provides a lens for interpreting the remaining commandments through honor.

The structure of *Loving God and Neighbor* is generally straightforward. The first three chapters introduce the reader to several key aspects. Chapter 1 brings up the struggle to see God's grace in the Old Testament's rules and makes a case for the threefold nature of the Ten Commandments. Chapter 2 summarizes each of the positive statements to the Ten Commandments that Campbell and Campbell later expand upon. Chapter 3 presents their foundational argument that the content *and* structure of Deuteronomy functions as "mostly an explanation of what each of the Ten Commandments means" (27).

Chapters 4 through 13 work sequentially through the Ten Commandments. Most of these chapters follow an identical organization: (a) a summary of the commandment and its positive principle; (b) a brief introductory narrative or note, often with a personal style; (c) an explanation of the commandment within Deuteronomy 5; (d) a survey of the commandment through the rest of Deuteronomy; (e) a summary of the positive principle restated; (f) a note toward what the commandment means for Christians today; (g) a quotation from the Heidelberg Catechism's question(s) and answer(s) related to that commandment; and (h) a series of reflective questions for personal devotions as well as for

teaching and preaching on the commandment. Chapters 9 and 10 do not have the brief, personal narratives to introduce the commandment, but chapter 9 does offer a "question to consider" (118).

Chapter 14 explores how Deuteronomy 1–4 and 27–34 direct believers beyond the law to grace. This chapter leans heavily upon Gary Millar's *Now Choose Life* and J. G. McConville's *Grace in the End*. Strangely, the chapter ends with the Heidelberg Catechism like chapters 4–13 but has no reflection questions. In chapter 15, Campbell and Campbell look at the importance of Deuteronomy for the modern believer by (a) noting Christ is the new Moses, (b) reminding Christians they, too, are in a time of waiting, and (c) summarizing the big picture of Scripture as how we ought to love God and neighbor.

Campbell and Campbell's argument for a more positive understanding of the Ten Commandments in the life of Christians today is valuable. Their pastoral tone encourages faithfulness and humility in discussion of every commandment. They make plain what they are arguing for and how they reached their conclusions. However, there are several ways that their arguments could have been strengthened. First, the work could have benefited from further editorial attention. Several of the typos and grammatical constructions lessened the book's readability.

Second, while newer works like Carmen Joy Imes's *Bearing YHWH's Name at Sinai* aid specific points in the argument, the absence of works such as Patrick D. Miller's *The Ten Commandments* stand out. Although Campbell and Campbell do cite Miller's *Deuteronomy* commentary, nearly twenty years stand between the first printing of *Deuteronomy* (1990) and *The Ten Commandments* (2009). Certainly, there are overlaps in content of the two books. However, *The Ten Commandments* focuses exclusively on the role of the Ten Commandments within Deuteronomy and their trajectory through the Old Testament and into the New for believers today. This goal resonates with their argument's scope and sequence.

Third, Campbell and Campbell's brevity can leave questions unanswered. For example, they emphasize that the fifth commandment extends to all "authorities God has authorized" (97). Are there any boundaries to honoring and obeying authorities? While they are clear about the Israelite authorities' dependence on the Torah, the modern connection is less clear. The dissonance is most evident when extrabiblical references are used without clari-

fications. Benjamin Franklin and Martin Luther King Jr. provide positive voices for obeying the fifth commandment for social order. The reader, however, is left to connect the dots on evaluating the roles of England in the American Revolution and the United States in the Civil Rights Movement. Clarification on the bounds of obedience within the right honoring of authorities would fill this gap.

These shortcomings lessen the overall value of Campbell and Campbell's *Loving God and Neighbor*, but the pastoral tone, reflection questions, and concise illustration of God's grace through the Ten Commandments make it a valuable resource. The book speaks most directly to pastors and laymen, who will generally find it helpful for navigating a more positive interpretation and application of God's commandments.

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Confident Witness: Evangelism & Apologetics for the 21st Century. Edited by David S. Dockery. Wheaton, IL: Crossway. 2024. 293 pages. Paperback, $29.99.

There is no real debate among Christians: We live in a post-Christian society that is either skeptical or apathetic toward Christian faith. How are Christians to navigate the tumultuous waters of secularism? In a world of pluralism, how is the Christian to defend and articulate the faith? *Confident Witness: Evangelism & Apologetics for the 21st Century* seeks to "help people understand better the meaning of the gospel" and to take the gospel to others (3). Specifically, the book is organized and written for college students and "those who serve on a college campus" (3) as a help and reminder of the importance of evangelism and apologetics in an age of pluralism and universalism.

Confident Witness is an anthology with 14 chapters written by 14 experts, professors, and/or ministers working in evangelism, discipleship, and apologetics. Additionally, each chapter has reflection questions to be used for personal or group edification. Readers need not read every chapter to benefit from others, though every chapter contributes to the overall goal of the book. Edited by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President, David Dockery, *Confident Witness* is an excellent collaboration of informa-

tive Christian voices. There are three significant themes within the work: classical evangelism and its history, apologetics and its role in evangelism, and the relationship between evangelism and discipleship.

Chapters 2–5 give basic descriptions of the history and practice of evangelism. Chapter 2 (which is the first chapter after the introduction) "What Is Evangelism?" written by Robert Sloan, sets the tone of the book. According to Sloan, evangelism is "the work of God's people in response to Christ's command" (9). He adds that evangelism is declaring the good news of Christ to the world. He then gives a detailed description of the redemptive work of God that began with the old covenant and culminated in the new. Sloan's chapter is a simple yet refreshing reminder of the call placed upon every Christian, and the message we are to bear.

Chapter 3, "The Nature of Scripture and Our Evangelism," written by Christopher W. Morgan, emphasizes and elaborates on the use of Scripture in evangelism. He writes, "the apostles appealed to biblical authority when they preached the gospel, and we should do the same" (24). The chapter argues that God uses Scripture in a way that is unique to evangelistic practice. As a minor theological treatise on the perspicuity, sufficiency, and authority of God's Word, Morgan writes, "Scriptural clarity impacts evangelism" (34) and thus deserves a "pride of place" (36) in any witnessing endeavor.

