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1. The journal will seek to provide an annual publication reflective of the theological basis and ethos of the Trust for students, laity, ministers, and lecturers to develop their minds and souls through in-depth articles and reviews.
2. The journal will seek to keep readers informed about new books or other publications and thus will strive to be a means of encouraging stewardship of time and money.
3. The selection of articles and works for review in each journal will usually reflect the fourfold division of the departments in the theological curriculum: biblical theology, systematic theology, historical theology, and applied theology, thereby providing balance as to the content of the journal but also providing harmony for the readers to see the unity of the curriculum. It will not be a journal devoted to one department of the theological curriculum.
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5. The journal will encourage the cultivation of writing and provide an avenue for publication and exchange of knowledge.
6. The journal will include one article or review devoted to the theme of theological education.
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Editor's Preface

Last year, our journal theme centred upon the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Following such a major anniversary, there are continuing subjects being discussed after-the-fact and also a whole host of publications continuing to be produced. Consequently, readers will notice that though this present volume is not a themed volume on the Reformation, there are still many submissions which clearly relate to this subject. For example, the opening submission, "The Editor's Rambles: How Numbers Can Change Over Time", is a very short yet hopefully provocative article about the solas and was written to stimulate our mathematical minds, theologically speaking. There are four major Reformation-related articles and also book reviews clearly related to the Reformation anniversary. The four articles will undoubtedly help to advance our understanding of the Reformation in Germany, England, Scotland, and Hungary. For example, Manfred Kohl invites us to study Luther through a unique lens, namely Luther's last will and testament. We have placed these four articles together – one each by Kohl, Haykin, Stewart, and Szőke – under academic articles.

A second theme which emerges this year in our journal is Christian worship. The opening sermon by John Koning, "Communion Chaos", is worship-centred as is the fine article by Tyler Van Halteren entitled, "Worship: Poetry and Renewal". Both deserve to be read and discussed. We have placed the Koning sermon and Van Halteren article back-to-back. Three of the book reviews also expand on the theme of worship: one by Tyler Stitt on Cherry's new book, *The Music Architect;* another on the new English publication of Bucer's *Ground and Reason* (a valuable work not only about the Lord's Supper but also about worship principles and practices in general); and, a review on the helpful new resource *The Pastor's Book*, which chiefly deals with liturgy and worship leadership. It is hoped that this second theme, worship, will receive much consideration from our readers.

Other submissions include a look at John Frame, a prolific contemporary theologian, as Cameron Fraser examines Frame's memoir, *Theology of My Life*. Thorsten Prill has provided a helpful article about contextualisation in mission work with a discussion on cross-cultural stumbling blocks. John Koning's submission "Confessions from a Pastor's Desk" is an article that can benefit all pastors, elders and students for the ministry. In fact, this article would be good to read and discuss in a seminary class or at a ministers' fraternal or workshop. Finally, in 2016 we began a discussion on the issue of offices in the church with Douglas Gebbie's article that year on "Two or Three

Office: A Slash at the Gordian Knot". This year the discussion continues with Murray Smith of Australia making his contribution to the debate with his article, "Shepherds and Servants: the two offices Christ appointed in his Church". No doubt these two articles will lead to a third article (maybe even more) in this irenic writing spree – all in keeping with a primary journal objective – to generate and encourage discussion on matters of the faith.

You will notice again a large number of book reviews – diverse and wide-ranging – well beyond what I have already highlighted. New Bible commentaries receive attention. New works related to philosophy are reviewed – something we have not highlighted a great deal in the past. However, these works are unique, and we felt that they should be reviewed for our readers. Some of the latest publications in church history have also been reviewed. Practical theology receives very good attention with reviews of many of the latest books related to pastoral leadership, preaching, worship, and missions. Those who teach in many of the above fields will no doubt want to carefully sift through these reviews.

This year we have also included something a little different. We wanted readers to learn about Wayne Grudem's new book on Christian ethics, so we sought and received permission to include an excerpt from this forthcoming publication. We are pleased to offer readers the opportunity to evaluate this work – in many ways Grudem's *magnum opus* on the subject. Lecturers in ethics and others will want to watch for this new book – due out later this year.

In North America in particular there has been much discussion about *The Benedict Option*. We have included Hart's lengthy review of this book. Hart helps us to evaluate the contemporary discussion and to be informed about this current and popular publication and the ensuing debate.

I am sure that pastors and theological educators will want to read Karl Peterson's review of *The Mentoring Church.* Mentoring is such a vital role in discipleship. Also, note Steve Curtis' book, reviewed under Book Briefs, which theological educators and mission minded-ministries should read.

Once again, I want to say thank you to each contributor. We appreciate your writing and pray God's blessing on each reader as together we take up many subjects of the Christian faith. We have changed our format a little with this volume: first, our logo has been updated; second, all article writers have been given the opportunity to include their email address. Blessings as you read, discuss and perhaps even write in response to this volume.

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The Editor's Rambles: How Numbers can Change Over Time

Jack C. Whytock email: jcwhytock@gmail.com



I have called this the editor's rambles. It is not a typical article but comes from a few throw-away comments I made in the introduction to a lecture I gave in 2017. I share it here in the hope of stimulating some thinking about how we quickly can take things for granted. We should learn to be curious and ask more about the development of concepts so that we do not assume all "reformation lingo" has been established for centuries. So here we go.

I must confess that I have had a nagging instinct for some time that the number five (for The Five Solas) may not be just as exact a way to summarise the theological heart of the Reformation as we have been making it out to be. I am in complete agreement with all The Five Solas of the Reformation – I want that to be made totally clear before I proceed! I have taught these solas for years to many classes of theology students and to others and will continue to do so. No, it is not the *theology* that is the issue in this short article, it is more the issue of the *number five*. Let me begin by asking a question: how many *solas* were discussed and spoken about 100 years ago in 1917, at the 400th anniversary (quadricentennial) commemorative lectures, talks, and celebrations of the Reformation?

1. The 1917 Celebrations

In 1917, the 400th anniversary celebrations of the Reformation were rather muted. After all, Germany was at war with the British Empire and America (America had entered the war just months before – April, 1917). Folks from overseas were generally not heading off for a tour of Wittenberg, Germany that year, unlike the hundreds, even thousands of tourists who went to Wittenberg in 2017—yes, a very different context in many ways.

Nevertheless, many were discussing the Reformation and were meeting, conferring, and writing special articles and books for 1917. I mention only a

few examples. The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa may have held the largest set of celebrations for the 400th anniversary. Special articles were produced for their magazine; special city meetings were held (some which had over 3,000 in attendance). The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) and the Presbyterian Church in United States (PCUS) both formed committees to deal with the anniversary and publications ensued. One of its leading speakers for the PCUSA was Dr. David Schaff, son of the noted church historian Philip Schaff. This anniversary did not pass unnoticed.

However, a curious fact can be observed: in all of these celebrations and publications, whether South Africa or the two major American Presbyterian bodies of the time, one will struggle to find any paper or speech centred on the theme of The Five Solas (or any number of solas for that matter!).[1] The one exception in America is the Missouri Lutherans; in 1916 Theodore Engelder of Concordia Seminary published a summation of the fundamentals of Reformation teaching under the rubric of the Three Solas in anticipation of the 400th anniversary: *sola scriptura, sola fide, sola gratia*.[2] And it is here that we really begin to see the solas developing from this point forwards throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century, particularly in America. It appears to have begun more with some Lutheran branches in the first half of the 20th century as three solas but not yet as the number five. [3]

Timothy Schleming suggests that the first reference in American Lutheranism to the three solas was in 1892 when it was etched into the cornerstone of the Missouri Lutheran Seminary building in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.[4] This would make sense as in 1916 it was the Missouri Lutheran theologian Engelder who wrote about the three solas. However, Engelder likely received this from Carl F.W. Walther, a Missouri Lutheran who likewise in the generation before Engelder had also used the three sola motif.[5] What seems to have happened is that late in the 19th century the three solas emerged as a foundational way of understanding Reformational truth and then by the 400th anniversary year a written articulation was made and it comes to us from the conservative Lutheran quarter of the Missouri Lutheran Church. This was a pocket and not universal in the American context as it was not found amongst the Presbyterians in 1917.

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[1] http://www.presbyteriansofthepast.com/2017/01/19/reformation-remembering-400th

[2] Theodore Engelder, "The Three Principles of the Reformation" in *Four Hundred Years: Commemorative essays on the Reformation of Dr. Martin Luther and its blessed results, in the year of the four-hundredth anniversary of the reformation*. Ed. W.H.T. Dau (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia, 1916), 97-109.

[3] Timothy Schmeling, "Proclaim the Wonders God has Done: *Sola Scriptura*", June, 2017, 1-2 assessed June, 2018.

[4] Schmeling.

[5] H.H. Walker, "Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, D.D. The Luther in America", in *The Lutheran Quarterly*, 12 (1912), 358.

Is there evidence that the Five Solas were being used in Europe in 1917? To date I have found no such evidence. But I have come across the use of the three solas in 1917 in one quarter in Europe. This comes from the Dutch quarter and celebrations in Amsterdam through the pen of Herman Bavinck for a commemorative volume associated with the Free University. Again, it is not the number five but the number three. Bavinck described these three solas as "this was not a new principle, only the old Gospel."[6] Interestingly enough they are the same three solas Engelder was using in 1916 and are the same ones on the cornerstone laid in Wisconsin in 1892. Yet so far I have not seen evidence of other Europeans using this three-solas rubric prior to 1900. If you know of such, please drop me an email as I would like to learn more about this.

So there would appear to be a noticeable change between 1917 and 2017. I will admit that mathematics was not my strong subject in school, but I do understand this much – three has grown to five. Does that mean two solas in the rubric were lost prior to 1917? To date I can find no such evidence. I have concluded that using the rubric of the three solas prior to 1917 was not universal by any means and certainly five as a group were not mentioned. What seems to have happened is that from 1917 to 2017 the concept of the solas grew across many denominational groups; they became fixed first at three and then they grew from three to five by 2017. We can certainly ask, "Why this change in the numerical language from three solas in 1917 (in a very small part of the Reformational family of churches) to usually five solas by 2017 (and virtually across the board of evangelicalism)?"[7]

2. Three, Four, Five and onto 2017

As we have seen, in 1916 the Missouri Lutheran theologian Engelder articulated the three solas. Throughout the 20th century the numbers gradually shifted, as did the configurations. These configurations can be found in various Reformed and Lutheran camps (not all orthodox evangelical), including liberal and neo-orthodox, whether Emil Brunner or Karl Barth or others; many were sifting through the Reformers and slowly adding definition – something which may actually surprise conservatives today.

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[6] Herman Bavinck, "De Hervorming en ons nationale leven," in *Ter herdenking der Hervorming, 1517-1917.Twee redeveringen, utgersproken in de openbare zitting van den senaat der Vrije Universiteit. Op 31 October*, 1517, eds. H. Bavinck and H.H. Kuyper (Kampen: Kok, 1917), 7. It has been noted there is no use of the term three solas in Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics*.

[7] On an aside, one does notice that actually the Germans both Reformed and Lutheran were really the first to celebrate the Reformation anniversaries and then slowly it crossed the Atlantic with the German immigrants both Reformed and Lutheran and then eventually the Presbyterians in America also got into the celebrations and commemorations as well.

The one sola that was often omitted (yet it could be argued was understood) is *Christ alone*; yet this sola was articulated in the 20th century by Barth, who viewed Christology as paramount and thus insisted on speaking of Christ alone. Faith and grace were often basically co-joined. Brunner stressed the glory of God over the scriptures – sola Deo gloria. So slowly, by say the 1980s and 1990s the five solas became a common phraseology for evangelicals of various stripes – Reformed, Pentecostal, Baptist, Presbyterian and Independent – but not generally for any Lutheran group. However, it is helpful to recognize the history of how these solas came to be articulated; it has been a slow road and actually quite a varied road. Humility here will help us all. One will find that, depending upon the decade, one can find three, four, or five solas.

In his standard church history textbook (for two generations now) *Christianity Through the Centuries*, the author, Earle Cairns spoke about solas in a very muted way back in the 1950s. Curiously, by his third edition in 1996, he spoke about three solas and referenced one which is not part of the five today for most – more ecclesiastically oriented.[8] His additional sola seemed to be missed in virtually all Reformation celebrations last year from my limited vantage point. Reading another fairly popular church history text by Latourette, one finds no mention of the five solas as a group but only a reference to a particular sola in that textbook.[9]

In conclusion, from 1917 to about the 1970s we have a fairly loose identification of three, maybe four solas, and then by the late 80s and early 90s five solas became standard fare. My conclusion here is that 1917 was a critical time to establish the rubric of the solas as three and various streams discussed these further throughout the twentieth century and this is why sometimes it will be four and sometimes five. Today it is as if we have had a convention and held a vote to fix the solas at five with no further discussion. Given the long road to get to The Five Solas as a rubric, I want to bring some caution here as just maybe we are not doing justice to the wholeness of Reformational teaching. So I formulate my question as follows for discussion: **"Do 'The Five Solas' do justice as a suitable summation of Reformation truth?"**

3. Five plus One or Two: 2017-2117

We must acknowledge that the solas, (and this is in reference to the three but we could also say it of the five), "do not represent the sum totality of the Christian life"[10] though they are extremely important and foundational. So

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[8] Earle Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries: Expanded Third Edition*, original 1954 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 289.

[9] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: The Reformation to the Present*. Original 1975 (reprint, Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1997),707. Latourette rightly stressed the centre of Luther's understanding as *sola fide* of the Christian faith.

[10] Schmeling. Schmeling writes about the use of the solas prior to 1517 which is something often ignored. Luther brought a biblical clarity where there was often

what may need to be added if anything? I would suggest that there needs to be recognition of the priesthood of all believers and Christian vocation. Now does this start to move us in the direction of six or even seven? Maybe.

However, more importantly, such a discussion highlights two things. First, quick numeric summaries cannot capture things in totality. There is a parallel here with the issue of the Five Points of Calvinism which also truncates such Reformed theology and divorces it from a wholistic perspective theologically. The same can be said about The Five Solas. They are foundational pillars but not the sum total. For Luther the priesthood of all the believers was extremely important in the context of his struggles with the European Catholic Church but also for the Christian life. Closely related to this is also the matter of vocation.

Early in the 21st century, Michael J. Glodo wrote an article about "Sola Ecclesia: The Lost Reformation Doctrine", which as a title surely echoes back to the Reformation Solas.[11] What Glodo is attempting to do is bring a balance back to the central doctrines of the Reformation, namely a proper emphasis on the place of the church in the life of Christians. Kevin Vanhoozer's recent book, *Biblical Authority After Babel: Retrieving the Solas in the Spirit of Mere Protestant Christianity* also draws out aspects of using the five solas as a united front towards recovering an ecclesial catholicity, thus moving towards a virtual sixth sola.[12] This is not exactly the same thing which Glodo was saying but again highlights an underlying issue: defining the core doctrinal pillars of the reformation and taking them into the life of the church today. With this in mind, recent discussions about sola ecclesia must be considered. Some of these discussions may well be rejected, hopefully not all, and maybe a refining process will continue. It certainly strikes me that a refining process took place between 1917 and 2017.

So I ponder the year 2117 and Reformation celebrations for that year, D.V. I wonder if the generations to come might be discussing six or seven solas in 2117. Will these include sola ecclesia or something about the universal priesthood of believers and calling?

Conclusion

What important applications and lessons can be drawn from this question about how and when the number five for reformation solas began? First, it is

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confusion, nevertheless the language did exist prior to Luther and to a certain extent can be found in the late medieval period before Luther.

[11].Michael Glodo," Sola Ecclesia: The Lost Reformation Doctrine", *Reformation and Revival*, 9:4 (2000), 91-97. See also John Muether, "A Sixth Sola?. *Modern Reformation*, 7:4 (1998), 24-28 which preceded Glodo's article.

[12] Kevin Van Hoozer, *Biblical Authority After Babel: Retrieving the Solas in the Spirit of Mere Protestant Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016), 29,288.

reminder that church history and theology must be properly placed in context in order to attempt to understand the flow of ideas or concepts. We will often discover some strange bedfellows along the way and will find that ideas take a long time to develop. Learning how a concept arose can be highly instructive.

Second, yes, The Five Solas can be extracted from the writings of the Reformers who laboured in various locations, but the concepts of these solas are not laid down quite as neatly as we use them today. Maybe we have missed something in the process. The Five Solas grasp the nexus of the subject of our salvation but might there also be a need to ensure that we see how all must be seen within the framework of a robust biblical ecclesiology? When we focus only on the five, may we also be limiting the message of the Reformers? I believe that we are, so I offer a challenge to think about the six solas, to make sure that the discussion continues. As I have said, I agree with all that is said in the content of the five solas: the Bible alone, Christ alone, faith alone, grace alone, and the glory of God alone. BUT there is at least one missing matter theologically that Luther and other Reformers saw as very important and foundational: the priesthood of all believers and Christian vocation.

Over to you.

Jack Whytock, jcwhytock@gmail.com

Sermon: Communion Chaos, 1 Cor 11: 17-34

John Koning* email: baldy.john1@gmail.com

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Food matters. Meals matter. Meals are full of significance. A shared meal speaks of companionship and friendship. Someone we share a meal with is likely to be our friend – or certainly be well on the way to becoming our friend. Food connects. It connects us with family, friends, and it turns strangers into friends. Think about your kitchen table or your dining room. Incredible things have happened there. Food is so much more than fuel.

Jesus Christ instituted an ordinance involving food and wine – He insisted that his followers keep doing it. One of the most important factors/blessings that God has provided for us is this holy meal. One of the key factors in your happiness and growth is your proper observance of this sacrament. It's known by different names in Christian churches: Holy Communion, breaking of bread, the Lord's Table or Supper and the Eucharist. It involves food and wine.

We are generally accustomed to the observance of this sacrament happening in a church building, with a definite liturgy and order – a solemn and dignified time. 1 Corinthians 11 comes as a shock – there seems to be very

little that is edifying here – there is a feeding frenzy, a mad scramble for food, drunkenness and class divisions between rich and poor.

We must note the seriousness of the passage:

- Their getting together does more harm than good! v17
- Their behaviour amounts to a despising of the church, and a humiliating of others v22
- Some participate and bring judgement on themselves v29
- Some have become sick, even died because of their abuse of the Lord's Table v30

There is a lot to learn here. The passage calls us to look in three directions:

1. LOOK AROUND: v17 – 22, 33 -34

A bit of background is necessary. It was a very different occasion in those days – there was no special building, no fixed liturgy, no sharp distinction between the supper party and the meal. Followers of Jesus would hang out together in someone's home, worship, have a meal, and then do what Jesus instituted. In those days it was more informal, more organic. The Lord's Supper was usually part of a meal the early Christians shared together – called the Love Feast (Jude 12). But what happened at Corinth was a travesty of love.

The wealthier members of the congregation provided most of the food – this could have been a wonderful expression of love and unity. But it went the other way, v21. The poor would have to finish their work before joining the meal, and slaves would find it difficult to be on time. But the rich did not wait. They ate and drank in their cliques. There was disorder that was causing chaos in the church. The wealthy people would come with loads of food, eat and enjoy a "*lekker*" [superb or fantastic] three-course meal, and just ignore poorer people. Some were enjoying a feeding frenzy – others were being disregarded.

Others weren't too into the food – they were into the wine. They were going ahead and drinking too much! Imagine getting "wrecked" at the Lord's Table? It's the opposite of what should happen – it was a complete lack of compassion and care for the other person. The very ritual that was intended to celebrate the gospel and symbolically act out their oneness in Jesus had become an occasion for splitting the church on the basis of status. A meal designed to express unity was being so abused as to highlight the disunity of the church. The food was gone when the poor arrived. Some had over indulged and others had nothing. But there was no real sharing – no real communion, no genuinely common meal. The differences between rich and poor were being highlighted. It seems that there was social snobbery going on at their gatherings. Distinctions were being made between the rich and the poor. Some people felt IN – others felt OUT. And this was the meal that commemorated the death of Jesus Christ on the cross – where we are all on the same level. There is a selfish elitism. Romans 12:10 "*Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honour."* (See also, James 2:1-7).

Paul uses the expression "when you come together" no fewer than five times – there is to be a '*togetherness'* about this sacrament. The Lord's Table

is not just between you and God. The Lord's Table is never just a personal matter – it's never just for individuals. Communion is a fellowship meal of God's people. We are in relationship with others. We are to eat together and drink together. As families we sit down and enjoy a meal together, as family in Jesus Christ we are called to enjoy a special meal together. We are not to decide just to have communion by ourselves at home. If someone is sick, hospitalized, or bed-ridden, that is another matter. But the principle is that we are to enjoy the Lord's Table in community.

So this passage would pose questions to us:

- Do I know these people around me? Am I getting to know them better?
- Am I in communion with them? (in a church group of more than 80 it's difficult – but in our smallish group it's easier to know others.)
- Do I have grudges toward others? Are their suspicions? Have I got attitude? Am I prejudiced?
- Do I consider myself an insider and them an outsider?

There is an important principle from Mt 5:23-24. This is not about coming to the Lord's Table – but the principle applies: *"Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering."* Make peace/make right with your brother before you celebrate the Lord's Table.

This problem of cliques, bias, divisions, is not the problem of Corinth only. Do we gravitate toward others because they are successful? Do we want to socialize with people just like us? Why do we struggle to reach out to people unlike us?

2. LOOK BACK v23 -26

We look back to the greatest person, greatest event and greatest achievement ever. Paul takes the Corinthians back to the Last Supper Jesus had with his disciples (Mark 14:12-25). When Jesus did this in that upper room we must remember he was not doing something brand new. Remember what happened that night he was betrayed in the upper room? It was a shared meal in a rented room. He was taking something very old, very established and very important – and giving it a radically new interpretation.

Jesus died on the Passover weekend. The Lord's Supper is based on the Passover – the greatest Jewish festival (see Exodus 12). God's timing and God's wisdom and God's plans are absolutely breath-taking! The Passover commemorated their escape from slavery in Egypt. It involved sacrifice of lambs, blood, substitution, atonement and escape. Those that escaped out of Egypt were those that were saved by the blood of the lamb on their doorposts.

By God's perfect wisdom, Jesus was crucified the very day the Passover Lamb was to be sacrificed. The whole Jewish system is replaced by Jesus, and

everything centres on the death and resurrection of Jesus – it's his death that establishes that covenant. 1 Corinthians 5:7, "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."

The Lord's Table is a meal of remembrance. After serving the bread, Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19b), likewise the cup. By participating we are not just saying these things happened. But we are involved – they include us.

Note that verses 24 and 25 of 1 Corinthians 11 do not command us to "**say** this" – but "**do** this!" Not "**think** this" – but **do** this. It calls for us to **do** – it's a drama in which we participate. It's habit-forming. Each time we're learning and re-learning our role. We're learning the habits of cross-centred living. Each time we participate we are reminded of the cross. We're reminded that our sin is atoned for, we're free, forgiven, acquitted and adopted. And we're reminded that the cross is our model. We're called afresh to serve and sacrifice.

The Lord's Table is a picture of the whole scope of Christ's relationship to His people: it indicates Jesus Christ *for* us in the atonement; it indicates Christ *in* us by appropriation; it indicates Christ *among* us by communion, it indicates Jesus *coming* for us. It binds together past, present and future.

It is the **Lord's Table**: He has done the work; He is the risen and ascended Head of the table. This is not an act of remembering a dead hero but of communion with the living Lord.

In verses 24 and 25, there are two phrases that have proven to be divisive:

- v24 Jesus took the bread, broke it and said: *This is my body which is for you*... What exactly did he mean? Was he being literal?
- v25 he took the cup saying: *This cup is the new covenant in my blood*...

Here we part company with our Roman Catholic friends. They believe and teach that the bread mysteriously becomes the real actual body of Jesus, and the juice in the cup becomes the real, actual blood of Jesus. In every mass the body and blood of Jesus is being re-created. But the Scriptures teach that Jesus was sacrificed once for all. Consider these passages from Hebrews:

> 7:27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.
>
> 9:12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.
>
> 10:10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

One of the frustrations in life is that very important things expire. Official things expire. Licences, passports, ID's expire – and it's a "*schlepp*" to get them renewed. Jesus death and its great effects never expire! Once – for always.

We believe as Protestants that the bread is a symbol of Christ's body – it represents his body. And the cup represents or symbolizes the blood of Jesus. The bread remains bread and the juice/wine remains juice. Many Protestant

friends see the Table as merely symbolic. It's a potent reminder of what God has done for us in His Son at the Cross; as a result, we should rededicate our lives to God. That is true – but there is more to it.

As Reformed Protestants we believe that the Lord's Table is more than a mere memorial, it's more than just remembering what Jesus did for us. It certainly is that – but it's more! The Lord's Table is a *means of grace* – when we participate with faith, it is a means by which we grow, by which our faith is strengthened, our hope is reinforced. When we participate in faith we believe that God graciously ministers to us. The Lord's Table, properly observed, changes us. It is more than a mere memorial. The shared activity of participating of the one loaf forms us afresh. It reinforces our identity as a community shaped by the cross.

I like what the old prayer book says: The Lord's Table is appointed for the "strengthening and refreshing of our souls. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving."

One slogan you have heard several times – and you will hear several times again – is: "We must learn to preach the gospel to ourselves." Well, God has instituted this occasion when he calls us to preach the gospel to ourselves and to the rest of the church. Why? Because we forget, we get distracted; we get side-tracked, because we live in a world where we are bombarded with other gospels.

Have you ever responded to an altar call? How many times? I am not a fan of altar calls. No doubt many people have responded genuinely. In the earlier days of my ministry (in another town), we sometimes had guest preachers – they loved to preach the gospel and invite people to accept Jesus Christ there and then – on the spot! "Give your heart to Jesus! Say the sinner's prayer!" People did. The problem was that several people did several times. The same people seemed to be being converted or to be rededicating their lives to God repeatedly. What on earth was going on?

People thought this was great – God was at work. I thought, "Here is a real problem." This was very confusing to me. Can you get converted every week? No! But what happens if you sin? What happens if you go through a really rough time? What can God offer you? What does God call you to do? He doesn't ask you to walk the aisle or go upfront – he invites you, no he *commands* you to participate in this Table! It's at the Lord's Table that we come to the living God, in repentant faith, and He ministers to us. This Table is God's perfect provision for us repenting believers.

v26. "… until he comes". The Last Supper looks back to the Passover meal, but it also looks forward to the messianic banquet. It's a tiny foretaste of God's coming new world. Before the fall, food was the way we expressed our trust and obedience. At the fall, food was the way we expressed our disobedience

and mistrust of God. Now for us – food becomes an expression of our trust in God's provision and our own repentance.

3. LOOK IN v27 -32

This is a time for self-examination, v28. In what ways can we participate in an unworthy manner? The Table is a representation of God and his gospel. Just like a flag is a representation of the country. The person who publicly tramples on his nation's flag insults his country. He says his leader and his government stinks. He is not merely destroying a piece of material. It is a symbolic action. A person who takes communion in an "unworthy way" similarly mocks the Lord Jesus and what he has done. This warning troubles believers with tender consciences. Can we ever make ourselves worthy? No! It's for sinners – real sinners – who can never make themselves worthy. Yet the command is to refrain from participating in an *unworthy manner* – v29 *Without recognising the body of the Lord* – without distinguishing the Lord's Supper from other meals – or – without recognising the body of Christ i.e., the wider church. So, I repeat, "In what ways can we participate in an unworthy manner?"

- In context, it must refer to what's been going on there in Corinth – where there is no regard for others, where there is disunity and favouritism. That "body" v29 – may well refer to the body of Christ – the church, 1 Corinthians 12.
- By treating it like religious medicine. By being superstitious – by thinking that in participating it automatically conveys blessing or benefit. The attitude: "It will do me good, it will make me acceptable." A thousand communions won't bring you to God or make you acceptable! The Table takes us to the One who died for us to make us acceptable. Many believe falsely that they were given grace at baptism – then lose some along the way – and need to get topped up at Communion. This is completely false! J.C. Ryle: "I cannot help fearing that millions substitute attendance at the Lord's Supper for repentance, faith and a real, living relationship with Christ." I have done visitation and invited people to join us in worship, and people have responded: "*I will come along when you have communion."* Those people have misunderstood.
- When there is an extravagant amount of outward ceremony. Smells and bells don't make the Lord's Supper "legit." The grace of God and a lively faith are the essentials of the Lord's Table. The Last Supper was a simple affair in a rented room. There was a *godly* simplicity about it all.
- By being careless or flippant. By just going ahead because it's routine. By not actively believing the gospel. By not confessing our sin and repenting from it. It becomes like brushing your teeth. When we don't recall Jesus and his death and resurrection for us; when we don't

preach the gospel to ourselves; when we don't recall the love and grace of God – then we are misusing the table.

So as we participate in communion this morning, we recall the benefits:

- It reminds us of God's great love for us
- It humbles us – it shows us the enormity and ugliness of our sin
- It assures us – atonement has been made, sin has been covered
- It restrains us- if this is what Christ did for us, we cannot go on sinning
- It sends us – we have a gospel to tell and to show
- It points to eternity – there is a glorious banquet coming in the new heavens and new earth.

