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## *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies*

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## ***Theistic Evolution, Christian Knowledge and Culture's Plausibility Structure***

**J. P. MORELAND**

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**Abstract:** In thinking about this article, I have decided not to write a technical piece. Over the years, I have done plenty of that on matters relating Christianity and science or the philosophy of science. Instead, as an aging (!) senior scholar, I have decided to reflect on the broader cultural implications of adopting a certain way of integrating Christianity and science, to attempt to offer some wisdom on the matter, and to issue a word of caution to my younger brothers and sisters. That said, here are my central reflections.

**Key Words:** philosophy of science, theistic evolution, Scientism, Physicalism, knowledge, neuroscience, Christianity, plausibility structure

### **The State of Our Culture Today**

In 1941, Harvard sociologist Pitirim A. Sorokin wrote a book entitled *The Crisis of Our Age*. Sorokin divided cultures into two major types: *sensate* and *ideational*. A *sensate* culture is one in which people believe only in the reality of the physical universe capable of being experienced with the five senses. A *sensate* culture is secular, this worldly, and empirical. Knowledge is limited to the sense perceptible world.

By contrast, an *ideational* culture embraces the sensory world, but goes on to accept the notion that an extra-empirical immaterial reality can be known as well, a reality consisting of God, the soul, immaterial beings, values, purposes, and various abstract objects like numbers and propositions. Sorokin noted that a *sensate* culture eventually disintegrates because it lacks the intellectual resources necessary to sustain a public and private life conducive of corporate and individual human flourishing. After all, if we can't know anything about values, life after death, God, and so forth, how can we receive solid guidance to lead a life of wisdom and character?

As we move through the early portion of the twenty-first century, it is obvious that the West, including the United States, is *sensate*.<sup>1</sup> To see this, consider the following. In 1989, the state of California issued a new Science Framework to provide guidance for the state's public school science classrooms. In that document, advice is given to

1. See Julie A. Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

teachers about how to handle students who approach them with reservations about the theory of evolution:

At times some students may insist that certain conclusions of science cannot be true because of certain religious or philosophical beliefs they hold. . . . It is appropriate for the teacher to express in this regard, "I understand that you may have personal reservations about accepting this scientific evidence, but it is scientific knowledge about which there is no reasonable doubt among scientists in their field, and it is my responsibility to teach it because it is part of our common intellectual heritage."<sup>2</sup>

The real importance of this statement lies not in its promotion of evolution over creation, though that is no small matter in its own right. No, the real danger in the Framework's advice resides in the picture of knowledge it presupposes: The only knowledge we can have about reality—and, thus, the only claims that deserve the backing of public institutions—is empirical knowledge gained by the hard sciences.

Non-empirical claims (those that can't be tested with the five senses) outside the hard sciences, such as those at the core of ethics, political theory and religion are not items of knowledge but, rather, matters of private feeling. Note carefully the words associated with science: *conclusions, evidence, knowledge, no reasonable doubt, intellectual heritage*. These deeply cognitive terms express the view that science and science alone exercises the intellectual right (and responsibility) of defining reality. By contrast, religious claims are described in distinctively non-cognitive language: *beliefs, personal reservations*.

In such a culture we now live and move and have our being. Currently, a three-way worldview struggle rages in our culture between ethical monotheism (especially Christianity), postmodernism (roughly, a cultural form of relativism about truth, reality and value), and scientific naturalism. I cannot undertake here a detailed characterization of scientific naturalism, but I want to say a word about its role in shaping the crisis of the West.

Scientific naturalism takes the view that the physical cosmos studied by science is all there is. Scientific naturalism has two central components: a view of reality and a view of how we know things. Regarding reality, scientific naturalism implies that everything that exists is composed of matter or emerges out of matter when it achieves a suitable complexity. There is no spiritual world, no God, no angels or demons, no life after death, no moral absolutes, no objective purpose to life, no such thing as the Kingdom of God. And scientific naturalism implies that physical science is the only way (strong scientism), or at the very least a vastly superior way (weak scientism), of gaining knowledge. Since competence in life depends on knowledge (you can't be competent at selling insurance if you don't know anything about it!),

2. Mark Hartwig and P. A. Nelson, *Invitation to Conflict: A Retrospective Look at the California Science Framework* (Colorado Springs: Access Research Network, 1992), 20.

this implies that there just is no such thing as learning to live life competently in the Kingdom of God. Spiritual competence is a silly idea since spiritual knowledge, as science has repeatedly shown, does not exist. And the same claim would and is being made regarding ethical assertions and moral behavior. Since there is no known spiritual knowledge or competence, Oprah Winfrey feels free to pontificate about matters religious (after all, she is, indeed, an authority about her own private feelings and subjective beliefs), but she would never do this if the topic were a scientific one. Why? Because there are experts she would call in to her show. What is an expert? It is someone with the relevant knowledge. Since there are no experts in ethics or religion, Oprah is free to say what she wants without fear of censure.

In the early 1960s, naturalist Wilfred Sellars announced that “in the dimension of describing and explaining the world, science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not.”<sup>3</sup> Scientific knowledge is taken to be so vastly superior that its claims always trump the claims made by other disciplines. *The key component of naturalism, then, is the belief that scientific knowledge is either the only kind of knowledge there is or an immeasurably superior kind of knowledge. As we shall see in more detail later, combined with postmodernism, scientism raises this central challenge to the Christian church at this time in history: The central issue is not whether Christianity is true (one could claim Christianity is true and based on blind faith and emotion and would probably be tolerated by European and North American elites); the central issue is whether Christianity can be **known** to be true. Is or is not Christianity a knowledge tradition, a set of ideas that through history provide us, in its key claims, with truths about reality that can be known to be true?*

Years ago I was invited to speak at an evangelistic dinner and I was put on notice by one believer that he was bringing his boss, a man who had been a chief engineer for decades, who was finishing a belated Ph.D. in physics from Johns Hopkins, and who went out of his way to attack and ridicule Christians. Upon being introduced to me at the dinner table, he wasted no time launching into me. “I understand you are a philosopher and theologian,” he said in an amused manner. Before I had a chance to respond, he said, “I used to be interested in those things when I was a teenager. But I have outgrown those interests. I know now that the only sort of knowledge of reality is that which can and has been quantified and tested in the laboratory. If you can measure it and test it scientifically, you can know it. If not, the topic is nothing but private opinion and idle speculation!” This is what I mean by scientism. It never occurred to the gentleman that his claim was self-refuting since it could not itself be “quantified and tested in the laboratory.”

Scientism accords the right to define reality and speak with knowledge and authority to scientists and scientists alone. And this posture is, sadly, pervasive throughout our culture. In the June 25, 2001, issue of *Time* magazine, the cover story was entitled “How the Universe Will End”. The universe is winding down, it says, and will eventually go

3. Wilfred Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963): 173.

out with a cold, dark whimper. It never occurred to the writer that if something is winding down, it must have been wound up, and if something is wound up, there has to be a winder-upper! But for those with eyes to see, the article's claim about the fate of the universe was not the main issue of concern. It's the article's implicit epistemology (theory of knowledge). It claims that for centuries, humans have wanted to know how all this will end, but because they could only use religion and philosophy, solid answers were unavailable. But now that science has moved into this area of inquiry, for the first time in human history, we have firm answers to our questions, answers that will force religion and philosophy to rethink its views. This same attitude is currently pervasive about the origin and nature of human beings and the ethical views—especially those about sexual ethics—we have inherited from Christianity.

This is scientism, and *Time* magazine employed the naturalist epistemology without batting an eye or, indeed, without knowing it was doing so. In the same issue, *Time* featured an article defending stem-cell research on human embryos: “These [embryos] are microscopic groupings of a few differentiated cells. There is nothing human about them, except potential—and, if you choose to believe it, a soul.”<sup>4</sup> Note the presupposed scientism. We *know* scientific facts about embryos, but non-scientific issues like the reality of the soul, are not items of knowledge. When it comes to belief in the soul, you're on your own. There is no evidence one way or another. You must choose arbitrarily or, perhaps, on the basis of private feelings what you believe about the soul. In a scientific culture, belief in the soul is like belief in ghosts: an issue best left to the pages of the *National Inquirer*. No wonder people in our churches increasingly fail to take Christianity seriously!

It is on the basis of knowledge (or perceived knowledge)—not faith, mere truth, commitment or sincerity—that people are given the right to lead, act in public and accomplish important tasks. We give certain people the right to fix our cars, pull our teeth, write our contracts, counsel our souls and so on, because we take those people to be in possession of the relevant body of knowledge. Moreover, it is the possession of knowledge (and, more specifically, the knowledge that one has knowledge), and not mere truth alone, that gives people confidence and courage to lead, act and risk. Accordingly, it is of crucial importance that we promote the central teachings of Christianity in general as a body of knowledge and not as a set of faith-practices to be accepted on the basis of mere belief or a shared narrative alone. To fail at this point is to risk being marginalized and disregarded as those promoting a privatized set of feelings or desires that fall short of knowledge.

In 1983, Os Guinness wrote a book in which he claimed that the church had become its own gravedigger.<sup>5</sup> The upshot of Guinness's claim was that the very things that were bringing short-term growth in the Christian community also were, unintentionally and imperceptibly, sowing the very sorts of ideas that would

4. Michael Kinsley, “If You Believe Embryos Are Humans...,” *Time* 157 (June 25, 2001): 80.

5. Os Guinness, *The Gravedigger File* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983).

eventually undercut the church's distinctive power and authority. The so-called gravedigger does not hurt the church on purpose. Usually well intentioned, he or she simply adopts views or practices that are counterproductive to and undermining of a vibrant, attractive Christian community. In my view, there are certain contemporary currents of thought that risk undercutting Christianity as a source of knowledge, and I shall argue that by its very nature, theistic evolution is the prime culprit. It is one of the church's leading gravediggers (e.g., we think that not "requiring" people to reject theistic evolution before they get saved, an attitude I have never seen in thoughtful Christians, will cause more to come to Christ. In the short run, it may. But in the long run, the price to be paid by such an approach is the de-cognitizing of Christianity with the result that, over the long haul, most will simply ignore Christianity as a silly superstition. Its practitioners caved in to the prevailing contemporary currents of ideas, instead of holding their ground, and eventually winning the argument due to hard-hitting scholarship and confidence in the Bible). To accomplish my goal, I shall, first, clarify the nature of knowledge; second, identify the nature of a plausibility structure along with the central plausibility structure constituting our contemporary milieu; third, identify three intellectual areas that, if embraced, run the risk of turning us into our own gravediggers. As I hope to show, these three areas are natural results of embracing theistic evolution.

### **The Nature of Knowledge**

Here's a simple definition of knowledge: It is *to represent reality in thought or experience the way it really is on the basis of adequate grounds. Knowledge is true belief based on adequate grounds.* To know something (the nature of cancer, forgiveness, God) is to think of or experience it as it really is on a solid basis of evidence, experience, intuition, and so forth. Little can be said in general about what counts as "adequate grounds." The best one can do is to start with specific cases of knowledge and its absence in art, chemistry, memory, scripture, logic, and formulate helpful descriptions of "adequate grounds" accordingly.

Please note that *knowledge has nothing to do with epistemological certainty—the logical impossibility of being wrong— or an anxious quest for it.* One can know something without being epistemologically certain about it<sup>6</sup> and in the presence of doubt or the admission that one might be wrong. Recently, I know that God spoke to me about a specific matter but I admit it is possible I am wrong about this (though, so far, I have no good reason to think I am wrong). When Paul says, "This you know with certainty" (Ephesians 5:5), he clearly implies that one can know without certainty; otherwise, the statement would be redundant. Why? If I say, "Give me a burger with

6. Psychological certainty is different; it is a sense of complete confidence and rest in an idea. I have psychological, but not epistemological certainty that God exists; as a result, I do not pray "Our Father who probably art in heaven!!"

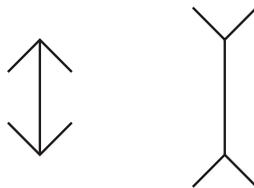
pickles on it,” I imply that it is possible to have a burger without pickles. If, contrary to fact pickles were simply essential ingredients of burgers, it would be redundant to ask for burgers with pickles. The parallel to “knowledge with certainty” should be easy to see. When Christians claim to have knowledge of this or that, for example, that God is real, that Jesus rose from the dead, that the Bible is the word of God, they are not saying that there is no possibility that they could be wrong, that they have no doubts, or that they have answers to every question raised against them. They are simply saying that these and other claims satisfy the definition given above.

The deepest issue facing the church today is this: Are its main creeds and central teachings items of knowledge or mere matters of blind faith—privatized personal beliefs or issues of feeling to be accepted or set aside according to the whim of individual or cultural pressures? Do these teachings have cognitive and behavioral authority that set a worldview framework for approaching science, art, ethics—indeed, all of life? Or are cognitive and behavioral authority set by what scientists, evolutionary biologists, or the members of BioLogos say? Are the church’s doctrines determined by what Gallup polls tell us is embraced by cultural and intellectual elites? Do we turn to these sources and set aside or revise two thousand years of Christian thinking and doctrinal/creedal expressions in order to make Christian teaching acceptable to the neuroscience department at UCLA or the paleontologists at Cambridge?

The question of whether or not Christianity provides its followers with a range of knowledge is no small matter. It is a question of authority for life and death, and lay brothers and sisters are watching Christian thinkers and leaders to see how we approach this matter. And, in my view, as theistic evolutionists continue to revise the Bible over and over again, they inexorably give off a message about knowledge: science gives us hard knowledge based on evidence and with which we can be confident, and while theology and biblical teaching do not give us knowledge, they provide personal meaning and values for those with the faith to embrace them.

### **The Importance of a Plausibility Structure**

Take a look at this diagram and notice what you see:



Notice that the right horizontal line looks longer than the one on the left even though their lengths are the same. Why? Because we see these shapes hundreds of times a day (the right diagram is the inside corner of a room; the left is the outside corner of a building), we are unconsciously used to seeing them as three-dimensional objects,

and so we unconsciously try to adjust to the two-dimensionality of the figures on the page. In this case, our habits of perception and thought shape (note: they don't completely determine, they just shape) what we see. When this diagram is shown to people in primitive cultures with no square or rectangular buildings, they have no such subconscious habits and they see the horizontal lines accurately as being of equal length.

There's an important lesson in this. A culture has a set of background assumptions—we can call it a plausibility structure—that sets a tone, a framework, for what people think, to what they are willing to listen and evaluate, how they feel and how they act. This plausibility structure is so widespread and subtle that people usually don't even know it is there even though it hugely impacts their perspective on the world. The plausibility structure can be composed of thoughts (scientists are smart; religious people are gullible and dumb), symbols (a person in a white lab coat), music, and so forth. For example, a book published with Oxford University Press will be taken by a reader to be more credible and to exhibit greater scholarship than a book by an Evangelical press, even though this assumption is clearly false in certain cases.

Here's the problem this raises for trust in God. Without even knowing it, we all carry with us this cultural map, this background set of assumptions, and our self-talk, the things that form our default beliefs (ones we naturally accept without argument), the things we are embarrassed to believe (if they run contrary to the authorities in our map), and related matters create a natural set of doubts about Christianity. Most of these factors are things of which people are not even aware. In fact, if they are brought to one's attention, one would most likely disown them even though, in fact, they are the internalized ideas that actually shape what people do and don't believe. Our current Western cultural plausibility structure elevates science and scorns and mocks religion, especially Christian teaching. And it has been the acceptance of theistic evolution by many Christians that has contributed to this mess. Why? There are at least three reasons. First, theistic evolution reinforces scientism because it exemplifies the view that when science and biblical/theological teaching are in conflict, we have to revise the Bible. We don't ever revise the science because scientific truth claims exhibit solid knowledge based on facts.

Second, this sort of revisionism—when we change biblical interpretations that have held steady for two thousand years at just the time when there is politically correct pressure to do so, especially when that pressure comes from science—gives off the message that biblical teaching is pretty tentative. We shouldn't hold to it with strong conviction because if we do, we may become embarrassed when we have to revise that teaching in years to come. According to advocates of scientism—and virtually all theistic evolutionists that embrace some form of scientism—biblical/theological ideas, ethical positions, and other claims that fail to have the backing of science are simply personal feelings and blind-faith commitments.

Third, the most pervasive definition of theistic evolution is that the general, naturalistic theory of evolution is true, and God is allowed somehow or another to be involved in the process as long as there is no way to detect his involvement. Design in biology must be unknowable and undetectable! For a thinking unbeliever (or believer, for that matter), the question surfaces as to why anyone should think God had anything to do with the development of life? What, exactly, did God do, and how could we know the answer to this question? If He was “involved”, no one could know it, so God begins to take on some of the characteristics of the tooth fairy.

As a result, for intelligent, well-educated people, commitment to Christianity should not rise above the level of a hobby. And believers in Western cultures do not as readily believe the supernatural worldview of the Bible in comparison with their Third World brothers and sisters. As Christian anthropologist Charles Kraft observes:

In comparison to other societies, Americans and other North Atlantic peoples are *naturalistic*. Non-Western peoples are frequently concerned about the activities of supernatural beings. Though many Westerners retain a vague belief in God, most deny that other supernatural beings even exist. The wide-ranging supernaturalism of most of the societies of the world is absent for most of our people...Our focus is on the natural world, with little or no attention paid to the supernatural world.<sup>7</sup>

There is a straightforward application here for evangelism and church growth. A person’s plausibility structure is the set of ideas the person either is or is not willing to entertain as possibly true. For example, no one would come to a lecture defending a flat earth because this idea is just not part of our plausibility structure. We cannot even entertain the idea. Moreover, a person’s plausibility structure is a function of the beliefs he or she already has. Applied to evangelism, J. Gresham Machen got it right when he said:

God usually exerts that power in connection with certain prior conditions of the human mind, and it should be ours to create, so far as we can, with the help of God, those favorable conditions for the reception of the gospel. False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion.<sup>8</sup>

7. Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity with Power: Your Worldview and Your Experience of the Supernatural* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1989), 27.

8. J. Gresham Machen, *What Is Christianity?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1951), 162.

J.P. Moreland: *Theistic Evolution, Christian Knowledge*

The simple truth is that ideas have consequences. If a culture reaches the point where Christian claims are not even part of its plausibility structure, fewer and fewer people will be able to entertain the possibility that they might be true. Whatever stragglers do come to faith in such a context would do so on the basis of felt needs alone, and the genuineness of such conversions would be questionable to say the least. And theistic evolution has helped to place Christianity outside the plausibility structure.

To see this, consider the following example. A few years ago when I picked up the morning's paper, I found a two-paged feature story entitled "Intelligent Design Debate Heats Up."<sup>9</sup> The article cites lay Catholic theologian at Georgetown University John F. Haught as opposing ID theory as bad science and bad theology. According to Haught, just as different explanations can be proffered for why water is boiling (the kinetic energy of water molecules are responding to heat and as evidence someone wants tea), so evolution can be seen as both the result of natural selection and part of God's purposes.

I disagree with Haught about the scientific and theological merits of Intelligent Design (ID) theory, but he is entitled to his opinion. If ID theory is bad theology and bad science, then so be it. What troubles me, however, is that Haught and others who opt for theistic evolution seem to do so with little appreciation for the emergence of scientism in our culture and its impact on people's perception of the availability of theological, ethical and political knowledge. Theistic evolution is intellectual pacifism that lulls people to sleep while the barbarians are at the gates. In my experience, theistic evolutionists are usually trying to create a safe truce with science so Christians can be left alone to practice their privatized religion while retaining the respect of the dominant intellectual culture.

And while this may not be true of all theistic evolutionists, the majority of the ones I have met have a view of theology and faith as exhibiting very low cognitive value, while science is the most cognitively excellent approach to knowledge we have. For example, theistic evolutionist, physicist and active member of BioLogos, Karl Giberson has said of science, "...I would argue that it is the most epistemologically secure perspective we have."<sup>10</sup> By contrast, as I have said elsewhere of Giberson:

He also seems to regard theology as a degenerative program forever mired in Kuhnian periods of crisis when no one can agree on the best paradigm, when no progress is evident and when theologians do more to impede the search for scientific knowledge...than to contribute to its progress. It is hard to see how such a view could countenance theological knowledge. In fact, Giberson's understanding of faith seems to include the notion that as rational justification for a particular belief increases, the possibility of faith decreases.

9. Richard N. Ostling, "Intelligent Design Debate Heats Up," *The Orange County Register* (2005): 14-15.

10. Karl Giberson, "Intelligent Design on Trial—A Review Essay," *Christian Scholar's Review* 24.4 (1995): 469.

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This is seen, for example, in his contrast between the “limited faith” involved in the inference of water in the bottom of a well from the observation of a splash and the so-called “profound” faith of the theist. For Giberson, such a faith is profound, I suppose, in light of the low epistemological value of theology as a discipline.<sup>11</sup>

Giberson’s theistic evolution is rooted in (weak) scientism which inevitably results in placing biblical teaching and theology outside the plausibility structure and depicting them as largely non-cognitive fields based on a blind “profound” faith. And I maintain that, however unintentional it may be, this is the posture and result of most theistic evolutionists.

I am not interested in that posture. I don’t want to play not to lose; I want to play to win. I want to win people to Christ and to “bring down strongholds” that undermine knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:3-5), to penetrate culture with a Christian worldview and to undermine its plausibility structure which, as things stand now, does not include objective theological claims. While there are exceptions, many theistic evolutionists simply fail to provide a convincing response to the question of why one should adopt a theological layer of explanation for the origin and development of life in the first place. Given scientism, theistic evolution greases the skids towards placing non-scientific claims in a privatized upper story in which their factual, cognitive status is undermined. Thus, inadvertently, Haught and those of his persuasion contribute to the marginalization of a Christian worldview.

This is why apologetics, especially scientific apologetics precisely like what we find in the Intelligent Design movement, is so crucial to evangelism and church growth. It seeks to create a plausibility structure in a person’s mind, “favorable conditions” as Machen put it, so the gospel can be entertained by a person. To plant a seed in someone’s mind in pre-evangelism is to present a person with an idea that will work on his or her plausibility structure to create a space in which Christianity can be entertained seriously. If this is important to evangelism, it is strategically crucial that local churches think about how they can address those aspects of the contemporary worldview that place Christianity outside the plausibility structures of so many. And I believe we will need to rethink the message we are giving to the culture when we constantly fail to have confidence in the knowledge claims of scripture and repeatedly revise the Bible, as theistic evolutionists do, when “scientists” tell us we must.

When science appears to conflict with scripture, we shouldn’t immediately lay our intellectual arms down and wait for scientists to tell us what we can allow the Bible to say and how we need to revise scripture. No, we should be patient, acknowledge the problem, and press into service Christian intellectuals who are highly qualified academically, have respect for the fact that scripture presents us with knowledge (not just truth to be accepted by blind faith), and who want to work

11. J. P. Moreland, “Theistic Science and the Christian Scholar: A Response to Giberson,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 24.4 (1995).

to preserve the traditional interpretation of scripture and avoid revisionism. These intellectuals should be given the chance to develop rigorous models that preserve historical Christian teaching, unless, in those rare cases, our interpretation of scripture has been wrong. These intellectuals are heroes because they value loyalty to historic understandings of scripture over the desire to fit in with what scientists are currently claiming. The Intelligent Design movement is just such a set of intellectuals.

Adolfo Lopez-Otero, a professor of materials science and engineering at Stanford and an atheist, was once asked what an unbelieving intellectual expects from a Christian thinker. Lopez-Otero said that the Christian should be daring and humble (try not to act like you are superior) in approaching other professors and secular thinkers: “Be as daring as politeness and civilized behavior allows. But, as I implied before, do not be shy to deconstruct the pretentiousness of his [the atheist’s] world in the same way that he is not shy to point out the ‘triumphs’ of science, the Enlightenment, and rationalism over the ‘superstitions’ of religion.”<sup>12</sup> Lopez-Otero goes on to say that Christian thinkers cannot afford to give excuses for their faith; that is the price they must pay for having declared themselves Christians.

In my opinion, advocates of the Intelligent Design movement are doing exactly what Lopez-Otero correctly describes. Rather than tucking their tails between their legs at the first sign of a conflict between the Bible and science, and standing ready (even eager) to let the scientists tell them what they must revise, the members of the ID movement have the intellectual courage and confidence in biblical teaching not to back down. Rather, ID advocates “deconstruct the pretentiousness” of truth-claims that go against biblical assertions that are properly interpreted (and they don’t grab for an interpretation that, all by itself, gives in to the other side of the conflict.) And they don’t make excuses for the Bible; they advance arguments in its support.

It should be clear that naturalism is not consistent with biblical Christianity. If that’s true, then the church should do all it can to undermine the worldview of naturalism and to promote, among other things, the cognitive, alethic nature of theology, biblical teaching and ethics. This means that when Christians consider adopting certain views widely accepted in the culture, they must factor into their consideration whether or not such adoption would enhance naturalism’s hegemony and help dig the church’s own grave by contributing to a hostile, undermining plausibility structure.

Consider as an example the abandonment of belief in the historical reality of Adam and Eve. Now, if someone does not believe Adam and Eve were real historical individuals, then so be it. However, my present concern is not with the truth or falsity of the historical view, though the issue matters greatly. Rather, my concern is the readiness, sometimes eagerness, of some to set aside the traditional view, the ease with which the real estate of historical Christian commitments is abandoned, the unintended consequences of jettisoning such a belief. Given the current plausibility structure set by scientific naturalism, rejecting the historical

12. Adolfo Lopez-Otero, “Be Humble, Be Daring,” *The Real Issue* (1997): 10-11.

Adam and Eve contributes to the marginalization of Christian teaching in the public square and in the church and thereby those who reject Adam and Eve unintentionally undermine the church. How so?

First, the rejection reinforces the idea that science and science alone is competent to get at the real truth of reality; theology and biblical teaching are not up to this task. If historically consistent understandings of biblical teaching conflict with what most scientists claim, then so much the worse for those understandings.

Second, the rejection reinforces the privatized non-cognitive status of biblical doctrine, ethics and practices—especially supernatural ones that need to be construed as knowledge if they are to be passed on to others with integrity and care. Since the church has been mistaken about one of its central teachings for two thousand years, why should we trust the church regarding its teaching about extra-marital sex, homosexuality or the role of women in the church? Admittedly, the history of the church is not infallible in its teachings; still, to the degree that its central teachings through the ages are revised to that degree the non-revised teachings are undermined in their cognitive and religious authority. The non-revised teachings become more tentative.

Finally, the rejection reinforces the modernist notion that we are individuals, cut off from our diachronic community, and we are free to adopt our beliefs and practices in disregard of that community and our adoption's impact on it.

If I am right about the broader issues, then the rejection of an historical Adam and Eve has far more troubling implications than those that surface in trying to reinterpret certain biblical texts. The very status of biblical, theological and ethical teachings as knowledge is at stake in the current cultural milieu as is the church's cognitive marginalization to a place outside the culture's plausibility structure. Those who reject a historical Adam and Eve, inadvertently, harm the church by becoming its gravedigger.

### **Two Things to Avoid If You Don't Want to Become a Gravedigger**

I suspect that most Christians still accept an historical Adam and Eve (but the same scientism and methodological naturalism that leads to embracing theistic evolution also leads most naturally to (though it does not entail) a rejection of an historical Adam and Eve). But there are two areas of reflection that involve revisionist views that may be more acceptable to Christians that, in my view, seriously undermine the plausibility of Christian teaching in general and undermine a growing, vibrant church. As we shall see, the adoption of theistic evolution contributes to the other area of revision.

## **Theistic Evolution**

It is widely acknowledged that evolutionary theory, to be clarified in more detail shortly, has “made the world safe for atheists” as Richard Dawkins put it. Whether theistic or atheistic, when properly understood, evolutionary theory entails the denial of a scientifically detectable Christian God, and as a result, places the detection of divine design outside of science. Given widespread cultural scientism, this is tantamount to saying that the proposition “God designed the world” belongs in an Alice and Wonderland novel. In this way, evolutionary theory has funded the growth of an increasingly aggressive form of atheism. Thus, former Cornell biologist William Provine proclaimed:

Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear....There are no gods, no purposes, no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death...There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning, and no free will for humans, either.<sup>13</sup>

It can hardly be doubted that the impact of evolutionary theory is its significant contribution to the secularization of culture, a shift that places a supernatural God who makes Himself known through Creation, intervened or made his actions detectable at various times in the creation of life, and who still intervenes today in answered prayer, miraculous healing and so on, outside the plausibility structure of Western society. In light of that, why would any Christian want to flirt with theistic evolution? There are three general understandings of evolution: change within limits (microevolution), the thesis of common descent, and the blind watchmaker thesis. The first is accepted by everyone, the second is not yet established and the third seems to me to be wildly implausible, especially given Christian theism as a background belief. Why? Because the blind watchmaker thesis is the idea that solely blind, mechanical, efficient causal processes are sufficient to produce all the life we see without any need or room for a god to be involved in the process, and there are good reasons (e.g., probability considerations) to reject this thesis. Recently, even the atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel has weighed in on the matter and claimed that this Darwinian thesis is implausible.<sup>14</sup> Theistic evolution is the view that the blind watchmaker thesis is true, there is no scientifically detectable evidence for God being involved in the process of evolution (remember: theistic evolutionists are committed to methodological naturalism), and we are free to reject metaphysical naturalism, I suppose by blind faith, even though we accept methodological naturalism while doing science.

13. See Dallas Willard, *Knowing Christ Today* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 4.

14. Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); cf. J. P. Moreland, “A Reluctant Traveler’s Guide for Slouching Towards Theism,” *Philosophia Christi* 14. 2 (2012): 431-38.

But theistic evolutionists fail to provide sufficient reasons for rejecting metaphysical naturalism, given that “we have no need of that (the God) hypothesis” in any of the sciences. Why be a theist in the first place? After all, while evolution is logically consistent with theism, there is nothing in evolution that would lead one *to* theism, and if “the God hypothesis” isn’t needed until humans appear, it is less credible to think it is needed subsequently. Given (1) the presence of a very vibrant, intellectually sophisticated interdisciplinary Intelligent Design movement, (2) the atheistic implications that most naturally follow from accepting general evolutionary theory (and many, perhaps most draw those implications), and (3) the fact that the blind watchmaker thesis is far from being justified, why would a believer want to embrace something that undermines the plausibility of Christianity?

Sometimes theistic evolutionists claim that by embracing evolution, they are actually contributing to the plausibility of Christianity by removing an unnecessary stumbling block—the rejection of evolution—before one can be a well-informed Christian. In my experience, nothing could be further from the truth. While there are exceptions, my experience with theistic evolutions is that they have a weak faith, do not see many answers to prayer, and lack a vibrant, attractive Christian life. Ideas have consequences, and if one knows he had to revise the early chapters of Genesis, it will weaken his confidence in the rest of the Bible. More on that later. But more importantly, by adopting theistic evolution, people become the church’s gravedigger: their strategy may bring short-term success by keeping a handful of scientists from leaving the faith, but over the long haul, it will contribute to the secularization of culture with its scientific epistemology, and to the marginalization of the church. After all, if we have to provide naturalistic revisions of the Bible over and over again, why take the yet-to-be-revised portions of scripture seriously? This approach significantly weakens the cognitive authority of the Bible as a source of knowledge of reality.

If science has shown that since the Big Bang until the emergence of *homo sapiens*, there is no good reason to believe in such a God, isn’t it special pleading to embrace this Deity when it comes to biblical miracles? Surely, history, archeology, and related disciplines, have, under the same methodological naturalist constraints, “shown” that biblical miracles are legendary myths that helped Israel and the early church make sense of their subjective religious experiences. And surely there are naturalistic accounts of the Big Bang, the universe’s fine tuning, the origin of life, etc. If theistic evolution applies methodological naturalism to evolution, why not also apply it to cosmological issues and biblical miracles? It seems to me that the naturalization of biblical teaching and miracles is much more consistent with theistic evolution (e.g., they both adopt methodological naturalism, they both place religion is a non-cognitive upper story of faith) than with Intelligent Design.

If we want to be consistent and to contend that core biblical teachings provide us with items of knowledge, it seems to me that we should not let the naturalist camel’s

nose under the tent from the Big Bang up to the appearance of human life. Clearly, if we need to postulate an active God to explain the origin and development of life, as Intelligent Design advocates claim, then before we step into the door of a church, we are already warranted in believing biblical supernaturalism, and biblical teaching fits easily in our worldview. But if we come to church as theistic evolutionists, a supernatural, intervening God and a knowledge-based Bible are less at home in our worldview and, indeed, may fairly be called *ad hoc*.

## Neuroscience and the Soul

The great Presbyterian scholar J. Gresham Machen once observed: “I think we ought to hold not only that man has a soul, but that it is important that he should know that he has a soul.”<sup>15</sup> From a Christian perspective, this is a trustworthy saying. Christianity is a dualist, interactionist religion in this sense: God, angels/demons, and the souls of men and beasts are immaterial substances that can causally interact with the world. Specifically, human persons are (or have) souls that are spiritual substances that ground personal identity in a disembodied intermediate state between death and final resurrection.<sup>16</sup> Clearly, this was the Pharisees’ view in Intertestamental Judaism, and Jesus (Matthew 22:23-33; cf. Matthew 10:28) and Paul (Acts 23 6-10; cf. 2 Corinthians 12:1-4) side with the Pharisees on this issue over against the Sadducees.<sup>17</sup> In my view, Christian physicalism involves a politically correct revision of the biblical text that fails to be convincing.<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, today, many hold that, while broadly logically possible, dualism is no longer plausible in light of advances in modern science. This attitude is becoming increasingly prominent in Christian circles. Thus, Christian philosopher Nancey Murphy claims that physicalism is not primarily a philosophical thesis, but the hard core of a scientific research program for which there is ample evidence. This evidence consists in the fact that “biology, neuroscience, and cognitive science have provided accounts of the dependence on physical processes of *specific* faculties once attributed to the soul.”<sup>19</sup> Dualism cannot be *proven* false—a dualist can always appeal to correlations or functional relations between soul and brain/body—but advances in science make it a view with little justification. According

15. J. Gresham Machen, *The Christian View of Man* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937): 137.

16. See John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000).

17. See N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection and the Son of God*, 2003.

18. See Joel B. Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008); cf. John W. Cooper, “The Bible and Dualism Once Again,” *Philosophia Christi* 9.2 (2007): 459-72; John W. Cooper, “The Current Body-Soul Debate: A Case for Holistic Dualism,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 13.2 (2009): 32-50; John W. Cooper, “Exaggerated Rumors of Dualisms Demise,” *Philosophia Christi* 11.2 (2009): 453-64.

19. Warren S. Brown, Nancey C. Murphy, and H. Newton Malony, *Whatever Happened to the Soul?: Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998): 17.

to Murphy, “science has provided a massive amount of evidence suggesting that we need not postulate the existence of an entity such as a soul or mind in order to explain life and consciousness.”<sup>20</sup>

One of these pieces of evidence is evolution. It is widely agreed that if evolution is the story of how we got here, then we are creatures of matter–consciousness and the self (if such a notion is still used) are entirely physical. I repeat: It is well known that one of the driving forces behind physicalism is evolutionary theory. Evolutionist Paul Churchland makes this claim:

the important point about the standard evolutionary story is that the human species and all of its features are the wholly physical outcome of a purely physical process...If this is the correct account of our origins, then there seems neither need, nor room, to fit any nonphysical substances or properties into our theoretical account of ourselves. We are creatures of matter. And we should learn to live with that fact.<sup>21</sup>

One might think that theistic evolution has the resources to solve this problem because God could add consciousness or a soul at any place in the evolutionary process. But it must be remembered that according to theistic evolution, God is allowed to “act” as long as God’s actions are not detectable and we don’t need to postulate God’s action as the correct explanation of some phenomenon that resulted from His act. As I have already pointed out, it is almost universally acknowledged that naturalistic evolution cannot explain the origin of consciousness or a soul. Since humans are merely the result of an entirely physical process (the processes of evolutionary theory) working on wholly physical materials, then humans are wholly physical beings. Something does not come into existence from nothing, and if a purely physical process is applied to wholly physical materials, the result will be a wholly physical thing, even if it is a more complicated arrangement of physical materials! And claiming that consciousness is emergent is just a name for the problem, not a solution. Thus, if God were to insert consciousness or souls into the evolutionary process, we no longer have evolution, strictly speaking.

I cannot undertake here a critique of physicalism and a defense of dualism.<sup>22</sup> Suffice it to say that dualism is a widely accepted, vibrant intellectual position. I suspect that the majority of Christian philosophers are dualists. And it is important to mention that neuroscience really has nothing to do with which view is most plausible. Without getting into details, this becomes evident when we observe that leading

20. Ibid., 18.

21. Paul M. Churchland, *Matter and Consciousness: A Contemporary Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013): 35.

22. J. P. Moreland and Scott B. Rae, *Body & Soul* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000); J. P. Moreland, *The Soul: How We Know It’s Real and Why It Matters* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014).

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neuroscientists—Nobel Prize winner John Eccles,<sup>23</sup> U. C. L. A. neuroscientist Jeffrey Schwartz,<sup>24</sup> and Mario Beauregard,<sup>25</sup> are all dualists and they know the neuroscience. Their dualism, and the central intellectual issues involved in the debate, is quite independent of neuroscientific data.

The irrelevance of neuroscience also becomes evident when we consider the recent best seller *Proof of Heaven* by Eben Alexander.<sup>26</sup> Regardless of one's view of the credibility of Near Death Experiences (NDEs) in general, or of Alexander's in particular, one thing is clear. Before whatever it was that happened to him, Alexander believed the (allegedly) standard neuroscientific view that specific regions of the brain generate and possess specific states of conscious. But after his NDE, Alexander came to believe that it is the soul that possesses consciousness, not the brain, and the various mental states of the soul are in two-way causal interaction with specific regions of the brain. Here's the point: His change in viewpoint was a change in metaphysics that did not require him to reject or alter a single neuroscientific fact. Dualism and physicalism are empirically equivalent views consistent with all and only the same scientific data. Thus, the authority of empirical data in science cannot be claimed on either side.

For example, the overstatement of neuroscience's authority is increasingly recognized from various sources, including some neuroscientists. As Alissa Quart's Op-Ed in the *New York Times* observes, "Writing in the journal *Neuron*, the researchers concluded that 'logically irrelevant neuroscience information imbues an argument with authoritative, scientific credibility.' Another way of saying this is that bogus science gives vague, undisciplined thinking the look of seriousness and truth."<sup>27</sup>

Given this, and given the fact that Jesus believed in a soul as did the other biblical writers, it is hard to see why believers would reject dualism in favor of some form of Christian physicalism. Moreover, loss of belief in the soul has contributed to a loss of belief in life after death. As John Hick pointed out, "This considerable decline within society as a whole, accompanied by a lesser decline within the churches, of the belief in personal immortality clearly reflects the assumption within our culture that we should only believe in what we experience, plus what the accredited sciences certify to us."<sup>28</sup>

What is the motive, the reasoning here for those believers who reject dualism? The answer: Evolution entails or strongly underwrites anthropological physicalism.

23. Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles, *The Self and Its Brain: An Argument for Interactionism* (London: Springer-Verlag, 1977).

24. Jeffrey Schwartz and Sharon Begley, *The Mind and the Brain* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002).

25. Mario Beauregard and Denyse O'Leary, *The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist's Case for the Existence of the Soul* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007).

26. Eben Alexander, *Proof of Heaven* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012).

27. Alissa Quart, (November 25, 2012): [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/25/opinion/sunday/neuroscience-under-attack.html?\\_r=3&](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/25/opinion/sunday/neuroscience-under-attack.html?_r=3&).

28. John Hick, *Death and Eternal Life* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980): 92.

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But if the church's teaching on this has been wrong for two thousand years, why should we believe her teaching when it comes to various doctrinal and ethical claims? As with theistic evolution's accommodationism, physicalism accedes to science a hegemony it does not deserve.

Here's the important takeaway: Acceptance of theistic evolution (which entails or strongly supports physicalism), along with irrelevant appeals to neuroscientific authority undermine the view that theology, biblical teaching and commonsense views of the mind and so on can stand on their own without the need for scientific backing. Such appeals (that we have to accept theistic evolution and the physicalism that comes along with it) reinforce the non-cognitive nature of theology and biblical teaching, and they contribute to the placement of biblical teaching outside the culture's plausibility structure. It seems inconsistent and *ad hoc* to allow science to revise theological anthropology while not allowing it to do the same regarding demonization and religious experience.