Chapter 4, "A Theology of Evangelism," by Erik Thoennes, provides the reader with a solid theological foundation for any gospel work. He not only gives a brief overview of gospel theology, he highlights the purpose behind evangelism. He writes, "True evangelism and discipleship always have the worship of Christ among the nations as the ultimate goal" (55). As Thoennes argues, evangelism is a means to an end–it isn't the end. The purpose underlying any evangelistic endeavor is that all may worship God. In fact, evangelism–ultimately–is helping the lost fulfill their purpose and design: to worship God.

Chapters 6–9 show the role apologetics plays in gospel work. Chapter 7, "Evangelism in the Post-Christian West," written by Jim Denison and Mark Legg, encourages and guides readers on the travails of a gospel witness in a world that has left Christianity behind. Though much of the West views Christianity as having "backwards" and "outdated sensibilities," Christians must continue to share the bold truth of the gospel in all its fullness (106).

Though such an attitude toward Christian faith will tempt believers to water down the gospel or ignore evangelistic responsibility, the call of Christ compels us to be witnesses of the gospel. As the authors detail, this can be done through building friendships with those opposed to Christ, so that one may have an opportunity to "show people the light of Jesus and tell them about the truth of his marvelous light" (124).

Though not a manual of Christian apologetics per se, chapters 8–9 are pointed defenses for apologetics. Chapter eight, "Putting Christian Apologetics In Its Place," written by philosopher Travis Dickinson, is worth the price of the book. Dickinson deftly and clearly articulates why apologetics is beneficial in Christian evangelism. He not only gives a positive case for Christian apologetics, he also addresses several common objections to apologetics.

In chapter 9, "Learning from C.S. Lewis," Henry Lee Poe uses Lewis as a case study on how to integrate apologetics into one's life. As Poe contends, "Part of the success of the apologetics of Lewis comes from the fact that he did not have a single apologetic approach but used at least five approaches, each of which spoke to a different dimension of life" (145). These five approaches are works of fiction, works of scholarship, testimony of experience, philosophical argumentation, and "little books about Christianity" (156). Poe illustrates to the reader how Lewis weaved these approaches into various parts of life and how others can do the same.

Chapters 10–14 could properly be categorized as analyses of the interplay and link between evangelism and discipleship. Chapters 10–11 set the stage for the remaining chapters. Chapter ten, "Evangelism for All People," by Anna Daub, is a survey of the global missions. In fact, Daub explores the changing dynamics of Christianity in the twenty-first century. She highlights the shift in missional work: though Christianity began in the East, the missional movements of Christianity for most of church history have been in the West. Over the last century, however, there is a change in the evangelistic winds: now those won to Christ by Western missionaries are traveling to the West hoping to stave off the Christian decline.

Chapter 11, "Cultivation, Planting, and Reaping in Evangelism," by Tim McKnight, is perhaps the most practical of all chapters. McKnight provides a step-by-step approach to engaging, conversating, and inviting the lost to Christ. He uses standard verbiage of common evangelistic training to help the reader implement the

noted practices. He emphasizes that conversion is just the beginning. Thus, discipleship must follow evangelism so the converted can "mature in their faith" and grow by "practicing spiritual disciplines in their lives" (203).

In chapter 12, Susan Booth gives a theological exploration into the role of prayer and the Holy Spirit in evangelism. Given that the world's population has ballooned to eight billion people, the scope of the evangelistic responsibility can be overwhelming. Booth encourages the reader that though tools, methods, and programs are helpful, "the priority still rests on the one thing Jesus said we need first and foremost–the power of the indwelling Spirit" (218). According to Booth, the task may be great, but it is not beyond the power of the Spirit. The chapter references verse after verse–from the Old Testament to the New–describing the work of the Spirit in accomplishing the kingdom mission from the beginning of Genesis to the coming of our Lord.

Chapter 12, "Moth and Multiplication," by Daniel Dewitt, is likely the pinnacle work on the theme of discipleship and evangelism. Dewitt uses the Yucca moth which lives in Joshua trees as an illustration on the "symbiotic nature" of discipleship and evangelism (229). He writes, "If you are discipling someone, it should be for the purpose of that person becoming a disciple who shares the gospel. If you are evangelizing someone, it should be with the goal that he or she will become a disciple" (230). This integrated, cyclical accord, argues Dewitt, is a more "biblical vision of multiplication"—both are required to fit a biblical mold of ministry (231). According to Dewitt, the end goal of evangelism is to make disciples–though one may quibble that disciples exist for more than evangelism, evangelism is certainly a necessary function of a disciple.

The last chapter by Freddy Cardoza focuses on the interplay between evangelism, discipleship, and higher education. He traverses education from Plato to contemporary America. Though education has changed over the millennia, as Cardoza argues, its impact upon society has not. When used correctly, higher education can be used as a powerful force for Christian propagation and truth. He writes that Christianity has had a major impact on higher education and higher education has had an impact on Christianity, yet "existential threats" loom large (268–9). If higher education is to continue to be a tool for gospel work, according to Cardoza, the church must strive to fight the good fight.

This may be the worst of the times culturally, but it is the best of times informatively. We have ample resources to train and equip saints for the task of evangelism. *Confident Witness* is a great contribution to such assets.

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Alvin Plantinga. By Greg Welty. *Great Thinkers Series*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2023. 208 pages. Paperback. $15.99.

Greg Welty serves as professor of philosophy at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. He is the author of *Why is There Evil in the World?* and co-editor of *Calvinism and Middle Knowledge: A Conversation*. Welty first heard of Plantinga while studying at UCLA in the early 1990s, and his appreciation for Plantinga grew through his days as a student at Oxford. Welty confesses his great admiration of Plantinga's thought, suggesting that it has "informed my dissertation, has informed my teaching career since then, and informs this book" (xxii).

This book is part of the *Great Thinkers Series* and is thus much more than a mere biography. Nevertheless, Welty interacts deeply not only with Plantinga the man, but with Plantinga the Christian philosopher and his ideas. The first chapter asks and attempts to answer the question, "Why another book on Plantinga?" Is Alvin Plantinga one of the greats? Welty answers the first suggesting, "A volume like this is needed because of the quantity and quality of Plantinga's work on behalf of Christian theism and because of the influence he continues to have today" (2). Quantitatively speaking, Plantinga's influence can be measured by noting that between 1985 and 2021, there have been at least twenty-two scholarly books and literally hundreds of articles and dissertations published on Plantinga's work (3). Measured qualitatively, Plantinga's ability to write and successfully publish from within the largely secular and anti-theist context of professional philosophy, all while utilizing and developing distinctly Christian sources is astonishing.