Worship: Poetry and Renewal

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Part One: Why the Church Needs Poetically Rich and Theologically Deep Music

If you walked into a contemporary evangelical church in the early 2000s, you would likely be greeted by the familiar sound of a worship team playing songs from the latest WOW worship CDs. Each WOW worship CD claimed to contain "today's 30 most powerful worship songs", and these songs seemed to be played everywhere for over a decade. But oddly enough, most of the songs on those albums have been left behind with our WWJD bracelets. Many of the songs I grew up singing are non-existent in the corporate worship of those same churches.

Why Do Some Songs Stay While Others Pass Away?

What is it that makes some songs stand the test of time and others fade? How is it that 'Amazing Grace' and 'It is Well with My Soul' have retained their relevance and impact for centuries? Why do some contemporary songs like 'In Christ Alone' and 'Before the Throne' find a lasting place in our churches? While there are various factors we could cite (such as melody and history), I propose that above all it is this – doctrinal depth and poetic power.

This should be no surprise. Any casual glance at the Psalms reveals the power and necessity of poetry to convey the depths of God's dealings with His people. To describe God as infinite and incomprehensible exhausts the limits of human vocabulary. The Psalmists were by necessity theological

wordsmiths. They had a deep and abiding grasp of God's attributes and workings in history, and they could reflect on it in a way that penetrates the soul

Why Poetry and Theology Need Each Other

Poetry apart from theology is empty, but poetry can increase the effect and the depth of theology. This must be the pursuit of every would-be song writer – presenting deep truths in ways that resonate with the mind and captivate the heart to draw God's people to worship. In an age where catechisms are non-existent in most evangelical churches and doctrinal Sunday schools have nearly vanished, resurrecting and writing doctrinally sound and gospel-centered hymns has never been so crucial to the health and vitality of our churches.

There are two simple but profound reasons for this:

Poetry Makes Theology Personal

I have seen two ever-present dangers in the Christian mindset towards theology. One is the mindset that deep theology is reserved for intellectuals and is irrelevant and impractical for the average believer. The other is that we can pursue theology without doxology – it is all too common for our debates about doctrine to fuel our egos more than our worship. Theologically rich songs provide a powerful avenue to bridge these two destructive gaps between the head and the heart. They teach the soul to connect these realities so they do not seem distant or theoretical.

Songs with image-rich, gospel-centered lyrics drive theology home in a way that many other means cannot. Think for a moment, what resonates with you more? Hearing someone say, "God will take care of all of your needs," or hearing the first lines of Psalm 23, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters." The imagery and the poetry of that psalm help our dull hearts to feel and believe the truths we have likely already heard.

I'll never forget watching a family at our church clutching each other through tears singing, "When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll." They had just witnessed the death of a friend, and in that moment the reality of God's sovereignty and faithfulness resonated with their hearts in a unique and powerful way. When poetry and theology meet it helps us to understand the height and depth of Christ's love for us more fully.

Poetry Makes Theology Memorable

Singing has always had a central role in helping God's people to celebrate and remember what He has done. There are many notable instances of this – when the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea, they burst into song reflecting God's deliverance; when David returned the ark of the Lord to Jerusalem, he gathered all of Israel in joyful worship; and, even on the night of the Passover,

we are told that Jesus sang psalms with his disciples – an experience that would no doubt be etched deeply in their minds. When sound theology is placed within our worship, we engrave truth upon our hearts in a real and lasting way.

During seminary I often found myself ditching cue-cards in favor of singing the Hebrew alphabet to the tune of the familiar ABC song. Singing allows us to effortlessly memorize ideas we would otherwise struggle with. This is a powerful tool that can be harnessed to increase the impact of our weekly worship. Choosing and writing songs that complement the message of the sermon or a series will allow people to continue to hum and sing the truths they've learned long after the three points have been forgotten.

Singing on Our Deathbeds

Several times each year I lead a group of youth to provide a worship service in a local nursing home. Many of the residents suffer from memory loss and other disabilities that make normal conversation nearly impossible. My ten minute message is often accompanied by the not-so-subtle snoring of the attendees. Yet, when we pull out their hymnals, it seems that they come back to life as they chant out in an unashamedly off-key chorus, "O precious is the flow, that makes me white as snow." It is clear that singing this poetic portrayal of the gospel for decades has left an inerasable imprint upon their minds and hearts.

Our churches need that. We need songs that impact our hearts with the truth; we need songs that remind us of Christ's redemption; and, we need songs that are worth singing on our deathbeds.

Part Two: When Worship Becomes Weak

Every believer at some stage has experienced a sense of worship feeling hollow – singing words that feel empty – and affections growing cold or distracted with other pursuits. What can we do when worship becomes weak? How can we rekindle a passion for God?

Renewing the Vision of God's Worthiness

Where better to learn than from those who have been worshipping since the dawn of creation?

In Isaiah 6 we are given a vision into the very courtroom of God, where our attention is immediately drawn to the most incredible of God's creatures – the seraphim, which means 'the burning ones'. Though they possess a degree of glory on their own, even they cannot look upon God; so, with two wings they continually shield their gaze from the brilliance of God's splendor, with two they cover their feet acknowledging their unworthiness as creatures, and with two they fly.

What inspires these beings to perpetually cry out, "Holy, holy, holy?" What keeps this song from become a rote and repetitive duty? The answer is evident – one shielded glimpse at the glory before them. In the thousands upon

thousands of years they have hovered before the throne, this glory has never become dull; the infinite worth of the one before them ensures there is always more beauty to behold, more wonder to experience.

Worship at its core is a response to worthiness; the very word 'worship' is just a shortened version of the old English phrase 'worth-ship.' When we become gripped by the intrinsic worth of something, it overflows in expressions of worship. God has created us in such a way that when our hearts become captivated, our tongue bursts out in joyful praise, our pockets open up to eagerly give, and our hands diligently serve. True worship is not something contrived but a natural response to worthiness. The greater our vision of God, the greater the fuel for our worship – both in song and in deed.

Renewing the Vision of Our Unworthiness

In response to this majestic scene, Isaiah falls flat on his face and cries out, "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" One glance at the Holy One before him overwhelms him with a sense of his own unworthiness and sinfulness. John Owen wisely stated, "He that hath slight thoughts of sin never had great thoughts of God."

Perhaps this is what Adam and Eve lost sight of in the garden when Satan put forth that devastating lie, "If you eat of this, you will become like God." Sin's most delirious deception is to exalt ourselves to think we are more like God, all the while making God more like us. This is the folly of idolatry – we exchange worship of the creator for the creature, the infinite for the finite, the flawless for the flawed (Romans 1:18). The more we lose sight of the infinite separation between us and the Holy One, the more the weeds of entitlement multiply, leaving little soil for the precious flowers of true worship.

But if we were left here it could only lead to despair. How can those of unclean lips sing anything worthy of this King of glory? Even our highest thoughts are too low for Him, our finest melodies are off-key, and our greatest gifts are mere trinkets. Why would we even assume that God would listen to us and then actually delight in what He hears?

The Unworthy Made Worthy

We read on of a burning coal that a seraphim brings from the throne, and in Isaiah's prostrate fear he hears these words of assurance, "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." Isaiah would not dare to even lift his gaze to God's throne, but God provides a way for him as a beautiful foreshadow of what He would do for Israel, and ultimately for all His people through the New Covenant.

God must initiate, we cannot. When Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, they were consumed (Leviticus 10). Likewise, when Uzzah reached out his hand to keep the ark of God from stumbling, he was struck dead by the Lord (1 Chron. 13). But now we see the reverse – God reaches out to man with a coal from His presence, and instead

of being destroyed he is purified. We must be made holy by the Holy One - only those set apart by God can stand before Him. There is a weightiness to God's glory that ought to keep us from frivolous, half-hearted worship.

We know the atonement in far greater clarity this side of the cross than Isaiah knew. The King has come down from his throne to cleanse us, to fully and finally bridge the gap between our unworthiness and His worthiness. Through His death Christ has torn the veil that long separated man from the blazing glory of God's presence, and through His resurrection and ascension He stands our Great High Priest, making it possible for all believers to enter God's presence with confidence (Hebrews 4:14-16).

The Heavenly Vision

The hymn we now know as "Turn your Eyes Upon Jesus", was originally titled, "The Heavenly Vision." Its well-known chorus was inspired by a few lines in a tract that said, "Turn your soul's vision to Jesus, and look and look at Him." And therein lies the remedy for weak worship – to look and look at Him and through this heavenly vision to remind ourselves time and time again of the great worth of our God, our unworthiness before Him, and what He has done to bridge the infinite gap.

Five Suggestions for Renewing the Heavenly Vision in Corporate Worship

1. Choose songs that exalt the Trinity, reflect on our need, and rejoice in the gospel. Alongside the tried and true hymns, there are many ministries producing sound, scriptural songs for our generation – Sovereign Grace, The Getty's, and Indelible Grace to name a few. Grace Community Church has published a hymnal entitled 'Hymns of Grace' which serves as a great resource.
2. Have worship leaders read a scripture that draws the congregation's focus to the heavenly vision. This can be especially impacting when the passage connects with the song following it. For examples of passages that lift up God's worthiness and our unworthiness see Psalm 90, Isaiah 40, Colossians 1:15-23, Ephesians 1:3-14, 2:1-10.
3. Pray in a way that reflects our stance before God during the worship service. Psalm 8 serves as great inspiration for this mentality.
4. Look into liturgies from the past. We can learn much from the Reformers and Puritans who seem to have had a clearer view of the heavenly vision. A recently published volume titled, *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past for the Present* has provided these in an easily accessible format.
5. Cultivate an awe of God through personal reading, prayer, and meditation. The Church needs more worship leaders and pastors who like Moses come down from the mountain with a glimmer the glory of God radiating from their faces (2 Corinthians 3:7-18).

May we and our people gain the vision that Samuel Rutherford and many others once had:

> … the very dust that falls from Christ's feet, His old ragged clothes, His knotty and black cross, are sweeter to me than kings' golden crowns, and their time-eaten pleasures. I should be a liar and a false witness if I would not give my Lord Jesus a fair testimonial with my whole soul. My word, I know, will not heighten Him, he needs not such props under his feet to raise his glory high. But oh that I could raise him the height of heaven, and the breadth and length of ten heavens, in the estimation of all his young lovers! For we have all shapen Christ but too narrow and too short, and formed conceptions of his love, in our conceit, very unworthy of it. Oh that men were taken and catched with his beauty and fairness! They would give over playing with idols, in which there is not half room for the love of one soul to satisfy itself (p.101).

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Confessions from a Pastor's Desk:

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In reflecting on many years in full-time ministry, two things are clear: I have messed up a lot and I have been burned badly. I have been in the black hole of burnout and depression. The struggles have not just been with ministry – but rather in trying to understand who I am – and coming to terms with that. I used to come away from pastors' conferences and fraternals thinking, "I am not like my pastoral brothers." It was a great concern and I started questioning whether I should even be in pastoral ministry. In explaining my journey of self-knowledge within ministry (as part of a Student Campus Ministry in my early days, seminary lecturer, church planting and full-time pastoral ministry in established churches), there are five imperatives I would like to highlight and shed some light on.

#1 Beware of 'busyness idolatry'/ 'busyness righteousness':

One of the first things you pick up on when a group of pastors and church planters get together is how busy they are; conversations around hectic schedules and crazy busyness buzz around a room amid the required theological and doctrinal dialogues. Generally, in the business realm or marketplace, this is par for the course – movers and shakers are by definition busy people. Church planters and pastors are also famous for being busy; there's always so much to do - important stuff – it is 'ministry' and 'kingdom work' after all.

> ***It has become a subculture. This sub-culture says that if you are not madly, crazy busy, you are not doing ministry properly. It comes with its own pastoral peer pressure.***

This began to intimidate me. I was not hectically busy all the time. I had windows of free time. Was there something wrong with me? I wasn't always rushing off to the next big thing or meeting or conference or talk or camp or ministry trip or pulpit swap. I began to realise how this busyness subtly becomes a pride issue. It becomes an identity issue, and it soon becomes a righteousness issue – always the slippery slope. Busyness covers a multitude of shortcomings. Bragging or whining about how busy one is should never impress. It is dangerous to buy into this subtle lie – dangerous for you, your family and your church.

"There is enough time for what God has called me to do" is what I preach to myself often. God is not a cruel tyrant. He knows I am not Superman. He knows I am dust. For me, those windows of free time are more than fine; they are necessary.

As a pastor or church planter, is it vital and essential to say 'no' sometimes and to decline invitations to speak at conferences or camps, or take on extra ministries. Your reasons for saying 'no' are not due to laziness or a comfort-zone mentality but because you know what your primary calling and responsibility are, and you never want to compromise your faithfulness in that. It is not possible to do more and more without compromising something, without some area of your life or ministry suffering. It is fine to say "no".

God, our Father invites us to this in Psalm 46:10*: 'Be still, and know that I am God'*. Jesus, our Chief Shepherd modelled this: *'The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves.'* [Mark 6:30-32]

#2 Begin your discipleship at home:

As pastors and church planters, the words of Jesus' Great Commission are always at the forefront. We are seriously committed to meeting new people, getting to know them, sharing the gospel with them, seeing them converted, baptised and taught.

We are big on discipleship. It is probably part of your church's mission statement. Discipleship, however, must always start at home. It starts with your spouse and your children. (And if you are crazy busy with 'ministry,' this will be the first casualty).

If Christianity doesn't work at home – don't export it.

Being early morning people, formal family discipleship in the Koning household took place before school, sitting in bed, reading the Bible and 'Leading Little Ones to God' (when our boys were youngsters), and praying and chatting through stuff. As a couple, we have prioritised praying for our children daily.

Informal family discipleship took various forms. Being a sporty family, lots of time was spent playing tennis, squash, cricket, running and mountain biking. It was not part of an agenda – it was just fun. As a family, camping adventures were always a favourite. Into their adult years, our boys cherish the memories of campfire made-up stories. We have unique and peculiar family traditions. While our sons were at school, we were avid supporters of their sporting events. We also enjoy listening to music together as well as dissecting and evaluating TV programmes. I cherish these informal discipling opportunities. It is Deuteronomy 6:6 fleshed out and contextualised.

I am thankful that I have spent more time with my wife and children than with any co-worker, colleague, elder or friend in church.

It wasn't an intentional thing; it was a pleasant and rewarding thing. But let me be realistic as to my shortcomings as a pastor husband/dad: I probably fared better on the informal side of discipling. (By Paul Tripp's standards, our formal training was below par. Paul Tripp gave me a guilt trip).

I regret the times our children were too aware of problems in the church and were privy to my complaints about people and circumstances in the church. I should have wisely protected them from that.

I often fell short in being a good example to my wife and children through my impatience, anger and sullenness. There were times I exasperated my children. At times I expected too much from them and moaned too much at them. (Perhaps ambushing my eldest while he was sleeping and setting his duvet alight with firecrackers was not the smartest thing to do!)

When it comes to my Ephesians 5 calling to love my wife, I try to spend lots of time with her, just chatting and connecting. This takes time. I try to protect her from unnecessary stresses and from any church attacks or unfair criticism. We go out to breakfast once a week. We eat suppers together. But most important, I have given her space to be her own person. This is where I have got it right.

But I have also got it wrong. My major shortcoming in loving my wife is not telling her I love her enough. I have also not always been wise in *what* I have unloaded on her, *when* I have unloaded and *how* I have unloaded. Sometimes it has been too much.

I have not always given enough care to her spiritual growth. I should be reading with my wife and not just with the eldership team. This is how I can build her up and encourage her.

We don't agree on everything, but one strength of our marriage is unity of conviction on the big things: *money, lifestyle, philosophy of raising children and philosophy of ministry.* We don't argue about these things. These are things that can and probably need to be discovered, to some extent, before marriage.

#3 Become self-aware:

It took me awhile to get to know myself (too long); to realise my strengths and weaknesses; and, to realise that I was not your typical pastor. (Is there a typical pastor?) I think churches probably have an idea of what a typical pastor is. I have discovered that it is ok if you don't conform to the typical church planter/pastor identikit.

But for many years I secretly struggled with my own temperament/personality and how God could use me effectively in pastoral ministry.

I am not a people person. I enjoy people: spending time chatting, listening, swopping stories, sharing big ideas and sometimes just talking junk. But sometimes I really struggle with people. I often need my space and time away from people to work through stuff in peace and quiet. This can be hard in full-time pastoral ministry.

I really don't like small talk, and in pastoral ministry there is no way to avoid it. An awareness of my need to be away from people and that I can become irritated by people has helped me to navigate ministering to people. I can still be a shepherd and pastor them.

> ***Recognising your weaknesses doesn't make you a bad pastor. It makes you a real pastor who realises his dependence on the help of the Holy Spirit.***

I am not a consistent worker. (That sounds worse than it actually is). The rhythm and the intensity of my work are not consistent from Monday to Sunday. They are not consistent from the early morning to the afternoon. I tend to work in fits and starts. I tend to work with great energy, almost manic, but I don't work like that all week. And if I don't start well, then I'm in trouble. So I work consistently in fits and starts. That is ok; there are others on the planet just like me.

I know my personal rhythms. I work best in the early morning, when I am the sharpest and at my most creative, or after exercise when the endorphins have kicked in. It therefore makes most sense for me to work on my sermon prep and writing in the mornings.

I have to guard that time. I cannot simply push that sort of work to early afternoon. Late in the afternoon I have a window where my creative juices come out of hibernation, but I have never been able to do sermon prep after 19h00. It doesn't work for me, but it may work well for you. Recognising your personal rhythms helps you to be wise with your schedule and commitments.

Self-awareness is a vital and helpful aspect to being productive in ministry.

#4 Be aware of a church's rhythms:

Weekly rhythms: Most of us have to produce one (or two) sermons a week. No matter how missional we are – Sunday is D-day, every week. That requires work – *reading, praying, preparing and researching* – careful, prayerful slog, week after week. There are no shortcuts for a faithful preacher wanting to correctly handle the Word of Truth in an expository manner. For me, Thursday is 'make or break.'

My sermon does not need to be complete by then, but it must have come together and have a framework of my main points and application. If not, I am

in trouble. So Thursdays are tough days for me. My family know that I am a different animal on Thursdays. (Probably best if I don't take many phone calls on a Thursday). I am distant, preoccupied and a bit tense. My wife graciously makes allowances.

It is very helpful to know these weekly rhythms and anticipate them. Of course, there might also be Bible study prep, visitation and other weekly church activities that require your attention.

Seasonal rhythms: Gospel ministry has very definite seasonal rhythms. There are holiday seasons that might involve a holiday club. There might be yearly camps or retreats. There are quarterly meetings or events. These seasonal events require unique planning, organisation and delegation. (*I am a poor planner – others help me*). The beginning of the year is strategic. People are well rested from holidays and full of New Year's resolutions and the church can tap into those good intentions to set a course or vision. It is a critical time, and you may well be feeling like the hamster on the wheel. You do not need to be discouraged; you just need to realise the rhythms of ministry and life.

A personal illustration: I find ministry during national holiday times (*mid-December to mid-January*) horrible and very tough. If you are not on leave, there is very little as far as the weekly rhythms going on. No midweek stuff, no small groups, no youth activities and people only want to see you in an emergency. So you are in limbo and on call. You are on duty, but there is not much to do. This can be frustrating and so it helps to understand that, anticipate that and make adjustments. It can be a real struggle. It is not you, or the church or Satan – it is just an inevitable rhythm of ministry. Use these times for ministry opportunities that you don't normally have time for (you could always alphabetise and organise your ever expanding book shelves and personal library).

#5 Be open to long-term change:

It is our preaching mantra – the Gospel means change and transformation. But that generally happens slowly. *'And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.'* [Philippians 1:6]

Firstly, we need to apply that to ourselves. I am not the man I was when I started out in full-time ministry 28 years ago. God has used different ministry situations to stretch, rattle and challenge me. God has grown me. I am grateful for that. Along the way, God tweaks us – slowly. I am in the process of being reinvented, by God's sanctifying hand, in small degrees. God is patient with me. Many of my initial ministry expectations and goals were ill-informed and immature.

My core theological commitments remain the same, but in terms of balance, emphasis and methods, there have been some substantial changes. Some of these might still evolve.

Secondly, we need to apply that to our congregation – the flock we are called to shepherd. Just as God is slowly and gently tweaking and sanctifying us, the same is true of those in our pews. Spiritual growth and knowledge cannot be microwaved. We need to patiently come alongside them, know them, love them, feed them, guide them, care for them, nurture them, pray for them and equip them for works of service for the building up of one another.

As a pastor or church planter, that is our high ministry calling. That is what we are to be faithful in. We can never be too busy for that. Too much is at stake**.** *'I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.'* [1 Corinthians 3:6-7] May our great confidence be in the true and living God and in His unbreakable, tenacious, never-ending and never-changing love and favour to us. *'Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!'* [Psalm 115:1]

John is married to Moekie and they have 2 sons: Nick, married to Sarah and involved in full-time student ministry with REACH; and Michael, studying Physics at UCT. John was converted to Jesus Christ in 1984 while in the army. He then went on to study at the Bible Institute in Cape Town. He currently pastors Grace Bible Church (an Acts 29 Church) in East London, Eastern Cape, South Africa.



Moekie is a Dentist and has always seen her vocation as an opportunity to glorify God. She is John's greatest supporter in full-time ministry and together they love being involved with God's people and serving them. (This photo offers a rare opportunity to see John dressed in a suit. Even an atypical pastor knows when to conform).

Christian Ethics: An Introduction to Biblical Moral Reasoning – an excerpt [1]

Wayne Grudem*

Author of the well-known text, Systematic Theology *and the author of the soon to be released,* Christian Ethics, *from which this is taken as an excerpt. Dr. Grudem is currently the professor of theology and biblical studies at Phoenix Seminary, Phoenix, Arizona. He was also the general editor of the* ESV Study Bible.



THE BASIS OF THE BIBLE'S ETHICAL STANDARDS IS THE MORAL CHARACTER OF GOD

1. God's Character Is Good. When the Bible talks about God's moral character, it talks about God as being "good." For example:

> *You are good* and do good;
> teach me your statutes. (Ps. 119:68)

> The Rock, his work is perfect,
> for *all his ways are justice*.
> A God of faithfulness, and without iniquity,
> just and upright is he. (Deut. 32:4)

> *Just and true are your ways*,
> O King of the nations!
> Who will not fear, O Lord,
> and glorify your name?
> For you alone are holy.
> All nations will come and worship you. (Rev. 15:3–4)

[1] Content taken from *Christian Ethics: An Introduction to Biblical Moral Reasoning* by Wayne Grudem, ©2018. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, Il 60187, www.crossway.org.

In these and many other passages, the Bible emphasizes that God's moral character is good. He is a God who is good, and also loving, just, merciful, faithful, truthful, and holy. In addition, God approves of and actually delights in his own moral character. He is the One who is the "blessed" God, that is, the One who is supremely happy in himself (1 Tim. 1:11; 6:15).[2] In fact, when his Word declares that he is "good," it implies that he considers his own character to be worthy of approval.

2. God Approves of Creatures Who Conform to His Moral Character.

Many other passages in Scripture show that God desires and approves of moral creatures who conform to his moral character. Just as God is loving, just, merciful, faithful, truthful, holy, and so forth, so he also desires that we act in ways that are loving, just, merciful, faithful, truthful, holy, and so forth. These are the qualities that God approves of in himself, and therefore these are the moral qualities that he approves of in his creatures as well. Just as he delights to contemplate his own moral excellence, he delights to see his moral excellence reflected in the creatures he has made.[3]

Here are some biblical passages showing that God delights to see his character reflected in our lives:

> But as he who called you is holy, you also *be holy* in all your conduct. (1 Pet. 1:15)
>
> *Be merciful*, even as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:36)
>
> *We love* because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19)
> Therefore *be imitators of God*, as beloved children. (Eph. 5:1)

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[2] The word *blessed* in these verses translates the Greek adjective *makarios*, which means "blessed, happy" (BDAG, 610–611).

[3] Once we accept the idea that God's own moral character is good, it is easier to answer the following question: "(1) Are God's moral standards right because he commands them or (2) does he command them because they are right?"

Both statements are true, if they are properly understood. (1) We must be careful not to imagine that God could command anything that is contrary to his moral character, and so we must not imagine that God could arbitrarily command anything we might imagine. If God's moral character is infinitely good, then he cannot command anything except what is right and good, and that means that anything he commands is right because he commands it. (2) We must be careful not to imagine that there is some higher standard of "good" or "right" outside of God to which he decides to conform. If we understand that the only absolute standard of good and right is God's own character, then we can also say that he commands things because they are right (they conform to his moral character).

> You therefore must *be perfect*, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matt. 5:48)

> *Do not lie* to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge *after the image of its creator*. (Col. 3:9–10)

Paul's idea is that our "new self" is becoming more like God, and therefore we should imitate God's truthfulness.

> Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears *we shall be like him*, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him *purifies himself as he is pure*. (1 John 3:2–3)

Putting this another way, we are to live in the same way that Jesus lived, to walk as he walked:

> Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. (1 Cor. 11:1)

> And *walk in love, as Christ loved us* and gave himself up for us. (Eph. 5:2)

> Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. (1 John 2:6)

> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, *leaving you an example*, so that you might follow in his steps. (1 Pet. 2:21)

John Murray, professor of systematic theology at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia from 1930 to 1966, rightly observes:

> In the last analysis, why must we behave in one way and not in another? . . . The ultimate standard of right is the character or nature of God. The basis of ethics is that God is what he is, and we must be conformed to what he is in holiness, righteousness, truth, goodness, and love. . . . God made man in his own image and after his likeness. Man must, therefore, be like God.[4]

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[4] John Murray, *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1957), 177.

GOD COULD NOT HAVE MADE OTHER MORAL STANDARDS

Because the moral standards that God gives us are grounded in his moral character, he could not have made other moral standards for us than the ones that he made. He could not have commanded us that it was right to hate people rather than to love them, to lie rather than to tell the truth, to murder rather than to protect life, to be unjust rather than just, and so forth.

However, one word of clarification is important here. When I speak of God's moral standards, *I do not mean to include the temporary regulations* that God gave the people of Israel in the time of Moses, such as the regulations about clean and unclean foods or the requirements for various kinds of animal sacrifices. Rather, I am referring to the abiding moral standards that have been applicable to all people for all periods of history.

GOD'S ABIDING MORAL STANDARDS AS FOUND IN THE BIBLE APPLY TO ALL PEOPLE IN ALL CULTURES IN ALL PERIODS OF HISTORY

If God's moral standards flow from his unchanging moral character, then it follows that these are the moral standards by which God will hold all people everywhere accountable. Several passages indicate that God will one day be the Judge of the entire earth:

> Shall not the *Judge of all the earth* do what is just? (Gen. 18:25)

> He comes to judge the earth.
> *He will judge the world in righteousness*,
> and the peoples in his faithfulness. (Ps. 96:13)

When Paul spoke to the pagan Greek philosophers on the Areopagus in Athens, he was speaking to an audience that had no knowledge of the moral standards of the God of Israel (even if some had a passing acquaintance with Jewish religion, Paul could not have assumed such knowledge on the part of any of his hearers). Even to this audience Paul proclaimed that the one true God, "the God who made the world and everything in it," is the God who "has fixed a day on which he will *judge the world* in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:24, 31). These pagan Greek philosophers, Paul said, would be judged by God according to his eternal, universal moral standards.

Similarly, in Romans 1, Paul teaches that Gentiles (most of whom have no knowledge of God's written moral standards in the Jewish Bible) will be held accountable to God because they are "without excuse" when they do not honor God as God or give thanks to him (vv. 20–21). Paul says that such Gentile

sinners "know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die," but they "not only do them but give approval to those who practice them" (v. 32). Moreover, they "know" these standards because "the work of the law is written on their hearts" (2:15).

Of course, these statements do not mean that any unbeliever can live up to God's moral standards and merit God's approval for his or her life, for "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). These proclamations of accountability to God's moral laws are given for the purpose of persuading people to repent of their sins and trust in Christ for forgiveness: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (6:23).

Peter says something similar in speaking about hostile unbelievers who are mocking and slandering faithful Christians:

> They are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; *but they will give account* to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. (1 Pet. 4:4–5)

The conclusion from these passages is that even people who do not believe in the God of the Bible or agree that his moral standards have divine authority on their lives will be judged by the God of all the earth. And the moral standards for which they will be held accountable are those that are found in God's "law," which is perfectly revealed in Scripture and also written on people's hearts and consciences (though imperfectly perceived).