## ***A Traditional Protestant Formulation of Sola Fide as the Source of Political Unity***

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**Abstract:** The doctrine of justification by faith alone does not merely have political implications; it is a political doctrine outright. Of course, this claim runs directly against critics of sola fide who claim that speaking of justice “by faith” guts the word “justice” of the very thing it needs—action or works. But this article argues that a classic Protestant understanding of sola fide is history’s unexpected ground of political unity. Objectively, justification is a covenantal verdict that declares someone righteous before a body politic. Subjectively, *sola fide* robs political actors of the incentives to warfare and domination by giving them that which all people, nations, and armies primarily seek—justification, standing, and the recognition of existence. The person justified by faith must no longer prove or justify him or herself by any earthly measurement: race (“I’m Aryan”), ethnicity (“I’m Serbian”), gender (“I’m male”), class (“I’m aristocracy”), nationality (“I’m Prussian”), wisdom (“I’m Progressive”) and all those things that lead to war and political oppression.

**Key Words:** justification, politics, church, new perspective, race, covenant

### **Introduction**

Books, articles, and conferences commemorating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protestant Reformation seem will abound this year. In that same vein, I’d like to examine one dimension that probably won’t garner much attention, namely, the political significance of Martin Luther’s *sola fide*. For several centuries now, critics have accused the doctrine of *sola fide* as yielding either political passivity/quietism and/or individualism. Yet I would like to propose that the doctrine of justification *by faith alone* provides the ultimate basis for a just political unity and just political activity. The doctrine does not merely have political implications; the doctrine *is* political. And this is crucial to recognize not just as an academic point, but for the

1. Some material in this article has been adapted from *Political Church* by Jonathan Leeman. Copyright (c) 2016 by Jonathan Leeman. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA. [www.ivpress.com](http://www.ivpress.com)

pastoral and ecclesial purposes of building unity in our churches, particularly across lines of hierarchy and difference.

Behind every flavor of tyranny, oppression, and social stratification in history is some form of justification grounded in the self and its works: “I’m more righteous, more ideologically correct, more freedom-loving, more tolerant, more inclusive, more wise, more white, more wealthy than you. Therefore, I or at least my ideology should rule over you.” Such self-justification leads invariably to division and exploitation. *Sola fide*, however, removes all human grounds for boasting, and gives one political standing in the community exclusively on the basis of what someone else has done. When my righteousness is vicarious, I have no basis for oppressing, exploiting, lording it over another. Not only, the forensic nature of justification unites us both with God and God’s community. It is first individual, but derivatively corporate. Here there is no Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female. Which is to say, justification by faith alone flattens hierarchies and unites one-time enemies.

The first place we should see such political unity, therefore, is in our local churches. If there is any place on the planet where the ongoing contests, say, between ethnic majorities and minorities should be resolved, it’s in our local churches.

### **Three Background Comments and a Working Definition**

Before unpacking the argument, let me make three background comments, and offer a definition:

*Background comment one:* The challenge of making this claim about the political nature of *sola fide* are the divergent conceptions that people have about the nature of politics and religion and the relationship between them. The claim that “*sola fide* is political” will sound one way to someone within the tradition of philosophical liberalism, and another way to an anti-modernist, which is closer to where I place myself. To keep things short, I’m not going to unpack this larger conversation any further here and simply refer the reader to my book *Political Church: Local Assemblies as Embassies of Christ’s Rule*. Some of the material which follows is adapted from that book. I hope I can communicate my thesis here even without all the qualifications and definitions one might want.

*Background comment two:* That said, one risk of skipping over this larger conversation about the relationship between politics and religion is that readers will take the bifurcations of philosophical liberalism for granted—so completely have Christians in the West grown up inside of liberalism’s assumptions. Which means, furthermore, the reader might easily assume that the argument “*sola fide* is political” is an immediate and direct call to public action and social engagement, as if I were arguing, “The church must not operate only in the religious sphere; it must step into the political sphere, too.” After all, many previous arguments for a political or social gospel amount to precisely such a call to social action. One thinks, for instance, of

the paradigmatic social gospeler himself, Walter Rauschenbusch. Rauschenbusch rightly perceived that sin and evil manifest themselves within society's institutions and "structures" (as we say nowadays). He argued, furthermore, that the gospel promised to regenerate society outside the church in the here and now, not just in the eschaton. Hence, he lamented those who "postpone social regeneration to a future era to be inaugurated by the return of Christ";<sup>2</sup> "postponement in it today means a lack of faith in the present power of Christ and paralyzes the religious initiative."<sup>3</sup> His social gospel, therefore, sought to evoke "faith in the power of God to redeem the permanent institutions of society from their inherited guilt of oppression and extortion."<sup>4</sup> Yet Rauschenbusch's entire argument rested on the assumption that politics and religion are separate, if overlapping, domains. Suppose, however, we jettisoned that assumption and asserted that all of life is political, and that all of life is religious, even while maintaining that church and state possess separate and distinct authorities and jurisdictions (my own perspective).<sup>5</sup> In that case, the claim that "*sola fide* is political" would most immediately apply to the people of the gospel, the church. Any applications for society's institutions and structures would be secondary and (perhaps) indirect. I don't need the reader to presently adopt my broader perspective on politics and religion, but I do hope every reader will at least agree that good theology always starts with the primary and works out from there to the secondary. Along these lines, this article will defer to another day the larger and crowd-drawing question, "What does all this mean for how churches engage society?" Instead, it will simply focus on the doctrine of *sola fide* itself and unpacking my assertion that the doctrine does not merely has political implications, but that it *is* political.

*Background comment three:* A distinctive of political institutions is that they are concerned with the principles of justice. Feminist political theorist Iris Marion Young has observed, "The concept of justice is coextensive with the political."<sup>6</sup> That is, however far a government's rule reaches, that far its concept of justice reaches. Young's comment, the first time I encountered it, felt to me like a cracked door with light coming through it ("What's through there?"). If Young is right, and the concept of justice is coextensive with the political, any claims about justification would seem to be political claims. The theology student, in other words, must put on the political scientist's hat.

*Definition of political unity:* Let me offer a working definition of political unity. Political unity is premised on a common ultimate authority—an authority with imperium (the ability to make heads roll). Political unity, more precisely, refers to *the*

2. *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1913): 345.

3. *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, 346.

4. Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1917): 5.

5. See *Political Church*.

6. Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990): 9.

*relationships that abide between subjects of the same governing authority, particularly as that governing authority obligates those individuals toward one another according to its rules of justice.*

And unless we only want to speak metaphorically, as when one speaks of “team politics” or “university politics,” then this body politic’s submission to this governing authority needs to take precedence over any other earthly authority. People need to regard it as possessing imperium over all others.

### **Critics of *Sola Fide***

What my argument is set against is the tradition of those who would debunk a traditional Protestant formulation of justification by faith alone as yielding both individualism and quietism, that is, political autonomy and political passivity, which would seem to be the opposite of a just political unity and activity.

*Sola fide* is critiqued by both the political philosophers and theologians. For instance, Alasdair MacIntyre, in his *A Short History of Ethics*, describes Martin Luther’s theology by observing, “The true transformation of the individual is entirely internal; to be before God in fear and trembling as a justified sinner is what matters... what matters is *not the action done or left undone*, but the faith which moved the agent.”<sup>7</sup> Luther presents us, continues MacIntyre, with “a new identity for the moral agent.” The individual no longer defines him or herself within “a web of social relations” but merely as “one who has the legal power to make contracts.”<sup>8</sup> At the heart of this is the individual standing in relation to God alone: “The crucial feature of the new experience is that it is the experience of an individual who is alone before God. It is as such, stripped of all social attributes, abstracted, as a dying man is abstracted, from all his social relations, that the individual is continually before God.”<sup>9</sup> There’s your individualism.

Another political philosopher, Jean Bethke Elshtain, sees the same strict division between the significance of faith and works in Luther. Elshtain argues, “For Luther to claim, as he does, that an individual’s works—his deeds—have, or may have, ‘nothing to do with this inner man,’ is an unsettling claim. If one took Luther at his word, the person who, say, tortures his pets tells us nothing about himself in so doing: neither does the woman who spends a lifetime ministering to the untouchables and undying. Surely Luther cannot have meant this, yet it remains a linchpin in Lutheran theology.”<sup>10</sup>

7. Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to the Twentieth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Great Britain: Routledge, 1998): 78.

8. Ibid, 80.

9. Ibid, 81.

10. Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981): 81-82. See also, *Sovereignty: God, State, and Self* (New York: Basic Books, 2008): 78-87.

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Moving from political philosophers critical of Luther to political theologians yields a similar set of critiques. That's not surprising among Catholic theologians like Jacques Maritain who (in his early anti-modernist phase) spoke critically of Luther's "swollen consciousness of the self" which had the individual "stand(ing) solitary and naked before God in Christ in order to ensure its justification and salvation by its trust."<sup>11</sup>

More striking is when the critique shows up among Protestant writers such as Jürgen Moltmann. Moltmann's critique of two kingdoms begins with the division between faith and works in *sola fide*: "When the person is justified before God by faith alone, then works fall out of this justified relationship to God." This division between faith and works corresponds to a division in the person: "In faith the human being is a Christian person; in works, a world person."<sup>12</sup> As a result, Christians will remain unconcerned with the state: "The impression of a dualism reasonably ensues and has led Lutheran theologians again and again to conform to unjust structures of the state and economy because the criterion for justice in the kingdom of the world was missing."<sup>13</sup> In short, Luther's doctrines of *sola fide* and two kingdoms, says Jürgen Moltmann, has tempted generations of Christians to conclude that faith is world-less and that the world is faith-less, that God is unreal and reality God-less.<sup>14</sup>

To sum it up in my own words, the standard critique of Luther and *sola fide* goes something like this:

- i. Luther's doctrine of *sola fide* bifurcates the human person into the inner person of faith and the outer person of works since God is said to free and to justify only the inner person by faith;
- ii. this anthropological yields a political bifurcation, where Christian virtues are privatized and therefore peripheralized; and it leaves Christians themselves passive in the face of unjust and tyrannical states since the state cannot touch their 'inner person', which is already free.<sup>15</sup>
- iii. In a nut shell: so heavenly minded, no earthly good.<sup>16</sup>

11. Jacques Maritain, *Three Reformers: Luther, Descartes, Rousseau* (New York: Thomas V. Crowell, 1970): 35.

12. Jürgen Moltmann, *On Human Dignity: Political Theology and Ethics*, translated by M. Douglas Meeks (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984): 71.

13. *Ibid.*, 72.

14. *Ibid.*, 75.

15. See Michael Kirwan, *Political Theology: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2009): 73-78; also, Walter O'Donovan, *Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 209.

16. Perhaps this is why at least several Protestant theologians who do not want to divorce the political and spiritual domains also adopt doctrines of justification that lean in the direction of the New Perspective on Paul, which sets itself in contrast to Luther, e.g. John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994): 212-27; Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame and SCM, 1983): 93-94. Cf. Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011): 260-66; 271-76.

I don't adhere to Luther's two kingdoms theology, and so I'm not going to attempt to defend it, per se. But I do maintain his view of justification.

At first glance, one can sympathize with these political thinkers. The idea that a person can in some sense be considered just "by faith" and not by his or her activity, to a political philosopher, sounds like cheating the system. It sounds like a hollow claim that goes against the very thing that is needed to produce a just society—just actions. Political philosophy is a meritocratic enterprise. It concerns itself with how people live, and it awards the title of "just" to those with the right behavior, however defined. To speak of justice "by faith," then, seems to gut the word "justice" of the very thing it needs in a body politic—action or works. So no wonder that some critique *sola fide* outright, while others, particularly those who embrace *sola fide*, treat the doctrine as non-political.

On the other hand, the Augustinian and medieval instinct to subsume the whole of the Christian life and sanctification under the aegis of justification provides a basis for justification to *mean* something from a political philosopher's point of view.

I propose, however, that a traditional formulation of justification by faith alone, albeit covenantally construed, does just the opposite of what the critics suggest: it provides a foundation for a truly just and united people.

To see that, we should think about *sola fide* and what God's justifying Word is objectively, and then what it means subjectively.

### **Objectively: Justification is a Covenant Verdict with Corporate Implications/Significance**

The basic thing I want to say here is, justification in the New Testament occurs within a covenantal framework and is what Michael Horton calls a "covenant verdict."<sup>17</sup> What's more, a properly covenantal and forensic conception of justification involves a corporate component in that it creates a body politic.

This claim might seem to embroil me in the controversies surrounding the New Perspective on Paul. After all, it is N. T. Wright who has famously proposed that Paul's doctrine of justification refers to "the declaration (a) that someone is in the right...and (b) that this person is a member of the true covenant family."<sup>18</sup> Yet it's worth bearing in mind that both friend and foes of the New Perspective affirm the covenantal nature of justification. Not just Michael Horton, but occasional Wright-critic Simon Gathercole agrees: "I am entirely in favor of understanding righteousness in covenantal terms; there is no chance to return to a previous generation's attempt to

17. Michael Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007): 121.

18. N. T. Wright, "New Perspectives on Paul," in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006): 258.

generalize the Jewish and Pauline understandings of righteousness as generic good deeds, and the polemic of Wright and others against this line is important.”<sup>19</sup>

Gathercole’s phrase “covenantal terms” gets it just right. The basic idea here is that God’s declaration of a sinner as “righteous” must be specified according to institutional terms. It is like rooting through the file drawer to find a signed contract in order to re-read all the terms and conditions. God does not legislate, adjudicate, or justify arbitrarily; he always respects the legal terms previously set. To say that justification produces a “right standing with God” is true, but it remains institutionally underspecified. Right standing by what institutional terms? Does he justify sinners according to the standards of the U.S. government? An imam? Moses? A personal pact between a sinner and God? God as he has expressed himself how?

Consider the debate between NT Wright and Douglass Moo about justification in Galatians 2:15-16. “We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith.” Wright looks at the context and argues that “to be justified” mean “to be reckoned by God to be a member of his family.” Moo maintains that we interpret *dikaioō* as “declare righteous.”<sup>20</sup>

Wright, I propose, wrongly imports *the institutional context* of justification into the *definition* of justification by defining it *as* covenantal inclusion.<sup>21</sup> He confuses justification’s “content” and “scope,” to borrow language from Gathercole.<sup>22</sup> Moo, however, would do well to offer a little more institutional specificity: “declare righteous” by what institutional norm? Can we please open the file drawer and find the contract that specifies the terms and conditions?

Or, to portray both sides positively, Wright rightly calls attention to the significance of the covenant, while his critics rightly guard the definition of justification. With Wright’s critics, I believe we should define justification as “declared righteous” or “reckoned as righteous.” What the critics may underappreciate, however, is the political significance of the covenantal context of justification and how that affects what justification does.

19. Simon Gathercole, “The Doctrine of Justification in Paul and Beyond,” in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006): 236-37.

20. Douglas J. Moo, “Justification in Galatians,” in *Understanding the Times: New Testament Studies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Richard W. Yarbrough (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011): 174.

21. N. T. Wright, *Justification: God’s Plan and Paul’s Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009): 116.

22. Simon Gathercole makes a helpful distinction between the “content” and the “scope” of justification, with Gentile inclusion belonging to the latter. I understand Gathercole to mean that inclusion is something that justification *does*, but is not what the term *means*. In “Justified by Faith, Justified by his Blood: The Evidence of Romans 3:21-4:25,” in *Justification and Variagated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004): 156.

To read Galatians 3 is to find the file folder and read the fine print. Galatians 3 alludes to the covenantal history of God's people, from Adam as the first son of God, to Abraham and the covenantal promise of blessing, to the Mosaic guardianship which taught that righteousness would not come through the law (3:21, 24), to the promise of the Spirit in the New Covenant. Then it effectively crowns Christ as the covenantal head who has fulfilled both Abrahamic promises and Mosaic curses in order to grant everyone with faith a covenantal identification with him and a covenantal identification with one another.

In short, a Christian's "extraordinary righteousness"<sup>23</sup> (to use Stephen Westerholm's term) is not a British or Muslim or even Jewish righteousness; it is a covenantal righteousness, meaning it is measured by the standards of the Bible's entire covenantal storyline. What then is justification? It is being declared in the right according to the terms of the covenant—a "covenant verdict."<sup>24</sup>

Why is all this significant for our political enquiries? Quite simply, the covenantal context of justification gives it a corporate significance. It means it constitutes (as a consequence of the covenantal verdict) a politically united people. It creates them as a body politic.

Classical Protestantism often affirms that justification is forensic. But what is important to recognize is that the new forensic relationship that abides between an individual and God also abides—as a result of the same atoning act and justifying word—between everyone else justified according to the terms of that covenant. The age-old debate between legal/forensic and moral/transformational accounts of justification locates the discussion in the relationship between the individual and God: is the individual *made* righteous or *declared* righteous before God?<sup>25</sup> The "forensic" side of the debate (which is where I place myself) then ties the topic of justification to the domain of the court, and conceives of the transaction as a two-way drama between defendant and judge in which the judge renders judgment based on the merits of the case.

But courts act before an entire body politic. Judges don't speak for themselves but for entire legal systems, and the legal cannot be divorced from the political. Courts do not put detached individuals on trial, they try subjects and citizens. They seek to apply the conclusions of law, a law that structures the public life of a nation. The work of the court is forensic in that it occurs "of or before the forum," as the Latin term would have it (*forēnsis*), or, one might say, of and before the entire public or

23. This is Stephen Westerholm's term for the gift of righteousness that Christians receive in justification. In *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004): 273-84.

24. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation*, 121.

25. For a history of this debate, see Alistair E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Defense of Justification*, 3<sup>rd</sup> (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 46-49; 59-72; 209-10; 212-15; 225-26; 237-41; 246-47; 252-55; 260-61; 263; 270-77; 295-307; 326-9; 339; 343; 355; 408; 416-18.

nation. “Forensic” is a relational concept that is both judicial and political, bi-lateral and multi-lateral. When an individual is declared “not guilty,” the judgment defines his or her relationship not just with the judge, but one is acquitted before the judge, the bailiff, the janitor who sweeps the courtroom, the mayor’s office, the newspaper editorial staff, and every other citizen and institution in the country.

Hence, defendants of the traditional position correctly defend the individual aspects of justification.<sup>26</sup> But we must also recognize that the individual’s justification occurs within a covenantal body politic, which means it has a corporate consequence. A horizontal derives from the vertical.<sup>27</sup>

To put it another way, a covenantal head necessitates the existence of a covenantal people (Rom 5:12f). Or think of Peter and these two parallel statements: “Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy (1 Pet 2:10). We could also look at Ephesians 2: 11-21.

Christ’s performative and forensic word of justification—his covenant verdict—establishes people as citizens of a new body politic.

### **Subjective: Exposition of Self-Justification, with the Help of Oswald Bayer**

It is also worth reflecting on the nature of justification and self-justification subjectively. To do that, we go to the original point of conflict in the Bible’s plotline—that moment when Adam and Eve decided they could be—in the serpent’s words—“like God” (Gen. 3:5). The words are worth meditating on. It would seem that Adam and Eve decided they were morally equivalent to God. “God might be *x*, but I am also *x*. God might be *y*, but I am also *y*. I am his moral equal.” And this sense of moral equivalency enabled them to step onto his throne and make moral decisions for themselves: “If I am his moral equivalent, I can make up my own mind about right and wrong. I can do as I please because my moral instincts are just as good as his.”

In other words, Adam and Eve’s self-enthronement depended upon an argument—call it a self-justifying argument, or self-justification. The argument can first be spoken by a serpent, a spouse, or the structures of society, but at some point a human actor must believe and adopt the argument before it means anything for that actor. And here we discover *the inseparable relationship between self-enthronement and self-justification*. Self-justification is self-enthronement’s legitimation, ground, basis. A person enthrones him or herself over against God only after justifying that action

26. E.g. Andrew Hassler, “Ethnocentric Legalism and the Justification of the Individual: Rethinking Some New Perspective Assumptions,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 54.2 (2011): 311-27.

27. See Michael Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification, and the New Perspective* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2007), 100-03, 110, 113-54 (esp. 152-54); Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007): 6.

with a reconceived identity of being God's moral equal—being “like God.” The person must judge him or herself as somehow worthy or deserving or justified to rule. Even a cartoonish evil villain like Lex Luther who laughs off moral convention has convinced himself, by some tortuous route, that his desire to kill Superman and rule the planet possesses a moral justification. He thinks he *deserves* it. So it is with the one year old in the high chair who angrily screams at her mother when her mother pulls back the spoon. Self-justification and self-enthronement are inseparable correlates. The first is the argument or rationalization for the second.

And wherever you have human beings engaging in self-rule (everywhere), you have human beings engaging in self-justification, which is to say, a kind of legalism. They're always concocting arguments to justify that rule. And they are going to use whatever law you place before them for the ends of self-justification, regardless of what purpose the law was intended to serve. Laws, whether the Mosaic Law or the laws of a contemporary secular ideologically progressive worldview, provide the terms and categories by which we seek to justify ourselves: as in “I kept that law. The person I am must be good/smart/upstanding...And being good by my own merits, I am capable of exercising moral judgment over good and evil. I am able to evaluate and judge and, if need be, condemn you.”

Along these lines, Lutheran theologian Oswald Bayer helpfully argues that the theme of justification “embraces the totality [of life]. All reality is involved in the justification debate.”<sup>28</sup> The battle for justification, Bayer says, is at the center of our individual lives, as well as at the center of “the histories of great social groups or movements” and “the histories of alliances, nations, and blocs.”<sup>29</sup> After all, Adam and Eve rejected *not only* God's law, they rejected God's justifying word: “This is very good” (Gen 1:31). And ever since, all people and all nations have had to labor continuously “to legitimate our existence. We have [had] to demonstrate each moment that we deserve to exist, to be noted, addressed, welcomed, and honored, even if it is by contradiction.”<sup>30</sup> It's ironic that *sola fide* is accused of promoting individualism, when in fact self-justification is the source of all social division.

To have a truly just and righteous society, there must a group of people who are willing to step off the throne that belongs to God alone—to be dethroned. But the only way rebellious human beings will be willing to step off God's throne is to first discover that their self-justifications are futile and foolish, that self-enthronement is illegitimate, that God's condemnation of them is correct, that they are not his moral equal, and that they require not a self-justification but a divine justification. A divine justification, however, is possible for rebels only if God does something to satisfy his

28. Oswald Bayer, *Living by Faith: Justification and Sanctification*, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003): 9.

29. *Ibid.*, 4.

30. *Ibid.*, 10.

own requirements of justice—if he can be both just and the justifier (Rom 3:26). What all this points toward is justification by faith alone, or *sola fide*.

In other words, *sola fide* offers the greatest hope for a truly just body politic because it vanquishes self-justification and, therefore, self-enthronement. Just as self-justification and self-enthronement are correlates, so justification by faith and repentant obedience are correlates.<sup>31</sup> Just as self-justification divides humans from one another and from God, so *sola fide* covenantally and politically unites them. It creates a new body politic.

As I observed a moment ago, the idea that a person can in some sense be considered just “by faith” and not by his or her activity, to a political philosopher, sounds like cheating the system, gutting the word “justice” of the very thing it needs—action or works. I believe the opposite is the case. *Sola fide* is history’s unexpected ground of political unity, because it robs political actors of the incentives to warfare and domination by giving them that which all people, nations, and armies primarily seek—justification, standing, the recognition of existence. Ever since God was dismissed as our source of standing, we have had to find it in ourselves, which leads to one-upsmanship, boasting, war. But the person justified by faith must no longer prove or justify him or herself by any earthly measurement: race (“I’m Aryan”), ethnicity (“I’m Serbian”), gender (“I’m male”), class (“I’m aristocracy”), nationality (“I’m Prussian”), wisdom (“I’m Progressive”) and all those things that lead to war and political oppression (see James 4:1-2).

There are two things going on here: First, the presence of faith presumes that the self has run out of resources and therefore has no choice but to forsake its self-justifying arguments. Faith, says Bayer, means “dying both to justifying thinking and justifying action,” so that “both thinking and acting are renewed.”<sup>32</sup> Or listen to how John Barclay puts it in *Paul and the Gift*: “Faith is not an alternative human achievement nor a refined human spirituality, but a declaration of bankruptcy, a radical and shattering recognition that the only capital in God’s economy is the gift of Christ crucified and risen.”<sup>33</sup> Being free from self-justification, faith is free—indeed, can afford—to think and work entirely for the sake of the other, not for the sake of validating or vindicating oneself.<sup>34</sup>

Second, therefore, faith involves the end of self-enthronement. At the heart of faith is the idea of submitting to the authority of another. The anti-faith Ayn Rand, in the form of one of her characters, put this well in an anti-faith exhortation, “Redeem your mind from the hockshops of authority...an error made on your own is safer

31. Graham Cole offers an analogous observation in *God the Peacemaker: How Atonement Brings Shalom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009): 115-17.

32. Bayer, *Living By Faith*, 25.

33. John Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015): 383-84.

34. Bayer, *Living Faith*., 21-22.

than ten truths accepted on faith.”<sup>35</sup> To take something “on faith” is to take it “on the authority” of another, whether the topic is medical counsel, investment advice, or the way of righteousness and salvation. It is to submit to someone else’s expertise. Or think of Matthew 8:8-10: “‘Lord, say the word and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man under authority’ . . . When Jesus heard this he marveled . . . ‘with no one in Israel have I found such faith.’” To have faith in God is to submit to God, and having faith in Jesus’ person and work is, among other things, a political act involving submission to his kingdom. It is to submit to Jesus as possessing ultimate, sword-bearing authority, an authority that transcends all other political allegiances.

How then is justification by faith alone history’s unexpected source of political unity? First, it unites people around not just *a* lord, but *the* Lord. Second, it brings self-justification to an end and grants a vicarious and alien righteousness, which means that people lack the incentives to war and domination and one-upsmanship. The most politically powerful phrase in the Bible just might be “Where then is boasting!” (Rom 3:27). Boasting is the root of all domination and coercion. We quarrel, fight, and murder because we desire and do not have, covet and cannot obtain (James 4:1-2). But now the need to say, “I follow Paul” or “I follow Apollos” or “I am a Communist” or “I am a Democrat” or “I am Hutu” or “I am a Tutsi” is extinguished because no one should “boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s” (1 Cor 3:21-23). In an assembly or gathering of those justified by faith there is neither slave nor free, Jew nor Gentile, male nor female (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). Those political categories that divide the world are erased.

## Conclusion

At the beginning, I defined political unity as *the relationships that abide between subjects of the same governing authority, particularly as that governing authority obligates those individuals toward one another according to its rules of justice*. This is precisely what the objective and subjective aspects of justification yield. Objectively the verdict itself is a covenantal verdict that, first, gives us righteous standing before the judge and, second, righteous standing before an entire covenantal community. Subjectively, *sola fide* requires an individual “to reach the end” of him or herself, and his or her self-justifying arguments for self-enthronement. This broken and regretful self therefore asks for a free gift of righteousness, yields the throne once more to God, and embraces those who were once enemies but are now fellow citizens.

Does Christ possess imperium over and against those who belong to this body politic? Of course, which is why you have a tradition of Christian martyrdom and why our Christian identity transcends national boundaries.

35. Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, centennial edition (New York: Plume, 2005): 1058.

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The gift of Martin Luther to the church was putting all this together: the first and continuous thing a sinner must do to keep the first commandment—“You shall have no other gods before me”—is to have faith in God alone for justifying grace.<sup>36</sup>

*Sola fide* does not divide Christians, it unites them, and it yields an ethic of walking by the Spirit in obedient freedom.

The political unity of the church, then, begins with its fundamentally political message. The church’s political nature begins with its own life—with its preaching, evangelism, member oversight, and discipline. To put real flesh on the idea, it begins with the two crumpled old women sitting over there in the church pew. Both have persevered in the faith for decades. Both have listened carefully week after week to their king’s words heralded from a pulpit. And year after year, decade after decade, through the ebb and flow of seasons, through the raising of children and the temptation to compare whose children rise higher, through the petty jealousies of friendship and maybe even an injury inflicted, through the divergent paths of financial prosperity and the attendant threats of covetousness and condescension, through ethnic contrast and conflict, through hasty words and hurt feelings, through times good and bad, those two old women, unrelated by blood, enemies by birth, have, by the power of the Spirit, found their worth and justification in a vicarious righteousness. And so, relieved of the burden to boast in themselves, they have discovered the freedom to forgive one another’s hasty words, to surrender the desire to compete and compare, to outdo one another only in showing honor, to fight for sisterly love and justice amidst everything that would have torn them apart. Here between these two old women is where we find a model political life, one that confronts, condemns, and calls the nations.

36. Martin Luther, commentary on the first commandment in “The Large Catechism,” in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000): 386-89; also, *A Treatise on Good Works* (Rockville, MD: Serenity, 2009): 28.

## ***Humanity As City-Builders: Observations On Human Work From Hebrews' Interpretation Of Genesis 1-11***

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**Abstract:** Hebrews 11:10 claims that Abraham “was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God” (ESV). The Genesis narrative, however, seems devoid of any indication that Abraham was looking for a city, leading some modern interpreters to conclude that the author of Hebrews was allegorizing the Genesis narrative. On the contrary, reading Genesis 1–11 (the preceding context of the Abraham narrative) from the perspective of the author of Hebrews reveals details which indicate that he is making a valid inference from the text of Genesis. Specifically, the text of Genesis presents the city of Babel (Gen 11) as the antithesis of God’s original plan for human flourishing. The author of Hebrews’s reading of the Genesis narrative reveals his theological perspective on God’s original purpose for humanity, which has several implications for how Christians should reconsider the divide often assumed between sacred and secular work.

**Key Words:** Hebrews 11, Genesis 1–11, Babel, work, city, Eden

### **Introduction**

Abraham’s appearance in Hebrews 11 is unsurprising. Although there are counterexamples, Abraham is generally depicted as a man of faith in Genesis. The author of Hebrews utilizes Abraham, along with several other key Old Testament figures, as an illustration of persevering in faith while God’s promises remain unsubstantiated (Heb 11:1, 13). What is surprising, however, is one of the ways in which the author of Hebrews illustrates Abraham’s faith. He claims that Abraham “was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God” (Heb 11:10). While most of the examples of faith in Hebrews 11 are rooted (even if only loosely) in the biblical narrative, this claim seems out of place. God promises Abraham land, descendants, and a great name. This city, however, to which Abraham is supposedly looking forward is absent from the Genesis narrative. From where did

the author of Hebrews draw his inference about this city? Several commentators have claimed that the author of Hebrews has succumbed to allegory at this point.<sup>1</sup>

Upon further review, however, there are some indications that should cause us to pause before agreeing that the author of Hebrews is allegorizing. Immediately prior to the beginning of Abraham's story is the account of the tower of Babel, which is the centerpiece of a large city. Cities appear at other points within Genesis 1–11 as well (4:17; 10:10–12). While none of these instances would qualify as a city whose designer and builder is God, their appearance in Genesis 1–11 is enough to warrant further investigation into the role of cities within the context of the Abraham narrative in order to see if any plausible solution arises which would explain how the author of Hebrews is reading Genesis.

This essay will investigate the possible role cities may have in Genesis 1–11 in order to discern if there is a basis for the author of Hebrews' claim that Abraham was searching for a city whose architect was God (Heb 11:10). It will demonstrate that the author of Hebrews intuitively discerned several features in the Genesis narrative which he interpreted to mean that God originally intended for humanity to construct a city in obedience to his command for them to fill the earth. Although humanity forfeited their right to build this city upon the earth, God continued to construct this city and will one day populate it with Abraham, his descendants, and those families who are blessed by Abraham (Gen 12:1–3). That is why the author of Hebrews claims that Abraham is looking forward to the appearance of this city. Although this reading of Genesis 1–11 is not immediately obvious, the text is written in such a way that this proposal for understanding Hebrews 11:10 is possible. This essay will begin by demonstrating that Babel (Gen 11:1–9) should be understood as the climax of human rebellion within Primeval History (Gen 1–11). It will then demonstrate that Babel is the antithesis of what God had originally intended at the beginning of creation. Finally, this essay will conclude by drawing several observations from the author of Hebrews' understanding of Genesis 1–11 related to work and human flourishing.

### **Babel as the Culmination of Human Rebellion**

This section will demonstrate that the city of Babel is the climax of human rebellion within Primeval History (Gen 1–11). It will begin by evaluating the presentation of Babel in Genesis 10–11. It will then examine the larger role Babel serves within Genesis 1–10.

1. See F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964): 298 and James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh, U. K.: T&T Clark, 1948): 170.

## **Babel in Genesis 10–11**

While the main Babel narrative appears in Gen 11:1–9, this is not the first mention of Babel within Genesis. Babel first appears in Gen 10:10 in connection to Nimrod. This gives the reader some background information concerning Babel. While Gen 10:8–12 gives few details concerning most of the people and nations it discusses, it gives several details about Nimrod.

Genesis 10:8 says that Nimrod was a mighty man upon the earth and a mighty hunter before the Lord. Although this description may appear positive to the modern reader, it should most likely be taken as a negative evaluation of Nimrod. The description of Nimrod as a “mighty” man should give the reader an immediate cause for concern. The only previous appearance of mighty men were the Nephilim in Gen 6:4.<sup>2</sup> While Gen 6:1–4 contains several features which are difficult to understand, it is obvious that the Nephilim should be understood negatively since they are a precursor to the Flood. The description of Nimrod as mighty hunter “before the Lord” should also likely be taken negatively. Even though the expression “before the Lord” may seem positive in English, the Hebrew word לִפְנֵי (*lipnay*) can also have a negative connotation, such as “in opposition to.”<sup>3</sup> Given what else is known of Nimrod, the phrase “before the Lord” likely indicates that Nimrod opposed the Lord.

Genesis 10:10–11 says that Nimrod founded cities and expanded his kingdom. This is contrasted sharply by the rest of the people discussed in Genesis 10, who gradually settled into their own lands. These statements in Genesis 10:10–11 portray Nimrod building and expanding his kingdom through the use of violence and force.<sup>4</sup> This background information concerning Nimrod, whose kingdom began with Babel (Gen 10:10), should lead the reader to expect the worst as the narrative moves to the plain of Shinar and Babel in Genesis 11.

Genesis 11:1–9 fulfills the reader’s expectations. All of humanity migrates to the plain of Shinar and builds the city of Babel. This is clearly a defiant act of hubris as demonstrated by their desire to reach the heavens and make a name for themselves (Gen 11:4). Since “the heavens” is the dwelling place of God (Gen 19:24; 22:11, 15; Deut 26:15), their desire to reach “the heavens” is an attempt to equate themselves with God.

## **Babel in Genesis 1–11**

Genesis 10–11 certainly portrays Babel negatively, but these chapters only reveal part of the author’s portrayal. The reader’s understanding of Babel can be enhanced significantly by observing parallels between Babel and earlier portions of Primeval

2. K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2002): 450.

3. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, trans. John J. Scullion (London, U.K.: SPCK, 1984): 516.

4. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 448.

History. For example, there are several parallels between Babel and the city built by Cain (Gen 4:16–17).

**Table 1: Parallels between Cain’s City and Babel<sup>5</sup>**

<b>Cain’s City</b>	<b>Babel</b>
Cain moved east (Gen 4:16–17)	Builders of Babel moved east (Gen 11:2)
Cain feared wandering across the earth (Gen 4:14)	Builders of Babel feared being dispersed over the whole earth (Gen 11:4)
Cain built a city when he reached his destination (Gen 4:17)	Builders of Babel built a city when they reached their destination (Gen 11:4)
Cain’s city was founded by a violent man (Gen 4:4; cf. 4:23–24)	Nimrod, the founder of Babel, was a violent man (10:8–10)

In addition to these parallels between Babel and Cain’s city, there are also a number of thematic and verbal parallels between the Eden narrative (Gen 2–3) and Babel (Gen 11:1–9).

**Table 2: Thematic and Verbal Parallels between the Eden Narrative and Babel<sup>6</sup>**

<b>The Eden Narrative</b>	<b>Babel</b>
Adam and Eve wanted to be like God (Gen 3:5)	The builders of Babel wanted to be like God (Gen 11:4)
Use of divine plural (Gen 1:26)	Use of divine plural (Gen 11:7)
God’s distress over what man may do (Gen 3:22)	God’s distress over what man may do (Gen 11:6)
Adam and Eve were banished from the garden (Gen 3:24)	The people were dispersed from Shinar (Gen 11:8)

The parallels between the Babel narrative and earlier narratives emphasizes the depravity of the builders of Babel. They were as prideful as Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They were as violent and aggressive as Cain. The author compares the Babel narratives with earlier ones within the Primeval History in order to demonstrate that a climax had been reached in human sin.<sup>7</sup>

5. These parallels can be found in Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 478 and John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992): 136.

6. These parallels stem from Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 467. Mathews also mentions a geographic parallel and multiple lexical parallels.

7. James McKeown concludes similarly. “Both human audacity and the severity of God’s punishment have reached a climax in the Babel narrative.” James McKeown, *Genesis*, Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008): 72.

## **Humanity as City-Builders**

The preceding section demonstrated that the city of Babel represents the climax of human depravity for the author of Genesis. This presentation of Babel, however, does little to help us understand the thoughts of the author of Hebrews. Babel certainly was not a city whose designer and builder is God (Heb 11:10). Yet, even though Babel was not the city Abraham was waiting for, perhaps it contains the clue needed to understand how the author of Hebrews was reading Genesis 1–11 and the Abraham narrative. This section will demonstrate that Babel was not only the climax of human rebellion but also the antithesis of what God had intended in Genesis 1–2. God intended for humanity to build a city but not Babel.

### **Filling the Earth with a City**

In order to demonstrate that humanity was eventually to build a city, this section will examine a difficulty arising from the two creation stories at the beginning of Genesis. According to Gen 1:26–28 God gave humanity two mandates. They were to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth,” and they were also to “subdue [the earth] and have dominion [over every creature].” The Garden of Eden narrative, however, gives no indication that humanity was ever supposed to leave the garden. Genesis 2:8–15 indicates that God placed the newly created man inside the Garden of Eden for the purposes of working and guarding the land. Genesis 2:16 indicates that the garden was humanity’s food source. Nothing in Genesis 2 indicates that humanity should ever leave the garden to “fill the earth” or to “subdue the earth” as Genesis 1:26–28 mandates. Genesis 3 only increases the difficulty of the problem. The punishment for human sin was exile from the Garden of Eden (3:24).

How was humanity to fill and subdue the earth while remaining within the boundaries of the garden? The most likely explanation is that humanity was to expand the boundaries of the garden until it encompassed the whole earth.<sup>8</sup> This explanation indicates a correlation between subduing the earth (Gen 1:28) and working and keeping the garden (Gen 2:15). Humanity was to cultivate the ground surrounding the perimeter of the garden and bring it under their control, thereby continuously extending the boundaries of the garden. This also explains why the author includes the rivers and lands outside of the garden in Gen 2:10–14. These lands and the gold in them would be of little importance if humanity remained stationary in the garden. Since, however, humanity was supposed to extend the borders of the garden, the location and resources of these lands could eventually be very important.

8. See Greg Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004): 81–82. Desmond Alexander quotes Beale approvingly. See T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem* (Nottingham, U.K.: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008): 25.

Genesis 1–2 may indicate that humanity was eventually supposed to extend the boundaries of the garden to encompass the whole earth. Since they were also to fill the earth (Gen 1:28), perhaps eventually the need for a city would arise.<sup>9</sup> Building a city would also indicate that the earth had been subdued to the greatest degree.