Despite the breadth and depth of Plantinga's philosophical work, Welty does a thorough job of distilling decades worth of thought into a fairly comprehensive yet manageable book. In chapters 2–6, Welty outlines and expounds Plantinga's contribution to Christian philosophy of religion: faith and reason (ch. 2),

the problem of evil (ch. 3), theistic arguments (ch. 4), divine attributes (ch. 5), religion and science (ch. 6).

Chapter 7 is particularly helpful as Welty analyzes the "how" and the "what" of Plantinga's thought. Welty shows that Plantinga's philosophical method follows five methodological principles, and his philosophical praxis can be described as four distinct activities (110). The five principles argue that Christian philosophers *shouldn't* (a) restrict projects to what unbelievers pursue, (b) start with unbelieving assumptions, or (c) interpret Christian belief to satisfy believers; *should* (d) pursue the Christian communities' questions and topics, and (e) start with Christian assumptions (137). The four activities Plantinga philosophically engages in are Christian apologetics, philosophical theology, Christian philosophical criticism, and constructive Christian theology. Most notably, Welty concludes from Plantinga's work that, "Theology (with the help of good philosophy) exposes bad philosophy as bad theology" (112).

In chapter 8, Welty makes a helpful contribution to Plantingian studies by situating the philosophy of Alvin Plantinga within the Reformed tradition of which he came. Welty does this by first identifying five Reformed themes: Divine providence, human freedom, Reformed apologetics, classical theism, and the order of salvation. Then, Welty asks two questions of each of these themes: "To what extent does Plantinga's work support this theme? Second, if Plantinga's work is in tension with this theme, how easily can his arguments be supplemented or revised to remove this tension?" (126). Welty shows how Plantinga diverges from Reformed theology on several points including his acceptance of libertarian freewill, his views on Molinism, and his rejection of divine simplicity as classically understood in the Reformed confessions (144-146). Welty concludes in the end that despite some of his misgivings about Plantinga's theological departures, none of these differences have any clear negative effects that risk nullifying Plantinga's positive contributions to Christian philosophy.

Overall, Greg Welty's *Alvin Plantinga* is a well-organized and insightful introduction to the thought of one of the most influential Christian philosophers of the twentieth century and one who continues to be a thinker whose views must be accounted for. Welty has a knack for being able to take dense and seemingly obscure ideas and explain them in a way that can be understood by the novice and the expert. This book would be especially helpful for

seminary students and pastors who are looking to better understand Plantinga and Christian philosophy and apologetics more generally. This work might also be helpful for a more seasoned academic unfamiliar with Plantinga that needs something to whet their appetite, but for those more familiar with Plantinga, this book will most likely be only of marginal value. Those looking for an extended treatment of Plantinga's philosophy of mind and metaphysics will have to look elsewhere. Nevertheless, this book is a great resource for one looking to begin their journey to understanding one of the greatest Christian philosophers in our day.

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Holy Grit: The Will to Persevere. By M. Dean Register. Bloomington: WestBow, 2023. 203 pages. Paperback, $17.95.

M. Dean Register is the founding pastor of Crosspoint Community Church in Hattiesburg, MS. He is a veteran writer of LifeWay Commentaries and has written numerous articles for Christian Publications. He is a New Testament content contributor for *The Quest Study Bible*, *The Holman Bible Dictionary*, and the *Holy Land Illustrated Bible*. He was selected as a Distinguished Alumnus at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, where he also served as an adjunct professor of Leadership and Pastoral Ministry. In *Holy Grit: The Will to Persevere*, Register provides a practical and biblically based approach to developing holy grit to persevere during challenging times. The inclination of individuals during difficult times is to find an alternate and quicker route out of the situation. However, that route lacks dependence on God, focusing instead on dependence on humans and their capabilities. He argues that individuals will encounter difficult situations at varying times, often leaving lasting scars. He encouraged that being able to persevere and hold on to the course requires obedience to God, faithful waiting upon God, and unconditional surrender. The purpose of this work is to encourage readers to develop holy grit, persevere to navigate challenging times, and not throw in the towel and abandon their faith.

Register commenced the book by providing a clarifying definition of holy grit, which is "a devout passion to live out the abundant life that Jesus worked in us without giving up" (xx). Register

expressed that, "God enables holy grit to develop at a divine pace in the oven of perseverance rather than in the microwave of impulse." (28) Hence, holy grit is an attribute that develops over time through perseverance. In addressing how to develop holy grit, he used prominent biblical examples to discuss the eight qualities individuals must have.

In chapter 1, Register used Abraham as a biblical figure to hone in on the need to develop the virtue of patience. "Holy grit endures a severe wait that leads to the death of selfish ambition" (13). Hence, the need to patiently wait and continue waiting upon God. Chapter 2 addressed the issue of forgiveness, using Joseph as the biblical figure. Register discussed in chapter 3 about how Caleb sustained a resilient faith, a virtue of holy grit that enabled him to pursue God's truth for several years (68). In chapter 4, Register explained how Elijah was able to overcome the urge to quit. Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, was the example used in chapter 5 to explain the importance of moving beyond the impossible, such as a heartbreak that she endured, enabling individuals to develop holy grit (110). Chapter 6 revealed how John the Baptist stayed the course of truth as a result of the discipline he had for the mission he was assigned (119). In chapter 7, Register explained how Peter overcame shame, which becomes possible when believers lay shame at the feet of Jesus, as the battle against shame requires persistent tenacity (160). In chapter 8, Paul was the biblical example used to demonstrate how fighting the sin of racism is necessary to build holy grit, refusing to allow cultural bias or politics to alter the message of the Gospel (182).

Register integrated lessons and principles from the biblical examples alongside his personal life experiences to show how various virtues can strengthen an individual's resolve to persevere through life's challenges. By using both biblical narratives and personal life experiences, Register presented a message that is not only highly relatable but also enriching for readers from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, presenting each quality with both types of examples helps readers understand how to personalize the content. Furthermore, through these narratives, readers learn about universal truths they can apply to their own lives to develop holy grit when facing similar challenges. By including personal stories, the message resonates deeply with the reader and evokes empathy, encouraging reflection.