Book Reviews
and
Book Briefs

Biblical Theology

Malachi Then and Now: An Expository Commentary Based on Detailed Exegetical Analysis. Allen P. Ross. Wooster, OH: Weaver Book Company, 2016, 202 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1941337288

Allen Ross states in his preface to "Malachi Then and Now" that "This commentary is designed to provide two helpful resources for the expositor and serious student of the Bible." He clarifies the two purposes of the book as being both a commentary and a demonstration of how to use sound exegetical analysis as a basis for expository preaching. The introduction is a compact hermeneutics course; and while Allen acknowledges that people will have varying levels of scholarship and access to furthering it, he in no way lowers the bar in laying out the groundwork of solid biblical study and research required of those who would rightly understand Scripture. This is a wonderful encouragement, and Allen gives an excellent foundation for new students of the Bible and those trying to dig a little deeper into the Scriptures. For continuing and committed students of God's Word, such as pastors and teachers, this two-fold method of approaching the text should seamlessly integrate with existing studies and help to refine and solidify the process of sermon and lesson preparation.

Allen fulfills the commentary purpose of the book admirably by making the content very accessible while being in-depth enough to hint at the wealth of understanding that undergirds his exposition. The reader is able to clearly understand the basis of the exposition and is given word studies and background information where it is needful or helpful for rounding out the application. The "Then and Now" nature of the prophetic literature as found in the book of Malachi is clearly demonstrated, and Allen does a fine job throughout the commentary of explaining the significance of the revealed word for both the original and contemporary audience. I appreciate the way that each chapter deals with universal truth without becoming entangled in controversy or drawing unnecessary conclusions. The best example of this spirit is found in Chapter 7 where Allen gives the basic message of the passage being studied and simply notes that the eschatological meaning of the prophecies "will require a good deal of study." This intent to provide biblical truth that Christians everywhere can be blessed and instructed by is probably the greatest reason that the book is so insightful and helpful.

The instruction in the proper study of God's Word is shown by example throughout the book. Each chapter is carefully laid out according to a prescribed plan and it allows the reader to get a clear sense of what good study

habits look like. This is very helpful and the consistent application of the exegetical method prescribed in the introduction demonstrates the fruit of intentional and methodical exegesis. Each chapter includes Allen's translation of the text, notes on the text and context, and exegetical notes that are first outlined and then summarized into a main theme. It is these notes that form the basis for the commentary, showing how careful study is foundational to providing useful commentary. It is in these parts of each chapter that the casual reader and beginning student may encounter some difficulty keeping their attention on the seemingly disconnected paragraphs where individual ideas and words are studied, but the layout has been chosen to make this as easy as possible for all readers. Allen has had to pick and choose in this portion; I think he has done a good job of making each chapter as readable as possible as an exegetical outline while still maintaining a natural flow into the commentary portion.

No one is disqualified from picking up the book and learning from it and everyone is encouraged to advance their scholarship for the sake of learning all they can from the Word of God. This is a wonderful resource and I highly recommend it to all who have an in interest in the study of the Scriptures and especially the book of Malachi.

Reviewed by Stephen Plouffe, pastoring in the Eastern Charge of the Free Church of Scotland, Prince Edward Island.

James, 1 & 2 Peter, and Jude. **Jim Samra. Teach the Text Commentary Series*, gen. eds. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016, 285 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-9240-4**

*For general observations on the purpose and format of this commentary series, see the review on 1 & 2 Samuel (*Haddington House Journal*, 2017:37-38).

Firstly, Jim Samra is to be commended for his ability to talk to his reader as someone who is equally tasked with the responsibility to teach the text in a way that is both faithful to the inspired author's intended message and relevant to a particular known congregation in the preacher's present context. In fact, throughout the commentary, but especially in the Teaching the Text sections, one almost has the sense that Samra is a friend sitting alongside the reader in his study considering how best to preach the text. His options for illustrating the text are always helpful, either because they can be used directly or because they stimulate further ideas.

I also like the assumption throughout the commentary that systematic, consecutive expository preaching is the norm. Thus, Samra comments on earlier passages with an awareness that a foundation is being laid for the exposition of later passages and comments on later passages with reminders of

information and lessons from earlier passages. Samra also very effectively presents the text in context by simply showing the connections and logical flow from the pre-text, to the text, and to the post-text. Similarly, the description of the structure of a passage is never made overly complicated but is always useful for understanding and preaching the passage.

Samra is able to keep his commentary concise yet extremely helpful for two reasons. Firstly, he is very good at selecting only those words and parts of verses that need explaining in order to bring interpretive insight to a passage. Secondly, Samra's interpretive and theological insights invariably cut through the complexity of the text and reveal the crux of its message in a way that in relevant for today. For example, Peter's expression, "arm yourselves" in 1 Peter 4:1 connects the believer's attitude to suffering not only with Christ's suffering but also with spiritual warfare. Thus, "in spiritual warfare, having the right attitude about suffering is absolutely essential to enduring it" (p. 167).

Another strength of Samra's commentary is that on several occasions he provides clear summaries of the Bible's theology on a relevant topic. For example, in dealing with 2 Peter 1:12-21, he provides a brief biblical theology of prophecy and Scripture (pp. 211-212). In dealing with 2 Peter 2:1-9, he presents concise biblical theologies of both false prophets and teachers (pp. 215-216), and homosexuality (p. 218).

To my mind, Samra's commentary on James is brilliant because he has identified the book's purpose so precisely. The epistle of James is "a multifaceted picture of what it means to be a mature Christian, a doer of the Word and not a hearer only" (p. 1). Thus, the Greek adjective *teleios* (James 1:4, 17, 25; 3:2) meaning mature, perfect, complete, and related verbs (James 2:8, 22) are key to understanding James. In particular, this insight helps Samra to deal very well with the critical question of how to interpret James 2:20-24, the issue of justification by works and not by faith alone. "James is not saying that when Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice he 'was declared to be righteous,' as if this were the moment he exercised saving faith. Instead, when Abraham offered Isaac, this was the moment that he showed himself to be righteous. In other words, what happened in Genesis 22 is the 'work' that demonstrated his faith" (p. 34).

A very helpful insight that Samra applies to 1 Peter frequently is the election-ethics-community-mission principle (p. 137; *cf*. Wright, 2006, *The Mission of God*). This pattern can be seen throughout the Bible from the call of Abraham to God's purpose for the Church. By election God creates a community whom He intends to become like Him in their character and behaviour so that ultimately the world may be blessed.

Finally, Samra's affirmation of the importance of the book of Jude in an increasingly ungodly and anti-Christian contemporary society is much needed and appreciated considering that this little book is frequently overlooked.

Overall, one is impressed by how concise and yet extremely helpful this commentary is, especially for the preacher but also for any Christian reader.

Reviewed by Greg Phillips, the academic dean & registrar of Dumisani Theological Institute in the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

Revelation. **Reformed Expository Commentary. Richard D. Phillips*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017, 764 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-62995-239-0**

*Richard Phillips is Senior Minister at Second Presbyterian Church in Greenville, South Carolina. He is the author of dozens of books, including many in the Reformed Expository Commentary series. His latest contribution in that series is in the book of Revelation. Readers might recall that other commentaries in this series - Galatians, Ephesians, and 1Timothy - were also reviewed in this journal. (I would refer you to Volumes 8 and 11.)

The Series

The series as a whole has received some high-profile endorsements of late; not least of which was being chosen by *WORLD Magazine* as book of the year. In a review of *WORLD Magazine's* top books of 2017 issue, Marvin Olasky Editor in Chief writes,

> *This year for the first time we are recognizing a series, the publication of which requires great perseverance. Chartres Cathedral took 25 years to build, Salisbury Cathedral, Notre Dame de Paris 100, and Cologne Cathedral 600. By those standards, P&R Publishing's 30-year plan to publish a* ***Reformed Expository Commentary*** *(REC) series covering all 66 books of the Bible is not record-setting. By American publishing standards, though, it's audacious.*

As the series title suggests, these commentaries are biblical commentaries that are expository in nature, attempting to present the text as it might be typically preached before a congregation while drawing attention to the doctrines of grace that have been so much a part of the Reformed heritage. Phillips, along with being the author of this volume on Revelation, also serves as co-editor of the series alongside Phillip Ryken. They state the purpose of the series this way:

> The Reformed Expository Commentary has four fundamental commitments. First, these commentaries aim to be biblical, presenting a comprehensive exposition characterized by careful attention to the details of the text. … Second, these commentaries are unashamedly doctrinal. We are committed to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms as containing the system of

> doctrine taught in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Third, these commentaries are redemptive-historical in their orientation. Fourth, these commentaries are practical, applying the text of Scripture to contemporary challenges of life—both public and private—with appropriate illustrations.

Who is the audience for this series? Again the editors:

> The contributors to the Reformed Expository Commentary are all pastor-scholars. As pastors, each author will first present his expositions in the pulpit ministry of his church. This means that these commentaries are rooted in the teaching of Scripture to real people in the church. While aiming to be scholarly, these expositions are not academic. Our intent is to be faithful, clear, and helpful to Christians who possess various levels of biblical and theological training—as should be true in any effective pulpit ministry. Inevitably this means that some issues of academic interest will not be covered. Nevertheless, we aim to achieve a responsible level of scholarship, seeking to promote and model this for pastors and other teachers in the church.

The Commentary

One item readers might charge is a glaring omission is the introductory sections that typically cover audience, date, themes etc. However, rather than multiplying words in an already generous commentary, Phillips, I believe sensibly, confines his introductory remarks to the exposition itself. Plus, most, if not all, of these areas he deals with early on in the commentary. Very early on, the reader has a good grasp of the intention, audience, date and the kind of literature we are dealing with.

In considering chapter 1 verse 8, Phillips deals with the question of purpose stating, "…the great purpose of Revelation is to provide Christians with a view of history from God's perspective in heaven." (p. 47) Later, quoting James Boice, he says "...to be comforted and strengthened by it to live for Christ and his glory at all times." (p.47)

A second example is his treatment of the question of structure. Is Revelation a chronological work, describing events as they fall out one after another? Phillips argues it isn't! Rather, it is arranged "into seven sections, each presenting the history of the church age from God's perspective in Heaven." (p. 166) Phillips goes on to say "Dispensationalists read Revelation as one continuous history, from chapters 1 to 22, resulting in complex and confusing explanations for the recurring depictions of Christ's return and God's final wrath. Revelation makes better sense, however, when we recognize seven sections that present parallel depictions of history, each with its own perspective." (p. 166)

One element I found encouraging was how liberally Phillips was able to quote (in agreeable ways) authors who hold to a different eschatological

scheme than Phillip's amillennialism – including John MacArthur and George Eldon Ladd. He says this is due to the fact that "…even when there is disagreement about the interpretation, the primary message comes through clearly enough." (p. xvi). In a book such as Revelation, there are many points of disagreement but many points of agreement as well.

One area where Phillips excels is in his grasp of church history. While his historical-grammatical skills reach back into the previous 65 books to give a sound and consistently biblical understanding of Revelation, he also (throughout the body of work) is able to show how the themes of the book are not confined at all to the first century nor to the time just before Christ's return but can be seen in the major epochs of church history and in the daily lives of ordinary Christian.

A more specific example is his consideration of the Great Tribulation that John references in Rev 7:14, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation." Phillips, I believe rightly, doesn't confine this tribulation to any one moment in church history but asserts that it characterizes the whole of the church age, which is often marked by suffering and sacrifice. Phillips says, " Faithful servants of Christ were thrown to the lions in John's day, were burned at the stake in the English Reformation, were hunted through the countryside during the persecutions in Scotland, were sent to forced labour camps in Communist China, and more recently have been bombed during their worship services in Sudan and Nigeria." (pp. 254-55) "How", asks Phillips, "might one go about convincing Christians in China, Iraq or North Korea that the tribulation has not yet started!"

Nevertheless, when looking at the various areas of difference, Phillips is generous in laying out the other schools so you know clearly the position he is critiquing. Invariably, he highlights two or three areas of an opposite position, usually highlighting the strongest argument in each area, and then gives his considered response. I found this most helpful!

The commentary as a whole is substantial at over 700 pages, but one is not to be intimidated by the size. The content, though thorough in its coverage of the passages, nevertheless maintains a mostly devotional quality and broadly lay-Christian appeal. Its chief aim is to present the material in such a way as to convey the message of strength and hope for the reader, as it was likewise intended for its original audience.

This is a book that can be used in the study or read at the bedside. If you are a pastor, this book can be enormously helpful; perhaps too helpful, as one feels inclined to restate what Phillips has laid out so well! But what I love about this series is their stated goal to promote and model a strong level of scholarship and exegetical skill for church pastors. In all the volumes I have read, including this one, they excel in their purpose.

If you are not a pastor and are one of those who finds the book of Revelation a closed or at least an enigmatic read, Phillips is the place to start. Because this material is first presented in a pulpit ministry, these commentaries arise out of the preached Word directed to real people in the pew. Each chapter ends, as

would any good sermon, with points of reflection, challenge, and application. I would enthusiastically recommend Phillips' excellent work!

Reviewed by Kent Compton, the minister of the Western Charge of the Free Church of Scotland, Prince Edward Island.

Thinking Through Creation: Genesis 1 and 2 as Tools of Cultural Critique. Christopher Watkin. **Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2017, 170 pp., paper. ISBN 9781629953014**

The author lectures in French studies and also teaches religion and theology at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, having received a Ph.D. from Jesus College, Cambridge. John Frame hits the nail on the head about this book in his foreword with a tongue-in-cheek comment: "Watkin is a surprise: a well-trained philosopher who is also a clear and helpful writer." (p. x)

Watkin comments in his conclusion that he has "tried to write the book that I would have wanted to read as an undergraduate student." (p. 137) To my way of thinking he has done just that with both panache and conviction. It is to be hoped that many young people, students or otherwise, and anyone who is trying to face up to faith and life issues and integrate faith and culture in holistic biblical reflection, will get hold of this book and find answers to some of their questions. It is a suitable antidote to the mumbo jumbo of social Marxism so prevalent in academia and elsewhere today, and the woolly thinking that goes with it. Or if you feel stale in the ministry, Watkin will certainly help you understand your audience and apply the biblical message in a challenging way.

The aim of this approach is to get "double listening" going between the Bible and present culture. Whereas contextualisation theologies often take a unilateral approach to this question, Watkin goes further with the double focus he presents: "Christianity must not only explain the Bible to our culture, but also explain our culture through the Bible." (p. xiii) I think this is a fruitful approach. If there have been a good many attempts to contextualise, some of them disastrous through compromise, not so many attempts have been made to critique culture biblically. Maybe this is because of the idolisation of popular culture and its media-based stranglehold on opinion today. When celebrities become moral arbiters, many Christians try to take refuge in culture-free zones. Watkin serves up "a vision of biblical doctrine not as a series of facts but as a framework for understanding any facts whatsoever, approaching the Bible not as story within reality but as the story of reality, and as the reality itself within which any other stories must necessarily exist." (p. 12)

The author also backs a winner when he points to the fact that our irrelevance as Christians in the present world can be attributed to things we have either taken to be irrelevant or just too difficult, and have consequently

neglected them, the doctrines of Trinity and creation for starters. On the contrary, salvation is to be found in what Christianity has been guilty of neglecting, in a full-orbed presentation of the whole counsel of God. It is encouraging to see how the author frankly presents "what we know about God before He created the universe", over against Nietzsche's "empty-signifier God". (p. 16-19) Perhaps here Watkin could have taken his point a step further and proposed "what we know about God after the end of the universe and in the centre of its history" with Christ the Alpha and Omega of the book of Revelation! That might have drawn together the whole of the purpose of the divine plan for creation and history, perhaps with reference to Karl Barth's *bête noire* of Reformed theology, the *Pactum Salutis*.

The doctrines of Trinity and creation structure the book as a whole, after a brief introduction on listening to the Bible, thinking it through, and listening to the world. The approach is subsequently threefold and gives a critique of present culture on the basis of biblical presuppositions: in chapter 2) the Trinity who created, chapter 3) the creation of the universe in Genesis 1, and chapter 4) the creation of humanity in Genesis 2. Genesis 1-2 is therefore a key passage for Christian worldview. Have we not been impoverished for having become Christocentric to the point of Christomonism? The influence of Cornelius Van Til and John Frame and other Reformed thinkers is palpable. Watkin's book is a fine application of their thought to the cultural challenges of the modern situation. The illustrations are useful, as are the chapter summaries, the questions for further study, and the book references at the end of each chapter.

Watkin is a scholar of French literature, and a widely read one at that, and, having taught many years in France, I was impressed! As a francophile, he might have profited in his presentation of creation from the classic work of Roman Catholic biblical theologian Paul Beauchamp, *Création et séparation* (pp. 1969/2005). God proceeds in creation by separating the distinct entities one from another and uniting them into one complementary reality. Under the lordship of God creational diversity and unity are respected. Watkin quite correctly sees how modern immanentism breaks down the unity of the created aspects into oppositions. His biblical critique of culture shows how this dichotomisation exercises a stranglehold, and how biblical "diagonalisation" overcomes the oppositions through faith in divine action and presence.

Biblical thinking is the answer to the deconstruction of the unity of reality by autonomous thought. It exposes the false dichotomies of the impersonal universe and the autonomous individual, the one and the many, objective fact and subjective value, hypostatised language and cypher language, functionality and beauty, nature and culture, intellectual and physical activity, work and leisure, nature as mystical other or as exploitable, and male and female. Perhaps the author's analysis could have been underpinned by sphere sovereignty in the Kuyperian tradition which, as the French say, would have brought water to Watkin's mill.

One final remark, a reluctant downside. This work is the result of twenty years study of Western culture and arises from a larger project. The depth of the research and insights of the author are obvious for all to see, insofar as the long term trends of modernism are concerned. However, in recent years things have accelerated at jet speed in popular culture. Christians who were part of a (silent) moral majority a generation ago have become an immoral minority and the churches have hardly woken up to the fact. The liquid culture of constant crisis, radical individualism, the new atheism, feminism, queer lifestyles, the transgender movement, social justice crusading, etc., has become the bread and butter of daily life in the West. Culture wars are becoming increasingly more vitriolic. People in public service who say too much fear for their jobs. Add to that the trauma of mass immigration, ecological catastrophism, and the growing feeling of apocalypse. Watkin barely touches on these issues. Perhaps he answers questions of a previous generation, rather than those of the millennials or the rising snowflake generation.

This comment in no way detracts from the overall excellence and usefulness of this profound and readable book, and may be an encouragement to Watkin himself, or to others, to pick up the ball he has started rolling. The analysis is great, but already needs re-applying to what we are facing.

Reviewed by Paul Wells, Liverpool, England; Professeur émérite, Faculté Jean Calvin, Aix-en-Provence; and Editor in chief of Unio cum Christo.

***The Mind of the Spirit: Paul's Approach to Transformed Thinking*. Craig S. Keener. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016, 402 pp., cloth. ISBN 9780801097768**

Keener's study of Paul's understanding of the relationship between cognition and transformed living is an academically rigorous study, yet presented in such a manner as to be accessible to the motivated reader. The depth of research and mastery of ancient sources is second to none, adding a contextual richness to Keener's disciplined exegetical skill. The result is a cohesive mosaic drawn from Paul's letters and the thought world of his Greco-Roman and Jewish contemporaries. Keener's conclusions, consistent with his research, are well-measured and admirably restrained.

The book is organized according to the numerous expressions of the mind/cognitive processes in Paul's letters (both positive and negative). The negative, *de facto* backdrop of the corrupted/fleshly mind is assumed throughout the study, and receives attention in chapters one and three. The corrupted mind is shown, first of all, to be a recognized malady among the ancients (including Paul, cf. Romans 1 and 7). Both religious and philosophical remedies such as law or reason are prescribed, with limited results. The

agreement of the philosophers is unanimous: human passions cannot be tamed, much less eradicated. Paul approaches this negative reality with neither denial nor capitulation, rather by introducing a new reality: the Spirit of God. The balance of the book is dedicated to discovering the nuances and potential of the mind which is influenced by the Spirit. It receives several names in Paul's letters: the renewed mind, the mind of Christ/Christ-like mind, the heavenly mind, the mind of faith, or the mind of the Spirit, all related in terms of transforming the believer's natural mind. Keener notes that these several titles are actually "…all the same mind…simply different entrances into the same reality in Christ and the Spirit, approached from different angles…" (p. 253).

In spite of this admission, Keener treats the reader to a detailed elucidation of the potential implications of the several Pauline titles, with particular attention given to the letter's immediate context. To this he marshals illustrative contemporary parallels. The mind of the Spirit, he notes, can be manifested in many ways, and in the letters of Paul, this is typically expressed in paraenesis. The calls to unity, humility and transformation anticipate the putting off of strife, pride and conformity to the world. The wisdom of the cross confronts worldly wisdom and status. The believer's heavenly citizenship relativizes all earthly loyalties. The eschatological hope of the resurrection and glory result in thankfulness, praise and peace. Solidarity with Christ redefines our lineage vis-à-vis Adam. Even the grace gifts of the Spirit imply particular callings and mutual service to the body. Each cognitive category anticipates a new core identity that can be the meditative impulse for the believer's deliberate "rethinking and retuning" (p. 263). The implications of Keener's study are enormous in terms of the believer's discipline of thought, and this is precisely where Keener exercises academic restraint. The study is not a "how to" exercise, rather a "what if" challenge.

Although Keener's contribution is decidedly academic, his presentation is not without pastoral impulses. Indeed, at numerous points, he calls for the fruits of peace, unity and reconciliation in the church. He highlights the universal need for transformation on the one hand, and issues an appeal to begin the process of affirming "a new reality" on the other (p. 33). He calls for the recognition of objective realities which can potentially recalibrate (and often eliminate) our present, subjective cognitive categories. This, he maintains, is a function of faith. While firmly grounded in the realism of Paul and the ancients, Keener is decidedly positive in terms of the potential outcomes of transformed thinking.

Reviewed by James P. Hering, pastor of Warrenton Presbyterian Church, South Carolina.

***Knowing Scripture. Expanded Edition.* R. C. Sproul. Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2016, 153 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-4468-5**

From the preface, throughout most pages of the book, the purpose of this book is clearly spelled out and focused on "studying the Bible" as opposed to "reading the Bible". The book emphasizes that it's through studying the Bible that the reader may come to know God who reveals Himself precisely through the written Word. The major concepts that constitute studying the Bible are given in a most convincing manner to anyone who may desire to know the God of the Bible. It is encouraging that the author motivates the reader through giving a brief history on how the Reformers took pain and some lost their lives as they persisted in translating the Bible into different languages for common people to have a chance to study the Bible in their own languages against the will of the Roman church. This makes clear his point on the importance of the Bible to all Christians who should dutifully study the Bible to gain insight on the God they are serving. Throughout the book, the author's purpose is crystal clear without any shadow of a doubt on what the author intends to drive home.

The author uses simple language which any literate person can understand. It is most commendable that there is no theological jargon that may blur the purpose of his book. Beginning by mentioning the two myths that tend to hinder studying the Bible, the author emphasizes that it is very important for the reader to approach the rest of the book knowing that he or she is pursuing something worthy for any Christian regardless of theological training. The chapters are arranged in such a way that they are in a progressive order in which the question the reader may raise in a chapter is answered in the chapter that follows. As this is not enough, each chapter has sub themes that tend to keep the reader focused on the theme of each chapter. An important point in any part is written in white and highlighted in black, making it easier for the reader to recap. This style makes the argument clearer as the book progresses, such that after reading the entire book, the reader will embrace the need to study the Bible. The author always begins his arguments by giving practical examples; these are strong building blocks to his arguments, because the reader will grasp the points easily.

As I read through this book, I was numbed at some points in seeing how as Christians we ignore our duty to study the Bible as the scriptures articulate. I found out that it is through devoted study of the Bible that we can really move out of 'feeling about Christ' to having the full knowledge of God. This challenge in the book is followed by an explanation of the instruments for studying the Bible, which are helpful to all Christians who want to move beyond *reading* the Bible to *studying* the Bible. I recommend that all Christians should have this book on their shelves and should be constantly referring to it. Their relationship with God will improve without a doubt.

All in all this book is an asset to Christians of all ages and levels since it has the guidance we need most to be able to know God and improve our relationship with Him. However, I want to suggest that the book should have given enough caution on the use of commentaries because Christians may be tempted to dwell much on commentaries and not the Word. Also, the author

should have given an example of how to purposefully use the tools, such as the lexicons in doing word study, to give a simple guideline to lay readers.

Dr Sproul died in 2017 and the forward is by J. I. Packer to this new expanded (third) edition. The first edition appeared in 1977, the second edition in 2009, and now this third expanded edition in 2016. The book has become a fairly standard basic hermeneutic text for entry-level readers.

Reviewed by Wilbert Chipenyu, a Zimbabwean teaching missionary with Timothy Two Project International, currently teaching and serving as acting principal at Dumisani Theological Institute, SA

Systematic Theology

The Essential Trinity. Eds. Brandon D. Crowe and Carl R. Trueman. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017, 318 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-62995-298-7

The sub-title of this book is 'New Testament Foundations and Practical Relevance'. The two parts of the sub-title are also the headings of the divisions of the book. The first division is made up of nine chapters, eight of which cover the books of the New Testament and a ninth which covers the Old Testament: the Trinity in Matthew (Brandon D. Crowe), Mark (Daniel Johansson), Luke-Acts (Alan J. Thompson), John (Richard Bauckham), Paul (Brian S. Rosner), Hebrews (Jonathan I. Griffiths), the General epistles (Brandon D. Crowe), Revelation (Benjamin L. Gladd), and The Old Testament (Mark S. Gignilliat). The second division is made of five essays on the Trinity and mystery (Scott R. Swain), prayer (Carl R. Trueman), revelation (Mark D. Thompson), worship (Robert Letham), and preaching (Michael Reeves).

Taken as a whole, the message of this book is that the God who makes Himself known in Scripture is the Triune God. The doctrine of the Trinity is not something which is imposed upon the Scriptures but is the systematisation of what God says about Himself and how He would have us to understand Him in His actions. The doctrine of the Trinity is the answer to the question: Who is the God of the Bible? Nor is this doctrine founded upon a few proof-texts. The Triune God speaks and acts triunely throughout the Scriptures.

Now that I have this book, on which shelf should I put it? Should it be with books on the doctrine of God? Or, should it be among those on New Testament studies? Or, again, what about the practical theology section?

It does not belong in the practical theology section, even though the latter part of the book is called 'Practical Relevance'. Three of these essays (mystery, revelation, and preaching) should be read first as an introduction because they orientate readers for the journey through the Scriptures found in the Biblical

Studies essays/chapters which make up the bulk of the book. They are doctrinal rather than practical, focused on hermeneutics rather than homiletics. Had I purchased this book because the words "Practical Relevance' on the cover caught my interest, I should have been rather disappointed when I read it.

One need only look at the list of abbreviations to know that this book can be catalogued under Biblical Studies. However, the subject matter is too specific for the book to be placed beside the New Testament histories, introductions, and theologies. If Leon Morris's *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* and *The Cross in the New Testament* are shelved beside other works on the atonement, then *The Essential Trinity* should be with other books on the doctrine of God. It will not replace other works on the biblical doctrine of the Trinity as the usual passages referenced are not treated to any great extent here. It will earn its place by complementing them.

How shall I use this book? Were I writing an essay on the Trinity, it would be very tempting to add a lot of material from this book. But the essay would lose cohesion. On the other hand, the careful use of some material from this book would show due diligence in research and make my essay stand out from others which merely parroted the common places. Using this book will give a freshness to any essay or lecture on the Trinity. Were I asked to recommend a good book for someone wanting to know what the doctrine of the Trinity is, I should not recommend this one as a starting place. It assumes too much prior knowledge.

As a preacher, I find this book stimulating. Where the Triune God speaks triunely, the exposition and application must follow. Rather than thinking that some passages provoke a sermon on the Trinity, or the deity of Christ, or the deity and personhood of the Holy Spirit, think that many passages provoke a point or sub-point on these subjects tied to the thrust of the passage. The doctrine of the Trinity permeates Scripture and must permeate preaching. Before preaching through a book of the New Testament or when studying a passage which looks to have a trinitarian bearing, I shall review the relevant part of *The Essential Trinity*.

I understand that the contributors to this book come from a range of backgrounds and that I cannot assume that they share my presuppositions. However, they have opened up the subject and given me food for thought. I might question some details, but the general message of this book is relevant to my preaching. If you read it, it will become relevant to yours.

Reviewed by D. Douglas Gebbie, the minister of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Chesley, Ontario and a frequent contributor to this journal.