### A Sanctuary-City

Just as sinful humanity eventually built Babel, perhaps humanity’s original purpose, before the fall (Gen 3), was to build a city. But what kind of city were they supposed to build? Gordon Wenham has demonstrated that the description of the Garden of Eden reveals that the garden is far more significant than an ordinary piece of Mesopotamian farmland. The Garden of Eden is presented as an archetypal sanctuary.<sup>10</sup> “Many of the features of the garden may also be found in later sanctuaries particularly the tabernacle or the Jerusalem Temple. These parallels suggest that the garden itself is understood as a sort of sanctuary.”<sup>11</sup>

**Table 3: Parallels between the Garden of Eden and Later Sanctuaries**

Parallels	Garden of Eden	Tabernacle	Temple
Hithpael form of הלך (hālak)	Gen 3:8	Lev 26:12; Deut 23:15	2 Sam 7:6–7
Cherubim	Gen 3:24	Exod 25:18–22; 26:31	2 Kings 6:23–28
Entered by the East	Gen 3:24	Num 3:38;	Ezek 43:3
Tree of life/ menorah	Gen 2:9	Exod 25:31–35	

9. See Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 25. Also, readers of the Primeval History should note an important difference between filling the earth and being scattered haphazardly across. Filling the earth is a divine mandate (Gen 1:28). Being scattered across the earth is divine punishment (Gen 4:14; 11:8). The author uses consistent terminology for both. מלא (mālē) is used for “filling,” while פָּרַד (pārad) and פָּשַׁר (pūš) are used for “spreading.” See the discussion of Carol Kaminski, who has determined that the Table of Nations (Gen 10) should not be understood as the fulfillment of the divine mandate to fill the earth (Gen 1:28 but specifically Gen 9:1) because of the differences in terminology. She contends that the nation of Israel is the fulfillment of this mandate (Exod 1:7). Carol Kaminski, *From Noah to Israel: Realization of the Primeval Blessing after the Flood*, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* 413 (London, U.K.: T&T Clark International, 2004): 11–12.

10. Gordon J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood*, *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, ed. R. S. Hess and D. T. Tsumara (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994): 19–24. John Walton offers a slightly different take on the Garden of Eden but shares many of the same conclusions as Wenham. See John Walton, “Garden of Eden,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003): 204–206.

11. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism,” 19.

Priest/Levites	Gen 2:15 <sup>1</sup>	Num 3:7–8; 8;26; 18:5–6	
Precious Jewels	Gen 2:12	Exod 16:4, 33 (Num 11:7); 25:7; 28:9, 20	1 Chr 29:2

Wenham’s arguments have been accepted and expanded by several other scholars.<sup>12</sup> If the Garden of Eden should be understood as an archetypal sanctuary, then the city which humanity was to build as they filled the earth and expanded the borders of the garden should be understood as sanctuary-city. Such a city would certainly find its antithesis in the city of Babel.

### **A City Whose Designer and Builder is God**

This paper has so far demonstrated that Babel is the antithesis of God’s plan in Genesis 1–2 and that it is possible to read Genesis 1–2 in such a manner that anticipates humanity as builders of a sanctuary-city. One final link must be established before arriving at the view of the author of Hebrews. Since humanity rebelled against God and became builders of Babel instead of the sanctuary-city God intended, what has become of the city that God intended to be built and which Abraham was presumably searching? Evidence from the New Testament indicates that this city continues to be built and will one day replace the city built by sinful humanity. The author of Hebrews indicates that God himself continued to build the city for which Abraham was searching.

The thought pattern of the author of Hebrews finds parallels among other New Testament authors.<sup>13</sup> In John 14:2–3, Jesus says “In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.” Apart from the shift from a city to a house,<sup>14</sup> this passage demonstrates remarkable continuity with the ideas of the author of Hebrews as proposed in this essay. God the Father and Jesus the Son were taking part in a

12. Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 20–31 and Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 66–80.

13. In addition to the passages cited here, citizenship in a heavenly city also appears in Paul’s letters. Paul writes in Galatians 4:25–26 “Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.” In Philippians 3:20, Paul writes “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ....” See Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 72–73.

14. Since the Garden of Eden is depicted as a sanctuary (as noted above), it is possible that the two authors are discussing the same idea with slightly different emphases. This seems to be an instance of diversity within a greater unity, which sometimes happens in biblical theology. For a discussion of the differences between diversity and contradiction within New Testament theology, see Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005): 34–42.

building project for the purpose of dwelling with their people. Revelation 21:10–11 says, “And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.” These verses coincide perfectly with the trajectory of Genesis 1–2 as interpreted by Heb 11:10. God has completed the construction of his city. All that remains is for his people, the remnant of humanity who have been reconciled to him through Jesus, to be reunited with him in the city which he built. Abraham’s faith is finally substantiated. The city which he was looking forward to has appeared.

### **Reflections upon Work and Human Flourishing**

The final section of this essay will reflect upon the previous study and draw implications from it concerning work and human flourishing. These implications are based upon the author of Hebrew’s theological reading of the Genesis narrative.

#### **Sin Has Not Necessarily Changed Humanity’s Work Qualitatively**

God intended for humanity to build a city, yet because of sin, humanity became unfit to build God’s city. They continued, however, in their roles as city-builders and eventually constructed Babel, the antithesis to God’s originally intended city. Even though Babel is the antithesis of what God had intended, Genesis 11:1–9 does not disparage the city itself but the intentions of those who built it. The fact that humanity continued to build a city indicates some continuity between God’s original plan and the city which they constructed. This indicates that sin has not necessarily changed humanity’s work qualitatively.<sup>15</sup> Even as a great expanse of time has passed from these events recorded in Scripture to the present, the same continuity may still exist. Humanity has continued to refine its role as city-builders. In addition to towers, temples, and homes, we now build “microchips,” “automobiles,” and “consumer goods.”<sup>16</sup> If the analogy between the city God originally intended for humanity to build and Babel can be extended to the current era, then it is very likely that God’s city would include “microchips,” “automobiles”, and “consumer goods.” At least, there seems to be little reason to think that if humanity had not sinned and continued building God’s city that this city would not have included many elements found in our modern cities. Humanity would be engaging in many of the same occupations.

#### **Christians Should Re-conceptualize Their Occupations as Their Sacred Work**

15. By “qualitatively,” I mean the *kind* of work that humanity will do.

16. I have placed “microchips,” “automobiles,” and “consumer goods” in quotation marks to indicate these are merely examples of the vast number of ways that humanity has refined its role as city-builders. Almost any occupation could be substituted for these three examples, their production, and commerce.

This previous observation demonstrates a correlation between secular work and sacred work that is often underappreciated within modern society.<sup>17</sup> Typically, pastors, missionaries, and other church workers are deemed to be the ones carrying out God's work upon the earth. This study has demonstrated, however, that there is a potential sacred element to many of the occupations undertaken by humanity. If "microchips," "automobiles," and "consumer goods" had a role in God's original intentions, then there is some sense in which those who engage in the production and commerce of these elements are filling a similar role they would have in God's city. They are fulfilling the role which God had originally intended for them.

### **Sin has Altered Humanity's Work Functionally**

The preceding two points have attempted to establish some continuity between God's original plan for human occupation and the resulting inherent sacredness of many human occupations. These two points, however, must be qualified in order to account for the presence of human sin. While sin has not necessarily changed human work qualitatively, sin has changed human work functionally.<sup>18</sup> The tower of Babel was constructed to be an idol of human sin. Even though it may have shared some affinities with the buildings in God's city, there was nothing sacred about the tower or the work done to build it. Similarly, "microchips," "automobiles," and "consumer goods" are often made in service to human sin. In as much as this is the case, there is nothing sacred about the production and commerce of them. Even though sin has not necessarily changed these things qualitatively as they would have appeared in God's city, sin has nullified any potential sacred function they may have had.

Sin has altered human occupations functionally in at least two other ways. First, Gen 3:17–19 indicates that humanity's subduing the earth will be much more difficult than God had originally intended for it to be. Instead of building God's city, much of humanity's work had to be focused upon survival in a world that was growing more hostile towards them. This same circumstance continues today. While the above observations have attempted to build continuity between what is considered to be secular work and sacred work, human sin does not always allow for this continuity to exist. It is difficult to see how occupations such as law enforcement and humanitarian aid would function in the world apart from sin because these occupations essentially seek to limit the effects of sin. Second, human sin has caused separation between humanity and God (Gen 3:24). God has provided a way for this separation to be reconciled through Jesus Christ, but this reconciliation can only occur when a person accepts the sacrifice Christ made on behalf of that person's sins and believes that God raised Christ from the dead to demonstrate the victory of Christ over sin and death.

17. By "sacred work," I am referring to work that has been ordained or intended by God. By "secular work," I am referring to any work that is not considered sacred.

18. By "functionally," I mean the role the work serves within society.

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Furthermore, Jesus has mandated that his disciples share this gospel throughout the world (Matt 28:19–20). Humanity’s sin and their need to accept the gospel means that jobs which are traditionally associated with the church fulfill a more immediate sacred function than those that are traditionally considered secular. This observation should not, however, nullify the sacred aspect of these secular jobs. It only recognizes the priority of the work done in order to make disciples of Jesus.

**Whatever You Do, Do Everything in the Name of the Lord Jesus**

The initial two observations of this section attempted to draw continuity between what is considered secular and sacred work. The third observation, however, has demonstrated that this continuity is not always possible because of the reality of human sin. How can Christians who work what are considered to be secular jobs fulfill God’s mandate to subdue the earth in a world that has been distorted by human sin? The apostle Paul provides the best path forward in Col 1:17 which says “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”<sup>19</sup> Every Christian should pursue their occupation as a testimony to what Jesus Christ has done upon the earth and as a means to glorifying God. The reality of human sin means that this will always be done imperfectly until the day when the earth is totally eradicated of sin. Christians, however, do not have to wait until then to glorify God through work.

**Conclusion**

This essay has demonstrated that the city to which Abraham was looking forward (Heb 11:10) was the city that God continued building in the aftermath of humanity’s sin in the garden. In doing so, this essay has proposed that God originally created humanity to be city-builders. Even though the effects of human sin have often radically distorted how humanity subdues the earth through city-building, we should acknowledge what continuity we can between God’s original purpose and the current occupations Christians pursue in order to glorify God through our work on the earth.

19. C.f. 1 Cor 10:31

***Reading with the Masoretes:  
The Exegetical Value of the Masoretic Accents***

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**Abstract:** The Masoretic accent system provides biblical exegetes with a reading companion that can clarify and confirm the sense of the text. This historic reading tradition covers the entire corpus of the Hebrew Bible. Understood according to its hierarchical structure, this system offers interpreters assistance at various levels of exegesis. Beginning students will benefit from the way the accents indicate clause boundaries. Intermediate interpreters have the opportunity to understand how the reading tradition groups clauses syntactically. Advanced scholars possess the ability to see the semantic highlights that the Masoretes built into their patterns of accentuation. Thus, at every level of study, the Masoretic accents prove to be a valuable reading partner. This article exposes the historical rise and hermeneutical principles that brought about the accent system. Building on that foundation, various examples from the book of Judges illustrate the usefulness of the tradition for Hebrew exegetes.

**Key Words:** accents, Masoretic Text, exegesis, Hebrew syntax, Semantics, Book of Judges

**Introduction**

God's word spoken by the prophets proved true. His word of judgment brought about the humiliation, defeat, and exile of his rebellious and idolatrous people (Jer 25:11; 52:3). His word of promise moved the king of Persia to decree their return and the rebuilding of the temple (Jer 25:12; Ezra 1:1). Yet, these people needed instruction so that they would not fall into the same deadly disobedience of their forefathers. During the many years of exile, God had been making preparations to meet this need. His hand was resting upon a man—Ezra, the priest and scribe—because Ezra had set his heart to study the torah of Yahweh, to do it, and to teach it among God's people (Ezra 7:10). Such teaching involved reading the text, providing interpretation, and giving the sense (Neh 8:8). This meant that Ezra and his fellow scribes had to be masters of the text & reading tradition, masters of instruction, and above all, men mastered by the text.

Can modern exegetes tap into the rigor of that generation 2,500 years removed? The Tiberian Masoretes claim to have captured the ancient reading tradition in

writing more than a millennium ago. Native speakers of a language may easily read a consonantal text, but this becomes more and more difficult for second-language speakers. In order to guard the reading tradition, the Masoretes devised an ingenious method to indicate both the proper pronunciation and syntactical groupings without altering the text. Whether or not we accept their claim that their encoded tradition extends back to Ezra, these men preserved a venerable reading of the Hebrew text. Though often overlooked, the Masoretic accent system provides biblical exegetes with a reading companion that can clarify and confirm the sense of the text through highly-predictable patterns. I will present this thesis according to three frames of reference: the history, the hermeneutic, and the “how-tos” of the accent system. I hope to demonstrate the useful nature of this tradition (1) by briefly describing how it comes to us through history, and (2) by detailing the underlying hermeneutical principles that make it work. I will then (3) examine various examples from the book of Judges in order to illustrate how this reading tradition is useful for exegesis at various levels of Hebrew proficiency.

### **A Brief Historical Background**

We must first establish a historical context for this reading tradition in order to lay a strong foundation for its exegetical utility. Aharon ben-Asher, the great Masorete of the Aleppo Codex, points back to Ezra and his contemporaries as the initiators of the Masoretic tradition.<sup>1</sup> Israel Yeivin summarizes the historical development:

It appears that the first to work on Masoretic matters were the *soferim*—the pupils of Ezra the Scribe in the early second temple period. Their work extended into the period of the Talmud (300–600 CE). After this the period of the Masoretes began, and their work continued until the final establishment of the received Tiberian tradition, including its vocalization and accentuation, in the tenth century. To some extent the work of clarifying the textual tradition, and preserving it according to the tradition of the Masorah, has continued up to our time.<sup>2</sup>

Trained men faithfully passed down the reading tradition for many centuries until it was recorded over the consonantal text. Even after they began to be written down, scribes continued to orally pass down both the vowels and accents.<sup>3</sup> Thus, trained men passed down the proper reading of the text from Ezra’s time, nearly 1400

1. Russell T. Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi, *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2017 (forthcoming)): Accents §1.

2. Israel Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*, trans. E.J. Revell, (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1980): 131–132.

3. Joshua Jacobson, *Chanting the Hebrew Bible: The Art of Cantillation*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 2002): 363.

years, until Aharon ben-Asher definitively put it down in the consummate Tiberian Codex, the Crown of Aleppo.

While multiple systems of vocalization and accentuation existed, the tradition of the Tiberian Masoretes developed the greatest precision.<sup>4</sup> The Tiberian tradition began around A.D. 600–800 and climaxed with the work of Aharon ben-Asher in A.D. 915.<sup>5</sup> The Tiberian system comprises three elements building on the consonantal text:

1. symbols for the vowels above and below the text along with other diacritical marks;
2. symbols commonly called accents to indicate word stress, musical trope, and syntax;
3. the Masoretic notes to ensure accurate transmission of the text.

Though consonantal scrolls remained the mainstay for synagogue worship, this four-dimensional text became the pedagogical, scribal, and liturgical touchstone.<sup>6</sup> The accents form a vital part of this ancient tradition and stand ready to serve modern interpreters who understand their hermeneutical framework.

### **Hermeneutical Sensibilities**

The Hebrew name for the accents, תְּעֻמִים (*te'amim*), means “sense” or “taste.” Scholars universally recognize three functions of the accent system that all play a part in conveying the sense of the text.<sup>7</sup> First, and most basic, the accents indicate word stress. Generally speaking, the accent falls on the stressed syllable of the word; hence the name, “accent.” Some accents come only before a word (pre-positive) or after a word (post-positive), but often the Masoretes doubled such accents—once in

4. Yosef Ofer, “The History and Authority of the Aleppo Codex,” in *Jerusalem Crown: Companion Volume*, ed. Mordechai Glatzer, (Jerusalem: N. Ben-Zvi Printing Enterprises, 2002): 27.

5. William Wickes, *A Treatise on the Accentuation of the Twenty-One So-Called Prose Books of the Old Testament* (מִירְפָּס אִיכ יִמְעֵט), Harry M. Orlinsky, ed, The Library of Biblical Studies, (New York, NY: KTAV Publishing House, 1970): 7; Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*, 12.

6. Jacobson, *Chanting the Hebrew Bible (Complete)*, 13.

7. Elan Dresher has published a notable exception to this claim. He argues that the accents do not mark the syntax of a verse but rather the prosody (reading rhythm). While he acknowledges that syntax and prosody share a huge common domain, he maintains that examples exist where the author is clearly marking prosody and not syntax (see Bezalel Elan Dresher, “The Prosodic Basis of the Tiberian System of Hebrew Accents,” *Language* 70.1 (March 1994); Bezalel Elan Dresher, “Biblical Accents: Prosody,” ed. Geoffrey Khan, *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, vol.1 (Boston: Brill, 2013). Two considerations must be raised against this assertion. First, the musical dimension of the accents often plays a dominant role in determining the precise accent used in a given phrase. The ancients would rarely read a text silently, and when read aloud they would often chant the words to a melody (Jacobson, *Chanting the Hebrew Bible [Complete]*, 173). Thus, reading a text aloud was not the same as everyday speech. Second, there is a clear hierarchy in the accent system. While every accents exhibits conjunctive or disjunctive features, within the disjunctive category each accent holds a rank relative to the others. Stronger accents (e.g. Etnachta, Zaqef) control greater portions of the text and offer a more pronounced syntactical break (see Wickes, *Accentuation of the Twenty-One Prose Books*, 29).

the proper position and once on the stressed syllable.<sup>8</sup> This function of the accents provides minor exegetical assistance in disambiguating identical verbal forms (e.g. Gen 29:6, 9; 1 Kgs 8:48).

Second, the accents indicate the melody to be sung on each word. Contrary to modern, Western music notation, each symbol stands for a musical trope, a unique melodic pattern, rather than one individual note. A.W. Binder notes that, “The style of Biblical chant is half-musical and half-declamatory, the reader always being mindful of the meaning of the text and welding it to the tropes.”<sup>9</sup> Joshua Jacobson comments that, “The *te’amim* serve to flesh out the bare bones of the scriptural text with an element of expressivity.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, as the musical tropes bind themselves to the text, the words take on a more lifelike expression. Though the trope melodies have changed over time, they function to express the sense of the text when read aloud.<sup>11</sup>

Third, in addition to indicating word stress and musical trope, the accent hierarchy conveys the sense of the text by defining the syntactical breaks of the verse. This function resembles a rather elaborate form of punctuation.<sup>12</sup> The Masoretes paint these breaks in layers: syntactical, clausal, and semantic.<sup>13</sup> The conjunctive or disjunctive nature of the accents group words into independent clauses (syntactic use). The hierarchy of the accents builds relationships between these independent clauses (clausal use). And at times the Masoretes chose to use the strongest accents to highlight special points of interest (semantic use). Russell Fuller writes, “The syntactic and clausal represent the usual, the expected, the routine; the semantic represents the fascinating, the interesting, the unexpected.”<sup>14</sup> These three layers of syntactical sense marking provide the exegete with a wealthy companion for reading the text.

### The Utility of the Masoretic Accents

All three functions of the accents (word stress, musical tropes, syntax) are co-extensive with the text. They offer an ever-present, historically-rooted, self-consistent commentary. The modern reader and interpreter of biblical Hebrew could not ask for a better friend. Second-language learning experts point out that “L2/FL readers ‘will not be able to read as well in the foreign language as in their first language until they

8. The Koren Bible provides all occurrences of these pre- and post-positive accents in duplicate form so that they mark word stress while maintaining their traditional position.

9. Abraham W. Binder, *Biblical Chant*, (New York: Sacred Music Press, 1959): 15.

10. Jacobson, *Chanting the Hebrew Bible (Complete)*, 9.

11. Numerous modern interpretations of the tropes exist: Ashkenazic, Sephardic, Moroccan, Egyptian, Syrian, Baghdadian, and Yemenite. Each of these cantillation systems exhibits elements of its historical and geographic development. Yet, the similarities between these systems point to common Palestinian origin (see Binder, *Biblical Chant*, 14).

12. Jacobson, *Chanting the Hebrew Bible (Complete)*, 23.

13. Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Accents §9.

14. Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Accents §9.

have reached a threshold level of competence in that foreign language.”<sup>15</sup> Frankly, very few students of biblical Hebrew ever aim so high as to read the Bible with native level competency, though this is a worthy goal. Yet the friendly voice of the accents calls out to beginning readers and more advanced exegetes alike. He offers to serve as a native language resource to anyone who follows his instruction. He identifies clauses, interprets their relationships, and indicates points of literary interest.

### Identifying Clauses [Beginner]

How many beginning students only learn to read Hebrew word, after word, after word? Of course any language learner will begin this way. But when readers approach a text for a second, third, and fourth time, they need to develop a reading fluency and expressiveness. High quality audio recordings accelerate this process dramatically. But when the student has read and reread a few dozen chapters with these training wheels, they would benefit from learning to locate word stress and phrase limits on their own. The accents tutor beginning readers in correct pronunciation and delimiting phrases.

#### Example 1. Judges 7:4

And he said to Gideon,	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־גִּדְעֹן	7:4a
“The people is still too many.	עוֹד־הָעָם רַב	7:4b
Take them down to the water	הַנָּחַל אוֹתָם אֶל־הַמַּיִם	7:4c
and I will sift them for you there.	וְאֶצְרְקֵנּוּ לְךָ שָׁם	7:4d
And it shall be when I say to you,	וְהָיָה אֲשֶׁר־אֹמַר אֵלֶיךָ	7:4e
‘This one will go with you,’	יָיָה   יֵלֶךְ אִתְּךָ	7:4f
he shall go with you;	הוּא יֵלֶךְ אִתְּךָ	7:4g
and whoever I say to you,	וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־אֹמַר אֵלֶיךָ	7:4h
‘This one will not go with you,’	יָיָה לֹא־יֵלֶךְ עִמָּךְ	7:4i
he shall not go.”	הוּא לֹא יֵלֶךְ:	7:4j

Word processors offer modern students and educators a simple venue for learning how the accents separate clauses. Pasting a copy of the text into a new document, students are able to insert a line break after each clause. Such line breaks will correspond with the disjunctive accents provided in the text. Beginning students may keep the text flush to the right hand side of the page. More advanced students will find benefit in using indentations to express relationships between these clauses.<sup>16</sup> Such exercises teach students to recognize clause limits, they learn the major disjunctive

15. Jo Ann Aebersold, and Mary Lee Field, *From Reader to Reading Teacher: Issues and Strategies for Second Language Classrooms* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 27.

16. For a good example of such text flow layouts, see chapters 37–40 of *A Modern Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009): 283-335.

accents, and they end up with a highly readable text format. Even if students only pay attention to the strongest disjunctives (e.g. Etnachta and Zaqef), such practice still makes strides towards natural reading capabilities. Thus, when students have acquired a general familiarity with these symbols, they become welcome sign-posts in the wilderness of an unexplored passage.

### Interpreting Clause Relationships [Intermediate]

When students have mastered some of the basics of reading a Hebrew text (i.e. proper pronunciation and rightly delimiting clauses), they will need to begin asking questions about how such clauses are related. Conjunctions and grammatical forms often signal the relationship of phrases and clauses. But the exegete needs to also examine clauses without clear conjunctions, or ones bound by the ever-present *Vav*. The Masoretic accents sketch out these relationships. Like literary cartographers, men of old have faithfully mapped out the syntax according to four hierarchical realms.<sup>17</sup>

The Masoretes structured these realms according to strict rules. The lords of each realm employ near and far subordinates. The near subordinate is always present, and the far subordinate may or may not be present. If the far subordinate acts in the verse, then he necessarily exercises more power than his near counterpart. All accents of lower realms function within the domain of the higher accents. Examples bear this out in every verse of the Bible.

#### Example 2. Judges 4:9

וְתֹאמַר	4:9a	⤴	↑
הַלֵּךְ אֵלַי עַמּוּד	4:9b	⤴	↑
אֲפֹס כִּי לֹא תִהְיֶה תִפְאָרְתְּךָ עַל־הַדְּרֹךְ אֲשֶׁר אֲתָה הוֹלֵךְ	4:9c	⤴	(Domain of Zaqef)
כִּי בְיַד־אִשָּׁה יִמְכַר יְהוּדָה אֶת־סִיסְרָא	4:9d		Domain of Etnachta
וּתְקוּם דְּבַנְרָה	4:9e	⤴	
וּתְלֹךְ עִם־בָּרַק קְדוּשָׁה:	4:9f		Domain of Siluq

As this example from Judges 4:9 illustrates, Etnachta rules over four main clauses (a–d) while Siluq rules over only two (e–f). Siluq and Etnachta are both first level accents subordinate to Sof Pasuq. Within the domain of Etnachta reside level two accents (e.g. Zaqef and Tipecha), level three accents (e.g. Revia, Yetiv, and Pashta), and level four accents (e.g. Geresh). These level three and four accents also reside immediately within the domain of Zaqef (4:9c). This illustrates what Wickes

17. These four levels of hierarchy refer only to the 21 narrative books (א"ב). The poetic books of Job, Proverbs, and Psalms (תמ"א) have three levels of hierarchy because verses tend to be much shorter. For detailed descriptions of the hierarchical levels see Fuller and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax, Accents*; Jacobson, *Chanting the Hebrew Bible (Complete)*; William Wickes, *Accentuation of the Three*, 24–50; Wickes, *Accentuation of the Twenty-One Prose Books*, 29–55.

calls, “the law of continuous dichotomy.”<sup>18</sup> Each ruler employs administrators over his domain who rule their own sub-domains. In this example, lexical conjunctions amply indicate the logical relationships between clauses. But the accents provide a powerful confirmation that readers have read the sign posts correctly.

### Example 3. Judges 4:21

וּתְקַח יַעֲלֵ אֶשֶׁת־הַקָּר אֶת־יְתֵד הַאֵהָל	4:21a	‖	↑ †
וּתְשֹׁם אֶת־הַמִּקְבֵּת בַּיָּדָהּ	4:21b	‖	↑ [Reviva]
וּתְבֹא אֵלָיו בְּלֵאט	4:21c	‖	(Domain of Zaqef)
וּתְתַקַּע אֶת־הַיְתֵד בְּרַקְתָּו	4:21d	‖	
וּתְצַנַח בְּאַרְזָן	4:21e	‖	Domain of Etnachta
וְהָיָה־נְרָגָם	4:21f	‖	↑
וַיַּעַר	4:21g	‖	(Domain of Tipecha)
וַיִּמָּט:	4:21h	‖	Domain of Siluq

This example illustrates a text that only uses *Vav* as the conjunction. Etnachta marks the end of the heroine’s actions (a–e), which are broken into units by multiple layers of accents (i.e. Zaqef and Reviva). The domain of Siluq marks off the result of her actions towards the villain (f–h). Within this larger domain, Tipecha delimits a nominal clause and its coordinate description (f, g). The grammar relates that these clauses describe the situation leading up to the heroine’s actions. The clause in 4:21g might easily be mistaken as a sequential action in the story, since it uses the same *Vayiqtol* (*wayyiqtol*) form as 4:21h. Helpfully the Masoretes have paired this clause with the preceding nominal clause, thus separating it off from the steady flow of subsequent actions.

These two examples illustrate how the syntactical and clausal function of the accents provide clear signals to the interpreter. The Masoretes either break or group clauses at various hierarchical levels. These groupings convey the sense of the text and prevent alternative readings. These interpretive aids prove useful to exegetes at every stage of reading proficiency. And when an exegete grows more familiar with the typical patterns used by the Masoretes, they begin to see a whole new set of interpretive signals.

### Indicating Literary Interest [Advanced]

Exegetes often overlook the accents in their study believing that the system is too irregular. How can interpreters trust a system so full of irregularities? Even William Wickes, credited with writing the most comprehensive treatment of the accents in the English language, writes that “. . . with due allowance for disturbing causes, we shall

18. Wickes, *Accentuation of the Twenty-One Prose Books*, 29.

still be able to accept the accents as reliable helps for the exegesis of the text.”<sup>19</sup> Most of the time the Masoretes employ the accents in a syntactical or clausal manner—very regular, very predictable. But, on occasion, the Masoretes also employ the accents in a semantic manner. Such semantic uses often indicate points of literary interest. Hence, accent “irregularities” should actually be granted more attention, not less.

The Masoretic use of Etnachta after direct speech passages provides a clear example of both a regular Masoretic pattern and divergence from this pattern.<sup>20</sup> In verses containing direct speech ending mid-verse, the Masoretes generally utilize Etnachta to mark the end of the direct speech. The end of the verse (Sof Pasuq) cuts off direct speech 70% of the time in the book of Judges (152x total). The remaining 30% of recorded direct speech ends somewhere in the middle of a verse. Etnachta marks this narrative feature 25% of time (55x); other accents mark this feature 5% of the time (11x). Therefore, when direct speech ends in the middle of the verse, the Masoretes choose to use Etnachta to signal this significant narrative feature 83% of the time. Their intentionality in deploying this pattern becomes clearer in verses with more than two main clauses.

#### Example 4. Judges 15:1

וַיְהִי מִיָּמַיִם בַּיּוֹם קָצְרֵי-חֹטְאִים	15:1a	ע	↑ [Reviv]
וַיִּפְקֹד שְׁמֹשׁוֹן אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ בַּגֶּדִי עֲזִים	15:1b	ע	(Domain of Zaqef)
וַיֵּאמֶר	15:1c	ע	[Intro of Direct Speech]
אָבָאָה אֶל-אִשְׁתִּי הַמְדַרְהָ	15:1d		Domain of Etnachta
וְלֹא-נָתַנּוּ אָבִיהָ לָבוֹא:	15:1e		Domain of Siluq

The five clauses in Judges 15:1 provide a perfect example of Etnachta signaling the end of direct speech. Typically, Etnachta resides as close to the middle of the verse as possible. Here that location would be at the end of 15:1b. While a strong accent breaks the verse at that point, the Masoretes reserve the strongest break for the end of direct speech (15:1d). This regular feature of the text prevents the reader from slurring the direct speech into subsequent lines. In 15:1e the narrator switches characters to describe the action of Samson’s father-in-law. Were it not for Etnachta signaling the end of the direct speech, the reader may assume Samson continues speaking to the end of the verse. Thus, the Masoretes did not use just any disjunctive accent to signal the end of direct speech; they consistently use Etnachta for this purpose.<sup>21</sup>

19. Wickes, *Accentuation of the Three Poetical Books*, 5.

20. The research provided here represents a portion of my forthcoming dissertation being completed at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (May 2017).

21. I provide numerous other examples of this Masoretic pattern in my dissertation. Here are a few of the clearest examples from the book of Judges: 3:20; 8:20, 21, 25; 15:6; 19:8—though the pattern is not confined to any one book.

But the Masoretes occasionally choose against their regular pattern of using Etnachta to conclude mid-verse direct speech. For this to occur, another interpretive dimension of the text needs to exert a stronger influence on interpretation than punctuating the end of direct speech.

**Example 5. Judges 16:30**

	וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁמֶשׁוֹן	16:30a	‡	↑ [Intro D.Speech]
	תָּמוֹת נִפְשֵׁי־עַם־פְּלִשְׁתִּים	16:30b	‡	(Domain of Segol)
	וַיֵּט בְּכַף	16:30c	‡	
	וַיִּפֹּל הַבַּיִת עַל־הַסְּרֻזִּים וְעַל־כָּל־הָעַם אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ	16:30d		Domain of Etnachta
	וַיַּהֲרֹג הַמָּתִים אֲשֶׁר הָמִית בְּמוֹתוֹ	16:30e	‡	(Domain of Zaqef)
	רָבִים מֵאֲשֶׁר הָמִית בְּתַקְיָו:	16:30f		Domain of Siluq

Judges 16:30 illustrates an instance where literary interest may be taking precedent over the regular Masoretic pattern. This verse climaxes the Samson narrative which began all the way back in chapter 13. The final act of Samson’s judgeship over Israel, the toppling of a pagan temple, results in more enemies being destroyed than throughout his entire bloody career (16:30e, f). Samson’s direct speech in 16:30b concludes with Segol, not the expected Etnachta. Segol, the strongest accent within Etnachta’s domain, sufficiently creates a pause in the reading so that the quotation is not slurred. This action frees up Etnachta to draw attention to the climactic moment. In fact, the very divergence from the typical pattern draws further attention to this event. Thus, a divergence from the typical Masoretic pattern does not constitute an irregularity but an intentional interpretive signal.<sup>22</sup>

**Conclusion**

These highly predictable Masoretic accent patterns, and intentional divergence from the patterns, can clarify and confirm the sense of the text. Not only do the accents provide multiple layers of information: word stress, musical notation, and syntactical relationships, but they also benefit readers at every stage of development. This truly remarkable system assists readers in delimiting clauses, discerning the relationship between clauses, and occasionally highlighting the points of literary interest. As a second-language learner I have had to learn the hard lesson of humility again and again. Pursuing language fluency truly requires child-like character and tiger-like

22. For more examples like this see Judges 11:38 (logical transition); 16:12 (syntactic construction); 19:28 (semantic pause). Another very regular pattern occurs with Etnachta preceding הַתְּעוּ (ve’atah, “and now”) in the middle of a verse. Examples of divergence from this pattern include Genesis 50:17, Judges 17:3, 18:14 (priority of another pattern); Genesis 32:10, 2 Samuel 24:10 (division of clauses); Exodus 3:18, Judges 6:13 (semantic high points). My forthcoming dissertation will also detail two more patterns—framing of conditional clauses, and *Vav* of contrast.

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tenacity. And part of that child-like character requires accepting help on a regular basis. The Masoretic accents stand large in the text as a pervasive and reliable reading companion. Learning to read with the Masoretes may prove more fruitful than we formerly imagined.

## *The Inherent Value of Work*

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**Abstract:** In recent scholarship and popular discourse, there has been an explosion of interest in the topic of faith and work. The revival of this age-old discussion has helped to revitalize a Christian understanding of the vocation and ministry through daily labor. While the faith and work conversation is healthy and has benefited many people, it suffers from an insufficient value system. This essay argues that work should be seen as having primarily inherent value. Work is not intrinsically valuable: it has no value in and of itself. Nor does it have purely instrumental value. Instead, work is valuable inasmuch as it serves the common good and reflects the moral order of the created order. This three-tiered value system is drawn from Augustine, but has most recently been championed by C. I. Lewis. Ascribing inherent value, rather than intrinsic or instrumental, to work enables individuals to balance several vocations and adjudicate between ethically acceptable and unacceptable vocations.

Key Words: Value theory, faith and work, inherent value, C. I. Lewis, Augustine, vocation

### **Introduction**

In his 1972 book, *Working*, Studs Terkel begins with a startling description of the purpose of his book and the nature of work. He writes, “This book, being about work, is, by its very nature, about violence—to the spirit as well as to the body. It is about ulcers as well as accidents, about shouting matches as well as fistfights, about nervous breakdowns as well as kicking the dog around. It is, above all (or beneath all), about daily humiliations.”<sup>1</sup> But he goes on to note that the book is “about a search, too, for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash . . .; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying.”<sup>2</sup> For Terkel the reality falls far short of the ideal, but there is an ideal for which people earnestly yearn. For Terkel’s subjects, work is instrumentally necessary to earn a living but lacks deeper

1. Studs Terkel, *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974): xi.

2. *Ibid.*

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value. He interviews dozens of workers and mostly finds out how unhappy they are. The accounts are poetic, rich, and raw. His work is powerful, but it leaves the reader longing for a better ending. It conveys the deep human longing to find value in work.

Forty years later, the situation is not much different. For many Americans, work is only good for the money it brings in. According to a survey from Pew Research in 2010, 87% of Americans cited the income from their jobs as a primary reason to work. Less than half felt they were working for the greater good.<sup>3</sup> This points to a purely instrumental understanding of work. In other words, work is mainly good because it serves a utilitarian purpose. The discussion of work, even as it is being carefully worked through by the ongoing Faith and Work movement, tends to suffer from an insufficient theory of value. Christians are seeking to revitalize a robust vision of the value of daily work, but the vocabulary for value theory being used is insufficient.

In contemporary discussions, the value of work tends to be discussed as either intrinsic or instrumental.<sup>4</sup> Intrinsic value is based on the nature of the work itself. Instrumental value is value based on the good derived from work. This article argues that such a two tiered value structure is insufficient, and that a three tiered set of values is necessary to understand the value of work as dependent upon its relational goodness in comparison to its proper function in giving glory to God. A category for inherent value, which is value dependent on the fulfillment of a purpose by an object in relation to another object, should be added for a more complete theory of value. To adequately discuss the value of work, Christians should clearly differentiate between intrinsic, inherent, and instrumental value.

To get at this thesis, first this essay will define and discuss value theory, outlining a three-part system of value which resonates with that apparent in the theology of St. Augustine of Hippo. Second, this essay will compare descriptions of work in Scripture against the categories of value. Third, this essay will show how ascribing inherent value to work enables an individual to balance several vocations and allows for adjudicating between ethically acceptable and unacceptable vocations.

3. Paul Taylor, *America's Changing Workforce: Recession Turns a Graying Office Grayer* (Pew Research Center, 2009), 16, accessed June 23, 2015, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/americas-changing-workforce.pdf>. See also Paul Heintzman, *Leisure and Spirituality: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic): 24–25.

4. R. Paul Stevens, *Work Matters: Lessons from Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012): 11.

## **Toward an Augustinian Theory of Value**

The topic of value theory is complex. There are nearly as many systems of value proposed as there are scholars who have written on the topic. Even between systems that seem to agree in principle, there are differences in vocabulary that can confuse the discussion.<sup>5</sup> It is possible to understand value through a biblical worldview and describe the schema of value in significantly different ways. Finding a key to the important ethical category of value can be difficult for a Christian, particularly since many philosophical systems seem to disallow the existence of God.

Thankfully Augustine provides an early Christian foundation for value theory. In *The Nature of the Good*, Augustine argues God is good in a unique way. Since he is the Creator, he is distinct from the creation.<sup>6</sup> Thus his goodness is a higher goodness than that possessed by created things. Creation is good, but it has a goodness derived from its relationship to the Creator.<sup>7</sup> The degree of derived goodness of an object is determined by its fulfillment of the purpose for which God designed it.<sup>8</sup>

This resonates with a commonly accepted division in value theory between intrinsic and extrinsic goods.<sup>9</sup> Intrinsic goodness describes the goodness native to an object for its own sake.<sup>10</sup> This is an immutable, final value that Augustine attributes to God alone.<sup>11</sup> For his part, Harvard scholar C. I. Lewis, a pragmatist

5. For example, even in edited volumes there is often a wide range of terms used for similar values. The text of various essays in the *Oxford Handbook of Value Theory* use the term “intrinsic” in multiple different ways and use synonyms (e.g., “final value”) at times to refer to a particular subset of intrinsic value. Iwao Hirose and Jonas Olson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Value Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). The primary purpose of this essay is not to create final, absolute definitions or assert a particular meaning for terms used by others, but to argue for applying three distinct categories for value with the definitions offered here, whatever one decides to call them.

6. The emphasis on Creator-creature distinction has led to accusations of dualism from some. Elaine H. Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York: Random House, 1988), 99. Colin E. Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study*, *Edinburgh Studies in Constructive Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998): 79. However, Bradley Green has since qualified this to indicate he is a hierarchical dualist, thus affirming the Creator-creature distinction without devaluing the created order. Bradley G. Green, *Colin Gunton and the Failure of Augustine: The Theology of Colin Gunton in Light of Augustine*, *Distinguished Dissertations in Christian Theology* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2011): 132.

7. Augustine, “The Nature of the Good,” in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. Edmund Hill and John E. Rotelle (Brooklyn: New City Press, 1990): 1.

8. *Ibid.*, 8.

9. Toni Ronnow-Rasmussen, “Intrinsic and Extrinsic Value,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Value Theory*, ed. Iwao Hirose and Jonas Olson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015): 29–30.

10. Clarence Lewis defines intrinsic value as “that which is good in itself or good for its own sake.” Clarence Irving Lewis, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1946): 382.

11. Augustine, “The Nature of the Good,” in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, 1.

philosopher who was not a theist, recognizes a category for intrinsic value, but argues, “All value in objective existents is extrinsic.”<sup>12</sup> Extrinsic goodness is non-final value ascribed to an object based on its relationship to a set of qualities.<sup>13</sup> Thus, extrinsic value refers to goodness that is due to attributes that come from outside the object itself.