Dean Register elucidated difficulties as the needful to enhance spiritual growth, not avoiding obstacles (18). He stated that difficulties are beneficial when they are met with faith and perseverance. In addition, Register advocated that almost any role anyone holds, including motherhood, requires holy grit to be accomplished (106). Having validated the existence of difficult times, he provided readers with practical tools to address the daily challenges faced by all and develop holy grit. In comparison to other books in the field, Register addressed the book to "ordinary plodders" (xv) while other authors mainly addressed ministry leaders. In addition, Register addressed personal struggles such as shame, unforgiveness, and racism, which makes the book relevant for present-day believers.

Furthermore, Register challenged readers to choose "re-signing" over "resigning, to hold on to conviction rather than succumb to defeat (90). While it is easy to quit, persevering through difficult times serves a greater purpose. The biblical examples he provided encourage readers to persevere, rather than quit when they encounter challenging circumstances. Register provided a pastoral approach to the discussion in this book, which is rightfully so as a result of his long-term role as a pastor. Having holy grit to persevere involves addressing issues within the faith that are hampering devotion to God and holy living. Likewise, holy grit requires believers to take specific actions for the cause of Christ and the kingdom of God. Register discussed the need to pursue racial harmony to avoid jeopardizing the supremacy of the Gospel (165). He admonished the readers to show love, acceptance, and forgiveness daily (180).

Holy Grit: The Will to Persevere is a valuable resource that provides all believers, church leaders, and lay members with tools to utilize to develop holy grit personally. This Scripture-based book provides substantial references for the readers to assess their lives and apply the principles in developing holy grit. Register included some 'Gritty Take Aways' at the end of each chapter that reinforce the message and encourage application for the reader. This book would be valuable to all individuals, including leaders, who seek to develop holy grit to persevere during difficult times in their lives.

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Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Suffers. By Dane Ortlund. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. 224 pages. Hardback, $11.99.

Dane Calvin Ortlund is a biblical theologian and New Testament scholar who studied under Douglas J. Moo and holds degrees from Wheaton College (BA, 2001; PhD, 2010) and Covenant Theological Seminary (MDiv, 2005; ThM, 2007). He comes from a line of distinguished clergymen as both his father and paternal grandfather—Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr. and Raymond C. Ortlund, Sr.—served as ordained Presbyterian ministers. He is author of eleven books and has authored, edited, or contributed to numerous other books, academic articles, and online writings. While serving at Crossway as Chief Publishing Officer and Bible Publisher, he published *Gentle and Lowly* in April 2020 just as COVID-19 began impacting global routines. Since October 2020, he has served as Senior Pastor at Naperville Presbyterian Church, a congregation affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America located near Chicago, Illinois.

Gentle and Lowly endeavors to broaden the Christian reader's understanding about the heart of Christ—who Jesus *is* and the bend of His natural inclinations—to increase the accuracy of the reader's mental image of God and bring their identity into alignment with truth. This ontological investigation of the second Person of the Trinity is guided by Ortlund's prioritization of the Bible as his foremost source of authority. In offering an insightful portrait of Christological attributes, his argument affirms essential tenets of orthodoxy, demonstrates a winsome infusion of Reformed theology, and reveals a niche affinity for the works of Thomas Goodwin and selected other Puritan thinkers. The associated historical injections from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries not only enrich the journey, but the Puritan lens dovetails creatively with Ortlund's methodological approach wherein an attempt is made to wring biblical texts dry of their theological content. Mercifully, the younger Ortlund avoids following those esteemed Puritan paragons into the pattern of verbosity.

Ortlund employs consistently vivid and occasionally hyperbolic prose sprinkled with endearing lightheartedness to bolster the reader's esteem for Christ's default disposition toward humans. A writing style saturated with pathos serves as his literary vehicle for drawing attention to Christ's heart marked by gentleness and low-

liness (Mt 11:29). He explores a wide range of related sentiments and frequently integrates common sensory perceptions (e.g., sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch) to help the concepts linger longer and urge the reader avoid drifting "from the felt experience of [Christ's] heart" (126). The author's emotion-laden turns of phrase emphasize the startling array of Christ's perfect attributes; however, the potency of these divine passions seems to lack proper context due to the disproportionately small attention given to God's simultaneous immutability. Likewise, Ortlund is careful to celebrate both God's immanence and transcendence, yet immanence occupies the central focus in the book which is somewhat surprising given the celebrated place of transcendence commonly observed in proponents of Reformed theology and worship. Further highlighting the complementary attributes of immutability and transcendence would have lent support to the author's case.

Ortlund does not equivocate in setting his engagement of Christ's heart within a Protestant framework. He shows no hesitation in identifying points of departure from Roman Catholic theology (cf. 69, 78). He builds his argument by investigating selected passages from the Old and New Testaments as well as certain doctrines—some of which he claims have been too often neglected in evangelical communities—such as perseverance of the heart of Christ, the heavenly intercession of Christ, Christ's advocacy and intercession, and the permanent humanity of Christ, as well as justification, atonement, and the Trinity. Over the course of the monograph, biblical theology drives the argument supported by helpful illustration through biblical exegesis and historical sources. The prevalence of theological inquiry, as opposed to a straight exegetical treatment of selected biblical texts, leads one to wonder whether the work could have been strengthened by an acknowledgment of the quintessentially theological angle of the book's approach.

Ortlund assumes that he is writing to "normal Christians" who predictably face sin and suffering (14). He likely overstates that premise by correlating this notion of normality with the concept of widespread discouragement, frustration, weariness, disenchantment, cynicism, and feelings of emptiness (13). By not leaving a space for Christian readers whose experience is not marked by such symptoms and who might reject the pervasiveness of the associated assumption, the author unnecessarily attenuates the connectiveness of his argument with the widest possible audience.

Ortlund makes much of Jesus' humanity and compassion in commending a Savior who co-suffers in solidarity with His children and stands ready to express profound love to them in disproportionate acts of mercy and grace. Given the author's knack for adopting some Puritan techniques for biblical engagement, the call to disproportionate thinking about One whose affection cannot be contained by human descriptors seems to logically follow. Christ's defiance of human efforts to impose artificial constraints on His empathic motives offers encouragement to the reader.

Ortlund's adept treatment of the related theological and biblical principles postures the reader to bask in the awareness of Christ's heart and respond by going to Him with humble confidence. This book is easily digestible by a popular Christian readership while intellectually robust enough to satisfy more erudite participants. On balance, *Gentle and Lowly* is a great gift bound to energize regenerate readers toward greater spiritual vitality as their appreciation grows for the heart of Christ.