God's Word Alone – The Authority of Scripture: What the Reformers Taught...and Why It Still Matters. **Matthew Barrett.**

The Five Solas Series, ed. Matthew Barrett. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016, 402 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-310-51572-2

Matthew Barrett concludes his book, *God's Word Alone: The Authority of Scripture* with this statement, "If God did not speak with authority in his written Word, I would be lost in my sins to this day, and so would you. So it is with much confidence that I can say that if the authority of Scripture is abandoned, our faith will be too. It is only a matter of time" (p. 374). Our faith and our life in Christ stand or fall on the doctrine of the inerrancy and authority of the Bible. To articulate and defend the inerrancy and authority of Scripture, Matthew Barrett has written an excellent, relevant book on the Reformation principle and biblical doctrine of *sola scriptura.*

Barrett's work is well organized. He begins with a substantive Introduction to prepare the reader for his material. First, Barrett's Introduction highlights the need for Christians to be aware of what *sola scriptura* is and what it entails. If people accept the Bible as their final authority, they often do not know why. *God's Word Alone* adequately answers this "why" question as it explains the "relationship between biblical authority and the nature of Scripture, namely, its own inspiration, inerrancy, clarity, and sufficiency" (p. 22). The Introduction further readies the reader by giving an understandable definition of *sola scriptura.* First, *sola scriptura* means "Scripture alone is our *final* authority" (p. 23). Secondly, *sola scriptura* means "that Scripture alone is our *sufficient* authority" (p. 23). And, thirdly, *sola scriptura* means "that only Scripture, because it is God's *inspired* Word, is our *inerrant* authority" (p. 24).

Part 1 of *God's Word Alone* is entitled, "God's Word under Fire, Yesterday and Today." In three chapters Barrett traces the rise of *sola scriptura* during the Reformation period and the attack against it during the Enlightenment and Modern period.

Chapter one gives a concise and clear treatment of *sola scriptura* during Reformation period. The medieval Roman Catholic Church held to a two-source theory of divine authority, church tradition and Scripture. The Reformers rejected this outright. Barrett shows that Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, William Tyndale, and John Calvin understood that inspired Scripture alone is the sole authority of the Christian faith. They did not invent a new doctrine but sought, as Barrett writes, "to return to the position of the fathers, a single-source theory of divine revelation" (p. 74).

In chapter two, Barrett tells the account of how the Enlightenment usurped *sola* scriptura by promoting human reason as the path to truth. He briefly describes *how* the Enlightenment attacked *sola scriptura*. But Barrett also helpfully describes *why* this occurred. Barrett shows how Baruch Spinoza, H.S. Reimarus, G. E. Lessing, and Frederic Schleiermacher held to a type of *nuda scriptura*, which states that church tradition should never help in the interpretation of Scripture and that the human mind alone is adequate to discern Scriptures meaning. Barrett writes that men mentioned above, "Rejected all ecclesiastical authority and tradition, believing them to be

oppressive and warped by superstitious dogma" (p. 88). Eventually, this led human reason to sit in on judgment of the Word of God, and Barrett shows how modern Christian liberalism did just that!

Barrett's third chapter lists the fallout of Christian liberalism's rejection of *sola scriptura.* The chapter is entitled, "Today's Crisis over Biblical Authority: Evangelicalism's Apologetic and the Postmodern Turn." Barrett first zeros in on the crisis between American Fundamentalism and Neo-Evangelicalism at the beginning of the twentieth century. It involved the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture. Fundamentalism upheld inerrancy and consequently the account of creation in Genesis. Neo-evangelicalism, on the other hand, compromised on inerrancy, and as a result, questioned the traditional doctrine of creation. Barrett helpfully recounts how evangelicals, who maintained *sola scriptura,* responded to neo-evangelicalism in 1978 with the "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy." Nevertheless, the crisis continued and still continues. Barrett shows that the Bible is still under fire from within evangelicalism, and, to help the church, he lists names and gives a short explanation of their positions. Secondly, Barrett zeros in on the subject of Postmodernism and its polemic against *sola scriptura*. Postmodernism asserts that there is no objective truth, only different perspectives and realities we build around ourselves. *Sola Scriptura* is *the* antidote to this unsustainable position. Thirdly, Barrett zeros in on "the Postconservative Reconstruction of Sola Scriptura" (p.136). This is a very helpful section. Barrett lucidly writes how some evangelicals, rather than affirming Scripture's inerrancy and infallibility, slyly say Scripture is authoritative only when God speaks through the Bible. No, Scripture is the Word of God and thus authoritative, period.

Part 2 of *God's Word Alone* has the title, "God's Word in Redemptive History." This is a *tour de force* on how, why, and to whom God has spoken. Though it is the shortest section in the book, it is its heart because the reader learns the connection between God's saving, covenanting, and revealing acts, and his Word. Barrett also shows the connection between God's spoken Word and the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ. Through God speaking his Word and then fulfilling his Word in Christ, we have a revelation of the inerrancy of God's Word. God's Word has left its mark on our world, and it is an inerrant Word, thus our final authority. This section is a must to read, and worth the price of this book.

Part 3 of *God's Word Alone* is entitled, "The Character of God's Word and Contemporary Challenges," and contains four chapters. Each chapter explains the key theological components that make up *sola scriptura.* Those doctrines are the inspiration, inerrancy, clarity, and sufficiency of Scripture.

When dealing with inspiration in chapter seven, Barrett answers the question of whether or not inspiration reaches to all and every word of Scripture. Barrett clearly shows that Scriptures inspiration is both verbal *and* plenary. He goes on to show that the Old Testament, the Words of Christ, and the Words of the apostles witness to the inspiration of the Old Testament. The

same attention is paid to the inspiration of the New Testament. Next, to Noel Weeks' work, *The Sufficiency of Scripture,* Barrett's work is the clearest on this subject.

When dealing with the Bible's inerrancy Barret has precision. What is refreshing in Barret's work is his strong argument for inerrancy, and he concludes if there is no inerrancy then there is no assurance in Scripture as our final authority. His section on Jesus' belief in inerrancy is especially helpful. Jesus is God; if God held to inerrancy, so should the church. Ministers and Sunday school teachers could use this chapter to teach on the subject of the trustworthiness of the Bible.

Barrett then tackles the clarity of Scripture in chapter nine. His fundamental message here is that God is a clear communicator and that language can be clear too. Language is God's gift, and he has purposed to use it to be a clear and effective tool to reveal his truth. Theologians like Barth and Bultmann mistrust language and thus cannot trust that God can communicate clearly. The church, however, can trust the Bible to give a clear message for all that is necessary for salvation, obedience, and eternal life.

The final chapter, "God's Speech Is Enough: The Sufficiency of Scripture" is a grand capstone to this book. Barrett first gives a biblical explanation and careful definition of the sufficiency of Scripture and then effectively answers modern challenges to this doctrine. Modern evangelicalism and its aversion to tradition as well as Roman Catholicism and its modern exaltation of tradition are both addressed. To evangelicalism, Barrett says, "Remember church tradition can and should act as a *ministerial* authority" (p. 346), a point he made earlier in chapter one. To Roman Catholicism Barrett says, "The church may be the rule of faith, but it is not the foundation of faith" (p. 363). Barrett also addresses science and reason. These realities in our world are not in opposition to the Bible. They are problematic only when they are used against God. Experience and culture are also great enemies of the sufficiency of Scripture as they argue that Scripture is a man-made book and irrelevant. Barrett gives a concise and cogent rebuttal: because Scripture is God's Word, thus inerrant and sufficient, it is always relevant and applicatory. "We have God's *best* Word already, and nothing needs to be added to it" (p. 370). Barret concludes this chapter by saying the Bible's sufficiency meets real life. First, it is a comfort to pastors. As they preach the Scriptures, souls will be saved, and Christians will thrive. Secondly, Scripture moves Christians to action. Lastly, Scripture reminds us that Christ and his Word take center stage in the church.

Barrett's book, *God's Word Alone,* is a sufficient work on the authority of Scripture. I have only positive comments for this volume. Go and read it – it will build you up in the faith of Jesus Christ.

Reviewed by Henry Bartsch, minister of Trinity Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Chatham, Ontario. Henry is married to Tammy; they have six children and three grandchildren.

***Christ and Covenant Theology: Essays on Election, Republication, and the Covenants*. Cornelis P. Venema. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017, 462 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-62995-251-2.**

Dr Venema is a minister in the United Reformed Churches in North America and President of Mid-America Reformed Seminary, where he is also Professor of Doctrinal Studies. As one would expect, he writes mainly from a Dutch-American perspective. Yet, there are many important references to the Westminster Standards. Indeed, when Dr Venema wishes a concise statement or definition of covenant doctrine, he cites the Westminster Confession as the Three Forms of Unity, coming from an earlier period, do not address covenant concepts so clearly. This, together with his use of consensus writers in his historical discussions, makes the book very useful to the wider Reformed audience.

The book is made up of twelve chapters. The first three chapters are part one. Chapter one is on 'The Covenant of Works in the Westminster Confession of Faith'; and chapters two and three are on 'The Covenant of Works and the Mosaic Economy'. Part two has five chapters, covering covenant and election in the works of Herman Bavinck, studies of Article 1:17 of the Canons of Dort regarding the election and salvation of the children of believers who die in infancy, and infant baptism. The third part has three chapters on 'Covenant and Justification and the "Federal Vision"' and one on N.T. Wright's interpretation of Romans 5:12-21.

This is a collection of essays which have different origins. The author, however, has gone over them for this book and given them a oneness of style and voice which gives a flow and unity to the whole work. That flow and unity also reminds the reader that the discussions are connected. These are, after all, essays in systematic theology.

The first essay describes criticisms of the Westminster doctrine of the Covenant of Works made from a neo-orthodox perspective, from a neo-Calvinist perspective, and from that of the biblical theology of John Murray; it concludes with a very reasonable defense of the Westminster doctrine. Those whose views are being discussed are treated fairly but plainly, and Venema's counterpoints are expressed with care and nuance.

The second and third essays are an extended interactive review of *The Law is Not of Faith: Essays on Works and Grace in the Mosaic Covenant*. Venema states and then assesses the case for the republication of the Covenant of Works in the Mosaic Covenant as the authors of the collection of essays display it. His assessment is that they have failed to make their case; and that even

allowing for their use of the phrase republication 'in some sense', their views are outwith the historical Reformed consensus.

The next five essays deal with the interplay of election and covenant, particularly, as they impact infant salvation and infant baptism. The first two are studies in Herman Bavinck's views on these subjects. Bavinck is presented as a mediating voice standing in the historic tradition of Dutch Reformed theology. In his original context, he was a mediating voice between the Afscheiding and Doleantie wings of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland. Here, he is a mediating voice between the presumptionist followers of Abraham Kuyper, the election focused followers of Herman Hoeksema, and the covenant focused followers of Klaas Schilder in today's North America. Those whose origins lie with the Afscheiding churches which did not unite with the Doleantie are not included.

The second two essays are a historical and contemporary exposition of Article 1:17 of the Canons of Dort, which deals with the election and salvation of infants who are born of godly parents and who die in infancy. Venema presents two interpretations of the Article: the first takes it to be statement of the fact of the election and salvation of such infants; the second takes it to be an encouragement to grieving parents not to doubt the salvation of their departed child, leaving the question of the election of every such child open. Describing the alternatives as the objective and the subjective interpretations, Venema opts for the former.

The last is an essay on infant baptism with an emphasis on covenant. In this chapter, the author, very helpfully, gives his own exposition of the Covenant of Grace rather than interacting with the views of others as he does in the rest of the book. The key feature of his discussion is the 'dual aspect' of the covenant: the outward administration of professing believers and their children and the inward reality which belongs exclusively to the elect. He then discusses the place of the sacraments, particularly baptism, in this schema.

The third section of the book deals with the Federal Vision. Here again, Venema is dealing with election, covenant, and the sacraments. In these essays, he uses the Three Forms of Unity as his creedal foundation. While (as those from a continental Reformed background often point out) the collective voice of the Federal Vision came out of a PCA church, Venema notes that Continental influences were not absent. In effect, he is bolting the door which might allow Federal visionaries to flee from the Westminster Standards and hide under the Three Forms of Unity. Federal Vision is an aberration from the wider Reformed consensus: even before the subject of justification by faith alone is discussed.

Taking a step back and looking at the book as a whole, it becomes clear that: the prelapsarian Covenant of Works and its relation to the postlapsarian Covenant of Grace, the interplay between election and the Covenant of Grace, and the connections and tensions between the dual aspects of the Covenant of Grace, cross over its divisions – whether it be the parts or the chapters. This collection of essays does have cohesion. Positively, it sets out a neo-Calvinist

position in the spirit of Bavinck on the subjects treated. Polemically, it compares and contrasts that position with the positions held by others. As Venema sets out the ordinary workings of the Triune God in election and covenant administration and then the exceptional circumstance of the deceased infants of believing parents, what becomes clear is that the Federal Vision has made the exception the rule and bent other aspects of the doctrines to fit. Federal Vision appears to be a twisting of neo-Calvinist thought.

Personally, first, I was pleased to read that no matter how great the 'judgement of charity' regarding the regeneration of the baptised, the need exists for conversion and self-examination to be preached to the covenant community. Perhaps, now that Bavinck's major works are available in English, further study and wider discussion might include those whose origins lie with the Afscheiding churches which did not unite with the Doleantie.

Second, I thank Dr Venema for listing Louis Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* in his bibliography and citing it respectfully in the footnotes. It has been over forty years since I went into a Christian bookshop looking for a volume that had the doctrines of the Bible set out in order and a book which would walk me through the history of redemption. Because of the Banner of Truth Trust's pricing policy in those days, I was able to purchase both Berkhof's Systematics and Vos's Biblical Theology out of my meager wages. Such was my teenage ignorance that I did not know that these books should have been bought on an either/or not a both/and basis. Although Berkhof (and Vos) and I have grown apart, I, like so many others, owe him a great debt.

Last, I am not a Neo-Calvinist. Dr Venema would probably dismiss me as a 'pietist'. Nevertheless, I enjoyed reading this book and benefited from his clearly-put contribution to the discussion of election and covenant theology.

Reviewed by D. Douglas Gebbie

Historical Theology

2000 Years of Christ's Power: The Age of Religious Conflict, volume 4. Nick Needham. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications and Grace Publications Trust, 2016, 686pp, paper. ISBN 978-1-78191-977-4

This, the much awaited fourth volume of Dr. Nick Needham's series, reviews the history of the Church in the period 1560 to 1740. In the meantime his previous three volumes have become standard texts in many theological colleges throughout the world. And this book seems set to follow suit. The series has been well received by reviewers and critics alike, though some have questioned whether comprehensiveness has been achieved at the cost of closer analysis and interpretation. Maybe. But, as we are reminded so frequently these days, although you can't have your cake and eat it, you can pick the cherries. Needham apologises, quite unnecessarily, for limiting himself to the story of the Church in England, Scotland, France, Germany and Russia. One may quibble with his choices. I, for one, want more of the early days of the Protestant missionary movement (section 5, chapter 1) and something of Irish, Hungarian and South African church history, but not at the expense of the story of Christ's power in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. If cherries have to be picked, Needham's choice is well made.

The book follows the format of the previous volumes. The eight chapters survey developments in German Lutheranism and the continental Reformed Church, including the Synod of Dort and the Amyraldian controversy. Puritanism in England is covered in two chapters and Scotland is explored to the end of the Covenanting era. There are two very useful chapters on the Roman Catholic Church, exploring Catholic piety, Jansenism, Quietism, the persecution of the Huguenots and Catholic missions. A final intriguing chapter introduces us to people and movements within Eastern Orthodoxy. There follows a list of important people, a reader of primary sources to savour an authentic flavour of the times, a glossary, bibliography and indexes complete the work. For better or for worse, there are no academic footnotes cluttering the page. With the bibliography, list of names, and the aid of
Google readers can follow up their interests with little trouble

Stylistically, Needham cracks on at a formidable pace, fairly galloping through the material. He draws rein only to offer explanatory asides to help a new-comer to historiographical or theological terminology draw breath and keep up. Inevitably, in an age of conflict, ugly street-brawls spill out across Needham's road. Most are aptly described but neatly avoided with little more than a glancing blow from the author *en passant.* But at a few places Needham pauses long enough to strike hard, perhaps nowhere more so than in Scotland's

Covenanter country. Describing the deplorable battle of Dunbar (1650), Needham exposes the folly of each side's praying and singing the same metrical psalms to the same Lord, despite the fact "only one side could win." Needham also strikes at the hoary old chestnut of Covenanting hagiography, that the Covenanters suffered only because they sought to worship God according to their own consciences. That, as we are shown, is but a half truth. They suffered because they wanted everyone else to worship according to their - the Covenanters' - consciences. Needham deftly shows how intolerance begat intolerance and turned otherwise godly men into virtual and, at times, real insurgents, bringing the whole farrago of national covenanting down on their heads in the welter of the Presbyterian holocaust.

And whilst we are on the subject, what a crisp cameo of Jamie Graham, the 1st Marquis of Montrose, Needham paints. Perhaps it is Needham's Baptist convictions that allow him more easily to appreciate the perspectives of Max Hastings, Montrose's military biographer, and John Buchan, that other Presbyterian cavalier. At any rate, he sees Montrose's true greatness without carping. The strengths of Puritan and Covenanter have long been placed before us to be gratefully appreciated, but Needham balances this by holding up their not inconsequential weaknesses to scrutiny, even exposing them to the biting satire of Butler's *Hudibras*.

Cameos of people and sketches of events are what Needham does so well. I especially appreciated, amongst others, his miniatures of the Orthodox Cyril Lucaris, Pietist Philipp Spener, Puritan William Ames, Roman Catholic Blaise Pascal, Separatist John Bunyan, and Anglicans Richard Hooker, John Donne and George Herbert. Though Needham's doubt as to whether any of Herbert's poems have achieved fame is surely open to challenge, not least by the millions who not so long ago in school assemblies sang "Teach me, my God and King" (The Elixir from The Temple), "King of Glory, King of Peace" (Praise II, The Temple) and "Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing" (Antiphon I, The Temple), and are grateful to have them in our hearts. Coming from such intolerant times, it was good to re-read John Owen's tribute to John Bunyan, "Could I possess that tinker's abilities for preaching, I would gladly relinquish all my learning." The last three chapters bring to sight attractive Christians too often lost to sight in a largely Protestant crowd.

We are deeply indebted to Dr. Needham for this volume, much of which is taken up with what Wordsworth once called 'old, unhappy, far-off things, And battles long ago'. Though these may galvanise for theological conflict today, I hope that even more they will alert us to the danger of division and give us determination to live in Christian harmony with all who have come under Christ's gracious power. We eagerly look forward to the next volume in the series.

Reviewed by John S. Ross, former CEO of Christian Witness to Israel, currently resident interim-moderator at Kilmallie and Ardnamurchan Free Church of Scotland.

Christianity in Eurafrica: A History of the Church in Europe and Africa. **Steven Paas. Wellington, SA: Christian Literature Fund, 2016, 554 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-86804-350-7**

This book was originally two separate books (one on Africa, one on Europe) that were primarily used for textbooks in Malawi where the author was teaching at Zomba Theological College. In 2016 they were combined as one volume using that curious word 'Eurafrica' implying here, in a positive sense, a close connection between the two continents – hence the book's sub-title.

Part one, "From Galilee to the Atlantic", has 40 chapters. These chapters chiefly deal with Europe but not exclusively as one chapter deals with North America and another with some of the Church Fathers who lived outside of Europe. Part two, "The Faith Moves South" contains 21 chapters – ranging fairly broadly over Africa but with noticeable content on Malawi, Zambia, and South Africa – many portions of Africa receiving little or no attention.

In reading this book, it must be kept in view that it is very difficult to write a one-volume survey of African church history which is both accessible *and* treats the whole continent. Given the immense scope of what constitutes African Christian history, one must be selective in their writing, so the difficult choice is either to be quite generalist or to focus on a particular strand, mission work, or locational context. In saying this, the current need for an up-to-date general survey of African church history is highlighted. So Paas has taken on a real challenge. The current dearth of texts in the field is evidence of the problem. The real question is, "Does Paas succeed?"

The use of the word Europe is somewhat limiting beyond what is mentioned above. One could argue that trying to focus on Europe undercuts other theological and missional influences on Africa. Thus, the book's marriage is not always helpful or totally convincing. Mission work in Africa has many influences – such as Dowie and Zion, Illinois (p.486). Paas recognises this influence, yet the book title does not indicate that African Christianity has been influenced also from beyond Europe; as a result, I am not exactly taken by the title.

A disappointing feature of this book is that after chapter five the Table of Contents' pagination does not match the text. It is generally out by one to two pages for the remaining chapters, and there are a total of 63 chapters. It is surprising that this slipped past the publishers. Some other curious mistakes: on page 298 the author is discussing Raymond Lull, the medievalist, in one line then jumps into South African 19th century history in the same sentence; on page 436 the information about the United Church of Canada is not correct.

This book does begin with a helpful and accessible introduction to church history as a field of study, somewhat in the tradition of Philip Schaff. Overall Paas' book has certain merits. Part Two is particularly helpful. Some chapters here will be of great service in teaching African church history, both on the continent of Africa and also on other continents. Paas has also included some themes which are easily ignored, such as African Instituted Churches, Faith Missions, and Pentecostals and Charismatics. So yes, the book is a definite contribution in the field but there are limitations.

The author provides various bibliographies and has done serious work. These bibliographies are to be found at different points throughout the book. Footnotes have been kept to a minimum but when used are helpful to guide the reader. The maps are most helpful and enhance the text. A few English-language issues remain in the text, such as the word "register" for the common word "index" (p.533).

I personally think it would have been better to have kept the book as two separate books; then each volume could have been expanded to bring forth a broader picture. There may be certain economic advantages to combining them, but it seems a forced union. By keeping them separate, then the limiting word 'Eurafrica' (that carries a lot of historical baggage with it) could have been avoided.

The first 50 pages of the book may be read here: https://www.clf.co.za/images/pdf/Sneak-preview-PAAS.pdf.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock.

***Martin Bucer's Ground and Reason: A Commentary and Translation*. Ottomar Cypris. Yulee, FL: Good Samaritan Books, 2016, 180+pp., paper. ISBN 978-1540468116**

Delighted, is my first reaction to seeing this book in print. It was laid away in German and then in a Ph.D. thesis in translation into English until this 2016 book was published. This immediately raises two questions: Why was it not published until recently? Is it really that significant of a work? I would answer the first as Cypris would also—Martin Bucer has often been a neglected Reformer and stands in the shadows of Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli, and Calvin. The neglect of Bucer has impoverished much contextual understanding of the Reformers as it has prevented us from seeing more in the galaxy of the Reformers just listed. Next, the primary source here, *Ground and Reason*, sets the proper context for understanding so much of the Reformation on worship, the sacraments, and liturgy, so a study of this document will pay many dividends. Yes, it needed to be published.

The translator and commentator, Ottomar Cypris (1915-1986) is not a well-known name. He was a German, was born in what is now Poland, grew up in Western Canada, and studied in both Canada and the United States. He was

ordained during the Second World War and one of his Ph.D. supervisors was the noted John T. MacNeill, the Calvin scholar born on Prince Edward Island (I just had to include that last detail). Getting this book to press began as a conversation between Terry Johnson and Brian Nicholson and was latterly taken up by Christopher Bogosh of Good Samaritan Books. Hughes Oliphant Old had written in, *Worship: Reformed According to Scripture* that "*Grund und Ursach* is one of the most significant documents in the history of Reformed worship."[1]

Now about the book, *Ground and Reason*, or in German, *Grund und Ursach*. This work is primarily about *the grounds* for the new evangelical worship in Strasbourg and the *reasons to justify* these new worship practices in Strasbourg in 1524 as arising from the Word of God. Its chief author is Martin Bucer, but he certainly benefited from the collegial atmosphere of his colleagues in Strasbourg at the time as is evidenced from the last page where seven additional names were willing to sign beside Bucer's name in point number 189 which began, "The contents of this little book are the common faith of those of us who are in the ministry and under compulsion to preach the Gospel publicly here in Strasbourg…."(p. 180). The names include Wolfgang Capito and Matthew Zell.

The text of the book is about 100 pages in 189 numbered paragraphs organised within 12 "chapters", plus a covering letter from Bucer to Count Friedrich of the Palatine by the Rhine or Duke Friedrich (the latter contains a separate 13 paragraphs). The majority of the 12 chapters centre upon the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, yet even within each of these chapters one will find side discussions which help to make the book much more than just a book about the Lord's Supper. One chapter is on vestments, one chapter on baptism, one on holy days, another on images, and then the final chapter about songs and prayers. So *Ground and Reason* does address key evangelical and emerging Reformed understandings on evangelical worship principles, the sacraments, liturgy, leadership, Christian freedom, and the laity. It is larger than one might initially grasp. Cypris' translation reads nicely.

The other main portion of this edition is the commentary by Cypris with about 70 pages. Cypris knew the subject well. His "Introduction" provides a context for the Reformation in Strasbourg and a very good survey of the life of Martin Bucer with clear recaps of Bucer's contributions in Reformation history, not just on worship, but also on the education of ministers and others, his involvements in Cologne, Hesse, and England, and with many of the Reformers in efforts to find common ground. Cypris reminds readers that early in 1524 the first German Mass was conducted in Strasbourg and later that year many more radical changes followed. Thus Bucer was under pressure to defend all these changes – hence, the writing of *Ground and Reason* on 26th December, 1524. In this book we are allowed to see how one great medieval

[1] Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship: Reformed According to Scripture,* revised edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 12

city – Strasbourg – encountered Reform in worship and liturgy. By examining this one city and the document for that city we can see wider patterns for comparison to Geneva, France, and Scotland.

Cypris' largest commentary section is on Bucer and the Lord's Supper. The author here sets forth a finely crafted and detailed contextual study. In many ways this is worth the book alone, next to the primary document. His commentary is very helpful. I have only found one paragraph in his commentary about the Lord's Supper with which I would quibble (p. 49). His commentary on baptism is helpful and a good complement to the text.

The commentary portion includes footnotes when referring to the particular paragraph in *Ground and Reason*. This method generally works well, although on occasion one wishes the author would have given a few more such footnotes.

This work was originally Cypris' Ph.D. thesis, awarded in 1971. Thus his research is now a little dated, yet in many regards surprisingly not so. The 2016 published work is a large-sized book and handles well and could serve as a class text for study. Four slight detractors: a few typographical errors have remained into the text; a signature indicating the author of the biographical sketch of Ottomar Cypris should have been included; page numbers for the bibliography and prefatory pages should also have been given; and, an index of some kind should also have been compiled. The value of the present publication is that we now have this neglected work available in English. Thank you for this labour of love. I look forward to introducing my students and others to it.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock.

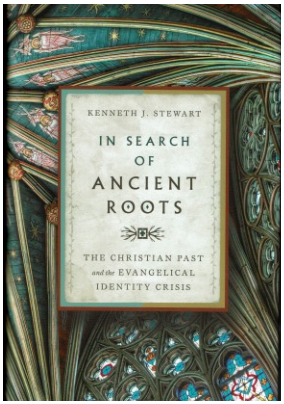
In Search of Ancient Roots: The Christian Past **and the** ***Evangelical Identity Crisis.*** **Kenneth J. Stewart, Wheaton, IL: IVP Academic, 2017, 286 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8308-5172-0**

We Canadian Evangelicals sometimes blanch at the way in which our theological position is identified in the United States with various unpalatable political views, becoming a byword for extremism of the worst variety – racist, mindless, reactionary and ignorant. Ken Stewart, a Canadian who is now professor at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia, has provided us with excellent reasons for defending our right as historic Evangelicals to assert the view that links our understanding of the Christian faith with Shaftesbury, Wilberforce and more recently, John Stott and Billy Graham. As a past President of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, I applaud his efforts.

Titled *In Search of Ancient Roots: The Christian Past* and the *Evangelical Identity Crisis* (IVP Academic, 2017) Stewart sets out to do two things:

establish the position that there has always, throughout the entire history of the Christian faith, been an evangelical tradition, that Evangelicals are not some Johnny-come-lately but an ongoing emphasis by certain parts of the Christian faith. He paints a somewhat rosier picture of the medieval church, and specifically some of the church fathers, than I would personally be happy with but his point is well taken. Where would we be without Jerome, Augustine, and Bernard of Clairvaux whom Calvin so admired and emulated? These traditions need to be faithfully examined, not to make a point, but to state clearly that we, as Protestants, differ from so-called the Benedictine option, because we agree with Abraham Kuyper and the Reformed emphasis of taking on the culture not retreating from it.

Thus he describes Evangelicals today as being in "an identity crisis" as many bail out of active involvement in, and commitment to, what we once called "Bible-believing and teaching" local congregations. Two friends of mine, one an elder in my congregation who was fed up with the petty power structures in our church, left for an Orthodox congregation where his semi-ordained status gives him an authority he claimed was lacking in the anarchic and leaderless Protestant church, a reassertion of what Stewart calls "the principle of authority". The other came out of liberal Unitarianism and embraces the ancient creeds and prayers of the church with considerable relief and personal edification. Many Evangelicals today lack a clear and biblical ecclesiology and church becomes a matter of indifference or personal preference.



His second emphasis is an even wider one: how Evangelicals have appropriated the history of the church in the last five hundred years. It is a breathtaking vista that Stewart paints, showing a remarkable ability to combine telling details with a broad brush while at the same time debunking some of the myths of our immediate past that we Evangelicals have perpetrated from Sunday School days. There is hope, however: Linda Finlayson's recent *God's Timeline: The Big Book of Church History* (Christian Focus Press), intended for children and youth and beautifully illustrated, has just sold out its first edition.