Most discussions of the value of work allow only intrinsic value or a single type of value in the extrinsic category, namely instrumental value. This limitation is unhelpful for understanding the true value of work, particularly from a Christian perspective.<sup>14</sup> At least two types of extrinsic goodness are indicated. The first type of extrinsic values are inherent values, which are, according to Lewis, “those values which are resident in objects in such wise that they are realizable in experience through presentation to the object itself to which they are attributed.”<sup>15</sup> Goodness of an object is thus due to qualities in the object itself in relationship to some external set of values. A second type of extrinsic value is instrumental value, which is dependent solely on the utility of an object to a subject.<sup>16</sup> In the instrumental view, goodness of an object is dependent on how well it fulfills a desired end.

There is both distinction and connection between categories of instrumental and inherent value. For example, a painting may be beautiful and representative of artistic excellence but serve no practical purpose. Thus the painting would have inherent value, but little instrumental value.<sup>17</sup> The value of such a painting is primarily derived from its ability to delight the viewer and testify to the excellence of the painter. Its value is relational. In contrast, a dust mop may

12. Lewis, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 432. Lewis’ main goal was to combat the influence of skeptical philosophies by arguing for a rational, objective ordering in the world. This is why Lewis is helpful for developing a Christian value system, though he is not himself a believer. E. Paul Colella, “Human Nature and the Ethics of C. I. Lewis,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 27, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 302.

13. Ronnow-Rasmussen, “Intrinsic and Extrinsic Value,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Value Theory*, 32.

14. *Ibid.*, 29.

15. Lewis, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 391. The term “inherent” is Lewis’ own. He used the term to describe a value category between intrinsic value (which requires a supernaturalist worldview) and instrumental value (which references the utilitarian worth of objects). The distinction between the two categories is fine, much like the difference between red and maroon: to the artist, it is quite important; to the weary husband shopping with his wife, it may seem numbingly trivial. Using the term “inherent” is helpful to prevent the confusion that might result if one used the terms *intrinsic*<sub>1</sub> and *intrinsic*<sub>2</sub> to refer to the categories here labeled as “intrinsic” and “inherent” value, respectively. For example, Sahotra Sarkar, *Biodiversity and Environmental Philosophy: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 52-58.

16. Lewis, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 391.

17. It might be argued that even the painting would have some utility if it were used to momentarily feed a fire or stop the draft around a door. This, however, is not the primary purpose of the painting and would reflect little inherent value.

have mainly instrumental value, inasmuch as it is good for cleaning the floor of the art gallery. However, if it is leaned next to the painting there would be no comparison between their beauty and, and it would give little or no attestation to the artisanship of the manufacturer.<sup>18</sup> This is especially true for objects that have been hastily and inexpensively made with only utility in mind. On the other hand, a staircase in the same art gallery may have significant instrumental and inherent value simultaneously if it is both artistically excellent and useful for transiting between levels. There is both continuity and discontinuity between these two types of extrinsic value.

Augustine's concept of goodness is helpful for discussing intrinsic value and both types of extrinsic value. In his discussion of the use and enjoyment of things in *De Doctrina Christiana*, Augustine differentiates between objects that are to be 'used' and those that are to be 'enjoyed.' Those things that are to be enjoyed have intrinsic value, "For to enjoy a thing is to rest with satisfaction in it for its own sake."<sup>19</sup> This underived value is attributed only to God.<sup>20</sup> Created objects, which have inherent value inasmuch as they are rightly ordered to God's design, are only to be used. As Oliver O'Donovan writes, "Augustine's position . . . is that one 'uses' an object that is in itself 'for use' (*utendum*) and enjoys an object which is in itself 'for enjoyment' (*fruendum*). To break with the objective order in which this distinction is rooted is vicious and perverse."<sup>21</sup> The Creator is to be enjoyed and the creation is to be used. To do otherwise is to sin.

In contemporary discussions, the term "use" generally has a negative connotation, reflecting only instrumental value being ascribed to an object. This is particularly troublesome when the use of humans is considered. However, as O'Donovan explains, "Our 'use' of other people must be understood to promote our welfare as well as theirs."<sup>22</sup> Thus using an object, human or otherwise, in Augustine's terms indicates that it must be appropriately valued in light of its relationship to God, and the use of it should enhance that relationship rather than detract from it.

As compared with intrinsic value, which can be ascribed only to God with his divine aseity, inherent value belongs to objects in proportion to the degree to which they are properly related to God. There is still goodness in things with inherent value, but it is not the highest good, and it is derived from the ordering

18. One might argue that the dust mop might properly attest to the quality of a brand and thus have some inherent value. The limited relation to its maker reflects a minimal inherent value.

19. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, trans. R. P. H. Green (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008): 4.4.

20. *Ibid.*, 5.5.

21. Oliver O'Donovan, "Usus and Fructus in Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* I," *Journal of Theological Studies* 33, no. 2 (1982): 368.

22. *Ibid.*, 371.

of the nature of the object to God. This reflects the distinction between Creator and creature. The Creator alone has intrinsic value. The creation has a degree of inherent value as it fulfills its purpose in bringing glory to God. In Augustine's calculus, these lesser goods should be used and not enjoyed.

Objects with inherent value may be used to glorify God, who is the only object with intrinsic value, and the only object that should be enjoyed. As Augustine writes about creation in *Confessions*, "Your works praise you that we may love you, and we love you that your works may praise you."<sup>23</sup> God's works have inherent value and may also have instrumental value. In both cases they may be used or abused according to Augustine's definitions.<sup>24</sup> However, an object may have instrumental value despite being deficient (though not entirely lacking) in inherent value. Augustine supports this when he shows how God used Satan to prove Job's righteousness.<sup>25</sup> Thus the Devil's disordered being, with its diminished goodness, has instrumental value to God greater than his inherent value. There is a difference between these two lesser types of value. Likewise an object improperly used is being abused, as the staircase from the example above would have been abused if it was employed for committing murder by pushing someone down it.<sup>26</sup> It may have instrumental value for that improper use, which would be divorced from the inherent value connected to its ordered usefulness. Its instrumental and inherent value is misaligned in an instance when the staircase is misused. Goodness is inherent to the created order because it was created by the highest good and its inherent value is proportional to its ordering to God, but it is also instrumental as it may be used or abused.

Augustine's system of value was largely derived in response to the dualism of the Manicheans. Therefore, he focuses on the value in the material world; in other words, physical objects can have value. In the contemporary, materialistic age, the ascription of value to physical objects is generally non-controversial. It is another thing, however, to ascribe good to an intangible object such as work. However, ascribing value to intangible objects is currently accepted to the point that courts assign monetary value to customer relationships in family law cases.<sup>27</sup> Closer to daily life, intellectual capital is typically granted value. Thus

23. Augustine, *The Confessions*, trans. Maria Boulding, *Vintage Spiritual Classics* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998): 13.33.

24. Indeed, in his *Responses to Miscellaneous Questions*, Augustine writes: "Everything that has been created, then, has been created for the use of human beings, because reason uses with judgment everything that has been given to human beings." Augustine, *Miscellany of Eighty-Three Questions, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* (Brooklyn: New City Press, 1990): 30.

25. Augustine, "The Nature of the Good," in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, 32.

26. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, 4.4.

27. E.g., Robert F. Reilly, "Family Law Valuation of Customer Intangible Assets," *American Journal of Family Law* 28.3 (Fall 2014): 130–42.

having a doctor examine a broken leg is valued much more than an inspection by a barber. The patient is likely to pay more for the expertise of the doctor in setting the bone than for the barber's efforts, even if the end result is identical. There is, then, some inherent value in the knowledge the doctor possesses that enables him to work redemptively on the patient, diagnose more fully, and perhaps prevent some avoidable complications.

Paul Stevens' proposal that work is both intrinsically good and extrinsically good is a step in the right direction, but it does not provide a separate category of value for ultimate, immutable good.<sup>28</sup> Applied in Augustine's terms, this would mean we could both enjoy and use work. However, according to Augustine, to enjoy something is to love it for its own sake, which would put it as the ultimate concern over God.<sup>29</sup> This would be idolatry, which is not what Stevens intends.

Although he classifies work as a good in and of itself, Stevens recognizes the need to differentiate between good and bad work. Accordingly, he defines "good" work as the expenditure of "purposeful energy that brings glory to God and serves our neighbor."<sup>30</sup> "Bad" work, therefore, "deconstructs creation, abuses our neighbor, and does not bring glory to God."<sup>31</sup> He goes on to describe good work as being a means of spiritual growth, being communal, and unfolding the potential of creation.<sup>32</sup> These are helpful descriptions and accurately represent work that honors God. They are also consistent with the idea that work must be rightly ordered to God to have value, which tends to undercut the idea that work is a good in itself. Instead, as represented by the category of inherent value, work is good as it is rightly ordered to God.

As proposed in this essay, a three category system of values has support from philosophically developed value systems, relates to an Augustinian understanding of ordered goods, and has benefits for developing a balanced view of the goodness of work. It also aligns with the image of work as it is represented through the narrative of Scripture.

### **Inherent Value of Work in Scripture**

Scripture does not give a clear categorization of work or vocation as described in contemporary terms. Indeed, the three categories described above are extrabiblical, much like Augustine's account of value. This, however, does not diminish the value of using such extrabiblical categories to provide a framework for biblical concepts, much as theologians do when describing the moral, civil, and ceremonial categories

28. Stevens, *Work Matters*, 11.

29. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, 4.4.

30. Stevens, *Work Matters*, 17.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*, 18–20.

of the law in the Old Testament.<sup>33</sup> Such categories are helpful and, as long as they do not impose improper order on Scripture, are beneficial for developing and promoting understanding.

Based on Scripture, there is reason to believe that work has inherent value as defined above. First, in the beginning work was entirely good. Indeed, the events of the six days of the creation narrative are witness to the triune God working. The maker God created the universe by the power of his word and recognized its goodness verbally (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). Second, even before the entry of sin into the world, God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden and gave him the task of cultivating and keeping the earth (Gen 2:15).<sup>34</sup> Contrary to John Sailhamer and Umberto Cassuto, work was not introduced to the created order because of sin.<sup>35</sup> Rather, both the particular task of tending the Garden and the general duty to work were perfectly oriented to God and therefore entirely good; the inherent value was perfectly aligned with its instrumental value.

That pristine character of work did not remain for long, however. When Eve was deceived by the Serpent and convinced Adam to eat the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3:1–6). It was at that point God cursed the created order, making work difficult. In one sense, work remained good, but it was able to be distorted. No longer was there a complete overlap between the inherent and instrumental value of

33. David W. Jones, *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2013): 56–63.

34. In recent scholarship, three main options are recognized for the appropriate translation of the words *דבא* and *לל* in Gen 2:15. The traditional and most common view is an agricultural view that Adam was placed in the Garden in order to “cultivate and keep” it. The agricultural interpretation of Gen 2:15 is supported by the vast majority of Bible scholars throughout history along with contemporary scholars such as Calvin Beisner and Richard Bauckham. Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation, Sarum Theological Lectures*. (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010): 21–22, 106–07; E. Calvin Beisner, *Where Garden Meets Wilderness: Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1997): 127. More recently, two alternative translations of Gen 2:15 have become increasingly popular. The most common recent theological interpretation of Gen 2:15 reads *דבא* and *לל* as “serve and protect.” This is a view held by Loren Wilkinson, Richard Young, and Steven Bouma-Prediger. Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care, Engaging Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001): 74; Loren Wilkinson, *Earthkeeping in the Nineties: Stewardship of Creation*, ed. Loren Wilkindon, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991): 287; Richard A. Young, *Healing the Earth: A Theocentric Perspective on Environmental Problems and Their Solutions* (Nashville: B & H, 1994): 163. A second recent interpretation renders *דבא* and *לל* as “worship and obey.” This variant translation appears to have originated with Old Testament scholar Umberto Cassuto and brought into popularity by John Sailhamer, but is the least common of the three options by far. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Perry Foundation for Biblical Research in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press Hebrew University, 1978): 122; John H. Sailhamer, “Genesis,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: With the New International Version of the Holy Bible*, ed. Frank Ely Gaebelein and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976): 44.

35. Neither Sailhamer nor Cassuto gives a well-supported basis for their rejection of work, but rather they assume that the references to work in Gen 2:5 and 2:15 are foreshadowing of the curse of work at the fall in Gen 3:23. Cassuto, *Genesis*, 102, 22–23; Sailhamer, “Genesis,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: With the New International Version of the Holy Bible*, 40–41, 45.

work. Instead, the created order was bent out of alignment. Work became difficult, with thorns and thistles infesting the ground (Gen 3:17). This was intended to point humanity to the need for a redeemer that would restore all things.<sup>36</sup> After this point in salvation history, there is evidence that some forms of work are sinful. For example, prostitution is a form of work declared sinful. Although the wages of prostitution could feed a family as well as the profit from agriculture could, money obtained through sex-work was unacceptable as an offering to God.<sup>37</sup> (Deut 23:17–18). When spiritual death entered the world, it became possible for work to be either evil or good (cf. Ps 28:4–5).<sup>38</sup> As Augustine argues, it became possible for something otherwise good to be diminished in value because it no longer fulfills its purpose.<sup>39</sup> It may still fulfill a utilitarian purpose, but work done wrongly is no longer used but abused.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the depravity in the world, there is clear evidence in Scripture that work itself is not irredeemable. Just as the Godhead did work in creating the world, so Jesus worked during his time on earth. He was a carpenter and the son of a carpenter (Mk

36. Most English translations of Gen 3:17 read, “cursed is the ground because of you.” Both the KJV and NKJV read, “cursed is the ground for your sake.” There is a subtle difference between the two. The Hebrew is indeterminate. I have not found a focused treatment of this subtle difference in any commentary. Seeing human sin as the cause of the curse is clearly found in the text, but the implications of the curse pointing humanity back to the need of a Savior is an implication of the KJV/NKJV reading. I prefer the KJV/NKJV reading because it implies both human cause and divine purpose. Augustine seems to support this reading in his commentary. Augustine, *On Genesis against the Manichees and, on the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Book*, trans. Roland J. Teske, *Fathers of the Church* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1990): 2.20.30. Also, Chrysostom, *Baptismal Instruction 2.4–5* and *Homilies on Genesis*, 17.40–41, cited in Andrew Louth and Marco Conti, *Genesis 1–11* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001): 94–95.

37. Commentators are divided as to whether Deut 23:17 and 23:18 both pertain to ritual prostitution, or whether there are separate commands prohibiting both ritual prostitution and using money from sex-work for vows. Neither arrangement undermines the assertion that at least sex-work done as worship to a false god is sufficiently ill-oriented to negate its inherent value. For more on the debate see Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976): 301–02; Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996): 949; John H. Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009): 1:497.

38. Commentaries consistently note the comparison in Ps 28:4–5 between God’s good work and the works of the wicked. The works of the wicked are disordered, opposed to community, and destructive. Charles A. Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 1 (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1906): 1:247–48; Nancy L. DeClausse-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014): 276.

39. Augustine, “The Nature of the Good,” in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, 4–6.

40. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, 4.4.

6:3).<sup>41</sup> He did miracles, which the Synagogue leaders classified as work. They thus accused him of violating the Law because of the redeeming work he did (Cf. Mark 3:1–6; Luke 6:6–11). However, Scripture tells us that Jesus did not sin (cf. 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15). Since Christ worked without sin during his life on earth, work as a category cannot be sinful; to argue otherwise creates a Christological problem. Rather, as fully God and fully man, Christ did work that was properly oriented to God’s purposes; thus the instrumental and inherent value of the deeds were perfectly aligned. Jesus’ work was entirely good.

In addition to Christ’s example, Paul’s letters encourage Christians to do godly work. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul urges the thief to stop doing dishonest work and “work with his own hands” to be able to meet the needs of others (Eph 4:28).<sup>42</sup> Although both stealing and honest labor can be taxing, one has greater value than the other because it is rightly oriented toward God. Similarly, in 1 Thessalonians 4:11, Paul urges the Christians to do honest work to provide for themselves.<sup>43</sup> For Paul, work is a necessary part of the Christian life as long as it serves the purpose of meeting needs and glorifying God. Indeed, Paul instructs slaves not to work merely to please humans or to gain materially. Instead,

41. There is some debate about the nature of the Marcan declaration of Jesus as a carpenter. Most scholars accept the fact that Jesus was both a carpenter and, as seen in Matt. 13:55, the son of a carpenter. William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975): 222; Mark L. Strauss, *Mark: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014): 241–42. Early in Christian history, Celsus, a detractor of Christianity, argued that Jesus’ vocation of carpenter made him unworthy to be revered. However, in Jewish society the role of carpenter was familiar and honorable within society. James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002): 171; William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974): 201–02. Complicating the issue, Metzger notes there is a textual variant that imports the Matthean formulation into Mark, but the committee indicated A-level confidence in the variant that identifies Jesus as carpenter. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendricksen, 1994): 75–76.

42. Thielman argues this is likely referring to agricultural workers whose incomes fluctuated according to the season and may have had to steal or rely on the dole to get by between seasons. Thus honest, manual labor which ran contrary to social norms was preferable to dishonest gain. Frank Thielman, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010): 315–16. This notion resonates with Gal 6:10. Cf., Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013): 388–89.

43. Behind the text there are a range of potential concerns. One commentator suggests that this verse is Paul’s counter cultural assertion that, contra Cicero, manual labor was good. It also served the purpose of putting the Christians in good standing with the culture since they were not dependent upon their neighbors. Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014): 296–99. Others suggest the eschatological predictions of immediate *Parousia* led to converts quitting their jobs. Paul was thus urging them to support themselves. William Hendriksen and Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995): 104–07. Another commentator argues that Paul’s exhortation was intended to direct the Christians’ efforts toward glorifying God, not outshining their neighbors. Gary Steven Shogren, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012): 170–71. Yet another commentator believes Paul is speaking against the patron system common in Roman culture. Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002): 208–12. It is clear there is no consensus other than that Paul is affirming the value of manual labor, which was generally viewed as socially stigmatizing. He is thus affirming the inherent value of work, even if it is socially unappreciated.

work is to be done explicitly for God's sake (Col 3:22–24).<sup>44</sup> Work, then, has potential to be entirely good and thus to be inherently valuable.

There is further evidence of the potentially undefiled nature of human work. First, Paul depicts the redemption of all creation in Romans 8:18–23. The “setting free from bondage to corruption” (8:21) seems to imply the repealing of the curse that God placed on the earth.<sup>45</sup> The futility of creation, where it resists human attempts at cultivation, will be ended and creation will be freed to glorify God. In Isaiah's description of the New Heavens and New Earth in Isaiah 65:17–25, there is an absence of frustration in work.<sup>46</sup> Workers will receive the fruit of their work, and labor will be purposeful. When the created order is restored, work too will be redeemed, and thus it will become consistently good and inherently valuable because it will be necessarily rightly ordered to God.

### **Practical Implications of Inherent Value**

Inherent value as a category has implications for all of life, because it honors the Creator-creature distinction by providing a means of establishing non-instrumental, non-final value for objects. This effectively creates a middle road for Christians to understand objects as meaningful apart from their utility without giving them status as ultimate or necessary. As defined in this paper, inherent value, as a category, is useful for many areas of life. It provides for rightly valuing the created order and for weighing end-of-life choices. It also has benefits for advancing the conversation on the doctrine of vocation along two fronts by providing a framework for balancing a variety of diverse vocations and giving a value structure that permits evaluation of the moral quality of vocations.

### **Balancing Diverse Vocations**

When work is viewed as an intrinsic good instead of an inherent good, then it bears pursuing over other, lesser goods. This could cause the neglect of other legitimate

44. Paul's discussion of the slave-master relationship toward the end of the household code in Col 3:22–4:1 is revolutionary. Beyond the startling significance of doing work for God's sake instead of for personal benefit, the master's responsibility to be just and fair because of God's lordship over all indicates an ontological egalitarianism with functional differentiation that has implications for all of Christian life. James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996): 252–60; Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008): 308–17. Note also the resonance between Paul's notion of doing work for the sake of something else (Col 3:23) and Augustine's discussion of using an object to gain enjoyment of God. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, 33.37.

45. Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 321; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998): 435.

46. It is not entirely clear from Isaiah 65 whether the prophet is describing the Millennium or the final fulfillment, since he references young men dying at age 100. (v. 20) However, if the chapter is referring to the Millennial Kingdom instead of the final restoration of all things, it only makes the redemption of work more imminent. John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998): 652–62.

vocations, such as parent, church member, and neighbor. If intrinsic value is also ascribed to these other vocations, then some means of comparing the relative values of these self-contained goods must be maintained. The new value system for selecting between various good vocations, each with intrinsic value, would tend to rely upon a utilitarian calculus. Thus, for instance, the intrinsic good of being a nurturing parent might be weighed as more pleasant than the intrinsic good of being an excellent employee because a child is more likely to return affection than a boss is to praise work done well. In this example, therefore, the intrinsic goods of various vocations become effectively merely instrumental.<sup>47</sup>

Other options for choosing between differing vocations exist, if they are all intrinsically valuable. For example, one might cast lots, divide time equally, or do whatever is closest at hand. All of these means would be valid if there were final value ascribed to each of the available vocations. However, such an arbitrary prioritization seems to undermine the moral order evident in creation. Thus, work cannot be described as having intrinsic value.

### **Moral Evaluation of Vocations**

In contrast, if work is purely of instrumental value, then the end is all that matters and not the work itself. There must be something of intrinsic worth that a worker pursues as the end of the chain of instrumental goods. The instrumental means of obtaining that intrinsic good is less morally significant than the good itself. This leads to the possibility that ethically unacceptable vocations may be viewed as good because they accomplish the same goal as another vocation. If work is viewed purely instrumentally, then the vocation of the prostitute is equal in value to that of the computer engineer, provided both achieve the same good of earning money to sustain life.

In an article on the decriminalization of prostitution, one sociologist argues that sex-work should be viewed as any other work. According to her argument, the problem with prostitution is not that it is inappropriate work but that it is stigmatized. The criminal nature of sex-work prevents prostitutes from reporting assaults and robberies.<sup>48</sup> Another study recommends decriminalizing some forms of prostitution because the authors allege prostitution reduces the incidence of sexual violence, thus providing societal benefit.<sup>49</sup> The major thrust of this argument is that if all laws about prostitution were removed from society, it would diminish the violence

47. Adler addresses this difficulty by describing all values in a Cost-Benefit Analysis as merely preferential or prudential. Such a simplification is necessary if all values are esteemed equally and reflects the danger of reflected if all vocations are viewed as having intrinsic value. Matthew D. Adler, "Value and Cost-Benefit Analysis," in *The Oxford Handbook of Value Theory*, ed. Iwao Hirose and Jonas Olson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015): 318.

48. Jacqueline Comte, "Decriminalization of Sex Work: Feminist Discourses in Light of Research," *Sexuality & Culture* 18.1 (2014): 202–04.

49. Scott Cunningham and Manisha Shah, *Decriminalizing Indoor Prostitution: Implications for Sexual Violence and Public Health* (The National Bureau of Economic Research, 2014): 1–54.

issues related to prostitution.<sup>50</sup> This perspective is valid if all work, including the work of prostitution, is judged merely by its outcome. However, since prostitution is prohibited by Scripture (Lev 19:29; 21:9), the work could be said to have some value but not value that accords with God's design for the world. There are different ways of evaluating the instrumental value of prostitution, but the fact remains that being good at being a prostitute falls short of making sex-work truly valuable.

Inherent value as a category for work resolves both sets of difficulties. By viewing work as valuable inasmuch as it is aligned to God, the problems of overvaluing of work and difficulty in prioritizing one vocation against others are resolved. Inherent value sees the goal of all of life to do all things for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31). Value is found in the object for which the work is done, not the work itself. Seeking work that is inherently valuable instead of instrumentally valuable resolves the question of morality about different sorts of work.

## Conclusion

There has been a great deal of helpful dialog about the doctrine of work and vocation in Christian circles in recent decades.<sup>51</sup> This has helped to break down the sacred/secular divide. It has been helpful in enabling Christian men and women to find meaning in their vocations, whether in the home, in the church, or in the marketplace. Much good has been accomplished through this discussion, but there remains a weakness in terminology to help provide a precise way of describing the value of work.

This essay has argued that work should be described as having inherent value, which is a distinct category from intrinsic and instrumental value. This adjective places the value of work in relation to the designer of work, namely God himself. It recognizes the instrumental benefits of working, which are also good, but which can be obtained through unrighteous forms of work. The greatest benefit of understanding work as having inherent value is that it provides a framework

50. Kathleen N. Deering et al., "A Systematic Review of the Correlates of Violence against Sex Workers," *American Journal of Public Health* 104, no. 5 (2014): 52–54.

51. This is by no means a new topic, as it is explicitly evidenced in Dorothy L. Sayers' work in the early Twentieth Century. Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker* (London, U.K.: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1952). However, work and vocation are topics that have sprung up with renewed vigor in recently years as this bibliography attests: William C. Placher, ed. *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Steven Garber, *Visions of Vocation: Common Grace for the Common Good* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2014); Heintzman, *Leisure and Spirituality*; Timothy J. Keller and Katherine Leary Alsdorf, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* (New York: Dutton, 2012); Tom Nelson, *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011); Amy L. Sherman, *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2011); Stevens, *Work Matters*; Gene Edward Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2002); Hugh Welchel, *How Then Should We Work? Rediscovering the Biblical Doctrine of Work* (Bloomington, IN: Westbow, 2012); Ben Witherington, *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011).

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for evaluating the morality of vocations. Seeing work as merely instrumentally valuable fails to provide that framework.

Discussions of vocation that ascribe intrinsic value to work can be helpful, but as seen in Stevens' writing, it creates difficulties of description with regard to good and bad work. His explanation is still beneficial, as are others that use similar terminology, but there is a need for more precise language that both ennobles work and leaves room for ethical evaluation.

Inherent value, when applied to work, fits with the biblical characterization of work. It is both corruptible and redeemable. It does not seem to have value in and of itself, and it is not good merely for its ends. Work that is rightly ordered toward God within the created order is valuable because it honors him. This is the category of inherent value. It permits distinguishing the vocations of priests from prostitutes. It provides the ethical schema that allows assigning moral value to vocations, pointing people toward the qualified goodness of work within the moral order of creation.

## ***Matthew's Hermeneutical Methodology in Matthew 2:15***

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**Abstract:** In Matthew 2:15, Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1 and states that the events recounted are a direct fulfillment of Hosea's prophecy. However, the Hosea passage is a clear reference to the exodus, not to an event which occurred over 1400 years later. Was Matthew playing fast and loose with Hosea's prophecy? Was his statement of fulfillment an abuse of Hosea's context and meaning? Matthew 2:15 is one of the most problematic passages in the Bible with respect to the New Testament use of the Old Testament.

**Key Words:** prophecy, fulfillment, typology, *midrash*, *pesher*, *sensus plenior*, analogical.

### **Introduction**

The use of the Old Testament by New Testament writers can certainly be problematic and has for centuries been the subject of much debate. A particularly vexing problem and perhaps the best-known example is the use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15. In 2:15 Matthew quotes the prophet Hosea to demonstrate that the flight of Joseph and Mary to Egypt and their subsequent return after Herod's infanticide was a direct fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. However, it is apparent after even a cursory examination of the text that it is not a prophecy at all, but rather a reference to a past historical event in Israel's history. Since the context of Hosea 11:1 was not looking forward to the coming Messiah, which aspect of the passage required fulfillment? This problem has vexed numerous interpreters of Matthew's Gospel. There is simply no consensus of scholarly opinion as to Matthew's hermeneutical technique. Even a brief examination of the views of various interpreters reveals a quagmire of different attempts to solve this thorny problem. This paper will attempt to examine the issue objectively. It will state the nature of the problem, provide a brief survey of interpretations offered by different writers, examine both texts in their historical and literary contexts, and seek to navigate the confusion. Finally, a solution to the problem will be proposed.

## The Problem Stated

Walter Kaiser provides some insight into the scope and complexity of this question. He writes:

There are, however, a number of problems surrounding Matthew's appeal to this passage: (1) Why does he quote Hosea 11:1 when the Holy Family goes *into* Egypt in verse 15? Should he not have waited until verse 20 if he wished to stress their *coming out* of Egypt?; (2) Is Hosea 11:1 a prophecy or in any sense a prediction of this event that overtook Joseph, Mary, and Jesus? Is not Hosea merely referring to a past historical act of God in the Exodus? Perhaps Matthew's hermeneutical method here betrays a use of *pesher*, *sensus plenior*, typology, or some other option than direct prophecy; and (3) What is the significance of Matthew's fulfillment formula, and what is his purpose in quoting this text?<sup>1</sup>

Kaiser concludes by asking, "Did Matthew properly use Hosea 11:1 or did he abuse both Hosea's context and meaning?"<sup>2</sup> It appears on the surface that Matthew's citation of Hosea 11:1 ignores the verse's context, engages in fanciful and arbitrary exegesis, and creates a "new hermeneutic" to justify his Christian presuppositions. If this is indeed true, a veritable "Pandora's Box" of hermeneutical possibilities lies in ambush for the unwary interpreter. E. Earle Ellis writes, "To many Christian readers, to say nothing of Jewish readers, the New Testament's interpretation of the Old appears to be exceedingly arbitrary."<sup>3</sup>

Matthew 2:15 is perhaps the most notorious example of a New Testament text that cites an Old Testament one "in a way that does not seem consonant with the meaning of the verse in the original context."<sup>4</sup> The implications of such a hermeneutical methodology are not inconsequential. In fact, they are staggering. In the first place, such a hermeneutic calls into question the entire historical-grammatical method of interpretation as the contextual integrity of the text is apparently compromised. Second, the authority and inspiration of Scripture would appear to be ignored. Matthew wrote that when Jesus' parents left for Egypt to escape the mass infanticide by Herod, this was a fulfillment of Hos. 11:1. How is it possible that Matthew could draw a connection between two events that appear to have nothing in common? This is the crux of the problem.

1. Walter Kaiser, *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001): 47.

2. Ibid.

3. E. Earl Ellis, "How the New Testament Uses the Old," in *New Testament Interpretation*, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1977): 209.

4. Craig L. Blomberg, *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010): 173.

## **A Survey of Interpretations of Matt. 2:15**

Numerous creative solutions have been proposed to explain Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1. Blomberg writes, "It will come as no surprise that scholarly opinion spans an entire spectrum when it comes to attempts to make sense of this phenomenon."<sup>5</sup> Following are some of the more common attempts to grapple with this issue.

### **Predictive Prophecy**

This view, advocated by R. C. H. Lenski and J. Barton Payne, posits that Matthew 2:15 is a direct fulfillment of Hosea 11:1. According to this position, Matthew's prophetic formula, "ἵνα πληρωθῆ" (*ina playraothay*, "that it might be fulfilled) (add transliteration and personal translation) sees Hosea's words, "and out of Egypt I called my son," as both futuristic and messianic. Thus, the first phrase in 11:1, "When Israel was a child, I loved him," is explained as a reference to Christ and not to Israel at all.<sup>6</sup> Israel's sojourn in Egypt is taken as "a divinely intended prophecy of 'my son,' the messiah, who likewise must sojourn in Egypt."<sup>7</sup>

### ***Sensus Plenior***

The doctrine of *sensus plenior* teaches that "along with the literal sense intended by the human author, the Holy Spirit may encode a hidden meaning not known or devised at all by the human author."<sup>8</sup> *Sensus plenior* originated as a Roman Catholic doctrine, but it has been adopted by some evangelicals who have seen it as a way to understand how the Old Testament is used by New Testament writers. The doctrine has received its fullest treatment by Roman Catholic New Testament scholar Raymond Brown, who writes that it "is that additional, deeper meaning intended by God but not clearly intended by the human author, which is seen to exist in the words of a Biblical text (or group of texts, or even a whole book) when they are studied in light of further revelation or development in the understanding of revelation."<sup>9</sup>

According to the *sensus plenior* view, the issue is not so much whether the human author of Scripture understood or comprehended what he was writing. What is important is what God actually intended. Thus, with respect to Hosea 11:1, God intended a deeper or messianic meaning which was more than Hosea, the human author, intended or even understood. This deeper meaning was discovered by Matthew,

5. Ibid., 192.

6. J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962).

7. R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943): 78.

8. Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, 125.

9. Raymond E. Brown, *The Sensus Plenior of Sacred Scripture* (Baltimore: St. Mary's University, 1955): 92.

writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and communicated in Matthew 2:15. William LaSor, an evangelical scholar who embraces the *sensus plenior* view, is quite clear in his analysis of Hosea 11:1. He writes:

Something like a *fuller meaning*, a *sensus plenior*, is required by many portions of Scripture, possibly by all of Scripture . . . The quest for a *sensus plenior* is part of the process of discovering the fullness of his purpose in his revelation. It is the recognition that at any moment in God's revelatory activity, he has the end in view and he has his people of future generations in mind. When he delivered the Israelites from Egypt, he was delivering all of his people from bondage – in a literal sense, for if Israel had not been delivered from Egypt there would have been no Israel, there would have been no Davidic king, no prophets, no Scriptures, no Messiah, and no redemptive fulfillment. It was therefore true, in this fuller sense, that God did call his Son out of Egypt.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, according to this view, the deeper meaning of Hosea's prophecy was recognized by Matthew as he found fulfillment in Jesus Christ's sojourn in Egypt.

### **Interpretive Techniques from Judaism**

Some interpreters have explained Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1 by suggesting that Matthew employed the same hermeneutical techniques that were common in first century Judaism. Harvard professor Krister Stendahl first posited this view in 1954 in his groundbreaking *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament*. In it he compared the hermeneutical technique used in Matthew's gospel with that of the Habakkuk commentary from Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls). He concluded that Matthew's formula quotations arose out of a rabbinical school of thought which he labeled *midrash-pesher*. Stendahl writes:

Thus the Matthaean school must be understood as a school for teachers and church leaders, and for this reason the literary work of that school assumes the form of a manual for teaching and administration within the church. As we shall see, the Matthaean type of midrashic interpretation . . . closely approaches what has been called the *midrash pesher* of the Qumran Sect, in which the O.T. texts were not primarily the source of rules, but the prophecy which was shown to be fulfilled.<sup>11</sup>

Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard explain the logic of this hermeneutical approach and how it bypasses the historical-grammatical method:

10. William S. LaSor, "The *Sensus Plenior* and Biblical Interpretation," in *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and William S. LaSor (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978): 274-75.

11. Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use in the Old Testament* (Lund: G. W. K. Gleerup, 1954; Reprint ed., Ramsey, NJ: Sigler Press, 1990): 35 (emphasis original).

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*A biblical author may have intended a text to have only a single meaning, but a later biblical author may have discovered an additional meaning he saw in that text.* In other words, if Matthew was performing a strict historical-grammatical exegesis of the Hosea quote, he could never assert that it spoke of the Messiah. But using a “creative” exegetical method he posited an additional sense.<sup>12</sup>

According to this view, that creative interpretive technique came out of Matthew’s background in Judaism using the techniques derived from some of the Qumran interpreters, such as *midrash* and *peshet*.

Two other interpreters from the latter part of the twentieth century who have adopted Stendahl’s approach are Robert Gundry and Richard Longenecker. Gundry expands upon Stendahl’s work by asserting that “there exists in the synoptic tradition, and pre-eminently in Mt, a large body of allusive quotations in which the language is only colored by the OT.”<sup>13</sup> He concluded that this free style of quoting the Old Testament in the formula quotations is the norm rather than the exception and that this is clear evidence that the Targumic style was a common feature of the early church’s exegesis. Gundry continues, “Again, it is felt that allusions are not based on any attempt to cite the OT accurately; i.e., the very allusiveness makes for a carelessness in text-form, this being so especially in the high-flown language of apocalyptic.”<sup>14</sup> He argues that Matthew could have hardly been ignorant of the context of Hosea 11:1 when he cited the fulfillment in Matthew 2:15. He explains his rationale for his position:

We are therefore justified in looking for his treatment of the OT text here as well as informal citations. The far greater number of OT allusions in Mt, many of them introduced into the common synoptic tradition, confirms this judgment, as do also the frequently met circumstances in which repetition of the OT phraseology occurs within the OT itself or in the NT outside the gospels, showing a certain fixity of expression. In such cases we are usually safe in seeing conscious allusion to the OT.<sup>15</sup>

Longenecker, on-the-other-hand, defines *midrash* as follows:

Midrashic interpretation, in effect, ostensibly takes its point of departure from the biblical text itself (though psychologically it may have been motivated by other factors) and seeks to explicate the hidden meanings contained therein by means of agreed upon hermeneutical rules in order to contemporize the revelation of God for the people of God. It may be briefly characterized by

12. Op. cit., 127.

13. Robert Horton Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975): 2.

14. Ibid., 3.

15. Ibid., 4.

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the maxim: “That has relevance to This”; i.e., What is written in Scripture has relevance to our present situation.<sup>16</sup>

However, Longenecker contends that Matthew utilizes more of a *peshet* approach in 2:15 in that he interprets the Old Testament passages as being directly concerned with the interpreter and his community. Although he admits that the purpose of rabbinic *midrash* “was often noble, and its practice at times moderate,” he laments “that its *middoth* both allowed and later encouraged imaginative as well as truly creative treatments of the biblical text,” which unfortunately “often went beyond the bounds of what today would be identified as proper.”<sup>17</sup> The term *peshet* simply means “to explain.” However, this approach is an application of the Old Testament without regard for the context of the passage. In favoring this *peshet* approach, Longenecker contends that Matthew in 2:15:

seems to be thinking along the lines of corporate solidarity and rereading his Old Testament from an eschatologically realized and messianic perspective. He has no desire to spell out all the features of the nation’s history, for many would be entirely inappropriate for his purpose. But he is making the point that that which was vital in Israel’s corporate and redemptive experience finds its ultimate and intended focus in the person of Jesus the Messiah.<sup>18</sup>

## Typological

This view maintains that πληρωω, (*playrao*, “to fulfill”) (provide transliteration and translation) does not necessarily indicate the fulfillment of prophecy, but rather the “completion or consummation” of the event.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the events in the life of Israel as recorded in Hosea 11:1-2 “typified the life of Messiah in Matthew 2:13-15.”<sup>20</sup> Leonard Goppelt views typology as “historical facts-persons, actions, events, and institutions” that in some way prefigure theological truth.<sup>21</sup> He further defines this position, “These things are to be interpreted typologically only if they are considered to be divinely ordained representations or types of future realities that will be even greater and more complete.”<sup>22</sup>

16. Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975): 37.

17. *Ibid.*, 38.

18. *Ibid.*, 145.

19. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001): 52.

20. Tracy L. Howard, “The Use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15: An Alternative Solution,” in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143 (1986): 320.

21. Leonard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Reprint ed., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982): 17.

22. *Ibid.*, 18.

The typological view has received considerable and varied scholarly support. For example, a recent Roman Catholic commentary by Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri describes Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1. They write, "Matthew views it typologically as pointing forward to this occasion when God rescues his beloved Jesus from the tyrant Herod and later brings him out of Egypt."<sup>23</sup> An older evangelical commentator, Alfred Plummer concludes that ". . . the history of the nation is often regarded as a typical anticipation of the life of the Messiah."<sup>24</sup> In like fashion, William Hendriksen writes, "When Matthew quotes Hos. 11:1 and applies it to Christ, it is evident that he regards Israel as a type of the Messiah."<sup>25</sup> Robert Mounce also sees a typological interpretation here writing that the typology ". . . allows Matthew to find in Hosea's words a prediction that the Christ child will be called out of Egypt."<sup>26</sup> Other scholarly support for the typological position include H. N. Ridderbos, John Broadus, David Turner (class lecture), R. V. G. Tasker, H. A. W. Meyer, Francis W. Beare, William Klein, Craig Blomberg, and Robert Hubbard. Of the dozens of works consulted for this paper, the typological position by far garnered the most support.

### **Analogical Correspondence**

In a 1986 *Bibliotheca Sacra* article, Tracy Howard formulated a view which he labels "Analogical Correspondence." This view argues that the New Testament writers "looked back and drew correspondences or analogies with events described in the Old Testament."<sup>27</sup> In his description of this view, Howard cites K. J. Woolcombe's definition of typology, which he argues "reflects the concept of historical correspondence rather than that of prefiguration."<sup>28</sup> This view clearly is a refinement of the typological view, but Howard sees his view as superior in that the "typological connection is retrospective rather than prospective. Furthermore this approach considerably reduces the element of subjectivity that the traditional prefiguration view of typology introduces."<sup>29</sup>

According to Howard's view, an analogical correspondence or connection is envisioned with both Israel's past and future. In the past there is a correspondence between Israel's history and Messiah's history. With respect to the past element of

23. Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew in Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture* in *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture* ed. Peter S. Williamson and Martin Healy (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010): 56.

24. Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew* (Reprint ed., Minneapolis: James Family Christian Publisher, 1978): 17.

25. William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew in New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973): 178.

26. Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew*, in *New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991): 17.

27. Op. cit., 320.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., 320-321.

this view, Howard writes: “This Exodus analogy contains a reference both to the nation’s past and to its future. Matthew’s primary connection with the nation’s past was geographical. He showed that even as the nation was taken into Egypt and brought out, so also the Messiah was taken into Egypt and brought out.”<sup>30</sup> With respect to the future element of this view, Howard argues the possibility that Matthew was looking beyond Hos. 11:1 to the context of the entire chapter and that verses 10 and 11 were also included in his Exodus analogy. Thus, according to Howard, “Hosea 11:1 is quoted by Matthew as a touchstone for other events in the chapter.”<sup>31</sup> So when Matthew quotes Hos. 11:1, his focus is not on just that isolated verse, but rather the entire context of the passage. Howard understands Hosea 11:10-11 as describing “an eschatological exodus from Egypt.”<sup>32</sup> He continues:

The exodus would be a starting over for the nation. This would occur at the inauguration of the “age to come.” Hence if Matthew had in mind all of Hosea 11 and was attempting to present parallels between the life of the nation and the life of Jesus, it is plausible that Matthew saw Messiah as the One who will lead this new exodus for Israel and hence inaugurate the new age. In light of this, one might suggest not only a parallel between Herod and Pharaoh, but also a parallel between Jesus and Moses.<sup>33</sup>

A second area of analogical correspondence that Howard sees is in the “son” pattern that Matthew is emphasizing when he quotes Hosea 11:1. He argues that it is evident that Matthew intended to emphasize the concept of sonship by rendering the Masoretic text literally and using *τον υιον μου* (*ton huion mou*, “My Son”) instead of the LXX reading *τα τεκνα αυτου* (*ta tekna autou*, “His children”). Howard refers to where God called the nation Israel His son (Exod 4:22-23). However, instead of worshiping God after their release by Pharaoh out of Egypt, Israel sinned by committing idolatry. Howard concludes:

Matthew then viewed Jesus as the *obedient* son Israel, who after the first Exodus miserably failed to keep the covenant. All that Israel should have done, Jesus did by exhibiting obedience instead of disobedience. Consequently after Jesus’ exodus from Egypt and His baptism by John, God could say, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17) . . . As Matthew drew these correspondences he saw Jesus as the One who *actualizes* and *completes* all that God intended for the nation.<sup>34</sup>

30. Ibid., 321.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., 321-322.

34. Ibid., 322.

## **The Old and New Testament Contexts**

Before analyzing the merits and fallacies of the various ways of interpreting Matt. 2:15, it is necessary first to investigate the context of both Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15.

### **The Context of Hosea 11:1**

Hosea prophesied to the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam II through and after the fall of Samaria (722 B.C.) and contemporaneous with the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah (Hos. 1:1). His ministry was roughly forty years in duration. Interestingly, Hosea's writings were the only ones preserved by a prophet in the Northern Kingdom. Under Jeroboam II the nation experienced economic prosperity and military prominence, but it was also a period of moral and spiritual decline as the Israelites attributed their blessings to Baal instead of Yahweh. Going back to the days of Joshua, the spiritual life of the Israelites had been corrupted by the influence of the corrupt Canaanite religions surrounding them. Thus, the prophecy of Hosea is replete with the denunciation of the worship of Baal and warnings of the consequences of failure to keep the covenant. Yet, despite his scathing prophecies to a wicked nation, Hosea also spoke of the restoration and blessings that follow repentance. Unger writes:

With the brokenness and passion of Jeremiah, Hosea had a sensitivity of heart that made him the apostle of love in the OT. Although the theme of judgment for apostasy runs through the book, it is interwoven by the golden strand of mercy and love. And Hosea's exposure of sin and impending judgment is not the fiery denunciations of Amos, but a mournful, solemn elegy that breathes the deep love of the Lord for His sinning people.<sup>35</sup>

Hosea's prophecy is comprised of several cycles which describe Israel's sin, her impending judgment as a result, and the ultimate restoration of the nation following her repentance and return to observance of the covenant. The primary symbolism in the prophecy of Hosea is found in the imagery of Hosea's marriage to a harlot named Gomer. Her unfaithfulness to Hosea provides the central image of the book and symbolizes Israel's faithlessness towards Yahweh. Even the children produced from this hapless union were given names that symbolized God's displeasure with Israel. After Gomer's unfaithfulness, she was to be brought home to Hosea to await her restoration to full favor. R. K. Harrison describes her return, "This was a clear picture of wayward Israel in its relationship with God and showed the unending faithfulness of the Almighty."<sup>36</sup>

35. Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger's Bible Handbook*, rev. by Gary N. Larson (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984): 305.

36. R. K. Harrison, "Hosea," in *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* eds. J. D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987): 452.

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Chapter 11 is divided into two principal parts, verses 1-4 and 5-11, although as Francis Andersen and David Noel Freedman point out “there are links between the parts, and interlocking elements.”<sup>37</sup> Fundamentally, it consists of a covenant lawsuit against Israel in which “the human protagonists in both units are Israel (vv 1 and 8) and Ephraim (vv 3, 8-9), while Yahweh, the divine antagonist and respondent, speaks and acts in both first and third persons.”<sup>38</sup> Yet, despite this lawsuit imagery, the love of God and His ultimate plan to restore Israel shines through in chapter 11. Some commentators see a threefold division in chapter 11 with verses 1-4 describing God’s love for Israel in spite of her sin, verses 5-7 describing the impending judgment as a result of her sin, and verses 8-11 describing the ultimate restoration of Israel. Regardless of how the chapter is divided, what is clear is how God’s love permeates all relationships, even adulterous ones. James Ward writes:

The love of God is the foundation and fulfillment of Israel’s life. Nowhere in the Bible is this conviction expressed more clearly and memorably than in the eleventh chapter of Hosea. In the seven preceding chapters we have been subjected to a relentless assault upon the whole range of human iniquities—Israel’s, and by extension our own. Now, however, the prophet returns to the themes which dominated the first three chapters of the book, namely the love of God and the covenantal history which is an expression of that love.<sup>39</sup>

Hosea begins chapter eleven by depicting God’s love for Israel as that of a father for his son. He writes, “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” (Hos 11:1)<sup>40</sup> In describing that tender love, Hosea goes all the way back to the beginning of Israel’s history as a nation to that defining event, the exodus out of Egypt. Frederick Tatford points out the significance of this reference: “The deliverance from Egypt was repeatedly used by the prophets as the outstanding illustration of the exercise of God’s power on behalf of His people.”<sup>41</sup> The view that Hosea is referring to the “son” of verse one as a corporate entity is strengthened by the fact that the LXX renders it “his children” instead of “my son.” That love which God freely gave to Israel is contrasted sharply in the next verse with her rejection of Yahweh: “But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images.” (Hos 11:2)

Chapter 11 continues the cyclical pattern of the entire book. First there is the expression of God’s love followed by Israel’s rebellion. Then comes temporal judgment

37. Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, “Hosea,” in *The Anchor Bible*, ed. by William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1980): 575.

38. *Ibid.*

39. James M. Ward, *Amos, Hosea*, Knox Preaching Guides, ed. John H. Hayes (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981): 86-87.

40. Unless otherwise stated, the *New International Version* will be quoted throughout this study.

41. Frederick A. Tatford, *The Minor Prophets* (Reprint ed., Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, Inc., 1982): 132.

which leads to Israel's ultimate restoration as seen in verses 8-11. Understanding this pattern and the context of chapter 11 is important in that it is clear that Hosea 11 is describing the history and future of Israel as a nation, not some individual messiah. It is not, on the face of it, messianic in any way.

### **The Context of Matthew 2:15**

Unlike the Gospels of Luke (1:1-4) and John (20:31), which expressly state a purpose for writing, Matthew's purpose is never directly stated. However, most conservative scholars agree that Matthew's is the most "Jewish" of the four gospels in that it is firmly rooted in the Old Testament. Matthew's purpose for writing apparently was to demonstrate to his predominantly Jewish audience that Jesus indeed was the Messiah-King as prophesied in the Old Testament. He begins by inserting a genealogy not found in the other three gospels, which as Robert Gundry argues, "These materials portray Jesus as fulfilling OT messianic expectations from the very beginning of his life."<sup>42</sup> It sets forth Jesus' royal lineage from David thus arguing for his messiahship. Matthew also selects events from the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, such as the virgin birth and other miraculous signs, which bolster this contention that Jesus was the long anticipated Messiah-King.

Matthew's second chapter focuses on the infancy narratives as he builds his case for Jesus' messianic identity. He is the only evangelist who describes the visit of the Magi who came to worship the newborn King. He also describes King Herod's maniacal plot to kill the Christ child in a futile attempt to preserve his kingly position. This leads to the question: Why did Matthew include these two widely divergent Gentile reactions to Christ's birth? It is true, as H. N. Ridderbos suggests, that this "formed further proof for Jesus and Mary of the greatness of their child."<sup>43</sup> However, it is likely that Matthew includes these polar opposite reactions in order to demonstrate that while there was overwhelming Jewish rejection of the Messiah-King throughout his ministry, Gentiles accepted him even if they did not readily embrace him as followers.

Matthew informs his readers that the Magi did not return to Herod having been warned in a dream, presumably by God, not to do so. Instead, they took another route and returned to their homeland. In like manner, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph ordering him to take his family immediately to Egypt to escape the assassination plans of King Herod. As R. V. G. Tasker writes so eloquently, "The land which had once been a land of oppression is now a haven to which the holy

42. Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982): 14.

43. H. N. Ridderbos, *Matthew in Bible Student's Commentary*, trans. Ray Togtman (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987): 38.

family can escape from danger.”<sup>44</sup> It has been suggested “that Egypt was a natural refuge for the Jews.”<sup>45</sup> Every city of size had a colony of Jews and it was likely that Joseph and Mary had either friends or relatives to whom they could go for refuge. In addition to that, Plummer argues that it was the obvious place to flee because of its close proximity to Palestine.<sup>46</sup> Throughout the Old Testament period and into the Inter-Testamental period, Egypt was a popular place for Jews on the run (Joseph, Gen 42-50; Jeroboam, 1 Ki 11:40; Uriah, Jer 26:21-23; Johanan, Jer 43:7). Many Jews also sought refuge in Egypt during the Maccabean struggle.

No details are given by Matthew regarding their stay in Egypt. The reader is informed that Joseph took his family back to Israel immediately following the death of Herod. John Walvoord writes of the importance of that statement in referring to the false Jewish tradition recorded by Origen. He writes, “Matthew, however, anticipating the charge that Christ picked up magical arts by a long stay in Egypt, specifies that they were there only until the death of Herod, which occurred within three years of his birth.”<sup>47</sup>

Then Matthew writes, “And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’” (2:15) In alluding to Hosea 11:1 he uses *ἵνα πληρωθῆ* (*hina playrao*, “that it might be fulfilled”), which is the same grammatical construction used in Matt. 2:15 to describe the virgin birth as prophesied in Isaiah 7:14. Turner writes about this introductory formula as denoting “the accomplishment of God’s purpose in his word through the prophetic channel.”<sup>48</sup> Interestingly enough, Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1 using the MT (Masoretic Text) rather than the LXX.<sup>49</sup> France sees this as significant in that it better accommodates Matthew’s theological purpose:

The quotation is in a form which fairly translates the Hebrew text but differs from the LXX in using the simple *kaleo*, “call,” for *metakaleo*, “call to oneself, summon,” and more importantly in that Matthew has not followed LXX in interpreting “my son” as “his [Israel’s] children.” This LXX rendering identifies the intended reference of the Hebrew text, but abandons its wording, and it is that wording which gives Matthew his specific point of entry to this instance of scriptural “fulfillment.”<sup>50</sup>

Thus, Matthew clearly indicates that Christ’s sojourn in Egypt was a fulfillment of Hosea 11:1 however that may be.

44. R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew in The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, ed. R. V. G. Tasker (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961): 42.

45. Mounce, 17.

46. Op. cit., 16.

47. John F. Walvoord, *Matthew: Thy Kingdom Come* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974): 23.

48. Op. cit., 90.

49. Ibid.

50. Op. cit., 80.

### **Analysis and Evaluation**

As has already been stated, an examination of Hosea 11:1 reveals that the verse is not a prophecy at all and does not require fulfillment. On the other hand, Matthew clearly states that it is a fulfillment of that text. What is clear is that Matthew's comments are not the result of a historical-grammatical understanding of Scripture, nor do they derive from an exegesis of the Old Testament text itself. How, then, was Matthew able to connect Christ's sojourn in Egypt (Matt 2:13-15) with the calling of Israel out of Egypt as described in the book of Exodus? As Howard points out, "Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1 would appear to be an example of conclusions at which the modern exegete would have difficulty arriving."<sup>51</sup>

It is evident from even a brief survey of the literature on the subject that scholarly opinion runs the gamut and that some attempts to wrestle with the problem can be quite creative. This section will attempt to analyze some of the vast array of solutions that have been proposed by evangelicals and described earlier in this paper, and to arrive at a possible solution that at least minimizes the flaws inherent in each approach. Further, a solution to the problem will be proposed.

Earlier in this paper, five views that have been proposed by evangelical scholars were described. This section will analyze and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each view. The predictive prophecy view, which argues that Matthew 2:15 is a direct fulfillment of Hos. 11:1, asserts that Hosea 11:1 actually predicts Christ's sojourn in Egypt as described in Matt. 2:13-15. This interpretation explains Matthew's fulfillment formula *ἵνα πληρωθῶ* (*hina playrao*, "that it might be fulfilled") as indicating a fulfillment of predictive prophecy. Further, קראתי (*kayraytay*) in Hos. 11:1 is translated as a future perfect ("I will have called [My Son]").<sup>52</sup> Andy Woods writes, "In other words, a one to one correspondence exists in between Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15. Therefore, Hosea 11:1 is solely a reference to Jesus and not to Israel at all."<sup>53</sup> This view appears to be perfectly plausible at first glance. However, upon further examination, numerous difficulties arise. In the first place, it is obvious from the context that Hosea 11:1 is not a prophecy at all, but a "statement of historical fact."<sup>54</sup> Hosea was looking back at the exodus experience of Israel from Egypt. Turner writes, "It is that in its original context, Hosea 11:1 is not a prediction of Jesus, but a reminiscence of the exodus."<sup>55</sup>

Second, *πληρωθῶ* (*playrao*, "to fulfill") does not always have to connote the direct fulfillment of prophecy. In fact, one standard Greek-English lexicon

51. Op. cit., 322.

52. Howard, 315.

53. Andy Woods, "The Use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15" (<http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/documents/articles/11/11.pdf>, July 13, 2011), 8.

54. Plummer, 17.

55. Op. cit., 90.

of Biblical Greek lists five different nuances that πληρωω (*playrao*, “to fulfill”) can have. The primary meaning of the word is “to make full, fill.” Other possible meanings that are more likely than “fulfillment of divine predictions or promises” are “of time, fill (up), complete a period of time, reach its end” and “bring someth. to completion, finish someth. already begun.” The definition, “Fulfill by deeds, a prophecy, an obligation, a promise, a desire, a hope, a duty, a fate, a destiny, etc.” is the fourth of five possibilities listed.<sup>56</sup>

Woods maintains that of the five times ινα πληρωω (*playrao*, “to fulfill”) is used as a fulfillment formula in Matthew’s infancy narratives (1:22; 2:5, 15, 18, 23), in three of those instances “a direct fulfillment of prophecy is not alluded to.”<sup>57</sup> Therefore, the inclusion of ινα πληρωω (*playrao*, “to fulfill”) does not automatically force the interpreter to expect a direct fulfillment of prophecy. As always in biblical interpretation, the context is the key. Howard argues that the word carries here the nuance of “to complete” or “to establish” apart from any idea of predictive fulfillment. He writes, “In other words this concept views an event in process which God ultimately brings to completion . . . Thus Matthew viewed Hosea 11:1 as being confirmed or fulfilled by another event that was much like it and that came to pass at a later time.”<sup>58</sup> Thus there is no reason to assume automatically that πληρωω (*playrao*, “to fulfill”) must always mean “to fulfill” when there are several other more likely possibilities available.

A third weakness of the predictive prophecy view is the assumption that יתאר must be translated as a future perfect. Although that conclusion is possible linguistically, it is dubious contextually. The verb in the first phrase of Hosea 11:1 is וַאֲהַבְתָּהּ (*vahevaha*) undoubtedly a preterit, is always translated as a past event (“I loved him.”). Likewise, continuing the thread, the verbs in verse 2 also are in the past tense referring to Israel’s rejection of God and their determination to follow the worship of Baal. It would make little sense contextually to break that thread by translating “I called my son” as a future perfect (“I will have called [My Son].”).

The *sensus plenior* approach is another view that has an initial appeal which bogs down under closer examination. LaSor cites Hosea 11:1 as well as Isaiah 7:14 as two particularly difficult passages in which cases neither author “had some distant future event in mind.”<sup>59</sup> The *sensus plenior*, argues LaSor, offers the best solution to interpreting those texts.

56. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago press, 1979): 670-71.

57. Op. cit., 9.

58. Op. cit., 315-16.

59. Op. cit., 271.

However, this approach is full of difficulties. Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard suggest several weaknesses of this view. First, it cannot be used along with the normal method of interpreting biblical texts, the grammatical-historical method. They write:

Almost by definition, a fuller sense cannot be detected or understood by the traditional historical, grammatical, and critical methods of exegesis. That is, such methods can only distinguish the meaning of the text, not some secret sense embedded in the text that even its author did not intend. If this is true, on what basis might the existence of such a sense even be defended.<sup>60</sup>

This leads to several unsettling questions: Do all Scripture passages have a *sensus plenior*? If not, what is the criteria for determining which passages do?

The second weakness that Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard set forth is that the approach lacks objectivity and offers little benefit to the modern interpreter. They write, “We have no objective criteria to posit the existence of a *sensus*, or to determine where it might exist, or how one might proceed to unravel its significance.”<sup>61</sup> Any approach lacking objective hermeneutical criteria opens the interpreter to wild and fanciful interpretations such as were common during the Patristic Period. Robert L. Thomas criticizes this method: “The practice of doing so has characterized Roman Catholicism for centuries and amounts to an allegorical rather than a literal method of interpretation.”<sup>62</sup>

A third weakness of this view is offered by Howard who sees it as an obstacle to inspiration. He argues that it “makes the inspired writer a secondary element in the process, while God is viewed as supplying directly to the interpreter many additional meanings not intended in the original context.”<sup>63</sup> He further states that this approach closely parallels the process of mechanical dictation.<sup>64</sup> Bruce Vawter’s analysis on this point is compelling:

If this fuller or deeper meaning was reserved by God to Himself and did not enter into the writer’s purview at all, do we not postulate a Biblical word effected outside the control of the human author’s will and judgment . . . and therefore not produced through a truly *human* instrumentality? If, as in the scholastic definitions, Scripture is the *conscriptio* of God and man, does not the acceptance of a *sensus plenior* deprive this alleged scriptural sense of one of its essential elements, to the extent that logically it cannot be called scriptural at all.<sup>65</sup>

60. Op. cit., 125.

61. Ibid., 138.

62. Robert L. Thomas, *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The new Versus the Old* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2002): 361.

63. Op. cit., 316.

64. Ibid.

65. Bruce Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972): 115.

Robert Yost: *Matthew's Hermeneutical Methodology*

Howard enumerates a three-fold criteria for a genuine example of the *sensus plenior* in order to establish “control and ensure objectivity in the interpretation.”<sup>66</sup> He writes:

First, the *sensus plenio* would have to be given by further revelation in the New Testament. Second, the *sensus plenior* would have to be a sense of which the human author was at least vaguely aware, that is, a messianic tendency. Third, the “fuller sense” would have to be grounded in a historical-grammatical interpretation of the Old Testament text.<sup>67</sup>

These criteria would rule out arbitrary or capricious interpretation or those totally unrelated to the meaning of the Old Testament text. It would also appear to rule out the connection between Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15 as an example of *sensus plenior*. Howard also argues that there must be continuity between the texts of the Old and New Testaments. He writes about the Hosea 11:1/Matthew 2:15 pairing: “Yet, even with these criteria, it seems that many instances labeled as *sensus plenior* would better fit under another category.”<sup>68</sup>

Even LaSor, a proponent of this view, admits how tenuous the connection is between Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15 (and Isa 7:14 and Matt 1:22-23). He admits that seeing in these passages “a later fulfillment in Christ raises as many problems as it solves . . . In neither case is there any indication that the author had some distant future event in mind, hence it is most difficult to conclude that the authors were speaking of Jesus Christ or even an unnamed Messiah.”<sup>69</sup> For these reasons, it seems best to reject the use of *sensus plenior* as a valid interpretive option in this case.

The argument initially set forth by Krister Stendahl that Matthew used interpretive techniques from Judaism such as Midrash and Peshar has great appeal. However, this approach is not without its critics. Raymond Brown, the Roman Catholic advocate for *sensus plenior*, argues that Midrash “is not a term that describes well the literary genre of either infancy narratives.”<sup>70</sup> Midrash is “literature about a literature” which provides commentary about a biblical text.<sup>71</sup> However, in the Gospels this phenomena is apparently absent. Woods notes:

Furthermore, in Midrash, the words of the prophecy are primary and serve as the foundation on which the Midrash interpretation depends. It took as its basis texts that it wished to make more intelligible. However, in Matthew, the words of the prophecy seem to be secondary and only point to Matthew’s words. Matthew added citations to an already existing narrative.

66. Op. cit., 317.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Op. cit., 271.

70. Op. cit., 561.

71. Ibid., 560.

Thus, Matthew's infancy narratives were not composed for the purpose of making Old Testament citations more intelligible but rather to make Jesus more intelligible.<sup>72</sup>

It appears highly unlikely that Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15 fits the criteria for utilizing a Midrash approach to interpretation.

In like fashion, the Peshet approach has also been criticized in this context. Lee Campbell states unequivocally, "Clearly, Matthew is not a *peshet* commentary. Such texts are line-by-line analyses of an OT text and Matthew's gospel does not conform to this format. Rather, Matthew applies OT citations to his narrative of the life of Christ."<sup>73</sup> Campbell further argues that Peshet "techniques are fundamentally eisegetical" and "hostile to the notion of objective interpretation."<sup>74</sup>

Bray's analysis of this problem is interesting. He appears to understand Matthew's hermeneutic as a combination of techniques. Instead of saying that it must be either this or that as most scholars do, he believes that Matthew was using a typological approach, but one that was enhanced by Peshet exegesis. He writes:

Matthew in particular uses the Old Testament to demonstrate the fulfillment theme, and he goes far beyond anything which could readily be derived from the literal sense of the text . . . Probably the only satisfactory way to understand Matthew's hermeneutic is to recognize that he virtually assimilates the historical experience of Israel as a nation to the life of Jesus – the ultimate in typological fulfillment . . . Naturally, such an interpretation is immeasurably enhanced by a liberal use of *peshet* exegesis, and there is a striking similarity between his handling of the Old Testament text and that found in the Habbakuk commentary from Qumran.<sup>75</sup>

Bray even goes so far as to suggest that the reason why both Matthew and John made liberal use of the Peshet technique was their close proximity to Jesus whose "own method of biblical interpretation was dominated by the *peshet* mode, as applied directly to himself."<sup>76</sup> The relative absence of Peshet techniques in the gospels of Mark and Luke can be explained by this same theory.

Howard's critique of Stendahl's hypothesis is four pronged. First, he notes that there are differences between the quotations in the Qumran commentary on Habakkuk and Matthew. For example, he points out that the introductory formula found in Matthew's gospel (*ἵνα πληρωθῶ, hina playrao*, "that it might be fulfilled")

72. Op. cit., 16.

73. Lee Campbell, "Matthew's use of the Old Testament: A Preliminary Analysis" in *Xenos Online Journal* ([http://www.xenos.org/ministries/crossroads/OnlineJournal/issue\\_3/mtmain.htm](http://www.xenos.org/ministries/crossroads/OnlineJournal/issue_3/mtmain.htm), 2000): 1.

74. Ibid.

75. Op. cit., 67-68.

76. Ibid., 69.

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is absent in the Qumran texts. Second, he gives the reason for the absence of *ἵνα πληρωθῆ* (*hina playrao*, “that it might be fulfilled”) in that Matthew’s use of the Old Testament exhibits “a different character because of the clear connection with the historical intent of the Old Testament context.”<sup>77</sup> He writes:

The hermeneutical features are quite different from what is found in the Matthean use of the Old Testament. The Qumran community saw itself as being in the “last days” to which all prophecy pointed. As a result of this perspective the Qumran community completely disregarded the original context when exegeting prophetic passages. The community felt that the original intention of the particular citation *was* for the community.<sup>78</sup>

Third, he notes the differences between Matthew’s technique of relating stories about Jesus along with Old Testament citations and the line-by-line Peshet techniques of analysis. He writes that in Matthew 2:15, “Matthew was not giving a midrashic homily on the Hosea text but rather was supporting his record with the Old Testament quotation.”<sup>79</sup> Finally, Howard argues that serious issues concerning inspiration of Scripture are raised when attempting to compare Matthew’s quotations with the writings of the Qumran community in that “frequently the Qumran community distorted the original intent of the Old Testament passage they were quoting.”<sup>80</sup> Essentially this means that sometimes the Old Testament writer was misinformed and guilty of communicating error that the community then corrected. Thus, Howard rejects Stendahl’s theory as a template for understanding the formal quotations of Matthew.

The typological fulfillment view has a lot of appeal as evidenced by the large number of scholars who have adopted this approach as an explanation of Matthew’s use of Hosea 11:1. This view is criticized by Howard and others who question a prefigurative view of typology arguing that it has questionable implications and assumes a latent meaning in the passage of which the human author was unaware. As already stated in this paper, the Hosea 11:1 text is a statement about the past, not a prediction about the future. On this basis, it is sometimes argued that Matthew’s use of Hosea 11:1 is illegitimate, “transferring to the future and to a different and individual ‘son’ what God said about his ‘son’ Israel in the past.”<sup>81</sup> R. T. France contends, “But of course that is the essence of typology, which depends not on predictions but on transferable “models” from the OT story. The exodus, leading as it did to the formation of a new people of God, was a potent symbol even within the OT of the even greater

77. Op. cit., 319.

78. Ibid., 318.

79. Ibid., 319.

80. Ibid.

81. R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, and Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007): 80.

work of deliverance which God was yet to accomplish.”<sup>82</sup> France goes so far as to identify Jesus in a new eschatological role as the “new Moses.”<sup>83</sup>

It seems likely that Moses is presented in the Old Testament as a type of Christ. Charles Talbert sees a detailed Mosaic typology in Matthew 1:1–2:23. He charts eight similarities between the tradition about Moses and those about Jesus in Matthew 1-2: (1) Genealogy; (Exod 1:1-5; 6:14-20; cf. Matt 1:2-16); (2) Dream (L.A.B. 9.10, Josephus, *Ant* 2.210-16); cf. Matt 1:21); (3) Birth (Exod 1:15-22); cf. Matt 2:16-18); (4) Infanticide (Josephus, *Ant* 2.205, 234; cf. Matt 2:2-18); (5) Future deliverer/savior (Josephus, *Ant* 2.205, 234; cf. Matt 2:4-6); (6) Expatriation (Exod 2:15; cf. Matt 2:13-14); (7) Command to return (Exod 4:19; cf. Matt 2:19-20); (8) Return to homeland (Exod 4:20; cf. Matt 2:21).<sup>84</sup> Talbert concludes, “For anyone who knew the Moses legends in antiquity, it would have been impossible to miss the remarkable similarities between them and Matthew’s story of Jesus origins.”<sup>85</sup> Thus, it is possible to speak of these parallels as teaching a “christological portrait of Jesus as a ‘new Moses.’”<sup>86</sup> Although the parallel that Matthew is drawing in 2:15 is more directly with the nation of Israel as a collective entity, Blomberg argues that “clearly, a ‘new exodus’ motif is present.”<sup>87</sup>

The “exodus” motif supports the typological view quite well. What is typological is God’s preserving love for Israel as seen over and over again throughout the Old Testament. Both the baby Jesus and Israel were objects of this preserving love and deliverance from an oppressor. Kaiser writes of this:

The fact that Matthew introduced this quote at verse 15 and not after verse 20 or even verse 22 clearly points to the fact the the *Exodus*, or *departure*, of the Holy Family from Egypt is *not* his reason for introducing the quotation at this point. Instead the emphasis falls exactly where it did in the context of Hosea: the preserving love of God for his seed Israel. The Exodus for Hosea was only one of the numerous acts of God’s love while rebellious Israel ran away from Him.<sup>88</sup>

Howard’s analogical correspondence view explains Matthew’s citation of Hosea as retrospective analogical correspondence, rather than a projective type or prophecy about Jesus. He notes the similarities between Israel and Christ, but he also points out that Jesus was an obedient son, unlike Israel. Thus, Christ fulfilled what God had

82. *Ibid.*, 80-81.

83. *Ibid.*

84. Charles H. Talbert, *Matthew*, in *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament*, ed. Mikeal C. Parsons and Charles H. Talbert (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010): 37-38.

85. *Ibid.*, 38.

86. Craig L. Blomberg, “Matthew,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

87. *Ibid.*

88. *Op. cit.*, 51.

intended for Israel had the nation not rejected Him. Howard is to be commended for his attempt to refine the typological view. He rightly understands that typology has in the past often been abused and has lent itself to arbitrary and fanciful interpretations. However, in this instance, it is not necessary. The typological view works quite well. Campbell writes eloquently:

When Hosea records, *Out of Egypt I have called my son*, he is tapping into an exodus motif that was expressed in the original event, reiterated and extended to “the king” of Israel by Balaam (Nu. 24:8); reiterated when Joshua entered Palestine; reiterated when the principle of redemption was applied repeated in OT didactic material; that would be reiterated later when Israel was restored after his impending discipline . . . and again when God would permanently redeem his people. Matthew was simply noting something implicit in Hosea, namely, Christ was the ultimate fulfillment of God’s promised redemption of Israel (Hos. 11:1-14:5). Hosea certainly understood that his recollection of the Exodus was anchored in God’s past redemptive history as well as his future promise of final redemption. And, this is exactly what Matthew did by pointing to its manifestation in Christ. Christ returned to Israel from Egypt, as an obedient son and also as God coming again to dwell in the tents of Shem. The resonance with the exodus motif is so remarkable that Matthew could say Christ ‘filled up to overflowing’ the entire theme. If we were contemporaries of Mathew we too could have anticipated a final redemption of Israel and rejoiced when we saw its penultimate fulfillment in the first advent of Christ and hoped in its ultimate fulfillment in his second advent.<sup>89</sup>

It seems better to understand Matthew’s use of Hosea 11:1 as an example of typology. This interpretive approach is based upon the recognition of a correspondence between events in both testaments. It rightly sees the principles of the plan of God as having an unchanging character. As Blomberg observes, “The original event need not have been intentionally viewed as forward-looking by the OT author; for believing Jews, merely to discern striking parallels between God’s actions in history, especially in decisive moments of revelation and redemption, could convince them of divinely intended ‘coincidence.’”<sup>90</sup>

It is true that typology has been greatly abused in the past by interpreters, which has led some writers such as Howard to suggest “analogical correspondence” or “correspondence in history.” However, in the final analysis, the dividing line is so fine as to be essentially nonexistent. Analogical correspondence and typology are essentially the same thing. As has already been mentioned, Bray sees Matthew’s hermeneutic as the “ultimate in typological fulfillment” and that such an approach is greatly enhanced by *peshar* exegesis as evidenced by the remarkable similarities between his handling of the Old Testament text and the Qumran Habakkuk

89. Op. cit., 6.

90. Blomberg, “Matthew,” 8.

commentary. Thus, typology provides a workable and more cautious framework for understanding the interrelationship between Matthew 2:15 and Hosea 11:1.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has covered a lot of ground both historically as well as hermeneutically. Part I summarized the major approaches to the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament. This section sketched out this history from the Apostolic Period to the Modern Period.

Part II survey and analyzed different approaches of the New Testament use of the Old Testament as evidenced by the hermeneutical techniques employed by Matthew (2:15) in his citation of Hosea 11:1. It was concluded that Matthew likely employed a typological approach possibly enhanced by the liberal use of *peshet* exegesis. Perhaps the only question remaining is whether this hermeneutical technique should be used by Christian interpreters today. Although the modern interpreter is limited in that he is not inspired by the Holy Spirit as were the writers of sacred Scripture. However, it is still possible by using the historical-grammatical method to see typological correspondence between events in the Old Testament and events in the life of Jesus.

The writer concludes and concurs with the caution given by Campbell:

Without prophetic authority we may have to hold conclusions drawn from such techniques more tentatively than Matthew does. Nonetheless, the use of interpretive methods consonant with those found in scripture substantially strengthens the confidence of modern interpreters who are committed to the kind of careful exegesis that honors the intent of the ultimate author.<sup>91</sup>

Because we are not inspired writers in the sense that Matthew and other authors of Scripture were, we must err on the side of caution.

91. Op. cit., 7.

## ***Book Reviews***

**Ferguson, Sinclair B. *The Whole Christ: Legalism, Antinomianism, and Gospel Assurance – Why the Marrow Controversy Still Matters*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016, pp. 256, \$24.99, hardcover.**

In an age characterized by both self-indulgence and anxiety, Sinclair Ferguson addresses in *The Whole Christ* the always pressing issues of legalism, antinomianism and assurance of salvation. Ferguson served as senior minister of First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina and is professor of systematic theology at Redeemer Seminary in Dallas, Texas and author of a number of books, including *The Holy Spirit* and *In Christ Alone: Living the Gospel-Centered Life*.

Here Ferguson looks back to an instructive moment in Protestant church history – the “Marrow controversy” in early eighteenth-century Scotland – in order to glean insights for handling the relationship between God’s grace and God’s call for obedience in the believer’s life. The introduction and first chapter shed light on the background and significance of the Marrow controversy, which centered on a book entitled *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* that was deemed antinomian by some Scottish Presbyterians but was and is believed by traditional Reformed and Presbyterian theologians to contain a sound presentation of the relationship between God’s grace and God’s law in the Christian life.

In chapter two, Ferguson draws from the Marrow controversy to emphasize the importance of the free offer of the gospel to all persons. Chapter three explores the harmful effects of “preparationism,” according to which the hearer must exhibit certain fruits of election before hearing the gospel. Ferguson identifies this approach to evangelism as an assault on the goodness and generosity of God.

Chapter four considers the nature of legalism, the root of which is a failure to see and trust in the goodness of God. In chapter five, Ferguson then sketches an *ordo salutis* – a discernible logical ordering of the benefits of salvation in Christ, like justification, sanctification and so on. In God’s economy the “indicative” (what is true of those who are in Christ) precedes the “imperative” (what God calls believers in Christ to do). Chapter six points up various signs to help diagnose legalism in one’s heart and actions.

Chapter seven focuses on antinomianism and maintains the normative function of the Decalogue in the Christian life. The eighth chapter contends that antinomianism ultimately emerges from a legalistic heart and envisions a positive (Pauline) place for the law in the life of faith. Finally, chapters 9-11 deal with the problem of assurance,

examining whether it is included in the essence of faith and explaining how one can possess assurance under the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

A number of helpful features in *The Whole Christ* stand out. First, Ferguson argues that at the foundation of a right view of grace, law and assurance is a right view of the good and loving God of salvation. Many Christians struggle to trust in the goodness of God and will be encouraged by Ferguson's insistence on it. Second, Ferguson's emphasis on union with Christ throughout the book is salutary. Whenever we separate the benefits of Christ (faith, justification, sanctification and the rest) from the Savior himself or from one another, we develop a lopsided and pastorally hazardous understanding of salvation. Third, in chapter ten Ferguson introduces readers to the illuminating distinction between the "direct" and "reflexive" acts of faith. The former refers to the believer's trust in Christ and his saving work, while the latter refers to the believer's confidence that he or she belongs to and is secure in Christ. The former is primary and "contains within it the seed of assurance" (p. 197). The latter is never the instrument of salvation and may be had in greater and lesser degrees throughout the Christian life.

On a minor critical note, I wonder whether the arrangement of the material might have been better if the historical sections on the Marrow controversy were gathered up into one chapter for the sake of clarity and proportion, instead of embedding parts of the historical description in different chapters and sometimes rehashing the events (e.g., pp. 77-8). Also, a few turns of phrase might, if he or she is not careful, leave the contemporary reader confused for a moment. For example: "repentance is not a qualification for coming to Christ" (p. 97). Does this mean that repentance is not in any way included in one's initially coming to Christ (as in Mk. 1:15; Acts 2:38)? To be fair, one need only read on and ascertain that Ferguson is simply emphasizing that there are no pre-requisites for hearing the gospel and initially turning to Christ and that faith in Christ logically precedes repentance (pp. 98ff.).

To locate this book in the broader field of theological study today, a few comments are in order. First, it can be read profitably as a study in soteriology and the Christian life. Its historical, exegetical, and dogmatic reflections will be beneficial for students of Scripture and Christian theology and practitioners in pastoral ministry. Second, it models nicely a decidedly theological (rather than a self-help or pop psychology) approach to understanding discipleship. Too often Christians look to trendy books with "steps" to success or happiness and will find a book of this sort to be a welcome break from such shallowness. Indeed, *The Whole Christ* exhibits well the fact that what may seem like strictly theoretical considerations in fact powerfully bear on one's daily Christian experience and will repay our attention.

Third, *The Whole Christ* illustrates the importance of understanding church history. That there really is nothing new under the sun is borne out in the history of the Christian church, and studying the past gives us access to debates and controversies where ideas, concepts and patterns of thought have run their course and proven to

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be either fruitful or spiritually harmful. Rather than reinvent the wheel every time we approach an exegetical or ministerial problem, we do well to know what the generations before us have already learned and passed on to us as wisdom for today. Fourth, Ferguson writes as a Calvinist, and “Calvinism” is a frequently used and sometimes poorly understood term in contemporary Christianity. In this connection, some readers may be pleasantly surprised to learn that mainstream traditional Reformed and Presbyterian theology would so adamantly speak of the goodness and fatherly love of God in saving sinners. Fifth, “grace” also is a frequently used and sometimes poorly understood term, especially when some evangelical leaders have recently reduced sanctification to a matter of simply believing more in justification by grace. Ferguson strikes the balance in instructing us both to rest in Christ alone as the basis of our salvation and in reminding us that those who are in Christ must and will grow in loving obedience to the Father.

Other available resources can help readers explore the issues covered here in more historical and technical detail, including the relevant chapters of Joel Beeke’s and Mark Jones’s *Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* and volume 4 of Herman Bavinck’s *Reformed Dogmatics*. However, for students and, indeed, for any Christian seeking to grow theologically and spiritually, *The Whole Christ* is a great place to start.

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**Johnson, Keith L. *Theology as Discipleship*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015, pp. 192, \$20, softcover.**

Theological dialogue is standard practice among scholars engaged in the halls of academia. These conversations are necessary and helpful, and it benefits the church greatly for scholars to remain steadfast in their specific academic pursuits; however, the church is not served fully if theology is restricted to the solitary confines of scholarly engagement. Theology must be applicable to the whole of life, and the church needs scholars to speak in this important conversational space as well. Keith Johnson (Ph.D., Princeton Theological Seminary), associate professor of theology at Wheaton College, addresses the need for theology to be recognized as far more than an academic discipline. Johnson helpfully shows that theology is central to discipleship for believers. *Theology as Discipleship* is an excellent work that will help thoughtful students beginning theological studies.