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What Did the Cross Accomplish? By N. T. Wright, Simon Gathercole, and Robert B. Stewart. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2021. 105 pages + x. Paperback, $17.37.

What Did the Cross Accomplish? is a published transcription of a discussion between N. T. Wright and Simon Gathercole at the fourteenth and final Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in November of 2017. In the wake of Wright's *The Day the Revolution Began* and Gathercole's *Defending Substitution*, the two renowned theologians present two similar, yet significantly different, approaches for constructing a "conservative" atonement theology. Wright is a research fellow at the University of Oxford. Gathercole is a professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, fellow, and director of studies in theology at Fitzwilliam College.

In his introduction, Robert B. Stewart recommends beginning one's investigation into the atonement with the Lord's Supper. Not only is the Lord's Supper an appropriate launching point for atonement theology, but it employs the major themes of substitution, covenant mercy, deliverance, and eschatology which are fea-

tured in the discussion between Wright and Gathercole (14–18). Stewart endorses Wright's general view of the atonement as one of the best attempts to incorporate the multi-faceted nature of the atonement and provide a comprehensive framework that is consistent with the broader scope of Christian theology and worldview.

Wright's opening statement includes six main points. Here, Wright emphasizes the multi-faceted nature of the atonement and, consequently, the limitations of atonement "models," especially traditional Western, forensic models involving propitiation. Wright's most detailed and theologically provocative point is his fourth. Here, he rejects speaking of the atonement as "Jesus' bearing our punishment," although he accepts sacrificial language (27). While the first five points emphasize what to *avoid* when considering the atonement, his final point reveals the *positive* theological framework he emphasizes throughout rest of the discussion: "divine love in action" (32). He understands the atonement as the means by which God restores all of creation and brings human beings into His covenant love and Trinitarian life (32–33).

Gathercole's opening statement is an implicit response both to Wright's opening statement and his fuller articulation in *The Day the Revolution Began*. Gathercole, like Wright, recognizes that the atonement is multi-faceted, but wants to ensure that Christ dying for our sins—perhaps even being *punished* in some sense for our sins (contra Wright)—is part of the picture. Gathercole argues, on the basis of Ezekial 33–34, 1 Cor 15:3–4 and Romans 5, that Scriptural language of Christ dying for our sins demonstrates a substitutionary account of the atonement that shares much in common with the perspective that Wright rejects (33–41).

The first question of the point-counterpoint section and subsequent exchange reveals the central point of disagreement between Wright and Gathercole, which, at one point, Wright explicitly identifies (54). Gathercole asks Wright, "How did Gentiles have their sins forgiven?" (42). Here, Gathercole suggests that Wright's framework for the atonement, which draws heavily on the *specific* story of Israel and the covenant in the Old Testament, cannot explain the *universal* extent of the atonement beyond Israel without incorporating the kind of heavy emphasis on the concept of guilt/punishment that Wright rejects (and Gathercole accepts).

In response, Wright gives an interesting interpretation in which the Messiah's death both fulfills the covenant (which addresses the

forgiveness of sins) and brings new creation (which defeats the 'powers' enslaving humanity) (43–44). Here, Gathercole thinks Wright is doing what both he and Gathercole discouraged in their opening statements – collapsing everything into one 'model' of the atonement.

Wright disagrees and makes a distinction between collapsing everything into one model and giving an account of Christ's work that makes sense of all the "pieces" provided in Scripture. While one *should not* try to make all the pieces look the same, one *should* understand how the pieces fit together to form a larger picture. According to Wright, Gathercole is mistaking Wright's 'putting together the pieces for collapsing everything into one atonement "model."

Gathercole later expresses his skepticism regarding Wright's successful "puzzle-making" (50) and references Jn 3:16 as an example of a "summary statement" of Christ's work that is not primarily about God's restoration of creation (50-51). Here, Wright simply disagrees and shows how he understands the term 'eternal life' in Jn 3:16 to suggest the renewal of the fallen creation by hearkening back to the Garden of Eden (51–52). Gathercole views Wright's "big picture" rendering as "convoluted footwork" (80) which allowed him to fit texts like Jn 3:16 into his "new creation" perspective. Gathercole, thinks Wright is distorting the details with the big picture while Wright thinks he is seeing them even clearer (50–55, 80–82). Thus, it seems that there is simply a *difference in interpretation*.

This difference in interpretation produces the following "pattern" of exchange between the two theologians: 1) Wright explains how he understands Scripture in light of his recommended "big picture;" 2) Gathercole does not provide an alternative "big picture" but asks how Wright can account for an element that he (Gathercole) thinks does not fit; 3) when Wright demonstrates how the element fits within his framework, Gathercole thinks Wright is seeing things that are not there. Thus, it seems that either one sees the picture Wright is painting and thinks it is majestic, or one thinks it sounds "picture-perfect" precisely because it is too good to be true. Either way, the picture is compelling and the discussion worth reading. For my part, I concur with Stewart: "Wright is basically right" (8).

Other significant moments in the discussion include Wright and Gathercole's agreement that *hilasterion* in Romans 3 does not

refer to a propitiatory/substitutionary sacrifice (35, 48–50), and Wright's rejection of (at least one articulation of) the "covenant of works" (57–58). It would be fruitful to compare both Wright and Gathercole's larger body of work on these points, but because of space limitations, I must leave these comments as they are in the discussion: invitations for further research concerning what the cross accomplished.

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Five Lies of Our Anti-Christian Age. By Rosaria Butterfield. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2023. xxi + 368 pp., $29.99 hardback.

Whether one acknowledges it or not, every Christian was at one time an unlikely convert. Rosaria Butterfield, author of *Five Lies of Our Anti-Christian Age,* champions this pre-regenerative reality of all Christians in a separate publication from her reflection on her conversion experience. As a former atheist and tenured professor of critical and queer theory at Syracuse University, her self-assessment of the implausibility of her conversion is not an overstatement. Not unlike the apostle Paul, Rosaria Butterfield is very much a persecutor-turned-participant of the kingdom of God. But her Damascus road was a dinner table, where Presbyterian pastor Ken Smith and his wife Floy discipled Rosaria unto salvation despite her initial determination to expose the hollowed-out agenda of the "religious right" and the perpetual harm evangelicals inflicted on the LGBTQ+ community to which Rosaria belonged. Her four major post-conversion publications illustrate her journey into Christian ministry and Christian academia. Her most recent publication, *Five Lies of Our Anti-Christian Age,* most clearly demonstrates the integration of Butterfields's natural academic prowess and her more recently discovered ministerial purpose.