Stewart highlights the importance of church history for the life and future of the Evangelical cause. Ask any of us who are in seminaries and you will learn that church history is the great neglected subject in the theological curriculum: difficult if not impossible to fund, a subject that can be relegated to the non-essential and unimportant, paling in significance to creating PowerPoint presentations and how to run the church sound system. Stewart has interesting sidebars in his account: baptism, John Henry Newman, (the ex-Evangelical who shocked Victorian England by following what he took to be a "kindly Light" all the way to Rome). As one reviewer said, Stewart

demonstrates an encyclopaedic knowledge of his subject from more than three decades of teaching, alas in the United States, Canada's great loss.

In his final chapter, Stewart addresses the issue of those who have joined Newman and become Roman Catholic (or even Orthodox). How do you lovingly deal with them? Is their view of their new faith realistic or idealistic? He has helpful and pastoral responses to six reasons provided for this wrenching change. Indeed the whole book, while scholarly and intellectually responsible in its content, has a pastoral commitment. It could helpfully be used in a church small group discussion with questions provided at the end of each chapter which bring what could be an ivory tower academic discussion to the level of a living room discussion.

We are grateful to Ken Stewart for this timely book. He makes 'we Canadians' proud.

Reviewed by Dr. A. Donald MacLeod, research professor of Church History at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto. He is a widely published writer and biographer.

***A Little Book for New Philosophers: Why and How to Study Philosophy*. Little Books series. Paul Copan. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016, 126 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0830851478**

A Little Book For New Philosophers is a small book densely packed with important ideas. Modelled after Helmut Thielicke's *A Little Exercise for New Theologians* (p. 9), its author Paul Copan says it is written for philosophically inclined Christians as well as the "philosophobic" who doubt philosophy's value and legitimacy (p. 9). It is written for the person in the pew as well as fledgling students of philosophy.

Part one, Why Study Philosophy, is a defence of philosophy in general and Christian philosophy in particular. Copan argues that philosophy is both useful to, and compatible with, Christianity. He addresses anti-philosophy biblical texts and concludes that the problem is not philosophy per se, but philosophy that is not centred in Christ (p. 24). He offers Ecclesiastes and Job as examples of philosophically-oriented biblical texts: "Ecclesiastes… explores issues of fatalism, hedonism, nihilism, human nature, mortality, meaning, and purpose — common topics in philosophy class" (p. 51).

Philosophy provides tools for the "life of the mind" (p. 9) and "thinking hard" (p. 37) about metaphysics (what is ultimately real), epistemology (what we can know), and axiology (values and virtues) (p. 31). Copan characterizes philosophy as a "second-order" intellectual endeavour (p. 34), and argues that it can enrich "first-order disciplines" (p. 33) such as history, science, theology etc. He links the concept of worldview (which everyone has), with philosophy, and concludes everyone has a philosophy and is, in a sense, a philosopher,

whether they realize it or not (p. 32), and Christ-centred philosophy can be useful in both defining and defending the Christian worldview (pp. 37-40).

Copan next considers philosophy in the contexts of faith, Scripture, and God. Christianity is a "knowledge tradition" (p. 43) and faith is not a blind leap, but a volitional act based on reasoned evidence (p. 42). Moreover, all truth is God's truth, and "we should welcome God's general self-revelation in nature, conscience, reason, and human experience" as well as "his special revelation in Christ and Scripture" (p. 46). He concludes that "all true academic disciplines are worthy of study" (p. 46). He uses the farming imagery of Isaiah 28, where God teaches the farmer, "who isn't necessarily a believer in God", how to farm, to illustrate how God provides instruction in "the lessons of nature", and then concludes, "The same could be said about philosophers…. It is God who sheds light and gives them insight about metaphysical, epistemological and ethical realities" (p. 47).

In Part Two, How To Study Philosophy, Copan discusses the ethical and moral dimensions of doing Christian philosophy; introduces the idea of doing philosophy in community rather than as a solitary, ego-centred endeavour; and then covers the epistemological issue of doubts (On this he says, rather than letting your doubts rule, why not doubt your doubts). The section ends with practical suggestions to new philosophers on how to get on with it.

In *A Little Book For New Philosophers,* Paul Copan reveals his twin-passions for Christ and philosophy. He offers a holistic vision of Christian philosophy that engages both mind and heart. It will be of value to intellectually-minded Christians in general, and, for fledgling Christian philosophers, it is sure to become a must-read. More than that, however, because of its brevity, this book would enrich any theological program that may not cover philosophy formally. It could become one of those small books a Bible college or seminary student reads incidentally as part of his or her required reading, but then remembers long after the diploma or degree has been obtained.

Reviewed by Dr. Rick Ball, who ministers as a PEI Anglican lay-reader and teaches apologetics at Trans-Africa Christian University, Zambia.

***Philosophy In Seven Sentences: A Small Introduction To A Vast Topic*. Douglas Groothuis. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2016, 156 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0830840939**

In *Philosophy In Seven Sentences*, Douglas Groothuis (Denver Seminary) seeks to write a "personal introduction to [philosophy] and to thinking in general" (pg. 81) through the vehicle of seven provocative pronouncements written across millennia. Aiming to profit "philosophical neophytes" and "seasoned philosophers" alike, it's chiefly about "*epistemology* (how and what

we can know)" and "*metaphysics* (the study of being)" (pg. 12). Groothuis introduces the seven sentences, gives each a chapter that includes biographical data, then offers concluding thoughts.

Pre-Socratic Protagoras: "Man is the measure of all things: of the things which are, that they are, and of things which are not, that they are not" (pg. 15): Groothius considers serial killer Ted Bundy a follower of this line of relativistic thinking (pg. 27ff) and dismisses it as self-refuting (pg. 29).

Socrates' "The unexamined life is not worth living": Groothuis discusses Socrates' use of dialectic and the value of suffering. He uses narcissism to illustrate the second-order nature of philosophic self-examination: "The patient may know he [is a narcissist]… without reflecting on the nature of the human condition as a whole or why narcissism is something to be contained" (pg. 39).

Groothuis leverages off of Aristotle's pronouncement that "all men by nature desire to know" to introduce the bedrock of logical thinking discovered by Aristotle: the law of noncontradiction. Aristotle "codified and championed" this principle which he "claimed was true at all times and for all people" (pg 52). Groothuis dismisses postmodern criticisms of this principle as self-refuting (pg. 56).

Augustine's pronouncement "You [God] have made us for yourself, and restless is our heart until it comes to rest in you" marks the beginning of philosophy expressed autobiographically (pg. 17). Augustine plumbs the depths of sin and evil. His statement that "evil is parasitic on the good; it warps and twists what is good by not submitting to the source of all good, who is God himself" (pg. 77-78) arguably demolishes the atheistic argument that man can be "good without God".

Descartes' pithy "I think, therefore I am": Unlike Augustine, Descartes' biographical angst was "more epistemological than moral" (pg. 85). Groothuis concludes that if Descartes is right, he shows empiricism to be false" (pg. 89).

Groothuis interprets Christian great-heart Pascal's "The heart has its reasons that reason knows nothing of" epistemologically: "Humans have the capacity to calculate and reason methodically, but they may also know some things by tracing out the contours and resources of 'the heart' — another organ of knowledge" (pg. 18). He argues that Pascal and Descartes both believe in innate ideas, but "disagree as to [their] content and extent" (pg. 109).

Finally, Kierkegaard's less well-known and arguably more opaque statement: "The greatest hazard of all, losing one's self, can occur very quietly in the world, as if it were nothing at all": Kierkegaard considers the self and existential despair, and laments the loss of meaning for "mere knowledge, social conformity, or economic success" (pg. 128). Groothuis was converted from atheism while reading Kierkegaard and finding "the book was reading me" (pg. 129).

Considered together, Augustine, Pascal, and Kierkegaard provide x-rays of the human soul which may challenge the reader but be healthy nonetheless.

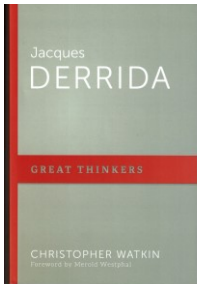
Groothuis hopes the seven sentences may function as "*bridges* to other lands of thought" and "*doors* into worlds previously unknown" (p. 19). He succeeds — this accessible book is a Whitman Sampler that whets the appetite for more. As such, it is eminently suitable for personal study, as a gift to a high-school or college-bound student, and for use in Christian and secular educational contexts.

Reviewed by Rick Ball.

Jacques Derrida. (Great Thinkers: Critical Studies of Minds That Shape Us). Christopher Watkin, Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017, 148 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1629952277

Christopher Watkin's recent contribution to the P&R's *Great Thinkers* series is a most welcome addition. Derrida has been abused by both critics and the public alike, perhaps more than any other twentieth-century philosopher, and remains generally misunderstood; this is where the P&R series really shines, with the goal of providing a concise and accessible overview of a thinker's writings and ideas, within the context of a Biblical worldview. Watkin divides his book into two parts, with the first part devoted to a survey of Derrida's key thoughts and concepts. The first chapter, *What is Deconstruction?,* is particularly valuable; if you're a skim reader, apply your attention to this section of the book. Watkin's survey also addresses commonly-held misconceptions regarding Derrida's thought. He is especially helpful in dealing with the myth that deconstruction meant language was meaningless for Derrida. Rather, for Derrida, deconstruction is a warning against treating our meanings as completely clear and our truths as The Truth.

Watkin conducts his examination, not by sympathizing with Derrida's ideas, but in being a faithful listener to Derrida's writings, a trait from which many writers could benefit. Watkin proceeds to examine Derrida's politics and ethics, and closes the first part of the book with a study of Derrida's theology, that from the late 1960s onwards consistently engaged with themes from the Western theological tradition. Watkin issues an important warning that we must be careful not to isolate Derridean ideas and graft them into our "Christian register", which would be an injustice to both the Bible and Derrida.



The second part of the book considers the three areas of Derrida's thought examined in the first half and responds to them from the viewpoint of a biblically Reformed specifically the Van Tillian position. Watkin provides a brief overview of other Reformed thinkers', especially John Frame's, treatment of Derrida's ideas. While some readers may appreciate this context, the high-level view does not

provide as much value as chapter five, which proposes a Van Tillian response to Derrida in light of John 1:1-18.

In summary, readers will find in this book a fair appraisal of Derrida's writings and ideas, although it should be noted that this book will find appreciation with two distinct reader audiences. The first part of the book will most surely be appreciated by undergraduate and graduate students studying Derrida's writings, and the second part will be more valuable for divinity and theology students. However, Christians looking to critically engage with Derrida's thought will do well to also pick up this concise and readable volume.

Thomas Aquinas. (Great Thinkers: Critical Studies of Minds That Shape Us). K. Scott Oliphint, Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017, 145 pp., paper. ISBN 9781629951416

P&R rounds out its *Great Thinkers* series with the addition of Scott Oliphint's study on Thomas Aquinas, which was published at the same time as Christopher Watkin's book on Derrida. Beyond the differences of medieval and contemporary philosophy, the two writers take very different approaches in their respective studies. Given the sheer volume of writing by the medieval philosopher Aquinas, choosing a point of examination is a task in itself. Oliphint, due to the constraints of the book format, limits the book's study of Aquinas and his writings to two areas: epistemology; and, the existence and character of God. Oliphint provides a very brief overview of Aquinas' intellectual development, which helps soften some of his later critiques of Aquinas, as in many ways his writings are representative of the medieval period. In comparison to Watkin's quiet and patient listening approach, however, readers may find that Oliphint is too swift in his critique of Aquinas. Nevertheless, Oliphint fulfills one of the *Great Thinkers* series' goals of examining ideas from a Reformed biblical perspective.

Ian Whytock lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia and is the chair for the Malagash Bible Camp and a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers.

Applied Theology

Departing in Peace: Biblical Decision-Making at the End of Life. Bill Davis. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017, 300 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-62995-259-8

Bill Davis is professor of philosophy at Covenant College and adjunct professor of systematic theology at Reformed Theological Seminary. He also serves as a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church in American and as a hospital ethics consultant. As the subtitle indicates, this book focuses on the making of end-of-life decisions in a biblical way.

The perspective set forth in the book is consistent with the findings of the study committee on Heroic Measures that was adopted by the Presbyterian Church in America in 1988. This book was written, however, to take the findings of that committee and show how they work out in practice in a contemporary setting (xv).

The book consists of eight chapters. After an introductory chapter to the book, chapter 2 deals with many of the foundational principles that underlie the reasoning of the book. This is a very helpful chapter as the book tackles some areas that may cloud our judgment. Using Scripture as his guide, Davis explains that while we are *obligated* to accept loving care that is likely to maintain or restore our health, we are not *required* to suffer merely in order to live as long as possible. Another difficult area he addresses relates to prayer. He asserts that while we ought to pray for healing, our plans should not depend on God performing a miracle.

Chapter 3 deals with end-of-life treatment decisions. The format covers the topics dealt with in an advanced directive (or health care directive). He addresses conditions including permanent unconsciousness, permanent confusion, permanent illness and dependence for daily living. He also explains

treatment options such as CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation), Ventilator, treating new conditions and tube feeding.

There are a number of things to appreciate about this book. To begin with, the book does an excellent job of providing clarity to issues that can become very complicated. Davis establishes 33 biblical principles that ought to help Christians think through end-of-life decisions. These principles are also gathered together as an appendix, which provides for easy reference.

The book is also very pastoral. In Chapter 4, Davis puts the principles set forth in the book into practice by considering six real-life scenarios. What is so helpful about this section of the book is that it will ask readers how they would speak into the situation as if questions were posed to them. The author provides three potential responses to the situation and then provides his own recommendation and his reasoning for it.

The book is also very practical. In Chapters 5-8, Davis gives guidance and his own recommendations on how to fill out an advanced directive. He also dedicates a chapter to addressing the issue of money as it relates to medical decisions. The aim of this chapter is to establish that Christians should not accept medical services that they cannot reasonably expect to pay back (199).

Due to the very nature of the topic, the material of this book is ideal for every Christian. Pastors would benefit in working through this material, but this book was written to bless the church broadly. There are supplementary lesson plans that can be downloaded from P&R's website, www.prpbooks.com, which are designed to be used in a Sunday school setting and will no doubt prove to be useful in helping every Christian to think through these matters with a biblical lens.

Reviewed by Peter Aiken who serves as the minister of the Central Charge of the Free Church of Scotland, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

***No God but One: Allah or Jesus?: A Former Muslim Investigates the Evidence for Islam and Christianity*. Nabeel Qureshi. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016, 316 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-310-52255-3**

The late Nabeel Qureshi's first breakout book: *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus* quickly became a New York Times bestseller after it was published in 2014. Qureshi, a former Muslim who converted to Christianity, initially began to research the Bible with the purpose of disproving it and further bolstering his staunch belief in the teachings of Islam. Instead, Qureshi was confronted with the truth of Scripture and renounced his Islamic roots. He discovered that Jesus is truly the Son of God, and that He is the only one who can atone for our sins.

In S*eeking Allah, Finding Jesus*, Qureshi shared his testimony and related the difficulties of his journey to faith in Christ.

In *No God But One*, Qureshi examines Islam and Christianity side by side by drawing on historical records, ancient texts, philosophers and of course - the Quran and the Bible. The book is primarily directed towards Muslims but will be meaningful to anyone who wants to know more about the claims of either religion.

I greatly appreciated Qureshi's balanced approach to what can quickly become a demonizing debate. As a former Muslim, Qureshi understood what the Quran means to Muslim people. As a strong Christian, he also understood the veracity of the Gospel and the consistency of God's word. Using a methodical approach, Qureshi examined the texts and practices of each religion in order to compare them. He demonstrated the arguments that caused him to doubt his Islamic upbringing and move towards faith in Jesus. Along the way, he dispelled many myths about what Muslims do and do not believe, and he refuted the modern idea that both peoples worship the same God.

Qureshi concluded the book by reminding readers, particularly Muslims, what it costs to abandon everything and follow Christ. He says, "There is no God but one, and he is Father, Spirit and Son. There is no God but one, and He is Jesus. It is worth all suffering to receive this truth and follow him." (p. 294) Indeed, Muslims around the world who come to Christ are shunned by their families and often banished from their communities. Sometimes the outcome is far worse than that. However, Qureshi has shown that the truth matters, whatever the cost.

No God But One is an excellent survey of the key teachings of Islam. There were many things that I did not know about the Muslim faith before reading this book, but having an insider's perspective helps me to appreciate my own faith and understand the shortcomings of Islam from more than a biased but ill-informed Western point of view. Qureshi's work also draws heavily on the rich history of Christendom, which further validates the claims we find in the Bible.

Reviewed by Andrew M. Whytock of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island who runs a professional writing services company.

***Effective Intercultural Communication: A Christian Perspective*. A. Scott Moreau, Evvy Hay Campbell, and Susan Greener. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014, 405 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-2663-8**

Scripture is clear that communication is very significant to God, and is a necessary component of our relationship to Him as our Creator, and to one another. God's Word communicates to us the gospel—a matter of life and death (John 1:12, Romans 6:23). It tells us that the words we speak actually

expose the attitudes of our hearts (Mark 7:21-22, James 3:1-4:1-2). Furthermore, it tells us that the manner in which we communicate will bear on our effectiveness in what we are trying to convey (Proverbs 15:1, 2 Corinthians 5:11, 1 Peter 3:15). All this is to say that effective communication is a very worthy topic to ponder as Christians. And as we are commissioned as the Church to make disciples of all nations, *intercultural* communications are something we participate in regularly, whether we always realize it or not.

In *Effective Intercultural Communications,* the authors set out to walk the readers through what they consider to be the critical introductory elements of intercultural communications for all types of Christian workers. The book is comprised of 24 co-authored chapters that are divided into four parts: Introducing Intercultural Communication; Foundations of Intercultural Communication Patterns; Patterns of Intercultural Communication; Developing Intercultural Expertise.

Some very interesting topics were chosen for discussion and much research was surely involved in putting this book together. I appreciate the authors' attempt to point out the fact that the history of Christian missions is not always fairly portrayed as it relates to its effects on the cultures that have received missionary workers over the past centuries. I also commend their conviction that our communication skills, or lack thereof, really do (in part) impact others' receptivity of the gospel and further teachings of the Bible.

However, I also have some concerns. My first concern regards the importance that the authors place on secular fields of study as they pertain to Christians participating in intercultural communications. In the Introduction of the book, a statement is made about how anthropology, linguistics, sociology, and psychology shed light on aspects of intercultural communications, which is then followed by this comment: "For the Christian, of course, theology and missiology must also be included" (p.2). I would critique that statement because, as most Evangelical church statements of faith make clear, we recognize the Holy Scriptures (which are infallible, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore sufficient) as *the rule* of faith and practice. Since good theology is based upon Scripture, it is not just something to be added; rather, Scripture is our *all-sufficient* basis of faith and practice, and our goal in theology is to compartmentalize the Bible's teaching. The authors do point out specifically some of the challenges that Christians are up against in confronting secular concepts of intercultural studies that do not conform to the Bible's teaching.

Another area of concern is the lack of significance placed upon the role of the sending church as it relates to preachers communicating the gospel and teaching cross-culturally. One danger of downplaying the importance of church polity, for example, is that contextualization could then become a main driver of the way that Christian missions is played out, almost leaving a cross-cultural Christian worker with the liberty of redefining significant areas of church life in trying to accommodate local customs.

For example, endeavoring to show the readers how to develop intercultural expertise in sharing the gospel, the authors affirmed Tsu-kung Chuang's alternate version (for the sake of seeking greater appeal in China) of what is commonly referred to as the Four Spiritual Laws. In the authors' words, "Rather than stating that we are all sinful, as in the original version, he states that no one can become the ideal perfect person, a point well known in Chinese culture. Further, he changes the statement about Christ being our provision for sin to Christ being the one who can restore our relationship with God. Finally, he removes the individualistic emphasis on receiving restoration with God" (p.257). Though they urge caution in such a condensation, do we actually have that freedom to change the emphasis of certain aspects of the gospel due to one's culture? On the contrary, the apostle Paul was opposed on many occasions for his consistent preaching of the same gospel everywhere (1 Corinthians 16:9, 2 Corinthians 11:23-26, Acts 16:23; 26:20; 28:22). That said, the authors do point out dangers of highly contextualized ministry and suggest boundaries.

As a church minister serving in a foreign field, I have realized that syncretism is a *real* danger crouching at the doors of developing churches. Therefore, I am convinced that unashamedly holding fast to Scripture, and, as a result, seeking wise direction from one's Bible-believing sending church in working to resolve difficult matters are at the core of a Christian worker being faithful in communicating the gospel and participating in the process of church planting. Though I know this may seem mundane, it is my caution that we do not unintentionally overlook or compromise these fundamental components as we seek to work through the challenges involved in the making of Christian disciples of every nation. Again, I commend and share the authors' *passion* for winning the lost for Christ.

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The Mentoring Church: How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders. **Phil A. Newton. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2017, 230 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8254-4464-7**

In *The Mentoring Church*, Phil Newton argues that the best preparation for pastoral ministry takes place in a context of the local church. Effective mentoring will be led by an experienced pastor with heavy congregational input and a deliberate interaction between theological learning, personal devotion, and real-life ministry engagement. The book explores the theology of mentoring, provides examples from the Bible and church history, and ends with models of mentoring in six contemporary local churches in the USA.



The Mentoring Church is a culmination of more than 30 years of Phil Newton's pastoral ministry at South Woods Baptist Church in Tennessee, USA where he and his fellow elders have trained countless servants for ministry.

The book opens in Chapter 1 by establishing the need for deliberate mentoring for pastoral ministry, openly acknowledging that an academic theological education is not sufficient to prepare a person for ministry. Chapter 2 explores Jesus' method of training his disciples, which first involved calling them into a relationship with himself, teaching them personally, and sending them little by little into the harvest. Chapter 3 shows how leaders in the book of Acts developed their ministry skills in teams. Chapter 4 details Paul's training strategy: ground the trainees in sound doctrine; always keep the healthy church in view; develop local church leadership; focus on personal mentoring.

The next section of the book surveys models of training for pastoral ministry from church history. In Chapter 5, Newton portrays Zwingli as 'a tutelary god' to his mentees (83) devoting personal attention to them. Calvin trained men for ministry through the establishment of the church-based Geneva Academy and the flourishing team of a "Company of Pastors". Calvin's "Company" thoroughly grounded their trainees in language, theology and Bible and then sent them out to plant churches based on the Geneva model. Chapter 6 presents the Lutheran Philipp Jakob Spener's reaction against the barrenness of 17th-century, university-based theological preparation of ministers. Spener focused on training the laity, using small group Bible studies, and developing the inner life of the candidate for ministry. Chapter 7 opens up Charles Spurgeon's model of mentoring in the 19th century. In his Pastor's College, he lectured both ministerial candidates and lay leaders on the full scope of pastoral ministry. The training ground for these lectures was active involvement in the congregation at Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle. Spurgeon relished the personal interaction with ministry candidates as they enjoyed long hours of his personal attention in his home on Friday afternoons. Dietrich Bonhoeffer in 20th century Germany held that the exclusive use of the German theological schools in universities as a method of pastoral preparation was a waste of time (109). In his book *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer writes about his small "preachers' seminaries" where mentees lived out heart-felt discipleship in community.

In the ninth chapter, Newton contends that a theology of leadership must emerge from a biblical theology of church. Since the church is God's great project on earth, training to serve that church will happen best within the structure of the local congregation. Newton does not disparage parachurch ministries, like Bible institutes and colleges. But those ministries are specialist ministries and should confine themselves to those specializations to serve the

greater church. Wise church leaders will use the expertise of parachurch ministries to carry out what churches often cannot do.

Chapters 9-13 provide concrete local church-based models of mentoring. In Chapter 9, Newton gives personal example from his own experience in training men for ministry. Such mentoring emphasizes the example of the primacy of preaching, life-on-life relationship between pastor and trainee, supervised training assignments, accountability and feedback, all within the sphere of the local congregation.

Here, one of Newton's central burdens becomes clear – the congregation must be involved in the training of future leaders. Not only does the church body provide real-life ministry opportunity for the potential shepherd, but the church itself is a mentoring community to the ministry candidate since "no one mentor can adequately cover all the bases necessary for a trainee" (141).

Chapter 10 presents Capitol Hill Baptist Church's "Boot Camp" – a five-month exposure to as many elements of regular pastoral life as possible. In chapter 11, Newton shows the focus used by The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, with its deliberate intent on training and sending church planters. At Grace Community Church in Nashville (chapter 12), the pastor brings on one or two trainees at a time and provides ample face-to-face accompaniment through all areas of pastoral ministry. Lakeview Baptist Church in Alabama demonstrates the way the church and academy can work in harmony – the academy provides the theological instruction and the church grounds that academic work in real-life ministry
preparation (chapter 13).

The final chapter summarizes the main emphases of the book by providing a template for training leaders in the local church. Summarizing his findings, Newton recommends the following:

- Mentors must speak holistically into their trainees' lives.
- Mentoring must train the protégé in the art of healthy relationships.
- Mentoring should encourage a team-approach to Christian ministry, beginning in the mentoring process.
- Mentors must give responsibility to the trainees and then trust them to carry out those tasks.
- The pastor, elders, and staff must be committed to the idea of mentoring in their church and set aside time to invest in it.
- The congregation where the trainee serves should be committed to engaging the trainee.
- The leaders must wisely select the trainee who will serve under their care.
- The internship must be uncomplicated but well planned out and well communicated to the mentee.
- The trainee should be exposed to and involved in as many types of ministry experience as possible.

Many mentorships require substantial reading from their trainees. Newton provides a helpful booklist in his appendix, Suggested Books for Pastoral Training.

There is a great need for deliberate mentoring in the evangelical churches of Africa. *The Mentoring Church* offers models which can help. Given the differences in culture, economic sustainability of the local church, the reality of bi-vocational pastorates, and the sparsity of theological education in Africa, a book on mentoring for pastoral ministry written on this continent would be a welcome companion to *The Mentoring Church*.

Reviewed by Karl Peterson, a former church planter in Mozambique and lecturer at the Bible Institute of South Africa and currently on staff at Parker Hills Bible Fellowship in Denver, USA.

***The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation*. Rod Dreher. New York: Sentinel [an imprint of Penguin Random House], 2017, 262 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0735213296**

On the centennial of J. Gresham Machen's birth (July 28, 1881), Charles Dennison observed in *New Horizons* that the man in many ways responsible for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) died a long way from where he started. Dennison, then the historian for the OPC, was not just commenting on the distance between Baltimore and Bismarck, North Dakota, where Machen succumbed to pneumonia. The historian was also drawing attention to the cultural isolation that Machen experienced over the course of his life. The son of a well-to-do Baltimore attorney, he studied at elite universities and rubbed shoulders with the nation's wealthiest and most influential persons. Yet Machen went to his grave as the leader of a small, obscure, and largely discredited cause—ministering the Word of God according to Presbyterian orthodoxy. Machen's life as a pilgrim in exile, Dennison believed, was also true for the OPC. This was not a communion characterized by prestige or cultural influence. Dennison repeatedly called upon Orthodox Presbyterians to remember and embrace their heritage. The OPC, he wrote, "begins where Machen ended and that is her secret, her genius, and her calling." The OPC's founding was a recognition that Christians are called to be strangers and aliens, a peculiar people, not transformers of culture.

Not everyone in the OPC shared Dennison's call for cultural exile or his interpretation of the church's founding, but Rod Dreher's new book, *The Benedict Option*, is a confirmation that Machen and Dennison had a point in eschewing the American mainstream for ecclesiastical authenticity. A writer at *The American Conservative* with a remarkable knack for hitting the sweet spot of discontent among Americans who prefer tradition to progress, Dreher with this book adds to his reputation for thinking beyond small government, a

strong national defense, balanced budgets, and family values. He argues that American Christians (and he tries to write with Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox in mind—he has been all three) are in the midst of a deluge that threatens the family, morality, communities, and churches. He quotes an Anglican theologian approvingly: "There is no safe place in the world or in our churches within which to be a Christian. It is a new epoch."

The current revolution in sexuality and marriage is the culmination of a long process, Dreher argues, begun even in the late Middle Ages, which saw the secular triumph over the sacred. Christians now confront a situation similar to what Benedict of Nursia experienced at the time of the Roman Empire's collapse in the fifth century. Just as Benedict formed a monastic community to preserve a Christian witness and culture, Dreher argues, so also contemporary believers need a "Benedict Option" to preserve the faith and pass it on to future generations. (The anomaly of monastic ideals and having children is a conundrum that runs through this book.)

The qualities that informed monasticism—order, work, prayer, asceticism, stability, community, and hospitality—are features that Dreher recommends to Christians in their everyday lives. This Benedictine outlook means above all being intentional about distinguishing Christianity from the surrounding culture. Parents should consider living in neighborhoods with like-minded Christians. They should also pay attention to the education children receive by looking at classical Christian academies or homeschooling. Christians should also, Dreher says, recognize the value of hard work and the virtues it instills, one of which includes rejecting the casual attitude to sex that prevails in the modern West. It also means that Christians should be self-conscious about their use of social media and other technologies that distract from either reflection or quiet.