Johnson’s book was born out of questions and conversations Johnson encountered from students in his introductory theology courses at Wheaton College. His students

questioned the relevance of theology to daily Christian living, and they also expressed legitimate concerns that theology might stifle one's daily walk with Christ due to the tendency of quarrels and divisions that all too often arise out of theological inquiry. Johnson rightly notes that these questions are common as students grapple with the various nuances of theological reflection. These questions are a direct consequence of the theological ignorance which exists in the church. Johnson notes that "It is possible for a Christian to participate in the church for years and never engage in disciplined theological thinking about core Christian doctrines or the history of the church's debates about them. It is also possible for academic theologians to devote their entire careers to the discipline and never be asked to translate or apply the content of their scholarship to the concrete realities that shape the daily life of the church" (p. 12). These possibilities reveal an unnecessary bifurcation between theology and life. Thus, Johnson's approach in this volume is to offer a corrective solution.

Johnson's thesis is clear: "Theological learning is pursued rightly when it occurs within the context of a life of discipleship, because the practices of discipleship enable and enrich our pursuit of theological knowledge" (p. 26). The negative press that is all too often associated with theology occurs when theology is approached as a discipline and not a form of discipleship. When viewed rightly, Christians will view discipleship as a natural extension of theology, and theology as a godly manifestation of discipleship. The relationship between discipleship and theology cannot be overstated, according to Johnson. He argues, "The act of learning how to think and speak rightly about God is an act of faith and obedience that involves our participation in the mind of Christ and our partnership with Christ by the power of his Spirit. In this sense, the practice of theology takes place as an act of discipleship to Christ" (p. 37). Throughout the rest of the book, Johnson builds a case for the close relationship between theology and discipleship. The book consists of seven chapters: Recovering Theology, Being in Christ, Partnership with Christ, The Word of God, Hearing the Word of God, The Mind of Christ, and Theology in Christ. The chapters are organized so that they stand alone. One could read a chapter of this volume independently and not be hindered by the lack of knowledge of the rest of the book. In each chapter, Johnson introduces the subject, engages various theologians, and provides substantive interaction with relevant biblical texts.

This book has a number of positive features. First, Johnson knows his subject matter well, and readers will benefit greatly from his interactions with other noteworthy theologians. Johnson interacts heavily with Calvin, Barth, and Bonhoeffer, and readers will also benefit from interactions with other theologians old and new: Gregory of Nazianzus, Aquinas, Augustine, Basil the Great, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Robert Jenson, Herman Bavinck, J. Todd Billings, N.T. Wright, and John Webster to name a few. For the intended audience, these conversations are helpful in modeling how Christians can approach a text and/or issue and engage the issues with precision and charity to others. Second, Johnson engages theological

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arguments biblically. Readers are often taken to Scripture to wrestle with the text and its implications. Students will benefit greatly from this approach because it forces students to build theology out of the Bible. Third, *Theology as Discipleship* reminds readers of all theological levels of the necessity of theology's application to walking by faith in daily union with Christ. Johnson helpfully illustrates the dangers of theology in the abstract which tends to have little effect on human emotion and ethics. Fourth, Johnson helps to recover a healthy and more robust understanding of discipleship. Too often in contemporary settings, discipleship is reduced to superficial anecdotes, which lack any corresponding biblical foundation. Fifth, Johnson's final chapter should be required reading for students pursuing ministry. In this chapter, Johnson describes nine characteristics of what theology as discipleship entails. For example, the ninth and final characteristic is "We practice theology as disciples when we pursue our theological work with joy" (p. 187). This joy is part ecclesial because it emerges from our desire to use theology as a means for the church to know and love Christ more. These positive features are just a few of the reasons why Johnson's book should be required reading for students pursuing ministry.

There are a few valid criticisms that emerge. First, at times, Johnson seems to assume that his readers have a working knowledge of the theologians with whom he interacts. It is in these sections that Johnson's audience appears to be much broader than students new to theology. Johnson seeks to engage academic theologians to reorient their view of theology as an aspect of discipleship. In these instances, beginners may get lost in the verbiage and not grasp Johnson's purpose. Second, Johnson seems to grant most of his effort rehearsing and teaching theology more than working out its implications for discipleship. To be fair, Johnson's final chapter addresses these issues, but there is not consistent development throughout the book.

In addition to this book, I recommend students to read Alister McGrath's short volume (256 pages) *Theology: The Basics* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), or his larger volume (536 pages) *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). Additionally, students will benefit by reading Johnson's colleague at Wheaton, Beth Felker Jones, who recently published *Practicing Christian Doctrine: An Introduction to Thinking and Living Theologically* (Baker, 2014). Each of these volumes are well suited for undergraduate and seminary students beginning theological studies. Johnson's work admirably connects theology to discipleship, and for this reason, students should read this helpful work.

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**Yarnell III, Malcolm B. *God the Trinity: Biblical Portraits*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2016, pp. xi + 260, \$29.99, hardback.**

*God the Trinity: Biblical Portraits* presents a nuanced exegetical case that “the pattern of the Trinity is woven into” (p. 5) the fabric of the various Old and New Testament literature. Throughout the work, author Malcolm Yarnell (D. Phil., Oxford), Research Professor of Systematic Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, balances close theological exegesis with a desire to help the community of believers understand life in the Trinity.

The opening chapter serves to introduce the case made in the sequel, appropriately beginning with Yarnell’s hermeneutic. Eschewing “propositionalism” (the insistence, bequeathed by the Enlightenment, that doctrinal claims must be propositional claims), Yarnell instead utilizes the historical critical method—although not indiscriminately (decrying its occasionally “acidic” use [p. 79], as well as its tendency to blunt our reading of the fathers [p. 98]). Each chapter (save chapter four) centers on the unpacking of a selected biblical passage, each yielding a complementary portrait of God (the fitting metaphor of portraiture is used throughout). Chapter one rounds out with a consideration of Matthew 28:16-20, highlighting the portrayal of the divine persons as in a unity that suggests coordinate relations amongst them (p. 21).

Focusing on 2 Corinthians 13:14, Yarnell presents in chapter two “a basic economic Trinitarianism” revealed in “how God works and how we are commanded to respond to him in worship” (p. 36). Taking each of the text’s four parts in turn, Yarnell considers the theme of each in relation to God’s work, naturally raising questions about the persons themselves. Regarding Jesus, for example, Yarnell traces Paul’s use of “Lord” to the Old Testament covenantal names “Yahweh” and “Adonai,” as well as “Messiah,” establishing Jesus as the bringer of the grace that originates in the Father and is perfected in the world by the Holy Spirit. Yarnell is careful at each turn (rightly) to emphasize the unity of God’s operations.

Having established Scripture’s presentation of God as three in one, chapter three looks to “the roots of Christian monotheism and its earliest development in a Trinitarian direction” (p. 57). How, exactly, do Christians speak of God as three in one? Turning to Deuteronomy 6:4-7, Yarnell presents the passage’s context (the Law, especially as God’s blessing) as the segue to the only, personal God’s invitation to Israel to enter into a unique relationship with himself. An early challenge for the Christian community, of course, was assimilating strict monotheism and the worship of more than one person as divine. Following Gerald Bray, Yarnell finds the crux of this issue in one’s understanding of “the place of the Messiah in relation to God” (p. 77), ultimately maintaining the divine title of the Shema is ascribed to Jesus (p. 79).

Returning to the topic of hermeneutics, the fourth (and shortest) chapter tracks “the progress of exegesis since the Reformation period, paying special attention to the problems introduced in modernity” (p. 88). This presentation of Yarnell’s reading

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of certain historical influences (e.g., Kant) on exegesis is interesting, although certain readers will feel it somewhat potted. Finding in this survey the roots of “problems in theological language,” Yarnell concludes, “we may state that God has an essence, but we cannot speak of what his essence is” (p. 105).

Chapter five looks to the Gospels, especially John’s, to ask, “What exactly the Father and the Son possess in common” and what their possessing it in common means (p. 107)? Yarnell methodically assesses Jesus’s actions to answer such questions. The remainder of the chapter unpacks the “threefold form” of John’s Gospel, presenting in turn “the only begotten God,” “the divine monarch,” and “the proceeding God.” One appreciates Yarnell’s sensitivity to the intra-trinitarian relations in Scripture, which he finds to be “eternal” and indeed “necessary” (p. 123), although certain readers will wish more were said toward specifying just what the relations familiarly known as “begottenness,” “generation,” and “procession” consist in.

Continuing in John’s Gospel, chapter six opens with “the metaphorical nature” of Jesus’s words in John 17, which tell us something of what God is like. Again noting the inadequacy of “human language” to describe God, Yarnell walks the reader through the “fivefold reflection upon the Johannine patterning of God” (p. 140) he finds embedded in the text. To this point in the book readers will have noticed that such terms as “essence” and “person” find but sparse usage (cf. pp. 116-117), and this is because such terms are “postbiblical” (p. 154), which Yarnell shies away from although without fully rejecting.

While timely in its release amidst rekindling trinitarian debates (particularly amongst Evangelicals), *God the Trinity* is little concerned explicitly to enter that fray. Nevertheless, Yarnell makes two claims that will be of particular interest to those involved. Regarding the issue of the Son’s equality with the Father, Yarnell writes: “In a move that has drawn many evangelicals...away from the Cappadocian doctrine of the eternal processions of the Son and the Holy Spirit, Calvinist theologians have deemed such language inappropriate” (p. 147). It is doubtful many Calvinists will appreciate this, particularly those who emphatically affirm the ontological equality of the divine persons. Second, Yarnell addresses a “Calvinist rule” which he explains is a “hermeneutical rule distinguishing between the ontological equality and the functional subordination of the Son” (pp. 147-148). Both Calvinist and other readers who draw such a distinction will be surprised that Yarnell “is convinced neither that” the rule “is biblical, nor that it is helpful” theologically. Given his repeated affirmations that the divine persons are fully and equally divine, along with such acknowledgements as “the Son may be said to be ‘subordinate’ to the Father without endangering the Son’s equal possession of the Father’s self” (p. 151) and that in Revelation John indicates “Jesus’s equality with, yet subordination to, the Father...(in) the eternal throne of God” (p. 211), it is not entirely clear what Yarnell is rejecting. Perhaps he is attempting (quite understandably) to move beyond potentially unclear “subordination” language, but if that is so then the claim that “there is eternal subordination in John’s portrayal

of the three.... There is no hint here that the subordination of the Lamb and the Spirit is...merely functional” (p. 217) are left somewhat unclear. Perhaps he assumes that “functional subordination” cannot be eternal.

Chapters seven and eight look to Paul’s portrait of the Trinity *via* the divine economy, especially in Ephesians, and John’s in Revelation, respectively. Yarnell is truly at his best in expounding the theology of the Trinity in these chapters, highlighting not only the intra-trinitarian relations but God’s unity and various works (redemption, judgment, renewal, etc.), as well. Having followed the avenue of economy, however, Yarnell is emphatic that “economy is dependent on ontology and not vice versa” (p. 194). Following chapter eight is a short epilogue containing ten theses offered as theological takeaways of the trinitarian portraits developed throughout the work, as well as new translations of the Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds forming an appendix. Those using *God the Trinity* as a textbook will find these useful.

There is much to appreciate in *God the Trinity*, especially Yarnell’s insistence that theology be grounded in exegesis. The book is generously footnoted, and while proficiency in the biblical languages will be helpful it is not required for a beneficial reading. Various readers will find quibbles here and there—attributing to Justin Martyr the conception “of Christ as an extension of the divine mind” (p. 123) or referring to an “evangelical correspondence theory of truth” (p. 176), for example. Throughout the book one detects a subtle deprecation of philosophy, which certain readers will find discouraging. Although the role of philosophy vis-à-vis theology is never addressed overtly, one finds the former routinely portrayed as (only) contributing to the latter’s undoing. Christian philosophical theologians have made valuable contributions to trinitarianism, and certain readers will detect in Yarnell’s project points at which such contributions could play a helpful role. Nonetheless, *God the Trinity* is a welcome addition to the trinitarian literature, preserving focus on the biblical texts while making a solid theological case that the Trinity is, indeed, woven into the full canon of Scripture.

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**Wright, Christopher J. H. *How to Preach and Teach the Old Testament for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016, pp. 288, \$18.99, paperback.**

Christopher J. H. Wright is the International Ministries Director of the Langham Partnership and was also chair of the Lausanne Theology Working Group which presented The Cape Town Commitment to the Third Lausanne Congress in 2010.

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He has written numerous books including *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*, *The Mission of God*, and *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament*, among others. He attends All Souls Church, Langham Place in London where he preaches occasionally.

Written as part of Zondervan's *All Its Worth* series, Wright focuses on the Old Testament in this volume, working beyond interpretation to aid preachers and teachers as they study and prepare the material for proclamation. Wright divides his book into two main sections, focusing on *why* one should preach and teach from the Old Testament in the first section and *how* one does so in the second. Every chapter ends with questions and exercises to help the reader digest the material, and the "How" section includes preparation checklists and sermon outline examples for each major Old Testament genre.

As for the "Why," Wright notes that many sermons tend to come from the New Testament or occasionally a Psalm (p. 17). Why then should a person be encouraged to preach or teach from the OT? In the first chapter, he gives his three primary reasons: 1) the OT is given to us by God, 2) the OT lays the foundation for our faith, and 3) the OT was the Bible of Jesus. The remainder of Part One explains that the OT tells a detailed story that has Jesus as its destination *and* its fulfillment (p. 38). Much of his discussion about Jesus centers around the nature of preaching and teaching about Christ in the OT, including its uses and abuses.

Part Two is the more practical section of the book, explaining each major section of the OT and providing several tools for preparation and teaching of the material. He emphasizes the importance of recognizing the big story of the entire Bible (p. 87), the larger stories encompassing God's various covenants (p. 89), and the numerous smaller stories contained in those (p. 90). Keeping these various levels of "story" in mind keeps one on firm ground when teaching the OT, particularly when moving into non-narrative sections. Wright then covers each of the major genres of the OT, explaining the methods, pitfalls, and important points to stress in each. He includes numerous pedagogical tools including checklists for interpretation and preparation of various texts, sample outlines from specific passages, and examples from each genre to show how to apply OT texts for a Christian audience, with Christ as the hinge point for this application.

One of the best features of Christopher Wright's writing is his ability to make Scripture immensely practical and beautiful, and this book is no different. His *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* helped give practical shape to the Torah as *Christian* Scripture, and he brings a wealth of insights from that book into this one. Thus, *How to Preach and Teach* is a great tool to understand the purpose of OT Law, one of the most difficult problems when preaching from those books. Moreover, he teaches one to preach OT law through a series of checklists and examples, providing a framework to apply to the gamut of laws (pp. 175-80). He applies this method to the other genres he covers as well (narrative, prophecy, poetry, and wisdom). Thus,

a significant strength of this book is that it gives a succinct theological and practical introduction to many primary themes in OT interpretation.

*How to Preach and Teach* also addresses the issue of Christ/Jesus in the OT, certainly a popular, albeit debatable topic of interest. Wright navigates through the conversation, supporting the practice of Christ-centered preaching, but he rightly insists that the practice is the proper result of good OT (and NT) interpretation, not the other way around (pp. 46, 51). Rather than leaving the topic vague for teachers, Wright uses chapter four to lay out the pitfalls and chapter five to give methods for preaching Jesus. Because of the “buzz” surrounding Christ-centered preaching, I suspect that many preachers will find chapters 3-5 to be the most pertinent part of the book.

Initially, the three chapters regarding Jesus and the OT seemed out of place in the “why” section of this book. The first two chapters properly covered the need for preachers to teach from the OT, but the next three appeared to be an excursus on Christ-centered preaching. However, I think it is fair to note that Wright places Jesus and the Gospel at the center of Christian preaching, and thus clear thinking about this method is warranted (p. 63). For proper OT preaching, one must show how the text points to Christ and calls for a Christian response (p. 79). As such, it bridges the gap between the “why” and “how” of preaching the OT.

Lastly, the “how-to” tools Wright includes, such as questions, checklists, or examples, will probably be most helpful in the classroom context where students must utilize them to produce sermon outlines or manuscripts. For the busy pastor, I can imagine the content of the book will be helpful, but without the accountability of the classroom environment, there is often little extra time to use the tools during a work week. These tools are quite good though and should serve the individual well who will take the time to use them. The “Questions and Exercises” and “Sample Outlines” are set off from the main text in shaded boxes, making them easy to find. However, the “Checklists,” perhaps one of the most helpful tools, are regularly buried within the text and may be harder to locate and thus utilize in regular sermon preparation.

Wright’s work will appeal primarily to those preparing for or already engaged in ministry or teaching. His book not only provides the *information* explaining the OT and a method for preaching/teaching it, but he also *models* teaching the OT as he informs. As such, this book will be at home in the Bible college or seminary classroom as well as in the library of the minister. Finally, Wright’s love for the OT and his perspective of its overarching message and purpose for Christians is refreshing, and thus this book might also provide for the seasoned scholar the opportunity to step back and see the beauty and practicality of the OT in a concise form.

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**Kibbe, Michael. *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016, pp. 152, \$12, paperback.**

As I have taught classes at both the undergraduate and graduate/seminary level one of the things that I have noticed that students struggle with most is academic writing. The struggle in writing is nearly universal among students. Kibbe's *From Topic to Thesis* is a very helpful tool that will help students through the beginning stages of the writing process, stages that are often ignored by students and under taught by faculty.

Kibbe starts his guide for students with an introduction. He starts the introduction with a discussion of process by noting that students should move from topic to thesis and not from topic to paper, which students often do. Kibbe also briefly outlines the history of theological research and gives a discussion of how theological research is similar and distinct from other areas of research. He ends the introduction with a discussion of key terms and a discussion of bibliography.

Chapter one is focused on finding direction. In this chapter Kibbe brings out a number of important points when writing. Kibbe starts this chapter with a discussion of four keys that students need to know: 1) students should not already have decided what their paper is going to argue at the outset; 2) research takes time; 3) at the beginning of research students should not use secondary sources; 4) that while they are a student is the only time when students will depend upon tertiary or secondary sources. In this chapter Kibbe has several questions that should be asked of primary and tertiary sources as well as different ways to find direction. There is a section in each chapter where he discusses questions to ask of the topic at hand. Kibbe also gives examples of finding direction in two research areas, which he repeats in later chapters. At the end of this chapter, and other chapters, he supplies a short list of main points that students should focus on that were discussed within the chapter.

In chapter two Kibbe discusses gathering sources. He has helpful discussion throughout this chapter on keys to gathering sources and on questions to ask, but one of the more helpful points that he makes, that I often find myself reiterating to students is that it "is rarely a good idea to cite an online source" (p. 61).

Chapter three focuses on understanding issues. This chapter hits on several important concepts like an excurses on common research mistakes where he notes things like the importance of using too many quotes.

The fourth chapter focuses on entering into the discussion. Here the focus is on the student beginning to speak into the issue/topic that they are engaged in researching. Important points like when to enter into the discussion happen and the importance of being able to articulate how one's thesis fits into the overall discussion of a topic.

The final chapter of the book discusses establishing a position. Here he notes that the thesis statement is the heart of the paper and that students should not being the writing process too soon.

After the final chapter Kibbe provides six appendices on the following topics: 1) things a student should never do in theological research; 2) helpful theological research tools like the *SBL Handbook of Style* and others; 3) scholarly resources for theological research with a focus on primary sources and a list of commonly used tertiary sources including things like major publishers and commentary series; 4) how to navigate ATLA, a scholarly database found in most theological online libraries; 5) an introduction and guide through Zotero bibliography software; 6) a suggested timeline for research papers.

Kibbe makes some very helpful points throughout his work. In fact, almost everything he writes within his work should prove helpful to students in either the undergraduate or graduate space within theological education. One of the more helpful things that he writes to students is that when they research students need to understand that they are not going to produce new knowledge or original research, but that the goal of a student's research should be new knowledge to them (p. 24). His appendix on things that should never be done by students within papers will certainly have everyone who has ever had to read student papers smiling and nodding with knowing approval of how egregious these things are.

I only have two minor critiques of this work. First, I fear that his interaction with tertiary sources and his discussion of Zotero, might become too quickly dated (because updates inevitably happen) and require a revision, which is not necessarily a bad thing, but something to be observed. Second, his timeline assumes a traditional semester and many students find themselves in accelerated courses that fall in an eight-week format, especially in the online format. It would be helpful to have an adjusted timeline for those students, but I supposed it could just be cut in half with the assumption that the student is not taking as heavy of a load and can commit more time in a shorter amount of time.

I would also add a few suggestions to Kibbe's helpful work, some of which Kibbe discusses briefly in his work but are worth rearticulating here. First, students should know what their professor expects from them with their writing. Every professor is slightly different and will expect slightly different things from students when it comes to writing. Most professors are quite transparent as to what they are looking for in this regard. Second, the way that students learn to write in an English composition class is helpful, but biblical and theological research argues in a different way than in an English class. Third, read Kibbe's appendix on things to avoid doing in writing and realize that this is only the beginning of writing taboos. For instance, I find it exceptionally difficult to read papers where students overuse first person (especially first person plural) and where students use second person. Some faculty do not mind the use of first and second person as much as I do, but many do, especially in regards to the use of second person. Fourth, take plagiarism very seriously because professors do.

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I would also add a couple suggestions to any professors that might be reading. First, none of us enjoy reading poor theology papers. I have found that a bit of work up front makes students writing significantly better. One thing that I always do is give a one hour lecture to every class that I teach about how to write a paper and how to research. We only scratch the surface, but it is a good start and students then feel free to ask me questions. In this lecture I also discuss plagiarism. I have found that student writing is vastly improved, their research is more solid, and plagiarism is almost completely eliminated after this lecture. Second, it is easy to blame poor writing on other departments or on poor college-level training (from a seminary perspective) or poor high school training (from an undergraduate perspective), but this is only part of the story. It is our job to help them write while they are in our classes. Instead of blaming others it is important for us to be faithful.

Kibbe's book will make a welcome addition to any and every student's library and would be a helpful required book at the beginning of both undergraduate and graduate theological degree programs.

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**Cortez, Mark. *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective: Ancient and Contemporary Approaches to Theological Anthropology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016, pp. 272, \$27.99, paperback.**

Marc Cortez is currently associate professor of theology at Wheaton College. His prior works include *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (T&T Clark, 2010) and *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies: An Exercise in Christological Anthropology and Its Significance for the Mind/Body Debate* (T&T Clark, 2008). As the title of these previous monographs indicate, Cortez has an interest in theological anthropology. The recently published *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective: Ancient and Contemporary Approaches to Theological Anthropology* represents his third full length contribution to this field.

What makes us human? This is a question upon which much ink has been spilled. Most studies attempting to answer this question have tended focus on one of several topics: 1) human origins, 2) ethics, and 3) the *imago dei*. What Cortez brings to this already oversaturated field is a rethinking of the methodology upon which so many of these studies are founded. Cortez's approach to theological anthropology is strictly Christological. Although this book is not primarily a constructive proposal but a study of historical Christological anthropologies, Cortez reveals his constructive method which will be taken up in a future study.

Cortez begins by defining Christological anthropology. He defines this approach as “one in which (1) Christology warrants important claims about what it means to be human and the scope of those claims goes beyond issues like the image of God and ethics” (p. 22). In order to make a case for what this approach looks like, he devotes seven of the eight chapters to exploring the Christological anthropology of five historic authors and two contemporary authors. Cortez begins by showing how Gregory of Nyssa’s Christological anthropology “requires that we bracket out biological sexuality as a nonessential feature of historical humanity” (p. 55). He then turns his attention to Julian of Norwich’s cruciform anthropology in which the cross reveals that to be human is to be a creature united to Christ and sheltered in God’s love. The chapter on Julian is followed by a chapter on Martin Luther’s understanding of how justification informs what it means to be human. Here Cortez argues that Luther’s theology of justification reveals not only the current fallenness of humanity but the eschatological telos of humanity in which God intends to bring about true humanity by redeeming it rather than replacing it (p. 95). The chapter on Luther is followed by a chapter on the reformed theologian, Schleiermacher, who in general is not well received by many conservative Christians. Cortez recognizes that including a chapter on Schleiermacher might seem unusual to some, and he attempts to defend his decision to devote a chapter to him. He argues that Schleiermacher’s anthropology is truly Christological. The subsequent chapter treats the theological anthropology of Karl Barth (a subject about which Cortez has previously written a full-length monograph). This chapter primarily focuses on Barth’s method and the difference it makes for the mind/body debate. The final two chapters address the work of two contemporary theologians: John Zizioulas and James Cone. Both chapters emphasize the communal nature of human beings. Zizioulas’s theology emphasizes the communal nature through his Trinitarian definition of personhood, and Cone emphasizes this by understanding humanity in light of liberation of the oppressed. All in all, these chapters serve as fitting introductions to the theological anthropology of the chosen figures. The chapters are concise and charitable, and the theological novice will quickly learn the prominent themes in the works of these theologians.

Despite the usefulness of Cortez’s case studies in Christological anthropology, the most interesting aspect of this book comes in his introduction and conclusion, since it is here that we see Cortez’s method on full display. First, we see that Cortez’s method expands discussions of theological anthropology beyond the overplayed themes of human origins, ethics, and the *imago dei*. His definition of a minimally Christological anthropology necessarily expands it beyond these themes. This ought to be welcomed in theological anthropology, which has so often been bogged down by these three issues. Second, his method captures and articulates an intuition that many Christians share but are unable to articulate well, namely, that Jesus’s humanity should make a difference when thinking about our own humanity. If in Christ we are presented not only with the fullness of Godhead but also with the fullness of humanity

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(p. 13), i.e. true humanity, then we would think that theological anthropology should turn to Christ in order to explain what it means to be human. In short, Christ is the epistemological key to theological anthropology.

Although Cortez argues for the epistemological priority of Christology for anthropology, he does not provide a normative method for making the move from Christ to what it means to be human. Some readers may see this as a fault in this book, but this is to misunderstand the purpose of the book, namely, to define Christological anthropology and provide some case studies in this method. Finally, his method provides ample logical space within which variations of this method may develop. He allows for a “minimally Christological anthropology” in which Christology warrants *important* claims about what it means to be human and “comprehensively Christological anthropology” in which Christology warrants *ultimate* claims about true humanity (p. 225). Creating space within which variations can exist ensures the usefulness and applicability of Christological anthropology across a wide range of theological traditions.

Though this reader has found much to appreciate in Cortez’s volume, this does not mean it is without shortcomings. First, it should be noted that Cortez does not critically engage with the theologians in his case studies. These case studies are primarily summaries of a given theologian’s anthropology. Readers would have benefited if Cortez had given at least a few reasons for not accepting a given theologian’s claims. Second, Cortez fails to address, in any substantive way, potential critiques of Christological anthropology. As someone who finds affinity with Cortez’s methodology, I would have liked to see Cortez respond to some objections to this method. Given the lack of engagement with possible objections, one gets the impression that his method is simply the best way to do theological anthropology, but Cortez does not do enough to motivate this conclusion.

Despite these flaws, Cortez has provided his readers with an excellent introduction to the topic along with some interesting and varied case studies. This book will be valuable to upper division undergraduate and seminary students who are wrestling with various methodological approaches to anthropology. It will also serve those who are interested in anthropological issues beyond human origins and the *imago dei*. Perhaps some of those students will continue to build upon the solid foundation that Cortez has laid in this book.

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**Frame, John. *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2015, pp. xi + 875, \$59.99, hardback.**

John Frame holds the J. D. Trimble Chair of Systematic Theology and Philosophy at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. Frame's *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* is just one book among many that he has authored—books that span a wide range of subjects, including theology, apologetics, ethics, worship, and philosophy. *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* is a culmination of sorts of Frame's labor in expounding upon Reformed Christianity's doctrines and applications. Frame's latest work is a helpful account of not only the history of Western philosophy, but also of the sometimes contentious, sometimes harmonious, relationship between theology and philosophy.

Frame seeks to tell a “philosophical” story in his *History*—one in which he attempts to “analyze and evaluate” the history of Western philosophy “from a Christian point of view” (p. xxvi). In a day when histories of philosophy have ignored theology's contribution to philosophical thought (or, at the very least, relegated such contribution as irrelevant to the scope of philosophy), Frame sees little difference between the two disciplines (p. xxv). More importantly, the Bible speaks to and has authority over philosophical thinking. Thus, the main emphasis of Frame's *History* is to demonstrate what the Bible says regarding philosophy and philosophical topics.

Frame focuses on those thinkers “who have either made substantial contributions to the general history of philosophy or developed distinctive philosophical ideas that have influenced the theology of the church” (p. xxvi). Though Frame employs the consensus interpretations of these various thinkers, he diverges from other histories of philosophy by assessing the impact that each thinker has had on the consensus and evaluating the thinkers' philosophies (evaluations that, Frame claims, may be found “unconventional”) (p. xxvi). Finally, Frame's *History* differs from others in four distinct ways:

1. Its Christian worldview is obvious throughout.
2. It is an “extended apologetic” that suggests that both non-Christian and Christian systems eventually descend into “the bankruptcies of rationalism and irrationalism.”
3. It interacts with both philosophy and theology as interdependent disciplines.
4. It focuses on the present period more than other histories (pp. xxvi-xxvii).

There are three features that I want to highlight—features that help Frame's *History* to stand out among the others. First, Frame's presentation of the material appeals to a variety of reading audiences. His writing style is accessible. Too often reading audiences find history texts to be dry and stuffy. Using a first-person perspective, Frame writes as if he is speaking to the reader, avoiding technical language without watering down the content. Related to Frame's writing style is the “aesthetics”

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of the text. Each page consists of one column of text and wide side margins. The margins contain helpful information, such as images of various thinkers and asides that expound upon an idea in the text. Furthermore, each even page of the book has the current chapter's outline, with the current topic highlighted. The outline allows the reader to know where they are in the chapter and to easily detect Frame's flow of thought. Finally, the layout of the content makes it easy for readers to make their own notes as they interact with the text.

The second feature relates to the extras that Frame provides in *History*. Each chapter ends with various elements that aid in retention and further study. In regard to retention, each chapter ends with the particular chapter's key terms. The key terms are then followed by study questions that draw out the significant topics covered. In regard to further study, each chapter offers an extensive bibliography related to the chapter topic. Frame includes both print material and online material (with full URL) in the bibliography. Following each bibliography is a "Read for Yourself" section that provides a list of suggested readings, a section that provides suggested audio lessons on particular topics or thinkers discussed in the chapter (lectures provided on iTunes from the Reformed Theological Seminary), and finally, a section that provides helpful quotes from thinkers discussed in the chapter as well as URLs to sites devoted to quotes from a particular thinker. These extras help Frame's *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* to be a valuable resource for any Christian interested in the history of ideas.

The final feature that I want to point out relates to Frame's intentional focus on modern thinkers. History of philosophy texts tend to focus their attention on thinkers of ancient past and near past, with only a few texts nodding to living philosophers. Frame's substantive attention to modern Christian thinkers helps to connect the past with the present, giving credence to the idea that the ideas of yesterday impact and shape the ideas of today.

It is challenging to find anything of substance to critique about *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*. Frame is honest in laying forth his intentions and purpose, and he substantively deals with each of his subjects. However, if there is anything with which one may disagree, it would be Frame's Reformed lens through which he views and interprets the history of Western philosophy and theology. As stated earlier, Frame unashamedly lays all of his cards on the table: his analysis and evaluation of the history of philosophy and theology is done through his distinctly Christian worldview. Frame's perspective is also more specific than a Christian worldview; that is, he operates from a Van Tillian Reformed perspective. According to Frame, all of his writings have been "deeply influenced" by Van Til, so much so that Frame "explicitly" dedicated *History* to him. Frame also seeks to "reflect some particular emphases of Van Til's teachings" (p. xxvii).

There is certainly nothing wrong with Frame interpreting the history of Western philosophy and theology through Van Tillian lenses. Though I personally do not

identify with Van Til's approach to philosophy and theology, there is much that I appreciate within his work. However, many who do not identify with Van Tillian Reformed tradition will disagree with Frame's conclusions from his analysis and evaluation of philosophical and theological thought. What drives Van Til's thought is a dichotomy between the reason of a lost person (in rebellion to divine authority) and the reason of a Christian (under divine authority). Undergirding this dichotomy is the idea that human reason is rational only when under the authority of divine revelation. When human reason is not under God's authority, it is autonomous and therefore irrational. Thus, reasoning with the lost is essentially fruitless, for any appeal to reason on the part of the believer is to meet the lost on their shaky ground. Such an approach, in Van Til's mind, inevitably leads the believer to irrationality. One must, then, first begin with the issue of God's Word and his authority, for this is the only starting point from which one can come to God.

The problem with the Van Tillian dichotomy is that it virtually makes it pointless for one to reason with the lost. The Van Tillian must first convince the lost that they (the lost person) are operating under false presuppositions, which inform their wrong view of autonomy from God, which then inform their false view of Scripture. In doing so, the Van Tillian presumes what the unbeliever *actually* believes and seeks to convince them otherwise. In short, the Van Tillian and the unbeliever become like two ships passing in the night, unable to meet on grounds from which the lost can be led to understand the Gospel message and their state before God. In other words, for the Van Tillian, there is a fractured view of human reason that makes communication between the lost and the saved essentially impossible.

I would rather say that the issue is not with human reason first, but with the human will. It is first the will that is in rebellion against God; the will chooses what it desires, and reason follows. If this approach is correct (which I think it is), then human reason is not radically fractured in the Van Tillian sense; rather, one is able to meet unbelievers on their own grounds, for human reason is given by God and part of our very nature.

Nevertheless, John Frame's *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* is an excellent resource for one's personal library. Whether one is a Van Tillian or not, Frame's *History* places itself among the most important histories of Western thought in the English language. Frame's boldness to write from a distinctly Christian perspective is a breath of fresh air in a day when many believe that philosophy means laying aside Christian beliefs. Further, Frame rightly fits theology into the discussion of philosophy, for the two disciplines have been intimately intertwined since the days of Thales. To write a history of Western philosophy without reference to theology is to present an anemic account of the history of ideas. Another helpful history of Western philosophy is Frederick Copleston's classic nine volume series titled *A History of Philosophy* (Image Books). Copleston's series is an excellent one to have on hand as a resource, as Copleston displays an amazing depth of knowledge of a wide array of

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thinkers spread over two thousand years. Another excellent history of philosophy is IVP Academic's three-volume set titled *Christianity and Western Thought: A History of Philosophers, Ideas and Movements*. It provides a Christian view of the history of Western philosophy from a non-Van Tillian, evangelical perspective.

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**Day, J. Daniel. *Seeking the Face of God: Evangelical Worship Reconceived*. Macon, GA: Nurturing Faith, 2013, pp. 287, \$16, paperback.**

J. Daniel Day is the former Senior Professor of Christian Preaching and Worship at Campbell University Divinity School in North Carolina, and he is the Pastor Emeritus of First Baptist Church in Raleigh, NC. As a pastor, he also served congregations in Texas, Louisiana, Missouri, and Oklahoma. His publications and articles appear in *Ministry Matters*, *Review & Expositor*, *Baptists Today*, and the *Abingdon Preaching Annual*. Day is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University and earned both MDiv and PhD degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

In the preface, Day clearly states his aim in writing: worship is about God. In his view, evangelical worship has been shaped by models other than “seeking God’s face”—the understanding that God is the object and subject of Christian worship. Instead, most contemporary evangelical worship falls within one of three categories: the “evangelism model” which makes worship synonymous with an evangelistic meeting, designed to facilitate the conversion of the worshiper; the “inspiration model” designed to entertain and attract worshipers with only positive words, images, and songs; and the “experiential model,” rooted in classical Pentecostalism and the charismatic renewal of the 1960s, and designed to elicit a strong emotional response from the worshiper. All three have a continuing influence on the worship life of the average evangelical congregation, and each leaves both a positive and negative legacy on Evangelicalism.

As a remedy to the prevailing contemporary models, Day proposes a constructive retrieval of the past, particularly the first three hundred years of Christian worship. Acknowledging the limitations of space, and the inability to provide a comprehensive treatment of the history of Christian worship, Day uses the classic description of Sunday worship from Justin Martyr in the mid-second century as a springboard for the future, and encourages recovery of its dialogical, Trinitarian, and social nature. From there, he surveys the longer heritage of the Church’s worship, distilling it into seven “landmarks”—navigational aids for thinking theologically about worship—and

finally ending with a Gospel-centered model based on images from Jesus' life and ministry as a way of planning worship that "seeks God's face."

Of the three prevailing models, Day saves his strongest critique for "Praise and Worship" (P&W), a form of the "experiential model," descending from the neo-charismatic churches of the late twentieth century, reaching its fullest expression in Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) and the bifurcation of evangelical church services into "traditional" and "contemporary." "Music is unquestioningly the signature of the P&W tradition," writes Day (p. 74), so much so that the P&W tradition effectively relegates the entirety of worship to music. The tradition also creates a threefold service order of *worship time* (music, usually the first part of the service), *teaching time* (the sermon, usually the second part of the service), and *ministry time* (a time of prayer for individual needs) with little connection between them. Consequently, the P&W tradition is the origin for the idea of the musician as "worship leader."

The issues with the "experiential model" in general, and the P&W tradition in particular, are both terminological and foundational, according to Day. By restricting the understanding of worship to only the musical element, P&W creates a form of worship that bears no resemblance to historic patterns, one that "can be sustained only by a strained interpretation of select scriptures" (p. 76), such as Psalm 22:3, a key text in the P&W tradition. Because P&W is wholly dependent on music, the proclamation of the Word is effectively severed from worship and has nothing to do with the more "expressive dimension" of music. As Day points out, P&W is not the first time that music has been the source of contention in the history of Christian worship, but "when music becomes the driver of an entire tradition's worship, legitimate caution signs are appropriate" (p. 78).

In addition, Day asks if the P&W tradition's "praise priority" is fully justified. While emphasizing the experiential element in worship, P&W does so to the exclusion of certain emotions. Following the Psalms, does P&W have any place for lament, for example? In any case, "A baseline for Christian worship is: Are our feelings, our emotions to be our primary means of acknowledging our relationship with, knowledge of, and love for God? The history of Christian thought gives a resounding 'No' to this question" (p. 82). On the role of music in historical patterns of worship, especially in the Church's first three hundred years, Day writes, "It is also a sobering reminder that the explosive years of the Church's growth were not what might today be called musically rich—and certainly not performance oriented. Something other than the power of its music made [Christian] worship compelling" (p. 130).

Day seems less certain when writing about the role of *charismata* in Christian worship, especially glossolalia. While valued in certain quarters of P&W, Day claims that the *charismata* disappeared by the middle of the fourth century. His source for the claim, however, is an older monograph. More recent scholarship, particularly from Catholic liturgical theologians Kilian McDonnell and George Montague, shows

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otherwise (see esp. *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries*, Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 1991).

Seeking to recover the depth of early Christian worship for the modern era, Day provides seven “landmarks” for churches to pursue as a corrective to the prevailing evangelical models above. Here, Day moves from the historical to a synthesis of theology and praxis. His seventh landmark is particularly relevant to P&W-styled churches: “Christian worship will be holistic, giving legitimacy to mental, physical, and emotional responses to God’s revelation in Christ” (p. 181). Borrowing on the work of Swiss theologian J.J. von Allmen, Day outlines an order of worship shaped by the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ life. Recast in biblical language as *Bethlehem, Galilee, Jerusalem, and Olivet Moments*, students of liturgical studies will recognize the paradigm as the classic fourfold order of Gathering, Word, Table, Sending. “The biblical narrative,” writes Day, “is placed in a primary, shaping role for the Church’s worship...and places a theological frame about each moment of worship...the greatest gain...is that this order asks worship planners to work theologically rather than psychologically or pragmatically” (p. 196).

*Seeking the Face of God* is both academic and pastoral. Written in part as a text for seminary-level worship classes, it is equally valuable as a resource for musicians, pastors, and others involved in regular worship planning, as well as anyone interested in the biblical, historical, and theological models undergirding worship across evangelical churches. Students of biblical and theological studies, as well as pastoral ministry, will find in Day’s book a foundational text and robust survey on the state of evangelical worship at-large (and a treasure trove of footnotes for further exploration). Each chapter ends with discussion questions suitable for continuing reflection, a writing assignment, or study group.