Despite her radical spiritual transformation, the target audience of *Five Lies of Our Anti-Christian Age* is largely the same as the target of her pre-conversion research—the Christian church. Thus, the premier difference in her pre-and-post-conversion publications is not the target audience—i.e. Western Christians; it is the difference in her assessment of Western Christianity and its engagement with the ethical dilemmas promoted by the LGBTQ+ community. Rosaria Butterfield no longer believes that evangelical

Christianity is too exclusive of sexual minorities but that it is too accommodating of the philosophy, agenda, and nomenclature that is characteristic of twenty-first century sexual progressivism. As she sees it in 2024, the mainline embrace of LGBTQ+ vocabulary, the accommodation of feminist theology, and the softening of evangelical sexual ethics are all tantamount to the exchange of the truth of the gospel for lies; five, to be exact (27). For Butterfield, the choice for Western evangelicals at this impasse is unironically binary: repentance from sexual sin that leads to faith or rejection of God's good and glorious design (157).

The softening of Western Christian sexual ethics is not an unassisted phenomenon. As suggested by the title, Butterfield contends that the LGBTQ+ community took control of the Western sexual narrative through the dissemination of disinformation in the form of five fundamental lies about human sexual expression and its compulsory social acceptability. The five lies challenged by Butterfield are as follows: homosexuality is normal, spirituality is kinder than biblical Christianity, feminism is good for the church, transgenderism is normal, and that sexual modesty is a patriarchal construct meant to oppress modern femininity.

As she disassembles theses five lies, Butterfield exposes the subliminal ideological current that is central to the progressive sexual agenda of the LGBTQ+ community. The point of origin for this current is the normalization of perverse sexual orientations and expressions. The implication toward which Butterfield drives the conversation is that the normalization of homosexual and transgender behavior inevitably leads to the mainline acceptance of said behavior in Western Christianity (73). Butterfield even goes so far as to say that non-affirming churches who still acknowledge homosexual orientation as a viable orientation for its *celibate* members are softening biblical standards for sexuality and are thus complicit in the concession of progressive sexual ethics in Western evangelical Christianity (86). At this juncture, she departs from perhaps the most accredited modern commentary on sexual ethics. But, by taking this position, Butterfield articulates her primary concern, which is that the accommodation of LGBTQ+ vocabulary leads to the accommodation of LGBTQ+ practice.

As she transitions from homosexuality to feminism, the ideological arc of the five lies addressed by Butterfield begins to resemble a greater-to-lesser line of argumentation. If the LGBTQ+ community is successful in moving the Christian mainline on sex-

ual ethics—a tremendous victory for them no doubt—then who is to say that Western Christianity should not also reframe its theology of gender in a light that is more, "female-friendly." She is also concerned that the success of the lie that Western Christianity has mishandled biblical exhortation about male-female covenant relationships inevitably leads to ambiguity about gender role and identity (188). Presented in propositional terms, the ideological arc at the center of the sexual progressivism exposed by Butterfield is as follows:

1. Homosexuality is normal.
2. If homosexuality is normal, then it is acceptable.
3. If Western Christianity can accept homosexual behavior, then what is to say it should not reconsider its theology of gender roles, which have historically oppressed women?
4. The mainline revision of gender roles is a precursor to the acceptance of transgender orientation in Western Christianity.

Drawing from her own well of experience, Butterfield provides a helpful index of contemporary vocabulary of which to be wary when engaging with sexual-ethical dilemmas in ministry. Her contribution to Christian ethics is therefore largely ministerial, insofar as it updates Christian leaders of the most recent developments and exchanges in LGBTQ+ nomenclature. The largest deficiency, however, in her publication is her rejection of the possibility of abstinent, homosexual-identifying Christians, as it ostracizes her from much of the historical conservative consensus on how the church ought to engage in contemporary sexual-ethical dilemmas.

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A Ransom for Many: Mark 10:45 as A Key to the Gospel. By John J. R. Lee and Daniel Brueske. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2023. 203 pages. Paperback, $24.99.

John J. R. Lee and Daniel Brueske both serve as professors of New Testament at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. In addition to the present volume, Lee has published *Christological Rereading of the Shema (Deut 6.4) in Mark's Gospel*. In *A Ransom for Many*, Lee and Brueske argue that Mark 10:45 is a hermeneutical key which unlocks Mark's Gospel. As they explain, "In this single

short verse, we find both a summary of Mark's message and a hint towards his purpose" (ix). The book unpacks this thesis in six chapters.

In chapter 1, the authors observe that the role of Mark 10:45 is often "assumed rather than explained" (2). The chapter concludes with a road map for the rest of the book, overviewing key ideas in the next five chapters (2-4). Chapter 2 discusses the occasion of Mark's Gospel, while chapter 3 explains its purpose. According to Lee and Brueske, Mark wrote to a Roman audience during the Neronian persecution in the middle to late 60s (15, 26–28). Mark wanted his readers to follow Jesus's example of true servanthood amidst his suffering (31). Hence, Mark unpacked for them both Jesus's identity and his ministry. As Lee and Brueske describe, "In terms of identity, Jesus is the glorious, authoritative Son of Man and Son of God. And in terms of ministry, this Jesus has come not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many as he announces the arrival of God's kingdom" (68).

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the meaning and function of Mark 10:45, respectively. The bulk of chapter 4 contains a detailed analysis of Mark 10:45 (86–113). Meanwhile, the authors also demonstrate how Mark 10:32–45 (the passage featuring Mark 10:45) relates to other parts of Mark's Gospel (79–84). Chapter 5 shows *why* and *how* Mark 10:45 remains crucial to understanding Mark (117). In the last chapter, Lee and Brueske reflect on various applications of Mark 10:45. The verse indeed bears implications for those who fall away, as well as those who seek to imitate Jesus's servanthood. The book concludes with two appendices, the first of which features an annotated recommendation for further readings while the second provides a concise history of scholarship on the ransom view of the atonement.

In what follows, I will note four strengths and two weaknesses of the book. With respect to its strength, Lee and Brueske write clearly. Their prose is easy to follow. The book's structure is also commendable as each chapter naturally leads to the next. For example, the first three chapters address broad matters in the Second Gospel before the next two narrow in on Mark 10:45. Fittingly, the book concludes by applying the message of Mark 10:45 to contemporary readers. Second, the authors convincingly establish Mark 10:45 as a hermeneutical key to Mark's Gospel. Part of their success comes from grounding their arguments in the historical

and literary contexts of Mark. Third, students will find the Scripture Index helpful for research.