The greatest weakness of Dreher's prescription is his understanding of Christianity. On the one hand, he idealizes a medieval social order, the kind that sustained Benedictine monasticism. That older European society assumed God haunted everything, all parts of creation and society were also signs of God's presence, and the whole world was sacramental. This means, of course, that Protestantism rained on Christendom's party by destroying the sacred canopy that bequeathed religious significance to all parts of human existence. Luther and his fellow travelers were not entirely to blame for upending Christendom. Renaissance humanists and modern scientists and philosophers also added to the decline of Christian Europe. But Dreher's narrative of the West reinforces the idea, made popular recently by Brad Gregory in *The Unintended Reformation* (2012), that Protestants "segregated the sacred from the secular" in ways that led to the current climate of cultural relativism. Whatever the merits of that historical claim, and there are a few, it conflicts with Dreher's larger aim of writing for all of "us" Christians. He hopes that all Christians can embrace the Benedict Option, and yet the book implicitly favors older over modern forms of Christianity. Dreher should have been more forthright about his own religious beliefs.

On the other hand, Dreher adopts a utilitarian approach to Christianity. It is most evident in his chapter on church life, which begins with a quotation by historian Robert Louis Wilkin, that "nothing is more needful today than the survival of Christian culture." Dreher does use the word "gospel" a number of times, but whoever indexed the book did not think the subject merited an entry in the index. It was omitted for good reason, since Dreher's book shows more concern for culture than for the gospel, that is, salvation. Indeed, the sacraments and liturgical worship become vehicles to raise an awareness of God's presence in the universe, while iPads and smart phones are distractions from religious meaning in the world. Dreher follows that line of conservative thought that sees cult (or worship) as the basis for culture. The logic inherent in tracing culture to cult might make sense of Old Testament Israel, but the example of Christ and the apostles does not. They gave little attention to culture (beyond ending Old Testament requirements) because they were more interested in salvation than assessing the polyglot world of the Roman Empire. Had Dreher started with a concern for the salvation of the next generation of Christians, he may well have had to distinguish among the branches of Christianity the one with the true gospel.

Despite this defect, Dreher deserves credit for embracing counterculturalism, and readers will find in parts of this book sound advice for evaluating unhealthy activities or reconsidering seemingly benign assumptions about modern life. At the same time, Dreher is late in his critique. Not only did Machen see in his day how accommodating culture had compromised mainline Presbyterianism, but fifty years before the OPC was formed Abraham Kuyper also recognized the path on which liberal European society was headed and took measures to preserve a Christian witness by forming separate institutions (church, schools, media, political parties). Because Reformed Christians have been worried about the culture for over a century, some of what Dreher writes may sound familiar and even repetitive. For that reason, readers may also wonder after reading Dreher what took Christians like him so long to wake up. The book is a testimony to the dangers that even mainstream Christians now see in the wider world. If mainline Protestants had not been so dismissive of Machen and the OPC eight decades ago, the Machen Option might be as worthy of consideration as the Benedict Option that Dreher now proposes.

Reviewed by D.G. Hart, an Orthodox Presbyterian ruling elder and lecturer at Hillsdale College, Michigan.

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***The Pastor's Book: A Comprehensive and Practical Guide to Pastoral Ministry*. R. Kent Hughes & Douglas Sean O'Donnell,**

consulting editor. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015, 592 pp., hc., ISBN 978-1-4335-4587-0

What a beautifully bound hardcover book complete with a marker ribbon, good quality paper – a book which should be on every evangelical pastor's book shelf. This has been a delight to read and return to since receiving a review copy. R. Kent Hughes, who had been a long-standing pastor at College Church in Wheaton, Illinois, has given us the best of his wisdom by collecting from years in Christian ministry and bringing it together into this book. Hughes is the chief author and collator for this book, but he has been ably assisted by Douglas O'Donnell. Many others have given permission for their materials to be included. Each is properly acknowledged and the reader clearly knows who did what; this makes for good reading and shows great care in the way the book has been put together.

There is one puzzling feature of this book: the sub-title. When I read this sub-title, I had the vision of a book that was going to look at many aspects of pastoral ministry. However, when I read the preface, I learned that the following aspects of pastoral ministry would not be included (except by way of a reference to a bibliographic source): "calling to ministry, personal character, family life, preaching, leading a pastoral staff, working with elders, church discipline, and church planting, would make this large go-to book too bulky to go to" (17). So my impression is that the preface has limited the focus of the book. A quick survey of the contents of the book will confirm this, with approximately three-quarters of the content dealing with worship-related ministry.

Hence, my bewilderment; I do not see how the sub-title fits this book. It is almost like then the book should have been a series of three books with this one being the one called The Pastor's Book: A Comprehensive and Practical Guide to Leading in Worship, then the next volume, The Pastor's Book: A Comprehensive and Practical guide to Pastoral Counselling and Visitation, and finally, The Pastor's Book: A Comprehensive and Practical Guide to Leadership, Church Growth and Revitalisation, or something along these lines. It is very strange to me that such a well-written and published book should have such a sub-title. Least a reader thinks that I am not endorsing this book, no, this is not the case. In fact, I would make selections of it mandatory reading in courses that I teach, and I would encourage congregants looking for a gift for a pastor or would-be pastor to buy a copy. So I am giving my endorsement as stated in my opening sentence. I am just confused by the sub-title.

The book operates on a principle of open candour and respect for both paedo-baptism and credo-baptism and the two names on the cover represent both convictions. This will offend some and will also make the book more popular across the evangelical churches today.

There are three parts to the book: Christian Gatherings, the Worship Service, and Ministerial Duties. Parts One and Two constitute about 75% of

the book. The two sections in part three on pastoral counselling and hospital visitation are excellent. I highly commend them.

Concerning the remainder of the book, I would say that this book is going to make liturgical practices relevant for today with good reflection and understanding. The Christian gatherings dealt with in the book are regular Sunday services, annual services, weddings and funerals. Rich resources are included, such as select funeral and wedding sermons. These would be very good for discussion at fraternal meetings or in a theology class.

It seems there is a renewed interest today in liturgy, especially by many younger pastors. *The Pastor's Book* would be good have alongside the new book by Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earngey, *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past for the Present.*

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock.

Preaching Points: 55 Tips for Improving Your Pulpit Ministry. **Scott M. Gibson, editor. Wooster, OH: Weaver Book Company, 2016, 123 pp., ISBN 978-1-941337-54-7**

Preaching Points is a collection of transcripts drawn from the weekly podcast of the same name produced by Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. The book is primarily an answer to requests from listeners for a printed version of the podcast, but it is also offered with the hope of connecting with preachers beyond the podcast audience. Listeners and fans of the podcast will already be familiar with the format and my goal is to present the book to the second group, those coming to it fresh.

As the subtitle makes clear, the 55 tips gathered together are aimed at those involved in preaching. They are presented by five members of the preaching and teaching staff of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and all are very accessible in both style and content. Each chapter is short, the longest being three pages, with an average chapter length of less than two pages. With the exception of a single passing reference to a point made in a previous chapter, each chapter is self-contained. A variety of topics are touched on throughout the book, but the majority of the points are related to the process of preparation and delivery, which is in line with the book's stated purpose of helping preachers to "Be clear!" However, the book is not simply a quick reference of how-to tips but maintains a clear emphasis on the authority of the Word of God in the preacher's life and ministry. I was surprised to find no direct mention of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Whether this was an oversight or this aspect of preaching is simply being taken for granted with the intended audience, this is a serious shortcoming since there is no true preaching without the Spirit.

Those familiar with the standard works on preaching will recognize many of the points, and the refresher on a main point that may otherwise stay buried

in the larger volume on the shelf makes the book very helpful for those who already have a solid background. The temptation for these readers will most likely be to zip through the book in one sitting and put it away, but the greatest benefit will come from remembering its source, a weekly podcast. I recommend approaching the book as a sort of preaching devotional, reading one chapter each week and then taking the week to pray and think through how you might implement that one idea.

For readers who may not have had the opportunity to read the larger works, or for whom those works may be inaccessible, this book will be a great resource provided it is taken in context. Many of the tips are condensed or extracted from more thorough discussions on preaching and readers coming to them for the first time will be in danger of taking them as more complete than they really are. Wisdom and care must be taken to work through the tips while giving each their proper weight within the individual's pastoral setting and ministry.

The style of the book makes it readily accessible and readable, and the short chapters make it easy to take in without being overwhelmed. It is helpful for both those with wide experience and those just starting out in preaching; where it does fall short in its treatment of the Spirit, those with a Spirit-led heart will undoubtedly benefit from its pages. Each point is clearly marked with the author's initials, which may be of help to those with complementarian convictions, and if the points are helpful to you, then they will lead you to further works by those authors.

Reviewed by Stephen Plouffe.

***Playing With Holy Fire*: *A Wake-Up Call to the Pentecostal Charismatic Church* Michael L. Brown. Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma -House, 2018, 202 pp., paper.ISBN 978-1-62999-499-4**

"… How can the Spirit's presence be so strong in our midst while we remain so carnal?... Why have we allowed so many abuses to continue in our midst?" (pp. 159,186). So asks Dr Michael Brown (PhD), a charismatic "insider" (pg. xv) dismayed by the excesses and errors associated with the charismatic movement he affirms and loves. He writes pastorally, with a "deep sense of burden, with grief over the lives hurt… and with pain because of the reproach that has been brought to the name of our Lord" (p. 7).

Brown's thesis is that a legitimate move of the Spirit, one which has resulted in the salvation of millions and rocked continents (p. xvi), has been accompanied by a litany of problems: "immaturity, gullibility, carnality, sensationalism, merchandising, corruption and doctrinal error" (p. xvi), ill-prepared and abusive leaders, compromise, and moral scandals (pp. 6-7), and fads (p. 22). He compares these immaturities and excesses to the Spirit-filled church at Corinth (e.g., pp. xvi, 136). A distinctive feature of Brown's theology is that he believes the gifts and callings of God are "without repentance" and

that, by way of partial explanation, the Spirit's gifts are genuine and continue even among sinning and erring leaders (e.g., p. 31) – a sobering thought.

The author identifies three overarching reasons for these problems: immaturity, gullibility, and the sin of pride among leaders. He argues for sound teaching to address the first – he quotes Alastair Begg approvingly: "The main things are the plain things, and the plain things are the main things" (p. 148); the cultivation of discernment to address the second; and repentance for the third. At the same time, he urges the church to avoid scepticism, arguing that "*discernment is not the same thing as scepticism, and cynicism is not a fruit of the Spirit*" (p. 18).

Brown has written a helpful book. It belongs in pentecostal/charismatic colleges, on the charismatic pastor's bookshelf, and in the hands of ordinary charismatics. Although not addressed to the movement's critics, they could benefit as well. Readers may be shocked, dismayed, informed, cautioned, and, at times, delighted. His conversational style and generous use of anecdotes helps to keep the reader's interest. His book includes many references to the developing world churches, African especially (e.g., pp. 23-24, 58-59, 123, 125-6), e.g., "… even Baptist churches in Africa commonly pray for the sick and drive out demons" (p. 126).

There are three areas where I wish he had said more. First, Brown, admittedly for good reasons which he outlines (pp. xvii-xviii), declines to name the charlatans and authors of various excesses and abuses. In some cases, the names were obvious to me; in other cases, I must confess I found myself wondering. Second, he sometimes asserts something is wrong without saying why. For example, he says, "it's a short step from proclaiming yourself to be an apostle to thinking that you carry the same authority as the first twelve apostles. That is a very serious error" (p. 75). And leaves it at that – no further comment. Finally, and more substantively, he stresses gullibility among charismatics, but I wish he had probed its psychological, sociological, and theological dimensions. I suspect it has to do with genuine enthusiasm for the living God and the desire to see the Spirit moving as per Acts and I Corinthians 12, coupled with a belief that uncritical, fideistic faith is the key to making this happen. This kind of in-depth analysis would be very helpful and would make an excellent follow-up.

Reviewed by Rick Ball.

The Music Architect: Blueprints for Engaging Worshipers in Song. **Constance M. Cherry Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016, 272 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-9968-7**



Because we are creatures of habit—people whose practices become deeply-embedded parts of our lives—it can be easy to think that the way *we* do things is the way they *always* must be done. This applies to ordinary parts of our domestic lives: how we organize our kitchen or celebrate a holiday. However, the assumption that these practices *must* be carried out in a certain way can be swiftly disrupted by marriage or by being taken in by another family, where another's practices and preferences are vastly different than, and challenging to, our own. This applies all the more when it comes to church music—the order of the liturgy, the style that is played, or the songs that are selected. Of all the ecclesial spheres in which to introduce change, music is among the most difficult. We can be quick to canonize our own preferences and suppose that any other way must be a form of unfaithfulness.

But congregational song is far more dynamic and rich than we realize. Across time and geography, there is an array of church music that is both diverse and dazzlingly bright. In *The Music Architect: Blueprints for Engaging Worshipers in Song*, professor of worship and music minister Constance Cherry offers a glimpse into this wide breadth of traditions and practices, and helps worship leaders to navigate how to use music to disciple those whom they are serving in their churches.

This book follows *The Worship Architect* and *The Special Service Worship Architect,* by the same author, in expounding upon various components of the Christian worship service. Particularly, *The Music Architect* narrows in on congregational song in order to understand the relationship between worship and music (see Chapter 3, p. 37). They are not, after all, the same thing. On the one hand, our performance-driven, production-centred worship music culture can easily seem to blur the two into one. But on the other hand, it is truly appropriate that we would have a hard time imagining a worship service *without* song—after all, singing is a command and is a gracious means that the Lord has given us to commune with and respond to him. So, how should we understand music's purpose in relation to worship?

With clarity, Cherry states the relationship between the two by saying, "The role of music in worship is to facilitate the proclamation and celebration of the story of God" (p.39). The story of God, of which the gospel of Jesus is central, is the heart of the church's worship. Music is not an end in itself, but an important means to the end. If music points to itself as *the* end, or if the ends it points toward are unbiblical, it fails in its God-given purpose.

We could think of the pitfalls of the smartphone in similar ways. If we neglect to use our smartphone to assist with the functions for which it was designed—communication, navigation, gathering useful information—or if it points us toward destructive ends—self-absorption or social isolation—it is no longer fulfilling its purpose. Music has the same capacity for misuse.

But, when practiced rightly, music beautifully comes alongside to facilitate the rehearsal and enactment of God's story (see Chapter 2, p.17). In order to

do this, music functions in a multitude of ways. It accompanies the liturgical movements of worship in order to engage the worshipers and make them primary participants with God in the story. It enables us to internalize the story in a way that the spoken word alone could not. It invites us into not only the dialogue of worship—the dance of revelation and response—but also into communion with each other, the body of Christ, as together we taste and see that God is good.

Cherry helps us to see that when music functions rightly, a whole expanse of congregational song opens up before us. She challenges the worship leader to evaluate their canon of song (see Appendix A, p. 266) for soundness and balance, and poses many helpful questions to help in the process. Selecting which songs to sing must be done intentionally and pastorally, because not only will a canon of song begin to identify a group of people as a bonded community, but the songs themselves will shape and form the hearts and minds of the worshipers (see Chapter 5, p. 97).

The songs we sing, therefore, must display the range of experience in the Christian life. They must both praise and lament, address God and address one another, declare God's story and tell of how our own intersects. The songs we sing should include "longer" and "shorter" songs—songs that develop extended ideas, and songs that are simple meditations and embody one particular liturgical act. They should include old songs (psalms, faithful hymns) and new ones. They should challenge us to personal holiness and to societal justice. They should reflect the breadth of the Christian tradition so that we can identify ourselves as part of the universal, orthodox church; they should also reflect the distinctives of our personal tradition and particular convictions (pp. 109-114). This book deconstructs many unnecessary dichotomies, such as the ones above. Where we may be quick to demand that music be done one way, we can easily miss the complementary perspective. The apostle Paul broke down dichotomies in a similar way: "I will sing with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also" (1 Cor. 14:15).

The variety and availability of congregational song and worship practices today is immense, and Cherry opens the door far enough to show us that there is still much more to see. One could only hope to dip one's toes in the ocean of new ideas that she describes—for some, that will be singing an African American responsorial song; for others, a rich metrical psalm. Cherry steers the reader toward only taking on a few new ideas at a time and working slowly to apply them in their context. This is wise.

Cherry's work is also an important reminder of the humility and love that are required when leading congregational song. Learning to lay down your own preferences for the sake of others necessitates and cultivates love. Choosing liturgical acts that will stretch and grow your local church body in new ways will take discernment and humility. And while it may be challenging to realize that the way we have done things is not the way things always need to be done, we should see the opportunity to widen our sights as a gift. In the

end, the cultivation of these practices will enrich our worship as we celebrate the story of God together.

Reviewed by Tyler Stitt, a final-year M.Div. student at Bethlehem College & Seminary, Minneapolis, Minnesota and a former worship leader at Cornerstone University, Michigan.

Crossing Cultures in Scripture: Biblical principles for mission practice. **Marvin J. Newell. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2016, 302 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-4473-9**

The author, a former missionary in Indonesia and missiologist at Moody in Chicago, begins by highlighting the Bible as the absolute truth, with other disciplines only being helpers to enable the reader to gain a deeper understanding of the Bible – they are not the truth on their own. This sends a strong message on the importance of the Scriptures even in understanding culture, its source, and what it entails. It is important for the author to identify that culture was perfect at creation, deteriorated because of sin, and was redeemed. This puts all cultures at equal footing and helps readers not to impose or elevate their cultural values over others. In other words, the order of culture points to the biblical culture (redeemed culture) as the standard culture to which all other cultures should conform for transformation because all other cultures are fallen cultures.

It is of great importance that the author points to practical examples where crossing cultures is elevated in the Bible, starting with the call of Abraham in whom all peoples of the earth would be blessed. This indicates the need to reach out to all people groups in their cultures and to transform their fallen culture by the Word of God. The giving of different Old and New Testament peoples who crossed cultural boundaries is good in identifying the effects, results, challenges faced and how they were resolved or failed to be resolved. These examples are important insights for present missionaries who would enter the mission field equipped with the necessary skills.

At the apex of cross-cultural mission is the example of our Lord Jesus. I like the way the author first gives the different cultural boundaries that existed during Jesus' time, which Christ skillfully and successfully crossed and in so doing achieved the intended results. Giving the seven marks of Jesus' prayer for His disciples (in John 17) highlights what the church needs to do as part of her mandate and how she should successfully do it cross-culturally.

The link and development from Jesus' examples and the seven marks to how the early church followed the guideline and was successful is very important for the present church. The example of Acts 1:8 given by the author (and explanation thereof) is important in preparing evangelism for different groups of people from E-1 (same culture) through to E-3 (radically different culture). If this is not grasped, evangelism across cultures will bear little or no

fruit because each group needs appropriate skill to successfully evangelize them.

I like the fact of contextualization by the missionary, but I suggest the author should have emphasized the fact that this should be carefully done to prevent the missionary from conforming to the fallen culture of the target group. The core of the gospel should remain unchanged in contextualization. Again, the author's parallelism of the Trinity and cultures on the aspect of unity and diversity should be carefully explained to avoid grey areas that might be brought by the parallelism. The Trinity is divine, as the author suggests, and lacks nothing while all cultures are fallen in their diversity and need the divine culture of the Bible to be transformed. The book is highly commended in the foreword by Patrick Fung, the general director of OMF.

Reviewed by Wilbert Chipenyu

Book Briefs

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

Counselling

Anger & Stress Management God's Way. Wayne A. Mack. Original 2004, this edition, Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2017, 139 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-62995-295-6

This book was originally published by a small press, Calvary Press Publishing. This new edition by P&R will perhaps promote wider circulation. The book is well titled, is very clearly organised by theme in all chapters, and is very accessible to a wide ranging audience. As the title tells us, two issues are the focus of the book: anger and stress and the counsel of the Scriptures to both. The first two chapters tackle the problem which must be considered first in any discussion of anger, namely the subject of when anger is right and when it is wrong. I thought the answer here was in accord with the Scriptures and was on solid ground. These two chapters would be excellent for a group Bible study or a teaching class for counsellors. A weaker chapter for me was chapter five," Where Does Stress Come From?" I think there needed to be expansion here. Chapter six was most helpful on the theme of the consequences of stress. The closing chapters deal with overcoming stress biblically as believers. Overall, a good book to have in the college library as a resource for counselling courses; a useful group Bible study text; and also a useful tool for pastors to use in ministry. – *JCW*

Leadership

Leader><Shift: One Becomes Less While Another Becomes More. Gary L. Johnson. N.pl.: n.pub., 2013, 209 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-615-89093-7

Though not a new release, this book has attracted interest as there are very few books written within the Christian world about leadership transitions. The work deals with four main sections as "The Preliminaries" about change which will come – "leaders have a shelf life". Then it develops "The Plan" of succession. Here there is much useful analysis and advice, but the book does not consider the multitude of factors which may hinder a smooth succession.

More text is needed in this section. Next, "The Process" is analysed as being much like a relay race, and finally "The People", considers the main individuals affected – namely, the leader who is leaving, the incoming leader and others. The book ends with a most moving epilogue.

Though somewhat contextual with a focus on very large church models, there are still enough valid and timely ideas to make this a worthwhile read for leaders who are going through or will go through a leadership transition. This book should be included in the bibliographies for courses of those who teach about Christian leadership and also will be useful to Christian leaders who must always be preparing for the transitional time of their ministry. There are some nuggets of common sense wisdom here. I do wish some of these self-published books, such as this one, would start on the right page, as we have grown accustomed to reading with a standard layout for books.
– JCW

Church History

The Unreformed Martin Luther: A Serious (and Not so Serious) Look at the Man Behind the Myths. Andreas Malessa. Original in German, 2015. English edition, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2017,168 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8254-4456-2

Paul Maier reminds us in the Preface that many legends and myths arose concerning Jesus. The same can be said for America's first President George Washington and also for Martin Luther. This is an easy-read book and causes one to laugh often and also to see that history must be told truthfully. It is well translated from the German by the Hillmans. It would serve well as a book to read alongside a text on the Reformation as it would show how myths often arise. There are 25 chapters, so each is quite short and one does not need to read them in order. My wife and I read them often at supper, rambling around the book. They made us smile and we also learned a great deal; some chapters which will make one say, "Now that was new for me!" I am sure one of the first to be read will be the chapter entitled "Luther the Boozer". This book makes church history truly interesting for those fearful of the subject. *– JCW*

Family

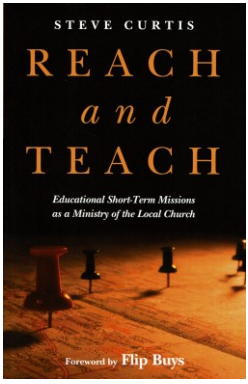
Family Worship. Donald S. Whitney. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016, 79 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-4780-5

The author of what is now a modern classic for spiritual formation, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life,* has given us here in *Family Worship* a very concise and helpful resource to give away to many. It is not really anything

new that will be found here, but for some it will be a good reinforcement, for others an invitation written at a level and in a manner which will be accessible to begin, and for still others it will be a call back to what they had once known and practised. The five chapters cover family worship in the Bible, in church history, the elements of family worship and problems. The "problems" chapter deals with questions, such as, "What If the Father Is not a Christian?" A helpful discussion series of questions is included in this book. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* and *Family Worship* should be in every pastor's study and they should be given out to all in pre-marriage counselling. Either could also be used in a study group. One point, some of the scriptures used to support family worship really more broadly speak of family piety and nurture in a general sense. – *JCW*

Mission

Reach and Teach: Educational Short-Term Missions as a Ministry of the Local Church. Steve Curtis. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016, 138 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4982-9622-9



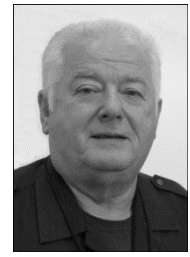
Here is a book which sets forth the thesis that there truly is value in short-term mission (STM) strategies and ministries. STM is a field of much current study. The book operates under the thesis that "there remains a critical need for the education and equipping of indigenous pastors" (p. 49) and that a strategy of educational short-term missions which is church-based can help to train indigenous pastors and create resources for them. This model is referred to as EdSTM. Much current STM strategy concerns evangelism and humanitarian and development-based projects. The low point is theological training at the appropriate level, especially in many untargeted areas. The book is easy to read, has a good forward by Flip Buys, the past international director of the World Reformed Fellowship, and has a glossary, appendices, and a bibliography. The author is the international director for Timothy Two Project International. I commend this work and was thrilled to read it as ten years ago I wrote an article, "A Mission Strategy for Equipping National Leaders: MT3"[1] and see a very similar philosophical approach. Well done, Steve. – *JCW*

[1] Jack C. Whytock, "A Mission Strategy for Equipping National Leaders: MT3", *Haddington House Journal* 11 (2009) , 51-67.

Academic Articles

Sensational Discoveries
A Contribution to the 500th Celebration of the Reformation[1]

Manfred W. Kohl*



**Dr. Manfred W. Kohl was born in Germany, educated in Europe and the United States, and lives in Nova Scotia, Canada. Dr. Kohl served as Vice-President of International Development for Overseas Council International, an organization that assists theological schools, primarily in the non-western world.*

Abstract:
A little more than two decades ago, while I was visiting the city of Stuttgart in southern Germany, Luther's own Latin Bible was found in that city. A few years later I had the opportunity to view the original last will of Luther in the church archives in Budapest, Hungary. In this will Luther expressed great concern that after his death Kaethe, his wife, and their five surviving children remain strong in their faith and that they be physically cared for. These two discoveries made a deep impression on me, because the notes in Luther's Bible and the references to his wife and family in his will showed without a doubt that Luther held Holy Scriptures, marriage, and family in very high regard – almost as "sacred sacraments".

A little more than two decades ago, in the autumn of 1995, both Christian and secular media reported a sensational discovery in the city of Stuttgart in southern Germany. While working in the state library in that city, a Spanish theologian came upon a small Latin Bible with copious hand-written notes. This Bible had belonged to the Reformer Martin Luther; it was the Bible he had used when he began to translate the New Testament into the German language in 1521-22 at the Wartburg, near Eisenach. The handwriting was that of Luther himself. Protestant Christians throughout central Europe were

[1] Some of the thoughts expressed in this paper were written for various denominational newsletters/publications prior to the 500th celebration of the Reformation.

excited to hear that Luther's own Latin Bible had been found! This announcement was the first major media coverage of Luther in the twelve years since the 500th celebration of his birth in 1983, apart from reporting on the preparations for the upcoming celebration of the 450th anniversary of his death the following year, in 1996. I was visiting Stuttgart at the time, and I was very excited to be there when this extraordinary discovery was made.

Several years later I traveled to Budapest, Hungary, to visit one of the first theological graduate schools established to serve Eastern Europe and Russia. I had been invited to give some lectures at that institution. In one of our free hours, members of the faculty and I visited the archives of the Lutheran church in the city. I could see immediately that these archives were well cared for. They were housed in very simple rooms in an annex in the cellar, two floors below ground level. I am sure great care had been taken to protect these documents during the Second World War and the ensuing East Bloc/Communist era.

The director of the archives realized quickly that I spoke German, and we began to dialogue. I shared with him that I am a theologian, that I have focused on church history, and that my doctoral work dealt with the "Radical Reformation" as well as "German Pietism." I observed that he was listening very intently. Finally, he said that he would like to do something which would make me very happy: he would like to show me the top treasure of the archives. He went into another room, came back with a small metal box, opened it very carefully and then, with great excitement and anticipation, showed me a five-page handwritten document. I could not believe my eyes; in front of me lay the original last will of Martin Luther.

1. Was this last will genuine?

I saw that the document had been written by Luther in 1542, four years before his death. It is well known that Luther went through long periods of sickness, and many times he was very close to death. He also had periods of depression or, in his words, "dark times." Therefore it is quite understandable that in this his last will he would be very much concerned about the future care of his wife and children. The archivist said that apparently not too many people today know that such a document exists. It was overwhelming for me to hold in my own hands the handwritten pages – with Luther's personal signature – for me another sensational discovery. I was very happy when the director of the archives made an excellent photocopy of this valuable document for me.[2]

[2] The Hungarian Lutheran Church lent the handwritten will of Martin Luther to the city of Wittenberg for the 500th anniversary celebration of the Reformation in 2017. It was on display in Wittenberg from August to November. The German government stated that it was essential for one of Luther's most personal writings to be on display at an exhibition of 95 of his personal belongings."
http://hungarytoday.hu/news/500th-anniversary-hungarian-lutheran-church-lend-luthers-will-wittenberg-29735

In studying the document further, I discovered on the last page the signatures of his three best friends '…Philippus Melanthon, Caspar Creuciger, Johannes Bugenhagius Pomeranus…' With their signatures, they signified to the authenticity of this will. The director of the archives also gave me a photocopy of the transcription of the will from the original handwritten German script into today's German script by Pastor Doleschall, a Protestant pastor in Budapest. (This document was undated.)