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**Fuhr Jr., Richard Alan and Gary E. Yates. *The Message of the Twelve: Hearing the Voice of the Minor Prophets*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016, pp. 378, \$25, paperback.**

*The Message of the Twelve* is a careful and thorough introduction to the Minor Prophets and their possible relationship to one another. Authors Richard Fuhr (PhD, Southeastern), program director of Biblical Studies and assistant professor of religion at Liberty University in Virginia, and Gary Yates (PhD, Dallas), professor of Old Testament at Liberty University, collaborate to present the historical, geographical, and theological core of the Minor Prophets. *The Message of the Twelve*

is an excellent introductory work that will offer students a trove of information on Minor Prophets studies.

Fuhr and Yates' wrote *The Message of the Twelve* as an overview for "students, pastors, and all who seek to understand this neglected segment of God's Word" (p. xiv). The first four chapters seek to explain the historical background of the Twelve, the prophetic role of the Twelve, the literary elements of the Twelve, and then the canonical unity of the Twelve. The remainder of the work is a book by book commentary on each the prophets. These chapters feature an introduction focused on connection to the modern world, an evaluation of the literary structure of the book, a sectional exposition of the text, and then a reflection on the significance and application of the book. The authors close their work with a call for the Church to read and apply the Twelve to daily living.

Fuhr and Yates' work excels at balancing the competing demands of scholastic quality and general accessibility. This is most notably accomplished through interaction with, and abundant reference to, other works in the field of Minor Prophet studies. Fuhr and Yates maintain an undergraduate to graduate level of reading requirement in their book, but point readers toward deeper levels of scholarship available on the subject. Readers are made aware of issues concerning the unity of the Twelve and other debates concerning these books. Students are pointed towards further works for consideration in these areas. The authors masterfully work in maps, graphs, iconography, and visual representation of select concepts to heighten the accessibility of their work. These additions, such as the chiasmic structure of Amos 5:1-17 (p. 131), are frequent enough to be helpful, but not so present as to distract from the text of the book.

Another excellent aspect of the work is the author's ability to make the Minor Prophets relatable for the modern Church. Although woven throughout the commentary section of each book, Fuhr and Yates best make their point that these books are applicable and necessary for Church life in their closing chapter. The words of the prophets not only resonate in the past, but also for today as the Twelve "challenges the church with its ethical call for the people of God 'to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly' with God" (p. 322). The authors close on the thought that the Book of the Twelve should also call the Church to look to the future with hope for God's glorious consummation of His kingdom on earth. Making the Prophets accessible and relatable to modern life is no small feat, and doing such with the Minor Prophets is even more praise worthy. Fuhr and Yates are to be commended for their quality on the matter.

Critically, the book fails in some measure to live up to its title. Outside of the introductory four chapters on the Twelve, Fuhr and Yates do not often reflect on how an individual book is adding to or shaping the message of the Twelve. Each individual book is examined within its own context, but there is little to no expansion of how passages might work in light of the greater literary unity. It

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seems that there would be a place for Fuhr and Yates to include a final closing section in each book's chapter on how that book contributes to the overall whole. Such an addition would further the argument and utility of the work. Lacking that, the reader is left wanting on this matter. Such a weakness is understandable in an introductory work, and does not ultimately remove much utility from the book, but it does remain an area for possible improvement.

Throughout *The Message of the Twelve* students are brought into conversation with the various Minor Prophets. More than a casual commentary, Fuhr and Yates investigate the Book of the Twelve and attempt to introduce the historical, lexical, and contextual aspects at play with each book. Their work serves as an excellent introduction to each of the books, and includes numerous references and citations of other works for students to continue on with. Biblical and theological students will be engaged by the clear and understandable writing, and challenged to broaden their understanding and appreciation of this oft neglected corner of the Old Testament. Fuhr and Yates fulfill their desire excellently in showing that "the prophets restore a vision of God's immensity and challenge us to worship and revere him above all else" (p. xiv).

*The Message of the Twelve* seeks to introduce readers to the unity of the Twelve and the content therein. Students should not rely though on this work as their only source for more academically focused work. Speaking to the unity of the Twelve, students should wrestle with their acceptance of such a theory. For the dissenting view noted by Fuhr and Yates, see Ben Zvi "Twelve Prophetic Books of 'The Twelve'" in *Forming Prophetic Literature* (Sheffield, 1996). For a positive view see either House's *The Unity of the Twelve* (Sheffield, 1990) or Rendtorff's "How To Read the Book of the Twelve as a Theological Unity" in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve* (SBL, 2000). For a substantive listing of current works on the Twelve, either in part or whole, students should consult the bibliography of *The Message of the Twelve* as it lists applicable commentaries and monographs.

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**Piper, John. *A Peculiar Glory: How the Christian Scriptures Reveal Their Complete Truthfulness*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016, pp. 304, \$24.99, hardcover.**

John Piper (DTheol, University of Munich) served for 33 years as pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN. He is the founder of [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org) and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary. Over the years, Piper has written over 50 books, each dedicated to connecting man's joy and satisfaction with the glory of God.

*A Peculiar Glory* is no exception. In this most recent book, Piper connects certainty of mind in the truthfulness of the word of God with the direct revelation of God's glory through the Christian scriptures. His argument is that the truthfulness of the Word of God is self-attesting as God's glory shines through with a peculiar light, enlightening the mind and satisfying the soul.

In summary, Piper's argument is a defense of verbal-plenary inerrancy. He argues for the complete truthfulness of the Old and New Testaments in all they claim. However, the distinctiveness of Piper's project is to provide a warrant for the believer's certainty and trust in this claim. How can one come to know (with certainty) the truthfulness of the Word of God? The warrant he offers is that "In and through the Scriptures, we see the glory of God" (p. 13). As the apostles saw God's glory in Christ face-to-face (cf. 1 John 1:3), so "we can see through their words" (p. 13). Faith is not a leap in the dark but an act of warranted trust grounded in our having seen directly the glory of God revealed through the word of God illuminated by the Holy Spirit. This glory is an objective and self-attesting reality. As he argues in the final part of this book, this glory is of a peculiar nature. The warrant of well-grounded faith is in the "utterly unique glory of Jesus Christ" (p. 17). This glory is the paradox of transcendence and meekness found in Christ, which matches the template of humankind's innate knowledge of God (c.f. Romans 1:19-21). When the Holy Spirit enlightens our eyes to this glory through the Word of God, we can have certainty in the knowledge of God.

The book breaks down into five parts. Part I begins with Piper's personal story. Beginning with the premise that "everyone is standing somewhere" theologically. That is, everyone stands in relationship to God and the Scriptures whether in ignorance, skepticism, doubt, or belief. Piper clarifies the "somewhere" from which he writes this book by relaying the story of his life raised in a Bible-believing home up through to his formal education and graduate work in Germany. Along the way, he experienced objections to his view of the Scriptures. He describes an experience, not of holding onto his view of the Bible, but of his view of the Bible holding onto him (p. 25). This is where he defines his view. The place where he stands and the starting point for the argument of his book is a solidly conservative belief in the inerrancy of Scriptures and their "final authority in testing all claims about what is true and what is right" (p. 35).

Parts II (Chs 2-4) and III (Chs 5-7) offer a somewhat typically evangelical defense of canon of the Old and New Testaments. In Part II, he defines the canon as the Old and New Testaments as well as providing a textual critical case that the OT and NT are the words of the biblical authors. Part III (Chs 5-7) treats the internal claims of the Scriptures for the Scriptures. This argument begins with the OT authors as "actors on the stage of the Old Testament" (p. 90). That is, they are conscious that God is speaking to them and through them, but are not consciously commenting on Scripture as such. Rather, God was speaking to people through people using human language. Building on the examples of Moses and the Prophets, Piper then argues that God "intends for there to be a written form of this divine revelation" (pp. 94-96), and as the Hebrew

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Canon is the collection of such writings, it comes with the implicit claim of complete truthfulness. The remainder of his argument for the New Testament is Christocentric as Jesus is “the Old Testament-fulfilling, divinely sent Messiah” (p. 124) and who confers his authority upon his apostles and anoints them with his Spirit.

Parts IV (Chs 8-11) and V (Chs 12-17) constitute the heart and distinctiveness of this book. Having defended the claim that the Old and New Testaments are the authoritative and true word of God, Piper turns to build his case for well-grounded certainty in their truthfulness. His concern is to liberate them from the burden of historical reasoning. That is, he sees modern historical scholarship as insufficient for establishing the truthfulness of the Scriptures. He is at pains to clarify that this is not because there are no good historical reasons to believe in the scriptural claims, or that there is no value or benefit in historical scholarship, but that most people in the world do not possess the training, resources, or time to ground their faith in such arguments. “And yet,” he says, “the Bible assumes that those who hear the gospel may know the truth of it and may stake their lives on it” (p. 130). Moreover, historical arguments only “produce probable results...but faith needs certainty” (p. 131).

Here he—in classic Piper fashion—turns to Jonathan Edwards, Blaise Pascal, and John Calvin. He uses Edwards’ exposition of 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 to show that the ‘just ground’ for saving faith is the ability “to see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Spiritual sight (granted by God) provides the warrant of well-grounded faith. It is not inference from historical reasoning, but direct experience or vision of the glory of God. Piper uses Pascal’s Wager to illustrate that faith is not a guess made in ignorance, but rather a point of decision one makes based on well-grounded trust. Finally, he uses Calvin to answer the question of how the average person might attain such well-grounded certainty in the Word of God. The answer is the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures will bring about a saving knowledge of God when the Holy Spirit persuades. As Piper concludes, “The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ is visible in the word of God only to those into whose hearts the creator of the universe says, ‘Let there be light’” (p. 191).

The final part (V) concludes by describing the peculiar glory of God revealed in the Scriptures. Here Piper focuses on the distinctive character revealed in Christ. The certainty of mind comes because the distinctive character of this revelation matches or rings true with the innate and intuitive knowledge of God every human possesses (Romans 1:19-21).

There are many strengths to this book overall. First, Piper wrestles with an important question trying to ground a certainty of belief for those whom the fruits of historical research are not available. Moreover, he wrestles with problem of submitting the Scriptures to the validation of historical criticism, which is a burden of verbal-plenary inerrancy. Here Piper attempts to ground the truthfulness of the Scriptures in an encounter with the glory of God. The Scriptures are a place of encounter. They are

the place where we meet God. This emphasis does help to explain how the Scriptures can be accessible for the average person and not only the historian. It helps to correct the modern tendency to dissect the Bible as a book of history to handle with the tools of modern science and historiography. Rather, they are the place to grow in the knowledge of God with all its resulting faith and joy.

There are at least three critiques to offer. First, there are few footnotes in this book later than the 1990's. In cases where contemporary scholars are cited, they are mostly as a kind of "if you're interested in this question, see these other books" manner. By cutting himself off from contemporary scholarship and refusing to engage any of the contemporary debates, the book is limited in its helpfulness for the contemporary Christian wrestling with contemporary linguistics, theories of truth, trajectory hermeneutics, or concepts like incarnational views of the Scripture. The argument for verbal plenary inerrancy is really a restatement of Evangelical arguments from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Second, the theses from Parts IV and V may not adequately provide ground for the claims in the first three. That is, his argument that the truthfulness of the Bible is self-attesting as one encounters the peculiar Glory of God, seems to be quite at home with non-inerrantist views of Scripture. By using experiential and consequentialist language to describe the certainty of trust in the Bible, it would seem infallible, incarnational, neo-orthodox, or reader-response views of the Bible may fit quite comfortably, leaving an argument for inerrancy weakened or unnecessary.

Finally, one remains without resource when it comes to counter claims about the nature of Scripture. For example, if the Christian grounds the truthfulness and authority of Scripture in their personal sight or vision of the glory of God, what do they do when they encounter the Mormon's claim to have encountered God in their expanded canon? How does one counter the atheist's experience reading the Scriptures when they see in their pages a capricious God who appears to be acting like other tribal deities? Can we say the Scriptures are self-attesting in this way, or must we engage other paths to certainty?

This book is pastoral in nature. It will serve the Church as so many books of its purpose have done in the past. It improves upon them as an encouragement to pursue the knowledge and the glory of God through the Scriptures actively and with faithfulness. It is a word of caution against a relationally detached reading of Scripture, and is an exhortation to know and delight in the glory of God through it. However, it suffers in its failure to engage with many of the contemporary questions faced by a generation that has tended to move beyond the inerrancy debate.

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**Radner, Ephraim. *A Time to Keep: Theology, Mortality, and the Shape of Human Life*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016, pp. 304, \$49.95, hardback.**

The significance and meaning of the *anthropos* has and continues to capture the imagination of ancient and contemporary reflections. Several recent reflections highlight human constitution, the afterlife, sexuality, and race, among others. Ephraim Radner's *A Time to Keep* touches on these important topics, but his approach is unique. Radner claims that an understanding of humanity must take into account the theological nature of time. Radner makes an important contribution that advances a rich vision of humanity situated in the scriptural story, guided by various theological authorities, and informed by the social sciences.

Radner advances the argument that humans are relational (i.e., filiated) beings shaped and molded by God's design of creation, redemption, and death. On that basis, he exhorts us to count our days. Our days are numbered as creatures. Between birth and death, we have a vocation and purpose. Life, death, toil and generative relationship shapes and forms the patterns of human living (p. 16). Radner sees this reality in the "figural" portrayal of redemption in "tunics of skins" or clothes, which is a metaphor for the shape of life, reflecting what God did at creation when giving humans skin. After the Fall of Adam and Eve, God made clothes as a way to protect humanity in the world, prefiguring what God does in Christ (see especially 2 Corinthians 5:1-10). It signifies the frailty and humility of human life, yet it also signifies God's actions toward humans as the means by which we live, and how we understand humanity. For Radner, the temporal frame in which we live is given by God not as an *ad-hoc* aspect to life, but as the way in which God reveals himself to his human creation.

With all of Radner's focus on mortality and the immanent realm, it is tempting to think that he has no place for the afterlife and the transcendent realm. Such a conclusion would not fill out a complete picture. In line with Charles Taylor's recent research, for example, Radner rejects the modern tendency to link the immanent of meaning to the denial of the afterlife. The immanent is suffused with meaning, instead. As a divine gift, human vocation is not purely immanent but transcendent. Radner states it well: "This is in part what I will be arguing when it comes to the areas of maturation, family, and work: their character as aspects of survival is, for the creature, precisely what makes them transcendent, and not purely immanent, goods" (p. 34). Participation in the framework God establishes, then, provides the means by which to develop transcendent meaning—value and character. He illustrates the dual nature quite well in his discussion of the Eucharist (i.e., the Lord's Supper; the anti-type for all meals as signs of life) where we partake of divinity through the flesh (pp. 213-18). The discussion is rich with symbolic and sacramental meaning, but he does not venture far enough in parsing out a sacramental ontology of participation. There is some room for suggesting that Radner could say a bit more about participation

and activity in other-worldly reality. For example, much of what Radner advances is quite compatible with platonic leaning views of the world in which all of reality is connected in a hierarchy of being leading to God with its attending emphases on the immaterial or heavenly realities. The talk of souls and access to another world (e.g., heaven) is not completely out of place in Radner's discussion (pp. 225-27), but he is generally weary of separating the two as he finds in theologians like René Descartes. Some might find his emphasis on the immanent a bit too strong; they might prefer to highlight the rich reality of the mental life as signifying and pointing to a higher reality that grounds and sustains the present material reality. While Radner might characterize substantial dualism as inhabiting a separation, many like myself would disagree, highlighting the integrative functional nature of both soul and body—which is, arguably, capable of accounting for both the “filial” and heavenly nature of Christian anthropology.

Radner discusses several other worthwhile, albeit, surprising and fruitful topics. He offers the reader careful discussions of bodily fluids and how it fits in the bodily nature of humanity (pp. 97-99). He also puts forward a thoughtful argument against homosexuality in the context of the scriptural pattern of generative life. He argues from a common theological reading of Genesis 2:24 that the one flesh union not only accounts for the two (male and female) that unite sexually, but that the union generates a third party. According to Radner, to go against such filial patterns would miss the shape of our sexual lives in the context of God's design.

As far as constructive theology goes, Radner's *A Time To Keep* is one the most significant pieces I have read in several years. The strength of his discussion rests in his expounding on the embodied life of the human. While there are other elements worth developing, his study helpfully keeps in perspective our life as creatures. Although not an introductory text, his book is an excellent complement to other works in theological anthropology and Christian ethics, given its emphasis on the frail bodily life of humans. It could serve as a useful text in biblical or theological anthropology at the upper-undergraduate level and at the graduate level. Finally, evangelical Christians will find much that is worth their attention as they develop their theologies of the body, death, and Christian living.

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**Fujimura, Makoto. *Silence and Beauty: Hidden Faith Born of Suffering*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2016, pp. 261, \$26, hardback.**

Makoto Fujimura is a distinguished contemporary visual artist, specializing in a traditional Japanese style of painting known as *nihonga*. As the founder of the International Arts Movement and the director of the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts at Fuller Theological Seminary, Fujimura is a prominent voice in the field of theology and the arts. He has written multiple books in this field, including *Refractions: A Journey of Faith, Art and Culture* (NavPress, 2009) and *Culture Care* (Fujimura Institute and International Arts Movement, 2014). In *Silence and Beauty*, Fujimura interacts with Shusaku Endo's acclaimed twentieth-century novel, *Silence*, to explore the nature of faith and grace in the midst of failure—and to engage with philosophical issues such as the problem of evil and the hiddenness of God in times of suffering (pp. 27-28).

For Fujimura, Endo's novel grants insight into the nature of Japanese culture, aesthetics, and Christianity. The novel chronicles the apostasy of seventeenth-century Christian missionaries to Japan who publicly renounced Christ by stomping on *fumi-e*, which are "relief bronze sculptures [of Jesus and Mary]" (p. 23). Those who did not step on these images were often killed or tortured (p. 30). This blot on Japanese history has resulted in what Fujimura calls a "*fumi-e* culture" in Japan—that is, "a culture of groupthink guided by invisible strands of codes of honor" (p. 24). Fujimura elaborated that "through visible and invisible forms this [culture] can cause many forms of . . . bullying [and] has excluded those who do not fit in" (p. 24). As such, hiddenness and ambiguity are cultural values in Japan, for if one openly refuses to conform to the surrounding culture, he/she risks being cut off from that culture (p. 72). Hence, though they experience an underlying shame for their ancestors' apostasy, Christians in Japan feel pressure to conform publicly to cultural expectations while keeping their faith hidden (pp. 40, 44). Fujimura points to Christ, the Suffering Servant, as the only solution to this *fumi-e* culture (p. 90), arguing that "the Christian gospel . . . can liberate us all from the grip of fear, trauma and death" (p. 69).

Part theology/philosophy, part literary criticism, and part personal memoir, Fujimura's *Silence and Beauty* is a fascinating read, providing "flesh and bone" to concepts that might otherwise be highly intellectual and abstract—such as the problem of evil and the freedom of the will. His work is particularly refreshing because of the high value that Fujimura places on art in the life of a believer. For example, Fujimura's own Christian conversion came after reading William Blake's epic poem *Jerusalem* (p. 100). Fujimura's personal story at this point is reminiscent of C. S. Lewis's testimony of the power of literature to reveal the longing in one's heart to be restored to Christ.

Fujimura is also helpful in his admonition for artists to deal with the dark side of reality (p. 192). This admonition is a good one for contemporary Christians to hear.

Christian music and storytelling tend to focus on “family friendly” and “uplifting” subject matters and in so doing, can possibly miss out on the glory of the gospel itself. Until one recognizes the brokenness of the world around him and of his own soul, he cannot truly experience the beauty of God’s grace.

Nevertheless, a few sections of the book give one pause, particularly with respect to Fujimura’s treatment of apostasy. Fujimura offers an excellent exposition of the fallout of a *fumi-e* culture, showing the trauma that results for those who apostatize or otherwise violate their conscience (p. 103). Especially haunting is Fujimura’s explanation that many Japanese Christians ultimately decided to renounce their faith publicly not to save their own lives, but rather to save the lives of others (p. 122). But Fujimura’s discussion becomes problematic when he seemingly suggests that Father Rodrigues, the main character of Endo’s *Silence*, is an example of faith because Father Rodrigues tramples on the *fumi-e* to spare others from suffering (p. 147). Fujimura even calls Father Rodrigues’s action “beautiful,” as it accompanies “the most powerful expression of the voice of Christ in Japanese literature” (p. 150). Moreover, according to Fujimura, through this experience, Father Rodrigues would “learn [the Japanese] art of hiding [one’s] faith” (p. 151; see also p. 207).

Now, certainly, God’s grace is great enough even to restore those who have denied Christ—the Apostle Peter is the perfect example. And admittedly, the Western reader cannot even begin to imagine the complicated choices believers in a persecuted context must face on a daily basis. But Fujimura goes so far as to suggest that one could be a “crypto-Christian” and continue to “step on the *fumi-e* every New Year’s Day” (p. 185). This mentality appears to run counter to the gravity of apostasy as revealed in Scripture. Jesus stated, “Whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father” (Matt 10:33; see also Mark 8:38, 2 Tim 2:12). Moreover, Hebrews 6:4-6 speaks of the terrifying fate of those who apostatize. Fujimura’s sympathy for human weakness and his desire for all to know the grace of God are to be commended, but to suggest that one could repeatedly and publicly deny Christ in order to escape death and yet continue to follow Christ privately is a clear violation of the teaching of the New Testament. Though in the context of the novel, Father Rodrigues acts as a Christ figure by laying down his own well-being for the lives of others, a greater picture of love would have been for him to hold fast in the midst of persecution, demonstrating to his followers that their hope is not in this present life but rather in the life to come.

Nonetheless, *Silence and Beauty* is a worthy read, benefiting artists and theologians alike. So many books speak of the need for theological engagement with the arts, but Fujimura is actually doing it, demonstrating how the arts can play an important role in a believer’s life and spiritual development. For further insight into the relationship between theology and the arts, one may also want to read Leland Ryken’s *The Liberated Imagination: Thinking Christianly about the Arts* (Wipf & Stock, 1989), Steven R. Guthrie’s *Creator Spirit: The Holy Spirit and the Art of*

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*Becoming Human* (Baker Academic, 2011), and Gene Edward Veith, Jr.'s *State of the Arts: From Bezalel to Mapplethorpe* (Crossway, 1991).

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**Crisp, Oliver D. and Fred Sanders. *Locating Atonement: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015, pp. 256, \$26.99, paperback.**

*Locating Atonement* is an edited volume drawing together several highly respected theologians and philosophers for the sake of determining where a theory of atonement might conceptually intersect with other prominent theological topics (e.g. the Eucharist, an account of the ascension, or a doctrine of divine wrath). The editors, Oliver Crisp (*Fuller Theological Seminary*) and Fred Sanders (*Biola University*), are both accomplished systematic theologians in their own right and conversant with the movement of analytic theology represented by several of the articles contained in this volume. In what follows, I will focus on the contributions of Benjamin Myers (*Charles Sturt University*) and Eleonore Stump (*Saint Louis University*), whose articles represent well the scholarly rigor of the volume as a whole.

In “The Patristic Atonement Model,” Myers attempts to develop a model of the atonement, which expounds the views of the patristics and serves as an alternative to the *Christus Victor* model advanced by Gustaf Aulén. Myers offers this alternative to Aulén’s model because the latter model has recently come under criticism by several scholars who claim that Aulén has *not* really offered a model, but rather, a mere restatement of the doctrine of atonement. *Models* of atonement, Aulén’s critics claim, ought to *explain* atonement. And as a result, the success of Myers’s alternative model depends on its ability to illuminate the *mechanism* by which atonement is achieved. That is, it depends on how well the model he advances *explains* the mechanics of atonement.

As Myers presents the patristic model, there are four metaphysical theses (p. 73) which the fathers endorsed: (i) *realism* concerning human nature, (ii) a construal of death as a *privation* of being, (iii) assent to divine *impassibility*, and (iv) the claim that the mechanics of the hypostatic union are *unknowable*. The mechanism by which atonement is achieved is then identified as the pouring out of divine life into the universal human nature such that “the privation is filled, i.e., cancelled out” (p. 73). Although there is much more by way of nuance to Myers’s account of the patristic model, the metaphysical theses and mechanism above provide enough for brief comment.

First, it is worth noting that the appeal to mystery concerning the hypostatic union presents a considerable obstacle for the success of this model, for surely some understanding of the relationship between the divine and human natures of Christ is necessary for understanding how Christ's divine life might be communicated to all humanity through the medium of an abstract universal human nature. Moreover, depending on the details of the participation relation, which holds between each particular human and the universal Humanity, this model may succumb to the same shortcoming as Aulén's model; namely, that the putative model merely re-describes, rather than illuminates, how atonement was achieved. Second, the mechanism itself remains fairly enigmatic. Myers does offer an analogy to help us understand the mechanism: as light dispels darkness so does the immutable divine life dispel death (pp. 79-80). However, more needs to be said concerning the relations between light and darkness and how this example is supposed to clarify the defeat of death. Myers also describes the atoning action of Christ as involving a *pouring out* of divine life to *fill* the privation of being that is death, but this, as far as I can tell, is merely a restatement of the atonement using spatial terms to describe a non-spatial reality. As a result, Myers has, in my view, fallen short of his goal of offering a robust model of patristic thought on the atonement. However, if we view his contribution as programmatic, then insightful close readings of several historical texts and a penetrating analysis of Aulén's original model make this article well-worth the read.

Stump's ecumenical "Atonement and Eucharist" details how the effects of the atonement might carry over into the practice of taking the Eucharist. To help us see this, Stump suggests that we consider the Eucharist as a replay of the story of the atonement. Stories or narratives, on her account, provide access to a sort of second-person knowledge, which enables a reader to develop a degree of closeness with the characters in the story. When a story involves historical events, a reader can then develop personal closeness with *actual* historical characters, and when the historical characters also exist in the present, a more meaningful personal closeness with that actual person becomes possible through the medium of the story. Stump's account, then, is this: to take the Eucharist is to approach the story of Christ's death, burial and resurrection anew, providing a chance for a deepened relationship with God each time the Eucharist is distributed.

While it is fair to note that on Stump's minimal account, *any medium*, which displays meaningfully a reenactment of the atonement story could in principle produce mutual closeness with God, no other medium was explicitly instituted by Jesus for this purpose. And at the very least, as Stump notes, any Christian tradition endorsing the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist will have reason to claim that no other medium *could* accomplish precisely what the Eucharist accomplishes, contrary to the above sentiment (p. 225).

One minor point that ought to be addressed, I think, concerns the connection between the Eucharist and a doctrine of *perseverance*. Stump claims that receiving

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the Eucharist deepens the mutual closeness between a Christian and her God, with the effect that she will be more likely to persevere, that is, not give up on sanctification (p. 224). This much seems relatively uncontroversial. However, she goes on to claim that because two wills are always involved in the sanctification process, each Christian “retains the possibility of returning to her original resistance to God” (p. 219). While I agree with this point, I do not believe Stump has said enough to establish it. Two further worries should be addressed: (i) what kind of possibility does she intend to claim here (e.g. psychological, epistemic, metaphysical, etc.) and (ii) given that perseverance comes after justification (i.e. the point at which a Christian has *given their consent* to join God’s redemptive plan), why should we assume God’s interaction with our wills would remain unchanged under these new conditions? Alternatively, how does the interplay between God’s will and the Christian’s will change the permissibility, or possibility, of certain actions on God’s part which *prior to justification* would have counted as God impermissibly violating the will of the Christian? Clarifying these two things would further tighten an already excellent and thoughtful piece.

As a brief perusal of the literature on atonement would indicate, theories of atonement have come under increasingly critical scrutiny. The contributors of *Locating Atonement* have taken this scrutiny seriously both by responding to objections and broadening the conceptual territory with which one must grapple in order to more firmly grasp the nature and implications of the atonement. As a result, students seeking both sympathetic and dissenting voices concerning a range of atonement views will leave satisfied, and the works therein will ably direct students concerning the most important contributions to the atonement, both those historical and those soon to come.

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**Porter, Stanley E., Jeffrey T. Reed, and Matthew Brook O’Donnell. *Fundamentals of New Testament Greek*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. pp. 466, \$40, hardcover.**

When one considers the quantity of elementary and advanced Greek grammars that have been published in the last hundred years, it is no surprise that the teaching of Greek has become such a refined art. No matter where someone goes to learn Biblical Greek, odds are they learned it through a similar methodology. What Porter, Reed, and O’Donnell set out to do in *Fundamentals of New Testament Greek* is continue to refine the advances made over the past hundred years. The very nature of Porter’s grammar is pedagogical. In his introduction he states that:

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All beginning grammar books are incomplete in their coverage of the language they introduce. In fact, grammar books often present half-truths (even lies!) about the language that we have seen needed correcting in second-year classes. We trust that this text contains fewer such statements than others. In an effort to minimize incompleteness, we have included fuller and more comprehensive discussions, definitions, and presentation of material than are usually found in other beginning grammars. (p. xii)

Porter then lists the goals he sets out to accomplish such as: introducing morphology, elementary syntax, useful exercises, vocabulary in occurrence order, illustrating and fostering care for the language, and exemplifying good scholarly work in the Greek New Testament (GNT) as beneficial for “greater spiritual maturity and personal piety.” (p. xii) Porter and his fellow authors have executed this goal with excellence. Their sensitivity to the obvious learning curve in studying any language is apparent in each chapter. The vast vocabulary covered (950 words) and the concepts integrated into his grammar make it a *tour de force* of elementary Greek grammars. In my estimation, this grammar is underutilized and overlooked, but the vast quantity of material covered ought to ensure its more universal integration into seminary classes.

The grammar is laid out with great simplicity, and much like any grammar it has a helpful introduction attempting to distinguish it from other grammars already out there. The rest of the book is laid out in 30 chapters in order to fit into a normal 2 semester schedule. In overall structure there is little that is unique about the grammar, the only exception being a parsing guide in the beginning of the book and a “concepts” section in each chapter. The parsing guide is extremely helpful and if students work to put this section to memory, working through the grammar will be much easier. The concepts section defines terminology used within the chapter before the chapter begins, almost like a short glossary at the beginning of the chapter. He also lays out the vocabulary necessary for each chapter in order to integrate the vocabulary into the student’s learning more fluidly.

Observing the layout, the ordering of material within the grammar is very unique. The sequence the material is presented in is one of the most useful features of the grammar – it is what Porter finds most useful to group together. Chapter 1 is obviously the alphabet, but he integrates contract vowel rules and accent rules, two concepts that are typically taught much later in many grammars. In his discussion about prepositions he talks about verbless clauses, seeking a more holistic approach to sentence structure for his students. Porter’s method of teaching the verb is also worth mentioning. This may prove difficult for someone coming with a background in other grammars, but Porter stays true to his convictions and separates the verbs based on the aspectual identity. One of the more helpful aspects of Porter’s work in this grammar is the integration of syntax. This is beneficial for a number of reasons, but most importantly, students will not be blindsided by intermediate/advanced grammars after using this book. One of the most frequent complaints I hear from

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students is not seeing the immediate practicality and I believe this is because of all the hidden gems in Greek that are reserved for advanced classes/grammars. This is remedied by Porter in his grammar.

Although the integration of syntax and complex grammatical concepts is helpful to the student of New Testament Greek, the greatest deficiency I have found within Porter's grammar is the amount of knowledge he assumes that the student has. For instance, in every chapter there is excursus information that is blocked off. In these sections the authors explain further syntactical issues, as per Systemic functional linguistics, or further incorporating verbal aspect, so much so that in these areas it gives a more intermediate feel to the grammar. Although, their intention to be more integrative is good, at times, this could be overwhelming for a student who has never learned another language, let alone a dead one. This is a pretty significant issue considering the purpose of the grammar is to make this an accessible and easy-to-use grammar. Many Greek professors bemoan the fact that most students do not know English grammar well enough to dig deep into Greek at the elementary level. If these are fair concerns, then Porter's grammar is in need of simplifying the areas of linguistics and grammar. Even things like verbal aspect take diligent time and effort to integrate into one's understanding. Therefore, greater attention will be necessary to understand where this is applied in his grammatical explanations.

This grammar has been out for a long time now and has been used by many students and scholars. This being said, Dr. Porter's influence in Greek grammar and linguistics cannot be overstated, and this grammar's task cannot go unappreciated. His grammar is one of the best and most comprehensive examinations of Greek grammar and linguistics written from the standpoint of an elementary grammar. Anyone seeking to either learn, relearn, or strengthen their study of Greek will benefit and grow in their study. This grammar will adequately prepare students to go further into the world of Greek, and enable them on their path to read the GNT with fluidity and ease. I would recommend this grammar to anyone seeking to learn Greek.

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**Nogalski, James D. *Interpreting Prophetic Literature: Historical and Exegetical Tools for Reading the Prophets*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015, pp. xi + 125, \$25, paperback.**

James Nogalski (Dr. Theol., University of Zürich) is Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in Religion at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Nogalski has written extensively on prophetic literature with works such as his two volume

commentary *The Book of the Twelve* (Smyth and Helwys, 2011) and *Literary Precursors to the Book of the Twelve* (De Gruyter, 1993). Moreover, Nogalski has translated four books into English from German which include *Old Testament Exegesis: A Guide to the Methodology* (Scholars Press, 1998) and *The Theological Witness of Prophetic Books* (Chalice Press, 2000).

In *Interpreting Prophetic Literature* Nogalski sets out to write a primer on prophetic literature which is accessible to a novice student. Nogalski's introduction is unique in that he shifts his focus away from historical backgrounds, which is normally the locus of the prophetic section in introductions, and instead pivots his book in order, "to [supplement] such introductions by focusing upon the art of reading prophetic literature" (p. 2). Nogalski accomplishes this by examining the different formulae of oracles, defining the key places and people, exhibiting contextual analysis, indicating theological themes, and developing a hermeneutical approach for modern day application.

Nogalski wants to correct the two main shortcomings of other exegetical introductions, namely that they assume a working knowledge of Hebrew and focus on the exegetical methodology of narrative literature. Most introductions downplay prophetic speeches, forms, and collections, which results in "[a] struggle to understand the poetry and the rhetorical logic of smaller and larger units within the prophetic writings" (p. 1). Nogalski overcomes this struggle and fills the gap in many ways. In chapter 2 Nogalski familiarizes his reader with the exegetical tools associated with rhetorical analysis in the prophetic texts. By the end of the chapter, the reader is able to delineate textual units based upon the recognition of: a) formulaic markers that begin and end oracles, b) shifts in the speaker and audience of oracles, and c) the four types of literary parallelism (synonymous, antithetical, stair-step, and chiasmic).

Chapter 3 covers the key places, people, and terms found in prophetic literature. This section is the heaviest on historical backgrounds; however, more is done in explaining each concept within their greater associative and theological framework. An example is Nineveh's use as a hyperbolic symbol for all evildoers instead of solely functioning as a geographical location in Jonah.

Chapter 4 contains a list of different oracle and narrative forms that are the most common in prophetic literature. As in the previous sections, Nogalski's brief statements are seen as a gateway into the larger world of prophetic literature studies. His supplemental model for this book allows him to introduce concisely major literary forms and to provide expectations when a student reads more in-depth work on specific prophetic sections.

In chapter 5 Nogalski creates a break in the methodology of studying small units and establishes his analytical method for observing the contextual relationships between the individual units detected from the tools in chapters 1-4. Although categorized a bit differently, the various ruminations on formulae, theological themes, and metaphors observed in the smaller units work in similar ways to the larger

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strategy of the prophetic books. The final section is a case study on the composition of Amos, and the interpretive methods used by the final redactor/s to place the four major sections of the book in their present form.

Nogalski's penultimate chapter contains the various nuances in the two major themes found in prophetic literature: judgment and hope. First, the causes for judgment on both the nations of Israel and Judah and on other, foreign nations are categorized under issues in social justice, ethical violations, and covenant breaking. Second, the hope offered after judgment is organized by the themes of physical and political restoration, covenant renewal, and cultic revitalization.

The final chapter is designed to orient the reader toward the important process of hermeneutics. Although concise, Nogalski's section on adapting the prophetic text contains thoughtful pastoral concerns. The author's hermeneutical approach begins with a pastor or teacher properly communicating original context, applicable theology, and contemporary analogies. For Nogalski teaching and applying the prophetic text is risky; however, the greater risk is avoiding the applicable message of the biblical prophets and "losing the ability to speak boldly to issues of importance for both the community of faith and the culture at large" (p. 122).

*Interpreting Prophetic Literature* distinguishes itself from other exegetical textbooks in that it successfully supplements introductions that focus on historical backgrounds and provides his audience access to the interpretation of the prophetic texts without any knowledge of biblical Hebrew. This book is best used in an upper level undergraduate classroom along with a textbook in historical backgrounds, or at the graduate level along with a technical commentary. Moreover, *Interpreting Prophetic Literature* is so accessible that pastors could use this with their congregations in Sunday school or Bible study settings as an introduction to interpreting prophetic literature.

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**Stanley N. Gundry, series editor for the *Counterpoints Series*, and Amy E. Black, general editor. *Five Views on The Church and Politics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015, pp 240, \$19.99, softcover.**

Zondervan's Counterpoints series exists to provide a forum for Christians to discuss and critique different views on important biblical, theological, and cultural issues. This volume on the relationship between the church and politics seeks to navigate this challenging topic with clarity and substantive dialogue. The five views represented are

the Anabaptist (or Separationist), the Lutheran (or Paradoxical), the Black Church (or Prophetic), the Reformed (Transformationist), and the Catholic (or Synthetic).

Amy E. Black (Ph.D., Massachusetts Institute of Technology) serves as the general editor of this volume, and her contribution is especially helpful to students engaging this discussion. Black is Professor of Political Science at Wheaton College and is a prolific author of several noteworthy books and articles. Black's introductory essay succinctly summarizes the wide array of responses centuries of Christians have offered in response to one's allegiance to Christ and the rights and responsibilities that earthly citizenship requires. Black carefully articulates the four major theological traditions (Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran, and Anabaptist) who have a distinctive set of teachings or values corresponding to what may loosely be called a political theology. The addition of the Black Church tradition is warranted because it is specifically rooted within the American experience, and it represents a "distinctive theological perspective, not to mention forms of communal practice, that is too often discussed in isolation or simply ignored" (p. 8). Black's introductory essay then summarizes the organizational structure of the book. Each view is presented and defended by a specific expert, and the other participants dialogue with responses and/or rebuttals to each presented position. Additionally, each presenter reacts to a case study on domestic poverty. This assignment further illuminates the similarities and differences these positions have regarding the same scenario.

Thomas W. Heilke (Ph.D., Duke University) presents the Anabaptist view. Heilke is the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Professor of Political Science at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan. In addition to this volume, Heilke is author, co-author, or co-editor of more than forty publications. The Anabaptist view, among those presented in this volume, espouses the most limited view of Christian involvement in politics. Heilke's contribution is a nuanced presentation of the Anabaptist position. The uninformed reader unaware of Anabaptist beginnings will appreciate Heilke's helpful approach to his position. He briefly recounts Anabaptist origins by giving the specific date (January 21, 1525) and the historical significance of their fateful beginning. On that day, the "re-baptism" of George Blaurock, a Roman Catholic priest, by the son of a Zurich patrician, Conrad Blaurock, ignited implications far greater than these participants probably realized (p. 21). According to Heilke, within ten years of this first baptism, "nearly the entire first generation of Anabaptist leaders had been executed" (p. 21). These gruesome beginnings linger throughout the development of Anabaptist thought, including its engagement to political movements and authorities.

Heilke's presentation describes the tenets of Anabaptist identity and its theological distinctives. Rather than having a "single-identifiable individual" leading this movement with a specific reform agenda in mind, the Anabaptist movement was essentially a "lay-led *movement*, p. 25, emphasis in original). This vital distinction provides a rationale as to why the Anabaptist position focuses on personal ethics, not public policy. Heilke's presentation locates the Anabaptist position as one deeply devoted to Jesus' ethical

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teachings and the implications for radical living. As a result, many see this position as one that cherishes separation from society. While many Anabaptists have political positions and some identify with tenets of major party politics, the position concerns itself with individual ethics as a means for societal impact.