Fourth and most importantly, the book is useful for teaching Mark. One may utilize the outline of Mark presented on pp. 77–78 for personal study and teaching. In fact, preachers may adopt the provided outline to plan the number of sermons and consult the book to make sure they highlight appropriate themes in each section of Mark. Further, the extended discussion of Mark 10:45 models sound exegesis. It reminds one that understanding words proves crucial to understanding theology. One's grasp of the former affects one's grasp of the latter.

The two weaknesses I have are mere quibbles. First, Lee and Brueske could have relegated the brief appendix on the ransom view of the atonement to a footnote in chapter 4, especially when they exegete Mark 10:45. Indeed, since extensive footnotes abound throughout the book, this adjustment could have easily been made. Second, I wonder why the authors do not contend for Mark 10:45 being *the* key, as opposed to just *a* key, as the title suggests (cf. 1). If there are other keys to unlocking Mark's message, Lee and Brueske have not explored and interacted with them. In my view, they convincingly demonstrate that Mark 10:45 is *the* hermeneutical key, so calling the verse *a* key undersells the thesis and overdelivers.

Overall, Lee and Brueske have produced a helpful resource for understanding and teaching Mark. Students, lay persons, and scholars will benefit from the fruit of their study. The book will go a long *way* (no pun intended) in Markan scholarship.

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The Doctrine of Good Works: Reclaiming a Neglected Protestant Teaching. By Thomas H. McCall, Caleb T. Friedeman, and Matt T. Friedeman. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023. 224 pages. Paperback, $27.99.

If you participated in Bible Drill, you might have memorized Eph 2:8–9, where Paul describes salvation by grace through faith and not works. Protestants stress the importance of faith alone, for as Martin Luther found in the early days of the Protestant movement, it is faith and not works that brings peace with God. Yet in our attempt to get the gospel right, we can easily overcorrect and minimize the importance of good works, which appear immediately after in Eph 2:10. In *The Doctrine of Good Works: Reclaiming a Neglected Protestant Teaching*, Thomas H. McCall, Caleb T. Friedeman, and Matt T. Friedeman seek to respond to this trend by bringing good works back into the Protestant theological conversation. The academic focuses of each author (Thomas McCall in theology, Caleb Friedeman in New Testament, and Matt Friedeman in evangelism and discipleship) combine with their ministry experience in this robust theological and pastoral resource, resulting in a well-rounded work of theology.

The authors argue that without a healthy doctrine of good works, the church is weak apologetically and out of step with historical Protestant thought, problems due in part to misguided views in popular and academic Protestant theology. In particular, the authors highlight a tendency to equate salvation with justification (xii–xiv). Alternatively, the authors draw on John Piper's Foreword to Thomas Schreiner's *Faith Alone—The Doctrine of Justification* to argue that justification is only one part of salvation (xv). Piper, affirming Schreiner, distinguishes between the conditions for being made right with God (faith alone) and the conditions for attaining heaven (love and obedience alongside faith).[13] McCall, Friedeman, and Friedeman cite some negative responses to Piper's position as proof that the Protestant doctrine of good works needs to be recovered (xv–xvi).

The authors begin their recovery by surveying the place of good works in historical Protestant theology. They distinguish be-

[13] John Piper, "Foreword," in *Faith Alone—The Doctrine of Justification: What the Reformers Taught . . . and Why It Still Matters*, by Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 11.

tween two categories of good works: "Good works of 'piety' (those related directly to love of God, most commonly expressed in personal and corporate worship) . . . and good works of 'mercy' (those related directly to love of neighbor, most commonly expressed in the commitment to care and the pursuit of justice)" (1). The authors survey Lutheran and Reformed theologians to show that such good works have historically been viewed not simply as important but as necessary for salvation, though not necessary for justification (2–24).

McCall, Friedeman, and Friedeman next study the place of good works in the Bible, arguing that from Genesis to Revelation, Scripture consistently speaks to the necessity of good works. While not an exhaustive study, their treatment nevertheless shows a persistent emphasis on good works. In the Old Testament, good works appear in the beginning as God works and then creates people to work (25–32). Good works are expected of God's people, from Abraham to Moses, and the Psalms of David and the writings of the Prophets bear witness to this expectation (32–59). In the New Testament as well, Jesus expects good works from his followers, and the first Christians do good works after his example (61–78). In Paul's letters, the authors find a strong affirmation of justification by grace through faith alongside a strong affirmation of the necessity of good works following justification (78–89). They argue that "when Paul says that we are saved 'by grace … through faith … not by works' (Eph. 2:8–9), this means that salvation is an unmerited gift that must be received as such, *not* that no subsequent response is required" (89). They finish their biblical study by considering James and Revelation and finding good works to feature prominently there as well (90–98).

After demonstrating the necessity of good works from Scripture, the authors articulate a theology of good works. They trace good works from creation to fall to redemption, they carefully locate the place of good works in salvation and the life of the believer, and they consider the role of works in the church, judgment, and eternity (99–125). They then provide case studies and leadership principles drawn from churches that actively engage in good works, emphasizing how good works are the outworking of our love of God and neighbor (127–92).

The Doctrine of Good Works possesses a number of strengths. First, this book is both scholarly and accessible. Throughout the book, the authors engage the disciplines of biblical studies, lan-

guages, history, and theology, and they do so efficiently and effectively. Yet the book is neither long nor dense. The blend of clarity and precision with which they write makes this a book that will benefit both the academy and the local church.

Second, this book is edifying. The three authors manage to write with a tone that is thoroughly biblical, theological, and pastoral, and I found myself reflecting on how their insights applied to my own life as I read. Such reflection can be sobering, particularly in light of the place of works in judgment. Yet the challenge to do good works remains a hopeful one, grounded in the grace of God and the possibility of what he can do in and through his church.

Third, this book is relevant. The authors suggest that "Paul's Letters have exerted a far greater influence on how most Protestants today think about good works than Jesus's own words and actions as recorded in the Gospels have" (61–62), and their introductory comments on recent theological texts and the negative response to John Piper's comments seem to demonstrate a need for a robust theology of good works (xiii–xvi). McCall, Friedeman, and Friedeman write to meet this need, and they do so successfully.