For many years, mainly in the 19th century, a long discussion about this will took place. Again and again scholars expressed great doubts that this document in Budapest could really be Luther's last will. Apparently many copies (or excerpts) of a will had been found in other places. A commission was appointed to check every aspect, and in the end the authenticity of this particular document was verified. This is recorded in the notes of Pastor Doleschall.

2. Why is this will in Budapest?

How was it possible for Luther's last will to be in the archives of another country? Why is it not in one of the great Luther collections in Germany?

From historical research we know that after the death of Duke Johann Frederick this original last will of Luther was in the keeping of Samuel Benedict Carpzovius, the rector and superintendent of the churches in Dresden. The will remained in his family, passed down from generation to generation. Finally, in 1804, it was included in a large auction of books and handwritten documents. Niklaus von Jankovich, a Hungarian collector of rare books and documents, bought the entire collection, including Luther's will, for 40 ducats. Then in 1815 he gave the five-page document to the Protestant Church of Hungary as a special gift.

For some time the will was kept in the Hungarian National Museum until finally it wound up in its present location in the archives of the Protestant Lutheran Church of Hungary. It is unquestionably one of the most valuable treasures in the custody of the Hungarian Church, and the Church is very proud of this treasure. All this information I received from the curator of the archives in Budapest.

3. What a life testimony!

Luther begins his last will by writing about his wife Kaethe '... she was always a very pious, faithful marriage partner, she was filled with love, she was faithful, she helped me, and through God's rich blessing she has borne me five children, still living, whom she also educated...'

Kaethe (Katharina Luther, nee von Bora, 1499-1552) was a remarkable woman, and much has been written about her. [3] She was one of twelve nuns

[3] A good bibliography is found in Hartmut Ellrich, *Die Frauen der Reformation* ("The Women of the Reformation") (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2012). See also

taken by a fishmonger on Easter weekend (April 6 and 7) 1523 from the Zisterzienserinnen Convent Marienthron (Nimbschen), near Grimma, to Wittenberg. Among these twelve were also Kaethe's sister Margarethe and Kaethe's closest friend, Ave von Schönfeld. This was a very dangerous undertaking. For anyone caught "kidnapping" nuns from a convent received the penalty was death. Luther wrote a special pamphlet justifying this action.[4]

Three of the twelve nuns returned immediately to their families. Eight were married soon after their escape, some in Wittenberg by Luther himself. Kaethe, however, did not get married. She worked for more than two years for several well-known families and friends of Luther. There she learned how to properly run a household. During her time in the convent, she had already learned reading, writing and singing. She became an efficient household manager, which was of great value for her later on, during her entire married life.

On June 13, 1525, Luther married Kaethe, with only his closest friends attending the wedding. A few weeks later, there was a big wedding celebration. According to several statements made by Luther, and from some of Kaethe's own statements, their early married life could hardly be described as a close relationship. It became obvious, however, that both learned not only to support each other on a daily basis but that they also developed a very close love relationship. One clearly sees in Luther's last will that his relationship with his wife and family was very precious. We know this from other writings as well, writings in which Luther wrote of sharing incredible joy in his marriage as well as the deep sadness they experienced as a family.

When Luther wrote his last will on January 6th, 1542, five of his children were still living. His first daughter, Elizabeth, died before her first birthday. Shortly after he wrote his will, on March 20th, 1542, his favorite daughter, Magdalena, age twelve, also died. Only four children survived their father; namely, Johannes (b. 1526), Martin (b. 1531), Paul (b. 1533), and Margarethe (b. 1584). In his last will, Luther requests from the Elector of the state that he appoint the proper guardian for his children: '... Herewith I ask most humbly my gracious lord the Duke Johann Frederich, the Elector of the state, that he would kindly protect and administer all things, including my wealth, accordingly...' Later, one of the guardians appointed was Philipp Melanchthon.

It is very significant to me that in his last will Luther laid on the hearts of his children that they continue to hold their mother in the highest honor - as

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the very popular *Luther Magazin Eine Entdeckungsreise: 500 Jahre Reformation* ("Luther magazine A Journey of Discovery: 500 Years of Reformation") (Witten: SCM Bundesverlag, 2016). This magazine gives important information on Reformation events as well as a list of contemporary publications on Luther, Kaethe, and the Reformation in general.

[4] The pamphlet was entitled „Ursach und Antwort, dass Jungfrauen Klöster göttlich verlassen mögen" ("Reason and Justification for young women to leave convents in a godly manner").

God has commanded: '... I would like not that she helps the children, but that the children should help her, watching her hands and holding her in honor, and being obedient as God has commanded...' Further, he writes that mothers are the best guardians for their children: '... I think that the mother is indeed the best guardian for her own children...' Only in case of emergency should the Elector of the state appoint someone else as a guardian for the children.

It was also important to him that his wife receive all the protection and help she needed. '... I also ask that all my good friends help my dear Kaethe, strengthen her, and defend her if some of the mean people, with their negative talk, accuse her or speak negatively about her...'

4. What a personal testimony!

Luther's last will expresses his deep love and great respect for his wife, and one can easily see that they had developed a very healthy marriage and close family relationship.

Luther not only translated the Old and New Testaments (using some of the already translated parts) into the common German language. He also wrote 350 pamphlets, brochures, and books, as well as more than 2,500 letters. He was a genius with languages, and he was able to formulate his writings in good German expressions. He also translated the Koran from Arabic into German and wrote several books on how one should deal with Muslims. Islam was making great advances in Eastern Europe during Luther's time.

Luther also wrote more than 40 hymns. For some he composed both the text and the music; others were his translations into German of already existing Latin hymns. Most of the hymns he practiced with his family, since he believed that the family should gather to sing, make music, read, and pray. All of his children had to learn to play at least one instrument. There are numerous reports of Luther, Kaethe, and the children spending evenings together singing, playing instruments, and reading Scripture.

Probably the most familiar of Luther's hymns throughout the world is "A Mighty Fortress is Our God". In writing this hymn, he was probably remembering or reflecting on the mighty castle in the town of Mansfeld, where he spent his childhood. He would have viewed daily this fortress towering over the small town. The text of this hymn has some heart-searching statements.[5]

Luther believed in a proper education for all children, not only for those given to convents and monasteries. Already in 1524 he recommended to all city authorities that all children receive free schooling so that they could read

[5] At the recent 500th year Reformation celebration in the church of the small village of Simmersfeld in the Black Forest in Germany I heard the pastor, A. Schweizer, recommending that we not sing the last verse of this hymn without first examining our own commitment to Christ.

the Bible.[6] One should also note that Luther believed that we should emphasize and celebrate Christmas, the birth of Christ, more than giving recognition to and remembering St. Nicklaus Day on December 6th. Luther and his family celebrated Christmas as one of the most important events of the entire church year.

In these final statements Luther also says that he would like all his debts to be paid: '...that she [Kaethe] pay all the debts which have been incurred (if I have not been able to pay them as long as I am alive). There are approximately 450 fl., maybe even more, which have to be paid…' For the paying of his debts, he gave instructions that all the silver and gold in his possession should be used, including cups, special coins, or medals. We know from later documents that the proceeds from selling all these possessions came to approximately 7,000 guilders. Luther was quite determined that the entire amount remaining after the payment of debts should be given to his wife and the children.

Luther knew that his last will did not follow strict legal requirements. According to these requirements, a will should be written by a notary public and signed and sealed before at least seven witnesses. Luther mentions this fact and writes that he as a person was always faithful to the truth, and that he was well known in heaven and on earth, and even in hell: '... Just let me be the person that I am, known to be in truth, namely everywhere - in heaven, as on earth, even in hell - known by everyone and given enough authority that one can surely believe even more than just a simple notary public…' Luther knew about Satan and all the temptations that he experienced in his own life.

As a verification of his last will he writes*:* '... This is Doctor Martin Luther (God's notary public and witness to his gospel) who very earnestly and after thinking it through carefully has given signature to it...' His last will was written in absolute honesty and he asks that the Elector of the state accept it as such.[7]

Luther wrote his last will, like all his writings, with total honesty, following his early expression "Here I stand. I can do no other." He was convinced that he was right. However, one should also mention that Luther was very wrong in his understanding and treatment of the Jews. He hated the Jews, holding, among other convictions, that they killed the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He wrote more than one document requesting that all authorities get rid of all Jews

[6] Luther's pamphlet was entitled "An die Ratsherren aller Städte deutsches Lands, dass sie christliche Schulen aufrichten and halten sollen" ("To the authorities of all cities in Germany that they should establish and maintain Christian schools").

[7] After Luther's death on February 18/ 1546, his last will was not accepted in court. The children were taken way from their mother, and Kaethe herself did not receive what Luther had allocated to her. Kaethe died six years after her husband, in 1552, a sick and poor woman.

in the land and burn their synagogues. These terrible treatises had bitter consequences over later centuries in Europe, and especially in Germany.[8]

Furthermore, Luther states that he is a poor sinner and that only through God's mercy and through the gospel of his dear Son did he became an honest servant, serving and testifying before emperors and kings: '…The dear God and Father of all mercy has granted me, the condemned poor and unworthy sinner, the gospel of his dear Son and has made me faithful and trustworthy that I can continue to serve in honesty...' In this last will Luther makes clear that this document, the summation of his life, is based on the same truth and honesty as the gospel itself. He always, throughout his life, demonstrated this openly in spite of all opposition.

I believe that in these few sentences quoted from Luther's last will the character of the great Reformer is revealed through his own testimony. Also significant are the signatures of the three friends who verified his last will: Magister Philipp Melanchthon, a close friend, student and co-worker, who later became guardian of Luther's children; Caspar Creuciger, who supported him faithfully; and, finally, the very gifted organizer, Johann Bugenhagius Pomeranus, who followed Luther as a close friend in joy and in sorrow. All three were closely connected not only with Luther, but also with the German Reformation as a whole.

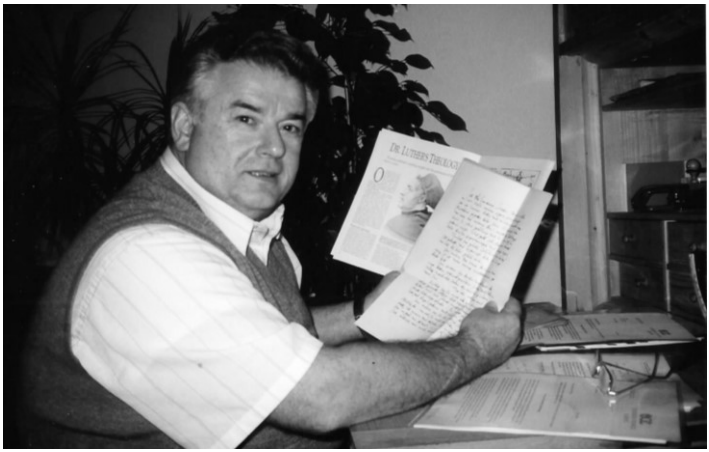
I personally wish, especially in this year in which we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, that everyone could read Luther's last will and that, in reading it, would reflect on his own life and beyond his own death. I wish also that everyone would recognize how important a healthy marriage and family relationships are, and why God has given us these basic institutions. Luther and his family are a convincing example. Luther's last will also makes clear with what love, loyalty, and determination Luther followed his Lord Jesus Christ.

The Reformation was a great turning point in the history of the church. This simple document – the "last will" of the Reformer Martin Luther – gives much insight into the man who was used by God to bring about these changes.

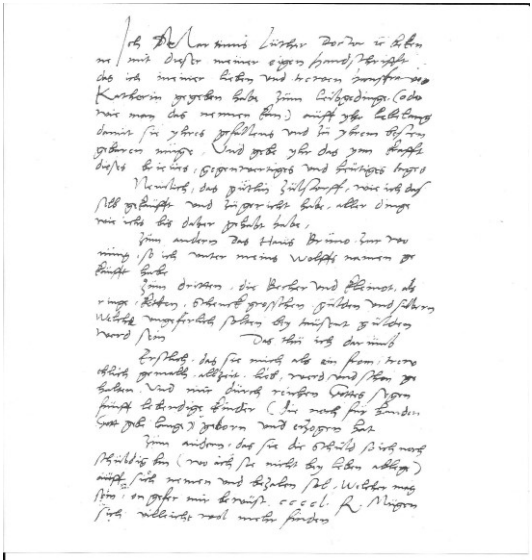
For me, the discovery of Luther's Latin Bible and the discovery of his last will are indeed sensational discoveries.

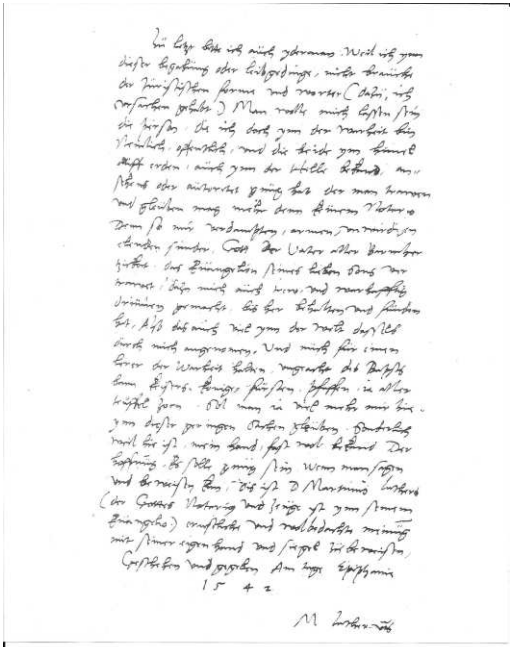
I attach photocopies of pages 1 and 4 of Luther's handwritten last will and an English translation of the entire will (5 pages).

[8] The best recent publication on the subject is Richard Harvey, *Luther and the Jews: Putting Right the Lies* (London: Cascade Books, 2017).



Dr. Manfred Kohl working on translating Luther's will





Dr. Martin Luther

Last Will and Testament

Wittenberg, Epiphany 1542

Page 1

I, Martin Luther, doctor, etc. acknowledge with this my own handwriting that I have given to my beloved and faithful housewife Katherine as an endowment (or whatever one can call it) for her lifetime, which she will be at liberty to manage according to her pleasure and to her best interest, and give it to her by the authority of this document on this very present day,
To wit, the little holding at Zulsdorf, the same which I have purchased and made useful, absolutely as I have had it up to now;

Secondly, as a dwelling the house of Bruno which I have bought under the name of my man Wolf,

Thirdly, beakers and valuables, such as rings, necklaces, gratuities, gold and silver, which should be worth about a thousand gulden.

I do this because, in the first place, as a pious and faithful spouse she has at all times held me dear, worthy, and fine and through God's rich blessings gave birth to and reared for me five living children (who are still alive, God grant for a long time).

Secondly, that she should herself assume and pay the debt, insofar as I am still indebted (what I do not pay off during my lifetime), which may be about four hundred fifty fl., as far as I know. There could perhaps also be more.

Page 2

Thirdly, and most of all, for this reason, that I do not want her to have to look to the children for a handout, but rather the children should be obligated to her, honor her, and be subject to her as God has commanded. For I have certainly seen and experienced how the devil agitates and provokes the children, be they ever so pious, contrary to this commandment through evil and jealous gossips. This is especially true when the mothers are widows and the sons take wives and the daughters, husbands and, in turn, mother-in-law daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law mother-in-law!

For I maintain that a mother will be the best guardian for her own children and will use such a holding and endowment not for the harm or to the disadvantage of her children, but to their use and betterment, since they are her flesh and blood whom she carried under her heart.

And even if after my death out of necessity or for some other reason (for I can set no limit for God in his works and will) she would remarry, I have confidence, and wish herewith to have such confidence expressed, that she will act motherly toward our children and faithfully share everything with them, be it the endowment or something else, as is only right.

And I hereby also humbly beg my most gracious lord, Duke John Frederick, Elector, etc., that his electoral grace will graciously protect and administer such a gift or endowment.

Page 3

I also ask all my good friends to be witnesses for my dear Kaethe and to help defend her, when some idle gossips want to trouble or defame her, as though she perhaps had a sum of ready cash on the side, which she would purloin or embezzle from the poor children. I bear witness that there is no ready cash except for the beakers and valuables listed above in the endowment. Indeed, such a reckoning can be manifest to everyone, since people know how much income I have had from my most gracious lord and beyond that I have not received as income one heller or kernel from anyone, except what was a gift, which is to be found cited above under the valuables and which in part is still tied up with the debt. And yet, with this income and with donations I have built and bought so much, and I ran such a big and burdensome household, that among other things I must acknowledge it as an extraordinary, remarkable blessing that I have been able to manage. The miracle is not that there is no ready money but that there is not a greater debt. I ask this for this reason that the devil, since he can come no closer to me, shall no doubt persecute my Kaethe in all sorts of ways for this reason alone that she was, and (God be praised) still is, the espoused housewife of the man Dr. Martin.

Page 4

Finally, I also ask of every man, since in this gift or endowment I am not using legal forms and terminology (for which I have good reasons), that he would allow me to be the person which I in truth am, namely, a public figure, known both in heaven and on earth, as well as in hell, having respect or authority enough that one can trust or believe more than any notary. For as God, the Father of all mercies, entrusted to me, a condemned, poor, unworthy, miserable sinner, the gospel of his dear Son and made me faithful and truthful, and has up to now preserved and grounded me in it, so that many in this world have accepted it through me and hold me to be a teacher of the truth, without regard for the pope’s ban, and the anger of the emperor,

kings, princes, clerics, yes, of all the devils, one should surely believe me much more in these trifling matters; and especially since this is my very well-known handwriting, the hope is that it should suffice, when one can say and prove that it is Dr. Martin Luther's (who is God's notary and witness in his gospel) earnest and well considered opinion to confirm this with his own hand and seal.

Executed and delivered on Epiphany Day, 1542
M. Luther

Page 5

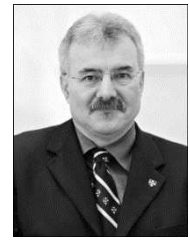
I, Phillip Melanchthon, attest that this is the opinion and will and hand of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther, our most beloved teacher and father.

And I, Kaspar Cruciger, attest that this is the design and will and hand of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther, our most beloved father, wherefore I myself have signed with my own hand.

And I, Johann Bugenhagen Pomeranus, likewise attest with my own hand.

Katherine Suffolk, The Puritan Duchess

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In Evelyn Read's (1901–1991) fine study of Katherine Willoughby (1519–1580), the Duchess of Suffolk, published in the early 1960s, Read summed up her life thus:

> [She] was born a Catholic and became a convinced and zealous Puritan; she was born to a sheltered and secure life and, by her own honesty and outspokenness, she courted persecution and lived in danger. She was a woman of wit and beauty and charm, and of great integrity. Her life would not be regarded as important in the development of the politics and affairs of England, but at least one great statesman cherished her friendship,[1] and many whose thinking and writing and preaching were basic to the Protestant Reformation owed much to her generosity and religious zeal and to the stimulus of her eager mind.[2]

More recently, British historian Alec Ryrie has described Katherine Willoughby as an "evangelical firebrand" and perhaps "the most aggressive of the reformers" within the royal circle around Henry VIII.[3] In her own day, a

[1] This was William Cecil (1520–1598), Lord Burghley, the chief advisor of Elizabeth I for most of her reign.

[2] Evelyn Read, *My Lady Suffolk: A Portrait of Catherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), [7].

[3] Alec Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 54–55, 194–195.

hostile Spanish Roman Catholic source described her as "one of the worst heretics in England" and one who had "studied at Geneva."[4]

Early years and marriage to Charles Brandon

As Evelyn Read noted, though, she did not start off that way. Katherine Willoughby's life began in a staunch Roman Catholic environment. Her father, Lord William Willoughby (1482–1526), maintained to the end of his days a "belief in the efficacy of the mass, the existence of purgatory, and the importance of good works."[5] He had married an ardent Spanish Roman Catholic by the name of Doña Maria Sarmiento de Salinas (*c.*1490–1539), who was the confidante and favourite lady–in-waiting of Queen Katherine of Aragon, the first wife of Henry VIII (1491–1547). Maria probably named her only daughter after the Queen. Moreover, Katherine Willoughby's godfather was Stephen Gardiner (*c.*1483–1555), later Bishop of Winchester, also an ardent Roman Catholic.[6]

Katherine's father died when she was seven years old, and she inherited a significant amount of land and money upon his death. Because her mother spent most of her time at court as the queen's lady-in-waiting, Katherine was placed in 1528 as a ward in the care of Charles Brandon (1484–1545), the 1st Duke of Suffolk and a close friend of Henry VIII, and his wife Mary Tudor (1496–1533), Henry VIII's sister.[7] Here, in Brandon's home, she would have learned to read and write, and also been schooled to some degree in Latin and Greek.[8] Charles and Mary had been married in 1515, and among their children was Frances Brandon (1517–1559), the mother of Lady Jane Grey. The Duke and Duchess of Suffolk were also conservative Roman Catholics, like Katherine's parents.[9]

Sadly Mary Tudor died in June of 1533. Ten weeks later Charles Brandon married his ward, Katherine Willoughby, who was only fourteen. He was 49! This shocks us, but neither the difference in age nor the alacrity with which he wed after Mary's death were necessarily regarded as unusual in that day.[10] Eustace Chapuys (*c.*1490–1556), however, the Spanish ambassador to the

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[4] "Simancas: September 1574," in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain (Simancas), Volume 2, 1568–1579*, ed. Martin A. S. Hume (London, 1894), 484–485 (*British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/simancas/vol2/pp484-485; accessed July 2, 2017).

[5] Megan Spruell, " 'A Simple Zeal and Earnest Love to the Truth': The Religious Journeys of Catherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk, and Katherine Parr, Queen of England" (MA thesis, Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 2013), 12.

[6] Read, *My Lady Suffolk*, 22–23.

[7] Read, *My Lady Suffolk*, 26–28.

[8] Read, *My Lady Suffolk*, 29–30.

[9] Spruell, "A Simple Zeal and Earnest Love to the Truth," 15–16.

[10] Read, *My Lady Suffolk*, 33.

English court, did regard it as a "novelty," as he put it in a report to Charles V (1500–1558), the king of Spain.[11]

Throughout the 1530s, despite the massive religious changes that were taking place in England, Katherine Willoughby, now Katherine Brandon and the Duchess of Suffolk, remained a staunch Roman Catholic.[12] This is evident from such things as: her friendship with Katherine of Aragon's daughter, the future Mary I (1516–1558); her close relationship with her conservative Catholic mother; and even small things like using saints' days to date her letters.[13] And yet it would have been during this decade at the court of Henry VIII that she first heard the preaching of Hugh Latimer (*c.*1485–1555), rightly described by Evelyn Read as "one of the greatest and most powerful exponents of religious reform in sixteenth-century England."[14]

During the 1530s Katherine also had two sons: Henry (1535–1551), named after the king, Henry VIII, who was his godfather, and Charles (1538–1551), named after his father. Further indication of her status within the royal court is the fact that when Henry VIII was preparing to marry his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves (1515–1557) in 1539, Katherine was asked to meet Anne at Dover and escort her to London.[15] Katherine subsequently became one of Anne's ladies-in-waiting. This only lasted a few months though, as Henry had the marriage annulled in the summer of 1540.

Almost immediately after the annulment, Henry married Katherine Howard (*c.*1523–1542), his fifth wife, who was the first cousin of Anne Boleyn and also the niece of the zealous Roman Catholic Thomas Howard (1473–1554), the 3rd Duke of Norfolk. But Katherine Howard lost her crown and her head when she was found guilty of adultery in 1542. She was succeeded by the evangelical Katherine Parr (1512–1548) in 1543, Henry's sixth and final wife, who was a close friend of Katherine Brandon, and asked Katherine to return to court as one of her ladies-in-waiting. When Henry married Katherine Parr in a small ceremony at Hampton Court, Katherine Brandon was one of only eighteen people present, again indicative of her standing at the court.[16]

Katherine's conversion

Now, when was Katherine Brandon converted to evangelical convictions? Or to put it as Paul Zahl does: "what inward springs and development" turned this brilliant woman into an "unquenchable, irrefutable" adherent of the

[11] Read, *My Lady Suffolk*, 33.

[12] David Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love: The Extraordinary Life of Katherine Willoughby, Lady-in-Waiting to the Tudors* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2015), 54.

[13] Spruell, "A Simple Zeal and Earnest Love to the Truth," 30–36, 61–63.

[14] Read, *My Lady Suffolk*, 37–38.

[15] Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 54.

[16] Read, *My Lady Suffolk*, 48.

Reformation?[17] This is not at all easy to determine. Megan Spruell, in a 2013 thesis, has argued that it was her appointment as a lady-in-waiting within Katherine Parr's household in 1543 that was the key factor in her embracing evangelical convictions.[18] Spruell itemizes three key elements in Katherine Parr's household that led directly to Katherine's conversion to evangelical views:

1. First, as a member of the queen's household, Katherine Brandon was expected to attend sermons on a daily basis in which evangelical beliefs, such as the authority of Scripture, were expounded by evangelical preachers.

2. Katherine Parr also initiated discussions of religious ideas that would have been an integral part of Katherine Brandon's daily life in the queen's service.

3. Then, Katherine Parr ordered that copies of a book she had written, *Prayers or Medytacions* (1545), a work in which she included evangelical teachings about salvation, be given to every woman in her household so that it could be used as a resource in discussing controversial issues of the day.[19]

By the mid-1540s, we know that Katherine believed that Scripture was the supreme guide to the Christian Faith. She had acquired a copy of William Tyndale's New Testament and begun to be openly critical of Roman Catholicism.[20] Her embrace of evangelical convictions can be seen in such small things as no longer using saints' days to date her letters.[21] After her husband Charles Brandon died in August of 1545, Katherine became more open in her commitment to evangelical views. By the late 1540s she had rejected the concept of transubstantiation and that we can be saved by faith and works.[22] And in the late 1550s she came to embrace the doctrines of predestination and election.[23]

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[17] Paul F. M. Zahl, *Five Women of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 2001), 76. Zahl devotes a chapter of this book to Katherine Willoughby: *Five Women of the Reformation*, 75–91.

[18] Spruell, "A Simple Zeal and Earnest Love to the Truth," 65. See also Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 60–62.

[19] Spruell, "A Simple Zeal and Earnest Love to the Truth," 65–66.

[20] Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 57; Spruell, "A Simple Zeal and Earnest Love to the Truth," 66.

[21] Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 57.

[22] Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 57.

[23] Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 57; Laura Lunger Knoppers, "Reviews: Melissa Franklin Harkrider, *Women, Reform and Community in Early Modern England:*

As one of the wealthiest women in England, she began to use her wealth to support the cause of reform. In Lincolnshire, for example, she did all she could to ensure that every parish church had a copy of the Bible.[24] When the great German reformer Martin Bucer (1491–1551) came to Cambridge as Regius Professor of Divinity in 1549, Katherine befriended him as she had moved to Cambridge to be close to her two sons who had gone there to study at St. John's College.[25] She also served as the patron of various leading evangelical preachers and reformers, of whom the chief was Hugh Latimer, who had "the greatest influence on Katherine's religious thinking" and seems to have been something of a spiritual mentor to Katherine.[26]

Textual evidence of her faith

Sadly, in 1551, there was an outbreak in England of what has been called the "sweating sickness," which took the lives of both of Katherine's sons. There had been other such outbreaks in England in 1485, 1502, 1507, and 1528. Those afflicted with this disease first experienced a cold shivery stage attended by dizziness, headache and various pains in the neck, shoulders and limbs along with fatigue. All of this was shortly followed by an intense sweating stage, which was marked by delirium, rapidity of pulse, palpitations, and thirst. The final stage was complete exhaustion and collapse or sometimes an irresistible urge to sleep. If a person survived the first twenty-four hours, they usually lived.[27]

When cases of this disease appeared in Cambridge in July of 1551, Katherine had her sons taken north to a family home in Buckden, Cambridgeshire, but it was too late as both of the young men had been infected and they died within minutes of each other. Their tutor, Thomas Wilson (*c.*1525–1581), famous for his oft-reprinted work *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553), noted understandably that their mother did take "their death most greeuously [*sic*]."[28] The Italian Reformed theologian Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562), who had come to teach at Oxford in 1547, noted of the elder son,

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Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk, and Lincolnshire's Godly Aristocracy, 1519-1580," *Fides et historia*, 41 no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2009), 97.

[24] Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 57.

[25] Georgina Bertie, *Five Generations of a Loyal House* (London: Rivingtons, 1845), I, 8, n.1; Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 97–98.

[26] Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 60.

[27] Susan Abernethy, "The English Sweating Sickness" (*The Freelance History Writer*, August 25, 2012; https://thefreelancehistorywriter.com/2012/08/25/the-english-sweating-sickness/).

[28] *Wilsons's Art of Rhetorique*, ed. G. H. Mair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 66. See also his remembrance of the two boys in *Wilsons's Art of Rhetorique*, ed. Mair, 14–17, 67–69, and the details of their lives in Thomas Wilson, *Vita et obitus duorum Fratrum Suffolcinsium Henrici et Caroli Brandoni* (London, 1551).