Robert Benne (Ph.D., University of Chicago) presents the Lutheran view. He is the Jordan Trexler Professor Emeritus of Religion at Roanoke College. He taught full-time at Roanoke for eighteen years prior to transitioning into his Professor Emeritus position. He founded the Roanoke College Center for Religion and continues to be a research associate within the department. He has published widely on the relationship of Christianity and culture. Benne locates the Lutheran view beginning when Luther posted his ninety-five theses to the Castle Church door at Wittenburg. Luther argued for a distinction between the power exhibited by the state and the church. The church possessed the power of the Word, while the state possessed the power of the sword. God's rule and reign was in both realms. He reigned over the state officials enforcing the law and through the gospel in the life of the church. Thus, the Lutheran vision is one with a clear law/gospel distinction.

Benne notes citizenship is crucial to unmasking the Lutheran view of church and politics. The government, and the politics that comprise social policy and law, are a post-fall reality in the Lutheran worldview. The government is to curb evil acts and forces, and Christians are tasked with knowing the difference between the two kingdoms. Benne believes future Lutheran interactions connecting the church to politics or public policy will come from indirect forms. Christians strengthened through the church will live out the implications of their faith in their secular workplaces. Benne notes the checkered past of Lutheran action (or inaction), and he establishes necessary parameters for his position.

Bruce L. Fields (Ph.D., Marquette University) presents the Black Church view. Fields is Associate Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology and Chair of the Biblical and Systematic Theology Department at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He authored the volume, *Black Theology: 3 Crucial Questions for the Evangelical Church*, and his areas of research focus on the Epistle of Philippians and black/liberation theology. Fields provides an excellent summary which exposes the entrenched struggle of the Black Church experience and its corresponding eschatological hope for transformation. Locating a precise Black Church political theology is difficult, according to Fields. On the one hand, political powers have brought oppression and marginalization to those associated with the Black Church; yet on the other hand, much of the social reform that has taken place in the American Black Church context is a result of government intervention. As a result, there is both a negative sense of realized marginalization and positive action between those in this position and those in political power. Students unaware of the real and painful struggles of those constituting the American Black Church will benefit greatly from this chapter. Fields provides an excellent summary of the major historical, political, and social trends of this position.

Perhaps the most illuminating aspect of Fields's essay is his conclusion. In these remarks he gives a clear picture of the importance of historical grounding for his position. He believes "the presence of Black people in the halls of power is absolutely critical, as their voice serves as a constant reminder of the potential degeneracy of human government" (p. 123). While the Black Church seeks further social and cultural reform, Fields asserts a critical relationship between this position's future goals and its past exists. The echoes of past dehumanization provide fuel to sustain their march toward equality in social and institutional reforms. Fields believes the societal work that needs to be done must be an ecclesial reality. The triumph he desires comes from a "Holy Spirit empowered love ascending through churches to embrace one another regardless of race and ethnicity" (p. 123). Readers will find Fields's view refreshing in that he tethers together cultural transformation and church vibrancy.

James K. A. Smith (Ph.D., Villanova University) presents the Reformed view. Smith is Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College where he holds the Gary & Henrietta Byker Chair in Applied Reformed Theology and Worldview, and he is an accomplished author of scholarly and popular level books and articles. Smith's chapter proves excellent and worth the price of the book alone. Smith admits the impossibility of presenting *the* Reformed view because a single view does not exist. Rather, Smith believes his Reformed position emerges from a post-reformation Kuyperian model. For Smith, "A Reformed understanding of the relationship between the church and politics is bound up with a wider constellation of convictions about the nature of creation, culture, and the common good" (p. 140). This wider conviction is one of transformation, which dispels distinctions between secular and sacred. In this view, the Reformation was not merely about individual salvation; Instead, the Reformation is more broadly to be understood as "a Christian reform movement concerned with the shape of social life" (p. 141).

Understanding Smith's "reformed social vision" is impossible without grasping the relationship between creation and eschatology. God created the world beautifully but left it to be cultivated by his image bearers. Humanity is tasked to work out the possibilities of the cultural goods inherent within the created world. Human government, then, is not to be understood as a divinely given construct. He notes, "Government and the political institutions that shape our lives are not 'divine' in the sense of being handed down from God like the descent of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21-1-2)" (p. 142). Smith believes all cultural institutions are products of human creation. Humanity is given the raw material by God in creation, and they are tasked with ordering their societal constructions with God's design. Sin corrupted humanity, and its corruption seeped into the social structures of human invention as well. Thus, these human constructs need *transformation*.

Christians should seek the transformation of society with the future in mind because "the eschaton functions as a normative vision for contemporary cultural labor" (p. 147). This vision does not seek to bring about the eschatological kingdom on earth,

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but to strive for the good laden in the raw materials of the lost Eden. The New Jerusalem is in view because it represents God's desire for his creation. Politics and government are aspects of a good but fallen creation, and "this conviction propels believers into government and politics" (p. 151). The Reformed tradition has a history of political statesmen (Kuyper and Bavinck, for example). Smith believes the government is just one of many organizations Christians must use to bring about societal transformation. The government's role, then, is limited; human flourishing and transformation must take place across a broad spectrum of human relationships and structures.

J. Brian Benestad (Ph.D., Boston College) presents the Catholic view. Benestad is the D'Amour Chair of Catholic Thought at Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he teaches in the Department of Theology. He has many publications focused on the Catholic faith and its integration within the public square, and he has lectured widely on various aspects of Catholic social doctrine. The Catholic position encompasses the broadest interaction between church and state due to its vast array of authoritative teachings (examples include, for example, Papal encyclicals and The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace). Benestad explains that the unified body of teaching known as the Catholic social doctrine not only compels Catholics into the public square, but these teaching prepare them for applying their faith across broad public arenas.

Benestad believes contemporary Catholic social doctrine is impossible to discern without fully considering the influence of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas (p. 203). Augustine's contribution centers on justice within the political and social order. The church's teaching on grace and love demonstrates the dignity of all individuals, and this resident dignity within humanity is the motivation to contribute to human flourishing through the public square. Aquinas's contribution centers upon his systematic treatment of virtue and its correlation to personal witness and social justice. Regarding Aquinas's virtue ethics, Benestad believes Aquinas's "reflections on the law as an instrument to restrain the bad and guide the good are especially needed today" (p. 203). Benestad concludes by nuancing the Catholic social doctrine's role. While it fails to bear the burden of ultimate responsibility of ushering in a just society, it does contribute by informing and training Catholic adherent to participate as engaged citizens within the public square (p. 204).

Finally, Amy Black helps readers when she concludes the book by tracing the complex political associations demonstrated by various strands within Christianity. She evaluates presidential election data to reveal the voting tendencies of the groups discussed within the chapters of this book. In addition, Black suggests the five positions have four core principles of agreement: (1) the centrality of the church and its witness to the gospel, (2) the importance of governing institutions, (3) the importance of civil/free associations, and (4) a concern for cultivating virtue in individuals and working toward a more virtuous society (p. 228). Regardless of one's position, these four principles

should cause Christians to engage one another with charity and grace when discussing the church and its relationship to politics.

This book successfully introduces readers to five views commonly expressed by Christians regarding the relationship between the church and politics. There are numerous strengths in this book, but I will mention only three. First, this book achieves its stated goal of presenting various views in succinct, yet illuminating detail. Students unaware of these positions will find this volume to be an excellent first step in uncovering the vast array of Christian positions. It is not easy to communicate the distinctions between various church traditions and their interaction with politics in historical, theological, and practical depth, but the contributors wisely use their words to convey their positions fully and fairly. Second, the layout of these types of books is a great help to students because each contributor responds to every position presented. While there are instances where readers will desire much more dialogue, the contributors were gracious and explanatory in their responses to one another. Some of the responses helped to distinguish critical differences between the contributors. Third, the positions reveal a wide spectrum among Christians, yet it is clear that each position realizes that the church is not called upon to remain silent. The gospel is public truth, and Christians have no business being silent in the public square.

A few weaknesses should be noted, but one must keep in mind the limitations of books organized such as this one. The authors are not exhaustive in their presentation of their views; thus, some readers will desire more depth in certain sections. In addition, because these views hinge upon biblical teachings, one would expect more explicit exegesis of relevant passages germane to this discussion. Often biblical passages are spoken of broadly, even though biblical and theological themes are used as motivations for a position's political ethic. For example, in his presentation of the Black Church position, Fields does not give significant attention to any biblical text, but he does helpfully locate the eschatological hope inherent within this position. This criticism is not reserved for Fields alone; each contributor speaks about the Bible's implications but not much about its exhortations. A second criticism is in the lack of substantive dialogue in the responses. At times, the respondents merely emphasize differences rather than exposing the errors of the perspective under review.

Students should read this book because it is necessary for Christians to wrestle with this subject. The genius of books containing various viewpoints lies within the succinct presentations and the interactions from the contributors. *The Church and Politics* is filled with numerous footnotes that can point eager students to further resources. It is possible that a Christian could read this book and not identify with any of the five positions. The value of this book remains, however, because these positions will resonate with a vast majority of Christians.

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**Aitken, James K. *T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. xii + 624, \$176.00, hardcover.**

Dr. James Aitken is a Lecturer in Hebrew, Old Testament, and Second Temple Studies at the Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge, UK. Dr. Aitken needs no introduction in the field of Septuagint studies; he is one of the most distinguished scholars in the field today. It comes as no surprise then that he serves as the editor of *T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint*, which brings together some of the world's best scholars in Septuagint studies.

Scholarship in The Greek Old Testament has the tendency to be slightly esoteric. Because of this it is a difficult area of study to enter into without introduction. In this volume Aitken has brought together the most valuable introductory material on Septuagint studies. Aitken himself says that he had “long felt the need for a handy summary of features for each of the Septuagint books, for easy consultation by both Septuagint experts and biblical scholars or students more generally” (p. ix). The Companion to the Septuagint fills this need with excellence, making it a necessary tool for anyone remotely interested in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.

The overall structure of the book is easy to use and the information presented is accessible. The glossary found right before the introduction to the book is worthy of attention, highlighting words that are commonly used in the field, but often used differently among specialists. For example, Aitken covers terms like “Old Greek” since there is a necessary distinction between Old Greek and Koine Greek in the Septuagint. Each chapter in the rest of the Companion is then written on a particular biblical book, so having this glossary is a great service to the reader in transitioning into the density of the Greek Old Testament.

In the introduction, Aitken walks the reader through some of the major issues in Septuagint studies. He defines the term Septuagint, highlights the origin, translation, text, manuscripts, and even answers the question of why studying the Septuagint is important. Aitken introduces other issues such as the distinct use of Greek among the different translators. This section provides one with the necessary information to enter into the conversation, therefore, the introduction is essential for a meaningful interaction with the rest of the book. Although it is only a few pages, the force of the introduction cannot be overlooked.

The rest of the Companion contains a chapter devoted to a book of the Septuagint, including the deuterocanonical literature. Although each chapter has a different author, every chapter begins with a list of critical editions of that particular book, and is then divided up into seven sections. The first section is General Characteristics, which distinguishes the books from one another while bringing the reader's attention to each book's unique features. For instance, there were two translators of Jeremiah. The student of the Greek Jeremiah must know this in order to understand the majority of modern scholarship on the book. The second section

is titled Time and Place of Composition. While this section considers historical issues, it is significant in understanding vocabulary and syntax of the biblical text. The third section is Language, where each contributor stresses the importance of distinguishing features that are common to a purely Greek text, those that maintain Greek style with a Hebrew *vorlage*, and some that seek to keep the Hebrew in contact. The fourth section is Translation and Composition, explaining the features that distinguish each book linguistically, which is the heart of Septuagint studies. Many of the main issues in Septuagint studies are related to, or affected by, how one understands translation and composition style. The fifth section is on Key Text-Critical Issues demonstrates the textual complications in the Septuagint. The Septuagint is influential in Old and New Testament textual criticism, but the Septuagint has its own dilemmas as well. Therefore, it is important to know what we mean when we say “the text” of the Septuagint. The sixth section, Ideology and Exegesis, displays how each book was written with theological persuasions and preferences. The Septuagint translators tried to keep the original author’s intent, but sometimes they add, take away, or embellish. Without understanding the theological motivation of these translations, we can’t begin to understand why the text received has these additions, omissions, and alterations. Finally, Reception History rounds out the end of every chapter to provide a functioning knowledge of how these texts have been received and thought about through history. There are also bibliographies at the end of each chapter for those interested in further research. Not every chapter is covered to the same extent or depth; the content is contingent upon the pertinent issues that are specific to each book.

A chapter that particularly stands out is the chapter on Jeremiah, written by Andrew G. Shead. Jeremiah is notoriously difficult, providing little to work with and large gaps to fill in. One example of this problem is the considerably shorter text of the Greek Jeremiah when compared to the Masoretic Text. Textually, structurally, and linguistically, this has created a lot of problems in studying the Greek Jeremiah. However, Shead does not shy away from any of these difficult issues. He states, “The differences between the Septuagint and MT of Jeremiah create different chapter and verse numbering for much of the book. Even the Greek editions are not consistent” (p. 470), illustrating the immense difficulty of Jeremiah. In the rest of the chapter, Shead avoids complicating the issues and gives us the necessary data to make our own critical evaluations. Considering the amount of difficulty involved in Jeremiah, it is impossible to cover all the challenging material, but Shead makes it easier to engage in such issues. Shead then provides a helpful bibliography for further study of the book. This chapter is a key to unlock the wide world of the Greek Jeremiah.

Biblical Studies students will quickly realize that the Septuagint is an extremely important text, and therefore they should have a functioning knowledge of this corpus. The reason being, the Septuagint is often the Bible that the New Testament authors used. It also influenced the vocabulary used in the New Testament and illuminates

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the text of the Old Testament theologically and historically. Aitken's Companion serves as a tool that will move someone beyond a basic knowledge of the Septuagint, preparing him or her to continue research. There is still much work to be done on the Greek Old Testament within lexicography, translation theory, and even exegetical influence upon the New Testament. For those who might be interested in Biblical Studies Dr. Aitken has seamlessly put together a group of scholars that provide a valuable resource in Septuagint scholarship with this volume.

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**Anizor, Uche and Hank Voss, *Representing Christ: A Vision for the Priesthood of All Believers*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016, pp. 208, \$20, paperback.**

Uche Anizor (PhD, Wheaton College) and Hank Voss (PhD, Wheaton College) come eminently qualified to speak about the priesthood of believers, a term popularized by Martin Luther but a biblical concept rarely understood and practiced over the centuries. Anizor is an associate professor of biblical and theological studies at Talbot School of Theology at Biola University and author of a book on a related topic: *Kings and Priests: Scripture's Theological Account of Its Readers* (Pickwick, 2014). Hank Voss, on the other hand, is a theological practitioner as national church planting director at World Impact and senior national staff with The Urban Ministry Institute of Los Angeles. Both have a passion for the topic and a vested interest in seeing the body of Christ put into practice the biblical doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Their desire is to develop a "theological vision" (p. 21) of the doctrine of the people of God as priests in God's kingdom as part of their "identity in Jesus Christ" (p. 21). They describe their thesis for this "well-rounded theological vision ... one that is constructive rather than reactive ... [and which] develops in four stages—biblical, historical, theological and practical" (p. 21).

First I want to commend this volume's outstanding theological discussion of the topic especially with the authors' implicit Redemptive-Historical narrative perspective in chapter two entitled: "A Royal Priesthood: Scripture's Story." In this section, the authors begin with God's creation of Adam in Garden as the first Priest-King, moves through how God gave this task to the Israelite people in Exodus, and then to the Davidic line using Psalm 110 and the third volume of Isaiah 52-66 (interestingly, the authors fail to bring in the important implications of Psalm 2 for the doctrine of the royal priesthood as it collates with Psalm 110). This then foresees the day when Christ comes and gives the task to his people (see e.g., 1 Pet

2:9-10). The authors then illuminate this through key passages in Hebrews and the Revelation of John. In addition, helpfully, is an explicit approach to the priesthood of believers from the extremely important Trinitarian viewpoint of chapter 4 (“Life in Communion: The Trinity and the Priesthood of All Believers”). Alongside of these two important theological chapters is a superlative overview of the historical development of the doctrine in various traditions including the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and “Luther’s Burden” to reform the priesthood, which in his time was reserved for a tiny minority of males in ecclesial orders. Throughout these chapters the author’s strive for more specific, practical application of the doctrine by expounding “Seven Major Ministries of the Priesthood” (pp. 75-80) and “The Seven Practices of the Royal Priesthood.”

I also greatly appreciate their seeing the missional aspect of their topic because this, in the long run, is the whole purpose of the royal-priesthood as Peter and the Prophets states – to fill the earth with the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the seas and to proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into light (Hos 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9, see pp. 48-49). The authors following G. K. Beale among others show that the task of the King’s priest in the Temple-Garden was to “*serve and guard it*” (28, author’s italics). The two functions of “tending the garden and attending to God’s word” both in and over the garden can be unified “as one act of expanding the sanctuary of God. As those created in the image of the divine King, humanity was to spread and reflect his glorious reign by subduing and ruling the entire earth (Gen 1:26-28)” – and I would add, for their King’s glory (p. 29, emphasis original). At this point the authors move directly into Moses’ discussion of Israel’s royal-priesthood while, curiously, skipping the underlying informing theology of the Abrahamic Covenant. This is a surprising lacunae as it would have greatly strengthen their theological case.

On the other hand, there are several aspects of the volume that I would like to critique, especially Anizor and Voss’ understanding of Adam’s ministry of priesthood as a dual office of king and priest. Unfortunately this is a common position taken by many today such as Meredith Kline, John Walton, and Greg Beale. However, I don’t think it is wise to be stamped into that position. Did the Father create Adam to be king of the earth with judging, law-making, and executive-royal functioning to bring deliverance to his children? This is, as Isaiah states, the sole prerogative of Yahweh himself (Isa 33:22)? Or did God create Adam to be a steward- administrator of the divine property? The second is undoubtedly correct. Certainly, the Holy Spirit predicted that the children of Israel would father a king eventually (e.g., Gen 17:6, 16, 35:11, 49:10), and even revealed laws for that king to follow (Deut 17:14-20). However, the account of Samuel’s reluctance to give them a king and the LORD’s clear displeasure at their request to be “like all the [other] nations” (Deut 17:14; 1 Sam 8:5, 10:19) demonstrates that their request was a treasonous and idolatrous rejection of Yahweh as their sole sovereign. God repeats this twice, once directly to Samuel and the second time through Samuel to the people: “They

have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them;” and “But you have today rejected your God, who delivers you from all your calamities and your distresses” (1 Sam 10:19). It is clear this was not the Creator’s moral will but his revealed, decretive will that allowed their request. Hence he gave them the first king, Saul. In other words, this gives evidence that humans were not originally supposed to be royalty but only servant-administrators of their King’s possession. As such, Adam was also to be a human high priest of this extended family, what the Hebrew terms: “Bünê hä´ädäm” (i.e., humankind or more literally, “sons of the Adam,” e.g., Gen 11:5). Here Anizor and Voss make an excellent case using the infelicitous term “Priest-King” – only King Jesus is our Priest-King – “Humanity is representational and representative, being like god in the exercise of rule over the earth while receiving delegated authority” (p. 27).

Of course, God used the Israelites rebellious request to bring David and his royal dynasty that ended in the birth of Jesus, the God-man, son of the house of David, as Isaiah 7:14 to 9:7 predicts. In the end, however, God gave an infallible, prophetic interpretation of his abhorrence of human kings in the words of the Prophet Hosea: “I gave you a king in My anger And took him away in My wrath” (Hos 13:11). God foreordained and used the rebel request for a king to bring King Jesus. He did this exactly as he used the murderous anger of Joseph’s brothers to send him to Egypt for the brothers’ ultimate good and as he foreordained the horrible evil of the cross for our greater good. God is much wiser than we are (1 Cor 1-3). The sin of Adam, then, was that he wanted to be king in his Lord’s place, to be able to determine good and evil for himself, and to be wise in his own eyes – a rebellious pattern followed throughout human history by all humanity and especially human monarchs and royal wannabes. Only Jesus is a King-Priest and not Adam, nor the sons of Adam, who as Woody screamed at Buzz Lightyear, needed to be shaken up and told unequivocally “YOU - ARE - A... ‘TOY’! You aren’t the real Buzz Lightyear! You’re a... aw, you’re - you’re an action figure!” In other words, Adam “You are just an administrator,” a toy – so to speak – an instrument to be used by the Creator for his sole glory (Psa 115:1) – not the Savior and King, a title reserved only for Jesus, who granted it to him by the Father (see e.g., Eph 1:19-22).

Biblical-theologically speaking, then, Adam was a type or picture of Christ. In other words, he is in an analogous manner similar to but not in every respect exactly like our Lord (see e.g., Rom 5:14). Christ is absolutely unique. Therefore, human ecclesial-religious government was to be by chosen priestly elders, whom the Levites represented in the days of Israelite “body politick” as the Reformational, British Baptist, Congregationalist, and Presbyterian confessions state. Civil government, as was Israel’s original, is ideally republican (rule by chosen elders , e.g., Deut 1:16-18 without a human king) not monarchical. Yahweh desires to monopolize his singular right to be Mon-arche – the sole ruler of the sons of Adam, and His Son to be the sole High Priest. Aaron was to be only a temporary picture of that office and, as

stated, the Levites were to serve the Aaronic priest, representing the people. So I disagree with Anizor and Voss at this point. However, I do strongly concur with their exposition that the body of Christ “in union with” their Messiah is to share his royal-priestly ministry (see pp. 72-75): “A mature doctrine of the royal priesthood is Christocentric-Trinitarian” (p. 149). The priesthood then moves from Adam to Israel to the Royal-Priest (Jesus) to the assembly of the King, the body of Christ (p. 55). This then implies rightly that “every member ministry is a vital practice of [our present] royal priesthood” (p. 139). Having said that, however, I greatly desired that the author’s had spelled this out in more detail with a chapter on the three types of gifts (ministry, manifestation, and motivation). In this Anizor and Voss could show what every member royal-priestly ministry looks like in practice both within the body and outside of the body as it missionally moves outward into the idolatrous cultures of the world to disciple the peoples and expand the Temple to fill the whole earth.

Furthermore, I also would have desired that Anizor and Voss would have dealt with the implications of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers and Adam’s fall, a surprising oversight. What this implies is that Adam, originally clothed with glory and honor (Psa 8:5), lost that encompassing glory/honor (Rom 3:23) and hence needed to be clothed with the wrapping belonging to another, ultimately Christ (see Rev 3:18). This implies again that Christ’s people are a royal-priesthood only “in Christ” as the authors do notably demonstrate (see chapter 6: “Representing Christ”). This weakness then perhaps leads to an underestimation of the glorious restoration of the whole earth coming from the redemption in Jesus the Christ (the Anointed Priest-King of heaven and earth) through his work operationalized through the hands and feet of his royal-priests on earth who work following the Spirit’s lead.

Last, in the context of the author’s discussion of Luther on official ministry and the priesthood of all believers, Anizor and Voss correctly emphasize, citing Luther, that “every Christian has the right and duty to teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, and rebuke his neighbor with the Word of God at every opportunity and whenever necessary” (p. 77). Yet there still remains, according to Luther, the public office of preaching. In my view, this is an overreaction to the “radical reformers who denied the validity of the pastoral office.” In other words the official, paid, full-time, public “ministry of the Word . . . for those called by a congregation to perform this ministry on behalf of the congregation” (p. 77) is always necessary. Here Anizor and Voss accept without much critique the Lutheran/Calvinist/Anglican/Baptist protection of the official ministry of the Word and Sacrament/Ordinance, inherited and modified from the Roman Church. This has historically always degenerated into an emphasis upon passive people in the pews listening to a preacher hired to do full-time ministry. It doesn’t matter whether the clergyman was a single pastor with a board of many deacons (congregational and baptistic polity), or three offices of pastor, ruling elder, and minister of word and sacrament in the Presbyterian system, or bishop, rector, and trustees in the Anglican system, the end result is the

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same: Passivity of the “laity” and slow conversion growth. This emphasis upon paid clergy and the almost always resulting building fund, while giving more or less lip-service to the priesthood of all believers is one crucial reason why biblical Christianity has been dying in Europe and is destroying the salt and light function of the body of believers in North America, in my opinion.

However, on a more positive note, the authors quickly redeem themselves by agreeing with Luther, who “permits all Christians—particularly in emergency circumstances—to administer baptism” (p. 77) and in similar situations “the Lord’s Supper” (p. 78). I agree wholeheartedly if the people of God are being overseen by their elected representatives (who are not clergyman) while doing their every-member ministry (i.e., Eph 4:12 NIV, NASB, ESV) house to house. The Lord’s Supper was not a magical ceremony with little cups of juice and a tiny sliver of cracker but a bring-and-share meal in the context of homes with real wine and loaves of bread, the staples of the ancient diet. Only by restoring the ecclesial community as many face-to-face assemblies, meeting primarily in homes as the primary gathering place, and overseen by multiple elders can we restore the rapid disciplining of North America back to the top priority of Christ’s community here. Only then can we again become the salt and light of our culture. There can indeed be gatherings of many home ecclesias (communities/assemblies) for celebration, lectures, teaching, and fellowship but this is not the essence of “church” (a very inadequate translation of *ekklesia* – an assembly).

Here again the author’s redeem themselves later, in the section titled: “Three Inadequate Protestant Versions of the Priesthood of all Believers” (p. 103). They are 1) “Clericalism: Monopolizing ministry to the heavenly Father;” 2) Atomistic and collective priesthoods: Misrepresenting our position “in Christ,” and 3) Holy egotism: Missing the Spirit’s prevenient witness.” Concluding this section, the authors add these sage words: “We direct our *worship* and prayer to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. We direct our *work* of ministry (Eph 4:12) as unto Christ himself, for the glory of the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit.” Finally, the authors correctly state that “the Holy Spirit directs our witness to Christ, for the glory of the Father” (p. 110).

All in all, this is an excellent and much need redemptive-historical and Trinitarian-theological reflection on the ministry of the people of God. A second edition that adds a chapter on how the three types of gifts could be implemented and modifications as mentioned would add even more to an already quite useful volume. I recommend it for any student seeking to understand every-member ministry in a sound missiology and ecclesiology.

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**Holmstedt, Robert D. *Ruth: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*. Baylor University Press: Waco, TX, 2010, pp. 180, \$29.99, paperback.**

*Ruth: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text* is an excellent volume in the Baylor Handbook on the Hebrew Bible Series, providing students and professors with a detailed grammatical discussion of the Hebrew text of the book of Ruth. Robert D. Holmstedt is the Professor of Ancient Hebrew and Northwest Semitic Languages at the University of Toronto. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Hebrew and Semitic Studies. Holmstedt has published an introductory Hebrew grammar entitled *Beginning Biblical Hebrew: A Grammar and Illustrated Reader* (Baker, 2013) in addition to many other publications related to Hebrew grammar and especially the relative clause in ancient Hebrew.

Holmstedt wrote this handbook “with both the intermediate student and the advanced researcher in mind” (p. 2). That being the case, Holmstedt provides a rich and engaging treatment of the Hebrew grammar of Ruth that is accessible to students still mastering basic Hebrew morphology and syntax.

After a brief introduction, Holmstedt spends three sections [corresponding to chapters] discussing his approach to Hebrew grammar, the role of linguistic features in dating the book, and the use of language to add dramatic “color” to characters in the narrative. Section 2 [§2] (pp. 3-16) proves helpful for students and professors who may be familiar with a certain “system” of Hebrew, but who are not familiar with the particular descriptions Holmstedt will use throughout the handbook. In some sense, he provides a short syntactical grammar of the lingo and abbreviations he uses throughout the handbook.

In §3 (pp. 17-39), Holmstedt addresses the linguistic features of the book of Ruth that are often used to provide a relative date for the book. He admits that dating a book based on linguistic features can only provide a *relative* date, but this section serves as a robust catalogue of linguistic features that Ruth scholars use to date the book. Holmstedt concludes that based on these features, Ruth “was written during a period of Aramaic ascendancy but not dominance and thus it may come from the early Persian period” (p. 39).

In §4 (pp. 41-49), Holmstedt discusses how the narrator of Ruth uses seemingly “incorrect” language to add “color” and dramatic effect to the characters. Holmstedt’s section adds to the beloved nature of the book of Ruth by arguing that the narrator intentionally used language that would enhance character development. Since Naomi spent nearly ten years in Moab and Ruth was a Moabitess, Holmstedt argues that what some scholars presume to be mistakes or anachronistic archaisms in the Hebrew Bible are intentional devices to further develop the characters. As such, Holmstedt provides another basis for seeing the narrative beauty of the book of Ruth.

In the remainder of the book, Holmstedt walks through the Hebrew text of the book of Ruth verse-by-verse, phrase-by-phrase. He has broken the book into a

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drama, labeling each section as “Act 1,” “Act 2,” “Scene 1,” “Scene 2,” etc. In each section, Holmstedt provides a brief introductory commentary to the section, his own translations based on grammatical and syntactical analysis, and then he proceeds to walk through the Hebrew text phrase-by-phrase.

Holmstedt’s grammatical discussions are thorough and engaging. He provides examples from other literature that are more common to the modern reader to help one understand the Hebrew grammar (e.g., Shakespeare’s ‘to be or not to be’, p. 52). In addition to Holmstedt’s discussion of the syntax, he regularly references standard Hebrew grammars so that students and scholars can follow up with additional background on the topics he discusses. He cites Waltke-O’Connor most often, but also include standards like Gesenius and Joüon-Muraoka. In addition to citing standard grammars, Holmstedt also refers readers to the standard Ruth commentaries for further study.

While Holmstedt’s grammatical discussions are thorough, they are not overly cumbersome. By this, I mean that when the Hebrew text of Ruth inevitably repeats certain features, Holmstedt will reference back to the previous section so that students are not bogged down with repetitive information. Likewise, as the book moves forward, Holmstedt reduces the amount of attention given to certain features that have been discussed already. This aspect of Holmstedt’s book subconsciously allows the reader to begin practicing what he/she has learned earlier in the book. For example, in keeping with his view of character “coloring,” (pp.41-49) Holmstedt comments on the “apparent masculine suffix referring to feminine antecedents” in Ruth 4:11 (p. 202). However, in his comment, he merely refers the reader back to Ruth 1:8. The student can either return to Ruth 1:8 for a full discussion, or, by this point in the narrative, the student will know that the narrator of Ruth often (mis-)uses masculine or feminine suffixes for character development.

Holmstedt’s handbook proves to be a clear and helpful study of the Hebrew grammar of Ruth *if one is familiar with his system of identifying grammar*. Holmstedt helpfully provides a brief discussion of how he communicates grammatical features in his introduction (pp. 3-16), and yet throughout the handbook, he uses abbreviations that may require the reader to return to the introduction to know to what Holmstedt is referring. An example of this would be his use of “NP,” “VP,” and “PP” for “noun phrase,” “verb phrase,” and “prepositional phrase” respectively. While his shorthand is helpful for succinct discussions, some students may need to decipher these simple abbreviations before digesting the material. Holmstedt also uses terminology like “complements” and “adjuncts” that require one to be familiar with his system to describe Hebrew grammar before fully understanding his discussions.

Holmstedt’s view on Hebrew word order proves to be a difficulty of this volume. Holmstedt argues that the typical word order in Hebrew is subject-verb rather than verb-subject (pp. 11-16). He argues that for the verb to appear first in a Hebrew sentence, something must “trigger” the change (pp. 11, 55 and throughout). In a

narrative like Ruth, this explanation of “constituent movement” proves cumbersome. Hebrew narrative word order appears most often as verb-subject, and so Holmstedt must regularly explain away the typical Hebrew word order with his complex notion of “triggered constituent movement.” For those familiar with his entire system to explain Biblical Hebrew, this word order dilemma may not be cumbersome. However, for most readers, no reason exists to explain away the typical Hebrew narrative word order of verb-subject.

Despite some minor difficulties in how Holmstedt explains his system of Hebrew, this volume will prove to be a fine addition to the library of both intermediate Hebrew students and advanced scholars. For the intermediate student, Holmstedt’s vibrant discussions will aid in understanding Hebrew grammar as well as help the student enjoy the text of Ruth. For the advanced scholar, Holmstedt presents an additional “system” of Hebrew grammar that enhances one’s understanding of the Biblical Hebrew. This volume will benefit both students and scholars with an in-depth discussion of Hebrew grammar and syntax as well as some lexicography and etymology of obscure words. Overall, Holmstedt provides students of Biblical Hebrew with a technical, but accessible study of the text of the book of Ruth.

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**Merrill, Eugene. *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Chronicles*. Kregel Exegetical Library. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2015, pp. 637, \$39.99, hardcover.**

Eugene Merrill is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary. He has authored a number of works including major commentaries on Deuteronomy (New American Commentary, B&H, 1994) and Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi (Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary, 1994, Moody; reprinted by CreateSpace, 2014). Merrill is a preeminent evangelical scholar and has provided pastors, students, and scholars alike a commentary that will be their go-to resource on the books of Chronicles. *1 & 2 Chronicles* is the fifth volume in the Kregel Exegetical Library, but is the sixth volume available at the time of this review.

Merrill begins his commentary with a discussion of introductory issues including material on historical and cultural setting, historiography, and theology of the book, as well as other major introductory issues. Merrill holds to commonly held views on issues of setting and authorship within the book while highlighting important aspects of setting like political re-establishment and social reform. He also has a

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discussion of religious reform that is quite thorough. One of Merrill's concerns is also how Chronicles relates to Ezra-Nehemiah. Within his discussion historiography he notes that the message of Chronicles "has to redress that despair [of Ezra-Nehemiah] while at the same time tracing the history of the nation from the time of the patriarchs to his present time to demonstrate how God's covenant people time and time again rebelled against his gracious covenant" (p. 52).

The commentary proper is broken into nine sections that follow major sections within the book. The first section focuses on 1 Chronicles 1-9 and gives a discussion of the genealogies. Next Merrill focuses on the rise of David (1 Chron 10-14). The third section focuses on David's exploits (1 Chron 15-21). Fourth, Merrill looks at the preparations for succession (1 Chron 22-29). The fifth section focuses on the reign of Solomon (2 Chron 1-9). The next two sections focus on the the reigns of Rehoboam to Hezekiah (2 Chron 10-28). The last two sections then focus on Hezekiah's reign (2 Chron 29-32) and the last kings to Judah to the decree of Cyrus (2 Chron 33-36). Each section begins with an outline. Then the text is broken into smaller units where there is a translation (from the NIV) provided along with text-critical notes. Each textual unit also contains an exegesis and exposition section. At the end of each of the 9 major sections there is also a section on the application of the theology of that section.

There are too many commendable features in this commentary to list them all so I will just mention two. First, the genealogies section of the commentary is exceptionally helpful. Merrill provides charts on the genealogies in Chronicles. These charts do two things. First, they show the percentage of space given to each tribe within the genealogies. A second chart compares the genealogies in Chronicles with the genealogies in Genesis, Matthew, and Luke. Within the genealogies section Merrill notes that "Without an understanding of the Chronicler's messianic hope and promise, not only are the genealogies without existential meaning but the entire narrative of redemptive history ceases to have significance" (p. 145). Another commendable feature of the commentary is the thoroughness of each section. From the introduction to the commentary proper it is clear that Merrill has given significant thought to each point of comment that he has made.

The only critique that I would make of this commentary is that the application sections could be lengthier or possibly more frequent within the commentary. Sometimes the application section is only about a page in length. The application comments are helpful and insightful, it would just be good for these sections to be a bit longer.

Merrill's commentary continues the early success of this Kregel series. The Kregel Exegetical Library commentaries are quickly becoming some of the best commentaries from an evangelical perspective. The volumes in this series have all been exceptional. Merrill's volume is no exception to this. This commentary will be of help to any student, pastor, or scholar. This commentary combines the best of

technical scholarship with readability. Hopefully this commentary will draw more interest to the text of 1-2 Chronicles by pastors and teachers within churches, as these might be some of the most neglected texts in all of the Bible.

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**Timpe, Kevin and Daniel Speak, eds. *Free Will and Theism: Connections, Contingencies, and Concerns*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 316, \$85.**

In this collection of essays, readers will encounter an interesting array of topics related to free will and philosophical theology. For example, essays cover issues related to divine providence, the doctrine of hell, the problem of evil, the doctrine of divine conservation or divine sustaining of the universe, and the compatibility of God's freedom with His essential perfection. Even though these essays cover different topics, there is one major question that runs throughout the entire book: does something about theism entail libertarian or compatibilist accounts of freedom?

One of the most impressive features of this volume for me is the editing of the essays. The contributors are not directly debating one another. It is not the case that one contributor writes an essay, and then another contributor responds to the original essay. However, the reader will often feel like she is reading a debate between dialogue partners. The editors have selected the contributors carefully in this regard. In many of the essays, a contributor has written up a nice summary of arguments that he or she has developed over the years in papers and books. Then the next chapter will include someone responding to the previous contributor's prior work on the topic. So even though the essays are not directly responding to one another, they often feel like a lively debate. Allow me to give some examples.

Over the years, Jerry Walls has developed a series of arguments against compatibilism based on Christian doctrine. One line of reasoning goes as follows. If God determines the actions of sinners, then God is responsible for those sinful actions. Human persons will not bear any blame for their actions since God is the one who has caused those actions to occur. This has several undesirable consequences for Christian belief, one of which is that God will be the author of evil. This is because God is the one solely responsible for evil actions occurring (pp. 94-96). Another undesirable consequence is that God would appear to be a moral monster for punishing people in hell since the damned were determined by God to sin (pp. 83-88). God is the one responsible for their sin, and yet He punishes them anyway! This, says Walls, is not an acceptable position for Christians to affirm. In *Free Will*

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and *Theism*, Walls offers an excellent summary of these arguments. In the chapter after Walls, Tamler Sommers offers a critique of Walls' previous versions of these arguments. So even though Sommers is not directly responding to Walls' essay, it still feels like a debate because Sommers is responding to the arguments that Walls has offered. This format is very beneficial to the reader, and makes the volume as a whole interconnected in ways that collections of essays normally are not.

Another example of this comes from the essays by Derk Pereboom and Timothy O'Connor. Pereboom has a long career of arguing for theological determinism, and the theological adequacy of denying human freedom. O'Connor has a long career of arguing for libertarian freedom. Pereboom's essay does a great job at summarizing his position on theological determinism. He offers several justifications for his position as well as several critiques of the libertarian account of freedom that O'Connor defends. Pereboom attempts to show that a theological determinist can maintain that God determines everything, and yet humans are still morally praiseworthy or blameworthy for their actions (pp. 115-119). Further, Pereboom argues that denying libertarian freedom does not make the problem of evil intractable (pp. 120-127). As one might expect, O'Connor disagrees with Pereboom on several fronts. Interestingly, O'Connor concedes that denying libertarian freedom does not make the problem of evil much worse. However, O'Connor argues that theological determinism makes God the author of evil, and makes the Christian practice of confession and struggle against sin deeply problematic. For if God is the one determining my actions, how exactly should I confess my sins? I suppose one should say, 'Lord, please help me not sin, if that is what you have determined to take place' (p. 138).

Not all essays in this volume have this debate feel to them. For example, Megan Griffith's critique of agent causation, and Laura Ekstrom's critique of libertarian freedom are basically stand-alone essays. Rebekah Rice offers an interesting dilemma for theists who wish to affirm that God acts for reasons, and that reasons are not causes of God's actions. Rice's paper engages with the work of other contributors, but it doesn't have the same debate feel to it. This is by no means a strike against her paper. The dilemma she develops is definitely worth considering.

Some readers of this journal may be disappointed that the volume is not very theologically thick. Most of the contributors are philosophers, and the theological discussions are often quite sparse. While I would like to have seen more explicit theological engagement, that may be asking for too much. The volume is focusing on *theism*, not Christianity. The chapters from Jerry Walls and Jesse Couenhoven are the most explicitly Christian in the volume. Most of the content from the other essays could easily be applied to any theistic religious tradition. That being said, I think this volume is an important contribution for anyone concerned with issues related to free will and its place in Christian theology.

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For students, this book will not serve as an introduction to free will, nor as an introduction to the place of free will in theology. The essays in this volume assume some level of familiarity with free will and philosophical theology. If you are looking for a good introduction, I would recommend starting with Kevin Timpe's *Free Will in Philosophical Theology* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014). Once a student has read this, then she can move on to *Free Will and Theism*.

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