The Doctrine of Good Works is not without weaknesses. While the argument that good works are necessary for salvation may appear scandalous at first, the conclusion that good works "follow [justification] and flow from it" (124) may not appear novel to most believers. The book is then not so much new information as it is a clear case for what is already generally affirmed. Additionally, the question implicitly raised in the introduction warrants more attention: Is it possible to be reconciled to God by grace through faith but to ultimately lose heaven due to an absence of good works? While some Lutheran theologians appear to affirm the possibility (9–11), they also affirm that "properly speaking, good works are not necessary to attain salvation or maintain salvation" (10). The apparent conflict between these two points deserves more space, and while the relations between justification, good works, and final judgment are addressed by the authors elsewhere (84–89; 121–23), a fuller discussion of the implications of these points would strengthen the book.

That said, *The Doctrine of Good Works* warrants a place on the minister's bookshelf. McCall, Friedeman, and Friedeman present a clear and coherent argument for the place of good works in

Protestant thought. They demonstrate the necessity of good works for salvation without compromising justification by grace through faith, and they support their arguments with history, biblical studies, and theology before showing how churches can practically engage in good works. The combination of theory and practice is especially fitting for this subject, and the result is a valuable resource for anyone interested in an often-overlooked doctrine.

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Preaching with Prominence: Crafting Expository Sermons Through Discourse Analysis. By D.C. McIntyre. Willmore: GlossaHouse, 2024. 181 pages. Paperback, $29.99.

In *Preaching with Prominence*, D.C. McIntyre offers a method of preparing truly expository sermons using discourse analysis of the biblical text in its original languages. McIntyre is a licensed Southern Baptist minister and holds a D.Min. from Knox Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Liberty University in Theology & Apologetics. His book is a reworking of his D.Min. dissertation in GlossaHouse's dissertation series.

McIntyre is to be commended for his commitment to expository preaching. He acknowledges the issues of deductive sermons in which the topic, concerns, and structure are usually determined by the preacher as opposed to the biblical author's (5). To overcome these issues, McIntyre believes that an inductive approach using discourse analysis on the biblical text in its original languages is necessary to establish the form of the text and consequently, the form of the sermon (1–2). Discourse analysis is an approach in linguistics that considers the meaning of words beyond a greater context of phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and whole narratives to the context of the author's discourse as a whole (12–13). This is needed to determine the structural units of the text. One of the reasons McIntyre encourages the use of the original languages is that there are particular structural elements seen in the Greek that are not translated over in English.

McIntyre advocates for following *lectio continua* ("continuous expositions") which is "a model of preaching through books of the bible in their entirety from start to finish" (21). Due to this commitment, the first type of discourse analysis he introduced in

sermon preparation is macroanalysis, which focuses on the global or bigger picture of relationship among paragraphs in a book (23). The result of identifying the macro-segmentation units as major discourse level parts (27–29), provides the preacher with boundaries for the selection of sermon texts in a preaching schedule without being influenced by the spacing, indentation, punctuation or headings supplied by the bible translators (24).

The second type of discourse analysis McIntyre introduced is microanalysis, which "seeks to observe and classify the microstructure of a discourse at the phrase/clause level" (51). This is done with a "top-down approach" in which the function of an individual sentence is determined by its smaller discourse units such as words, grammatical/syntactical structures, phrases, clauses, and illocutionary acts (52). Doing so ensures that the preacher is faithful in determining the biblical author's meaning and intention. The process is visually represented in a clausal structure made up of independent and dependent clauses (66–69), similar to structural diagraming in many preaching books. With this clausal structure, microanalysis aids the preacher to form the main points and sub-points of a sermon (69).

Next, McIntyre shared how the use of the Greek Verbal Aspect Prominence Theory can aid in the emphasis of preaching. Many preachers with a commitment to expository preaching and the grammatico-historical form of exegesis may study the same biblical text, but have different emphasis on their sermons. Verbal Aspect Prominence Theory can reveal what is meant to be emphasized in the text through prominent foregrounding and what is meant to be de-emphasized through backgrounding (103–4). The title of this book, *Preaching with Prominence*, is not necessarily a reflection of strongly preaching in a way that stands out, but a reflection of preaching with the use of Verbal Aspect Prominence Theory and prominence markers (155). Prominence markers identified with thematic highlighting provides supplemental information from the biblical author that guides the preacher to know the topics of importance in the discourse that is of the author's concern (106, 116). Finally, McIntyre concludes with steps on how to create a sermon preparation template in Microsoft Word and an example of how discourse analysis is used to prepare a sermon outline of Matt 2:1–12.

Preaching with Prominence is a very practical book that adds great value to help and ensure that a preacher prepares expository ser-

mons. McIntyre is to be commended for his commitment to expository preaching, grammatical-historical exegesis, and the study of the original languages. He provides an approach on how to study the biblical text with the intention of preparing a sermon without falling into the danger of "sermonizing" or looking for one's own sermon structure while ignoring the author's intention. However, this is not a typical preaching book recommended for those in introductory preaching classes. McIntyre acknowledged that his book does not present the principles of sermon illustrations, applications, or preaching homiletics (14), which are covered well in other preaching books. This book is recommended for more seasoned preachers who have a knowledge of the Greek language and are willing to take the time to learn and apply discourse analysis in their sermon preparation. Although discourse analysis is practical, one may find it hard to learn it just from reading this book. It would be beneficial if there were some online classes or videos teaching and guiding through the steps of discourse analysis to act as a companion to the book. Furthermore, easier accessibility to resources such as a link to download a premade sermon preparation template Word document (instead of creating one's own) or even a Logos workflow would aid the preacher pursuing this method.

The result of applying McIntyre's method of discourse analysis leaves the preacher with a very impressive biblical outline that is true to the text and the author's intention, as seen from the example outline of Matt 2:1–12 in the last chapter. However, this outline with its main points and sub-points may be seen a textual outline as opposed to a sermon outline. It can be adapted in two ways to be a sermon outline, while still remaining true to the authorial intent. The first way is to shorten it, as there is not enough time during a usual Sunday worship service sermon to present all the main points derived from the discourse analysis and leave time to develop each point with illustrations and applications. The second way is to reframe the language of the main points into present-tense, universal statements that are relatable to the needs of the contemporary congregation. This kind of sermon outline can be achieved following McIntyre's discourse analysis approach to crafting expository sermons.

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