Henry, that "he had made such progress in learning, godliness, and piety, as to be the admiration of every one."[29]

Katherine's textual response is the following letter, which was written to her friend William Cecil in September 1551 from her main home in Grimsthorpe, Lincolnshire:

> I give God thanks, good Master Cecil, for all his benefits which it hath pleased Him to heap upon me; and truly I take this last (and to the first sight, most sharp and bitter) punishment not for the least of His benefits; inasmuch, as I have never been so well taught by any other before to know His power, His love, and mercy, my own weakness, and that wretched state that without Him I should endure here. And to ascertain you that I have received great comfort in Him, I would gladly do it by talk and sight of you; but as I must confess myself no better than flesh, so I am not well able with quiet to behold my poor friends, without some part of those *veyl drages* [vile dregs] of Adam, to seem sorry for that whereof I know I rather ought to rejoice. …So with many thanks for your lasting friendship, I betake you to Him that better can, and I trust, will, govern you to His glory and your best contentation.[30] From Grimsthorpe, this present Monday.
>
> Your poor but assured friend,
>
> K. Suffoulk.[31]

This is a fascinating letter in so many ways. It reveals Katherine's struggle with hiding her deep grief in the presence of her friends, but also her awareness that in the midst of this great sorrow her God is a good God. And he was using this sorrow to teach her about "His power, His love, and mercy," as well as her own weakness and that not to know this God is to be in a truly "wretched state." Thus, she can begin the letter with a line of praise: "I give God thanks, good Master Cecil, for all his benefits which it hath pleased Him to heap upon me."

Marriage to Richard Bertie and exile

Katherine would also have been able to praise God for a man named Richard Bertie (*c.*1517–1582), who had joined her household in the late 1540s. Richard had been educated at Oxford and was employed as Katherine's "gentleman usher," that is, a trusted official who would walk ahead of her in ceremonial

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[29] Cited Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 103.

[30] That is, satisfaction.

[31] Cited in Bertie, *Five Generations of a Loyal House*, I, 11. See the reflection on this letter in Zahl, *Five Women of the Reformation*, 79–80. Zahl notes that this letter is one of the most important texts for understanding Katherine's theology (*Five Women of the Reformation*, 84).

processions and be her escort at all official functions of the court. He also handled her business affairs, which were extensive owing to her significant lands and properties.[32] He spoke French, Italian, and Latin fluently, and he was decidedly evangelical. The Bishop of Lincoln, for instance, described Bertie as a man who was "earnest in religion."[33] By 1552 he and the Duchess were firmly in love. They were married by Hugh Latimer either in the summer of 1552, or at the latest, the beginning of 1553.[34]

With the accession of Mary to the throne in 1553, however, Katherine was in danger of being incarcerated or being subjected to religious demands that would violate her conscience. Richard was commanded to appear before Stephen Gardiner, who was hoping to force the couple to swear allegiance to the Roman Catholic faith. But Richard told him that his wife abhorred the mass and that she would be a false Christian to profess something she did not believe. As he told Gardiner, "To force a confession of religion by mouth contrarie to that in the heart, worketh damnation where salvation is pretended."[35] Through this exchange with Gardiner, it became clear to Katherine and Richard that they needed to quit England and flee to the European continent.[36] It is noteworthy that Katherine was prepared to relinquish all of her lands and wealth, aristocratic standing and position, for the sake of her evangelical faith.

The next few years had numerous anxious moments as they made their way down the Rhine to Wesel and then Weinheim in Germany. Eventually they received an invite to Poland, where Protestantism was flourishing at the time. On the advice of the Reformer Jan Łaski (1499–1560), who was a friend of Martin Bucer, Sigismund II (1520–1572), the king of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, not only gave Katherine and Richard a place of safe refuge but also the opportunity to be involved in advancing the reform of the church. Sigismund needed a Protestant governor to administer the Polish province of Samogitia, which was largely Protestant, and is now one of the ethnographic regions of modern-day Lithuania.[37] So he enlisted Richard. For a year, 1558,

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[32] Read, *My Lady Suffolk*, 89–90; Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 106.

[33] "Bertie, Richard (1517–82), of Grimsthorpe and Stamford, Lincs." (*The History of Parliament: Member Biographies*; http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/bertie-richard-1517-82; accessed June 30, 2017).

[34] Read, *My Lady Suffolk*, 92; Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 107; Zahl, *Five Women of the Reformation*, 81.

[35] Cited Bertie, *Five Generations of a Loyal House*, 18. For other details of their discussion, see Bertie, *Five Generations of a Loyal House*, 15–19.

[36] For details of their escape from England and their time on the continent, see Read, *My Lady Suffolk*, 101–129; Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 127–168. See also the brief summary in Zahl, *Five Women of the Reformation*, 81–83,

[37] Samogitia had been the last pagan area of Europe.

he and Katherine spent their last year in exile administering this Baltic province for the King of Poland.

Further textual evidence of Katherine's faith

Mary died in 1558 and it was now safe to return to England. As soon as Katherine heard that Elizabeth had become queen she wrote the following letter from Samogitia. The text is another key window into her worldview.

> The almighty and ever-living God so endue your Majesty with his Spirit, that it may be said of you, as of his prophet David, "He hath found one even after his own heart."[38] Your Majesty, I know, well knoweth how, most naturally, all creatures embrace liberty and fly servitude, but man most specially, because God, of his fore-conceived kindness, created him thereunto; and, fallen from it, freed him again. Wherefore so much the more lively is not only the desire, but the sense of it, in mankind, than in brute creatures, as the sharpness of reason exceedeth the dulness of unreasonableness. But yet then he feeleth it most at heart, when the liberty or freedom of conscience by unlooked fortune falleth out, even as sudden misfortune, after great sorrow, freezeth the heart; and as health is most delectably felt after extreme sickness, so is the sense most inward in changes chiefly when oppression or deliverance of conscience showeth itself. And though such alterations follow commonly the people of God, not by chance, but by his providence, and albeit He in all his works is good, and his works profitable to those that be his; yet as his wrath and chastisement giveth just matter of mourning, so must his mercy and cheerful countenance fill our souls with gladness. Wherefore now is our season, if ever anywhere, of rejoicing, and to say, after Zachary, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,"[39] which hath visited and delivered your Majesty, and by you us, His and your miserable and afflicted subjects. For if the Israelites might joy in their Deborah,[40] how much we English in our Elizabeth that deliverance of our thralled conscience. Then first your Majesty hath great cause to praise God that it pleased Him to appoint you the mean whereby He showeth out this his great mercy over that land; and we generally ought to praise, thank, and honour Him in you, and you in Him, with an unfeigned love and obedience all the days of our lives. It is comfort enough to all your subjects, that you do the will of Him that hath raised you up, spite of His and your enemies; but unto the heavy hearts of your persecuted subjects, these tidings distil

[38] Cf. 1 Samuel 13:14.

[39] Luke 1:68.

[40] See Judges 4–5.

> like the sweet dew of Hermon[41]; and though I have my portion of this gladness equal with the rest, yet I cannot choose but increase it with the remembrance of your gracious good will towards me in times past, and with hope, continuance of the same in time to come; only I greedily wait and pray to the Almighty to consummate this consolation, giving me a prosperous journey once again presently to see your Majesty, to rejoice together with my countryfolks, and to sing a song to the Lord in my native land. God for his mercy grant it, and to your Majesty long life, with safe government, to his glory, your honour, and subjects comfort.
>
> From Crossen, in Sanogelia,[42] the 25th of January.
>
> Your Majesty's
> Most humble, loving, and obedient subject,
> K. Suffoulk.[43]

Three key aspects of this important letter need to be noted. First, notice the way that Katherine described God:

- He is the "almighty and ever-living God";
- He is the creator of humanity and their liberator;
- He is the One who rules this world by his providence, not chance, and who raises up rulers like Elizabeth;[44]
- He is the God who "in all his works is good";
- He is One who shows mercy to individuals and to nations;
- But to the wicked He is a God of wrath;
- He is a prayer-hearing God;
- And because of all these things, he is a God to be praised, thanked, and glorified.

Then, Katherine assumed that men and women have been created in such a way that their hearts long for freedom—in modern parlance, it is in their DNA. The reign of the Roman Catholic Mary I had been one of tyranny in which the English had been "persecuted" and their consciences forced into bondage, "our thralled conscience," as Katherine put it. For her, liberty is an affair of the heart ultimately: "he feeleth it most at heart, when the liberty or freedom of conscience by unlooked fortune falleth out… so is the sense most inward in changes chiefly when oppression or deliverance of conscience showeth itself."

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[41] See Psalm 133:3.

[42] Now Samogitia, which is an area of Lithuania today.

[43] In Bertie, *Five Generations of a Loyal House*, 34–35.

[44] Katherine had an "extremely high doctrine of providence"; for her, "God's providence is all. He alone has free will" (Zahl, *Five Women of the Reformation*, 85–86).

Finally, Katherine was convinced that God had raised Elizabeth up to bring deliverance to the English people, and if Israel "might joy in their Deborah," the biblical judge who delivered the Israelites from the bondage of the Canaanite king Jabin, "how much we English in our Elizabeth." The comparison of Elizabeth with Deborah was one commonly made at the time – hence, the need for English men and women to pray for Elizabeth to be empowered by the Spirit of God and be given "long life, with safe government."

The return to England

Katherine and Richard travelled back to England in the late spring or summer of 1559. Like many of those who came to be called Puritans, however, she was ultimately disappointed by the Queen's religious policy.[45] While Elizabeth shared many of their theological convictions, she insisted that she was the head of the church and was tolerant of worship practices in the church that reminded the Puritans of medieval Catholicism.

Katherine's disappointment can be seen in a letter she wrote to William Cecil on March 4, 1559, which is described by Paul Zahl as "a classic."[46] The heart of the letter ran as follows:

> …for the love I bear you I cannot forbear to write… and if it shall please you to heed a simple woman's mind. Undoubtedly the greatest wisdom is not to be too wise, which, of all others, you should by experience chieflyest know. For if there were anything whereby that good duke, your old master,[47] deserved and felt the heavy stroke of God, what is there else whereof men may accuse him but only that when God had placed him to set forth His glory (which yet of himself he was always ready to do) but being still plucked by the sleeve of [by] worldly friends, for this worldly respect or that, in fine gave over his hot zeal to set forth God's true religion as he had most nobly begun, and turning him to follow such worldly devices, you can as well as I tell what came of it: the duke lost all that he sought to keep, with his head to boot…
>
> Wherefore I am forced to say with the prophet Elie, "How long halt ye between two opinions?"[48] ...If the Mass be good, tarry not to follow it nor take from it no part of that honour which the last queen, with her notable stoutness, brought it to and left in (wherein she deserved immortal praise seeing she was so persuaded that it was good) but if you be not so persuaded, alas, who should move the

[45] See Baldwin, *Henry VIII's Last Love*, 165–167.

[46] Zahl, *Five Women of the Reformation*, 83. Zahl regards this text as being a vital text for understanding Katherine's theology: *Five Women of the Reformation*, 84–85.

[47] Edward Seymour (1500–1552), the Duke of Somerset.

[48] 1 Kings 18:21.

> Queen's Majesty to honour it with her presence, or any of her counsellors? …To build surely is first to lay the sure cornerstone, today and not tomorrow; there is no exception by man's law that may serve against God's. …Christ… hath left His Gospel behind Him a rule sufficient and only to be followed. Thus write I after my old manner, which if I persuade you, take it as thankfully and friendly as I mean it; then I will say to you as my father Latimer was wont to say to me, "I will be bold to write to you another time as I hear and what I think; and if not I shall hold my peace and pray God amend it to Him." With my hearty prayer that He will so assist you with His grace that you may the first and only seek Him as His eldest and chosen vessel.[49]

Here we see again the depth of Katherine's evangelical convictions:

- "Hot zeal to set forth God's true religion" is recommended by means of the negative example of Edward Seymour (1500–1552), the 1st Duke of Somerset, who was Lord Protector during the early years of the reign of Edward VI (1537–1553), and, though an evangelical, an inept ruler;
- She takes the show-down between Elijah and the prophets of Baal to be a model in some ways for her day: there are only two options—"God's true religion" or that religion centred on the Mass;
- There is one sure foundation for the Christian Faith: "Christ… hath left His Gospel behind Him a rule sufficient and only to be followed"—Katherine "wanted a Bible-led and Bible-organized church" and it is therefore "not anachronistic to understand Katherine as a Puritan"[50]
- There is an urgency to building the proper foundations and she disapproved of caution in reforming the church: "To build surely is first to lay the sure cornerstone, *today and not tomorrow*"[51]
- Finally, note the reference to Hugh Latimer: "my father," that is, "my spiritual father"

Final days

In the final twenty years of her life, Katherine was frustrated at the Elizabethan settlement. Well has Paul Zahl described her as "a frustrated Puritan" during this period of her life and spoken of her "insistent impatience with Elizabeth"

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[49] In Read, *My Lady Suffolk*, 133–135. Part of this letter can also be found in Zahl, *Five Women of the Reformation*, 114–116.

[50] Zahl, *Five Women of the Reformation*, 87.

[51] Zahl, *Five Women of the Reformation*, 87, 88.

and her "snail's pace in the Reformation of the Church."[52] This impatience began with the issue of reforming the Church, but overflowed into more personal matters. She long petitioned Elizabeth to give her husband the title of Duke, but all to no avail. A number of her final letters relate to this worldly matter and Katherine's frustration that Elizabeth would not listen to her. It is evident that Elizabeth had an antipathy towards Katherine. Why? At this remove in time, we cannot say for certain. Zahl comments that if Katherine had said "the sky is blue, Elizabeth would have said, no it is red!"[53]

When Katherine died in 1580, her husband Richard had a sculptor by the name of Thomas Goodlord erect a huge memorial to his wife in the parish church of St. James, Spilsby, which also became a memorial to him as well, when he died two years later. On the back of the memorial, which is quite visible to anyone in the sanctuary, are six panels of texts, five in Latin and one in English. One of them, in Latin, expresses Katherine and Richard's hope:

> We know that our Redeemer lives, and we believe that we shall rise again out of the dust and though after our skin worms destroy our bodies, yet shall we see God in our flesh, and not another.

[52] Zahl, *Five Women of the Reformation*, 76, 83, 88–89.

[53] Zahl, *Five Women of the Reformation*, 89.

Drawing on the Resources of a Neglected Reformation

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Today, a Christian standing in the Reformed tradition and identifying as a Presbyterian will be of no particular ethnic heritage. Such a Christian believer may as well be of Brazilian or of Korean heritage as of the more customary Scots-Irish ancestry. All this is as it should be as an anticipation of the heavenly kingdom in which the populace is drawn from "every nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev. 7.9).

Yet, this essay will argue that while this expression of the Christian faith can function perfectly without respect to ancestry or dialect, people identifying with this expression of the Reformed tradition desperately need to become familiar again with its Scottish origins. The reason? Presbyterians worldwide are functioning increasingly without reference to our period of origins: the half-century of Scottish church life extending from 1550-1600. This era helped to establish concepts of governance, conceptions of recognized ministry, and patterns for worshipping God. Our dilemma is that, increasingly, we cannot consult these Scottish roots because we have lost sight of them.

A concrete example will help us to grasp what is at stake. There has been a recent discussion within some Presbyterian churches about the acceptability of partaking of the Lord's Supper "all in one" with the bread or wafer dipped in the communion chalice (a practice called 'intinction').[1] In those discussions,

[1] In 2013, presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America failed to ratify an amendment to the Book of Church Order which would have prohibited this practice. http://byfaithonline.com/intinction-amendment-fails/ accessed June 21, 2017

how many at the discussion table were in a position to say, "the biblical basis for our historic practice of partaking of the elements separately is thus and thus...?" Very few, I believe. My point is that the Scottish Reformation heritage is no longer our conversation partner. It is as though we have only our own generation to talk to.

A New or an Old Predicament?

In North America, it appears that we have been confronting this 'deficit' situation for about a half-century. In 1960, the publishing house of the former Presbyterian Church in the United States, John Knox Press, published the US edition of a biography of John Knox, *Plain Mr. Knox* by the Scottish writer, Elizabeth Whitley. (1960 was the 300th anniversary of the formal adoption of the Reformation in Scotland).[2] I know of no subsequent publication in America of material bearing on the Scottish Reformation released by a Presbyterian publishing house.

In this same period there has also been a steady diminution of theological instruction regarding Scotland's age of Reform. A minister-scholar in the United Church of Christ, Bard Thompson, included excerpts from the Scottish service book of 1564, the *Book of Common Order,* when he compiled his useful anthology, *Liturgies of the Western Church* in 1961.[3] In the then-United Presbyterian Church in the USA, Princeton Seminary maintained until 1976 a specialist in Scottish Church History, Norman V. Hope; at his retirement, no successor was named in this subject area. Robert M. Healey, a church historian at University of Dubuque Theological Seminary published serious articles on Scotland's Reformation era until his retirement in 1993.[4] Today, if Scotland's Reformation receives attention at all in North America, it will tend to be only in university departments of history. North American seminary curricula seem to have left off any interest it had in this in the past. [5] These are stern charges. Can they be substantiated?

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[2] *Plain Mr. Knox* had been published in the U.K. by Skeffington Press in 1960 and by John Knox Press, Richmond, VA in the same year. Happily, this good entry-level biography has been kept in print by Christian Focus Publishers, Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland

[3] New York: World Publishing, 1961. See chapter IX.

[4] Robert M. Healey,"The Preaching Ministry in Scotland's *First Book of Discipline*", *Church History* 58.3 (1989), 339-353; Robert M. Healey, "John Knox's "History": a "Compleat" Sermon on Christian Duty", *Church History,* 61.3 (1992), 319-333; Robert M. Healey, "Waiting for Deborah: John Knox and Four Ruling Queens", *Sixteenth Century Journal,* 25, No. 2 ,1994, 371-386;

[5] The writer has anecdotal evidence that Scottish church history received strong attention in the classrooms of Dr. David Calhoun, emeritus professor of Church History in Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis. Dr. Dale W. Johnson of Erskine Seminary, Due West, S.C. co-authored a volume, *John Knox: An Introduction to his Life and Works* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009).

Scotland Passed Over in Silence?

The three volume *Presbyterians in the South* of the late Ernest Trice Thompson commences with immigrant Presbyterians who had reached Chesapeake Bay.[6] The seven volume series of the late Hugh Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church,* in so many ways admirable, gives not so much as a page to the Scottish Church in his fourth volume (2002) which is devoted to the Reformation period.[7] The recent second volume of Zondervan's two-volume *Church History: From Pre-Reformation to the Present Day* (2015) co-authored by John Woodbridge and Frank James contains *no* separate treatment of Scotland's Reformation. The contemporary of John Knox, Mary Queen of Scots, appears in the Woodbridge-James volume only because she eventually represented a destabilizing threat to English Queen, Elizabeth I once she fled southward into England. But the unstated assumption of most such volumes is that we will find out what we need to know about the Reformation heritage in the English-speaking world from Elizabethan England and from the European Continent. By such a method of reckoning, Reformation Scotland is just a sub-plot that a curious person would need to investigate independently. A slightly older two-volume set, *The Story of Christianity* (revised 2010) by the Cuban-American Methodist, Justo Gonzáles, devotes five pages to John Knox and the Reformation in Scotland.[8] That is all.

Admittedly, the dearth of reference to Reformation Scotland is not so total in Commonwealth countries as has been just described in the U.S.A. On account of the 2003 publication of Ian P. Hazlett's *The Reformation in Britain and Ireland*[9] readers in the United Kingdom and Commonwealth countries have been somewhat better served.

But We Are Calvinists not Knoxians

But someone will say, "What you say about a neglect of Scotland may be true and it may be lamentable, but remember -- we are Calvinists not Knoxians. Remember, it is our historical connection *to Geneva* that matters most". This attitude could be called a Geneva-centric approach; it has been dominant for decades now. It is an orientation that seems very widespread today, especially among those who profess a strong Reformation interest. Nevertheless, we cannot carry on any longer in reliance on this Geneva-centric theory, for three reasons:

- The Geneva-centric theory is undermined by the actual historical immigration patterns. To speak simply of America, within which this

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[6] Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South* 3 vols. (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963-1973)

[7] Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002

[8] Justo Gonzáles, *The Story of Christianity* 2 vols. (New York: HarperOne, 2010)

[9] Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2003.

writer resides, census data gathered within the last decade has shown that when asked to identify their ancestral heritage, more than 11 million Americans still identify themselves as of Scottish or Scots-Irish descent. This compares to only 1 million Americans who claim any Swiss ancestry.[10] The Reformed theological tradition was *not* brought to America by Swiss (let alone Genevan Swiss) immigrants, but by the Scots-Irish. Have we faced up to the implications of this?[11] No one needs to pretend to be of Scots-Irish descent when they are not. But unless we recover a sense of how the Reformed theological tradition was actually transmitted to our various countries, we will misconstrue a host of questions. To use the modern parlance of "reception history", the path by which the Reformed theological tradition was received and diffused into the western hemisphere was by way of Scotland. It was spread by immigration and through missionary evangelization.

- The Geneva-centric theory does not explain either Presbyterian life as it has actually unfolded. Reflecting on this question from within the USA, the writer observes that numerous divisions within the Presbyterian family --already in existence at the time of large-scale immigration in the eighteenth century-- were transported here from Scotland. The former United Presbyterian Church U.S.A. which merged into the Northern Presbyterian church in 1958 (and which to a considerable degree has re-emerged today in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church) had an identity which it brought with it from Scotland. So also the Covenanters or Reformed Presbyterians (sponsors of Geneva College at Beaver Falls, and the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (sponsors of Erskine College and Theological Seminary, Due West, S.C.). None of these groups originated in North America: their people emigrated here from Scotland, with their movements already in existence.[12] Geneva and Genevan immigrants have no light to shed on such matters.

- The Geneva-centric theory is also historically unhelpful in explaining the origin of our actual church practices. The General Assembly as an annual national deliberative gathering has come to us from Scotland, not Geneva; so also has the office of moderator, the units of the synod

[10] See Wikipedia, "Scots-Irish Americans", "Swiss Americans".

[11] D.G. Hart, *Calvinism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 71, notes that it was the German, Dutch and Scottish expressions of the Reformation which spread most overseas through immigration.

[12] See the entries in the D.G. Hart, ed *Dictionary of the Presbyterian and Reformed Tradition in America* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005)

> and the presbytery. It could hardly be otherwise, for Geneva in Reformation times was a mere canton with a total number of pastors ranging between 7 (in 1538) and 16 (in 1554).[13] What kind of a model could Geneva provide for those attempting to apply the Reformed faith to a nation? It was in Scotland that the rudimentary conception of Reformed church government which was functioning in Geneva was gradually adapted to a pre-existing national church consisting of about 1,100 congregations. [14]

Thus, the point being urged is that Presbyterian origins in Scotland in that first half-century are foundational for the church polity, foundational for the conceptions of ministry, and foundational for the ways of worshipping God which form the heritage of Christians in the Presbyterian family. And, this argument is not undone by the fact that today's Church of Scotland (a doctrinally-comprehensive denomination) has fallen on hard times and is doctrinally unstable.[15] This argument is not based upon the Church of Scotland as it now is; it is instead a question of the first principles from which our movement arose. The question is one of whether we can come once more to be "in conversation" with those first principles.

How can we proceed? I propose to take three broad topics, each of which are of considerable importance for Presbyterians today, and to show how conversation with our foundation-era (1550-1600) can help to illumine our contemporary discussions.

I. The Broad Scope of the First General Assemblies

The first Presbyterian General Assembly ever held took place in Edinburgh in the summer of 1560. Present were a mere 7 ministers and 35 other persons (only 2 of which were ruling elders); there were as well representatives of Scottish towns already supportive of the Reform, the landed lesser nobles and university leaders.[16] At that point, Protestantism was advancing both by bold preaching and by the military efforts of the Army of the Congregation against

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[13] William G. Naphy, *Calvin and the Consolidation of the Genevan Reformation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 58.

[14] Robert M. Healey, *The Preaching Ministry in Scotland's 'First Book of Discipline',* Church History, 58.3 (1989), 343. The French Reformed Church was also trying to apply the Reformed framework of polity on a large scale in this same period, yet with this difference: they were setting up an alternative ecclesiastical body, which replicated the still-existing Roman Catholic system. In Scotland, legislation of 1560 ended Roman Catholicism's jurisdiction in the country.

[15] The Church of Scotland has declined from a membership of 1,300,000 in 1960 to about 350,000 today.

[16] J.I. Weatherhead, "General Assembly" in the Nigel M. Cameron, ed. *Scottish Dictionary of Church History and Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 353-354.

opposition loyal to the Queen Regent, Mary of Guise. The Scottish Reformed Church had to this point consisted of unrecognized congregations (we would call them 'underground churches'). Parliament met of its own accord (without the customary royal approval) and sanctioned the meeting of this first General Assembly. Admittedly, from a strictly legal point of view, the General Assembly also had no constitutional right to meet without the consent of the Queen Regent. But then, as she was not likely to approve meetings which she knew intended to overthrow the decayed Roman Catholic system, the Parliament and Assembly were prepared to go forward without her approval.

The summoning of a General Assembly was an attempt to realize in Scotland a principle (called the 'conciliar' principle) which had been recovered in the preceding centuries of Christian history. That principle was that councils were comprised of representatives drawn from *across* the church (rather than only members of a church hierarchy) which had the spiritual authority to determine liturgical, theological and disciplinary questions for the church. This Scottish assembly understood itself to be the *national* council of the Church within Scotland, something quite in line with the occasional summoning of international councils. The General Assembly was therefore not, strictly speaking, *denominational* (inasmuch as there was but one Christian church in Scotland), but national, because the Church of Scotland was intending to address the needs of the nation as a whole. The official written record (which we today call the "Minutes" of our Assemblies) the Scots called *The Book of the Universal Kirk.*[17] Sometimes the gathering was termed "the general assemblie of this whole realme".[18] Its concerns went beyond what might be categorized as strictly religious, for it also aimed to exercise supervision over Scotland's three existing universities, over public education and poor relief.

Today, we cannot pretend that our annual Assemblies are a comprehensive General Assembly of the church of Jesus Christ as it exists in our various nations, but we can *aspire* to be that and we can deliberate ambitiously with those wider horizons of education and public welfare in view. Let us do everything we can to avoid narrow tribalism and provincialism. We should assemble to do more than church housekeeping.

This General Assembly (which at first met twice per year) rapidly tackled three main projects, which would affect the life of the national Church of Scotland for many decades to come:

1) The Assembly was first authorized by Parliament to provide a written program for national Reformation. What was sought was a scheme which could entail the transformation of the extensive

[17] The minutes of Assembly for the period from 1560 to 1616, referred to by this name, were only published in book form in 1839, edited by Alexander Peterkin. Another fuller edition, edited by Thomas Thomson, was published in three volumes 1839-1845.

[18] Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, iii. 23 quoted in Duncan Shaw, *The General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland 1560-1600* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1964), 19

Roman Catholic structure in place across the nation into something recognizably Protestant. More than one draft was honed. This manual of polity and discipline was prepared and returned to the Parliament for approval in late 1560. This 'First Book of Discipline' in an amended form remained in force until 1578, when a 'Second Book' superseded it. This second work reflected a changed situation, which had developed considerably across two decades. By 1578 there were now a sufficient number of functioning Reformed congregations to allow for the formation of presbyteries when previously there had only been larger territorial synods.

2) The assembled Parliament of Scotland had also requested the Assembly to proceed with the writing of a brief Confession of Faith (the Scots Confession) which eventually guided the church until the days of the Westminster Assembly 85 years later. A committee of six men, all with the first name of John, produced this confession. Of course, the most famous contributor was John Knox. Their work, done under the pressure of time, took a mere four days; "team effort" is the term aptly chosen to describe their collective effort.[19] The Parliament then approved this Protestant statement and banned any further celebration of the Roman mass inside Scotland.

3) By 1562, the General Assembly had also adopted a book of set orders of service for use across the nation. The Assembly commissioners endorsed a pre-existing book that had been used in the refugee congregation at Geneva in which John Knox and a co-pastor, Christopher Goodman, had earlier served. That earlier book was known as the *Form of Prayers used in the English Congregation at Geneva.*[20] The General Assembly published it in 1564 as the *Book of Common Order.*[21] We will have reason to return to this.

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[19] It is widely supposed that a draft of this document may have existed in advance and that four days was spent in polishing it. David F. Wright, "The Scottish Reformation: Theology and Theologians" in the *Cambridge Guide to Reformation Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 175.

[20] A modern edition of this book, first published at Geneva in 1556 was published under the editorship of W.E. Maxwell as *John Knox's Genevan Service Book* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1931).

[21] The Genevan volume, adapted for Scottish use in 1562 and 1564 has been reprinted periodically. Two known editions are those of G.W. Sprott and Thomas Leishman, *The Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland, Commonly Known as John Knox's Liturgy, and the Directory for the Public Worship of God Agreed Upon*

What emerged from this opening phase of the General Assembly's work was a determination to foster a common Protestantism for the whole nation characterized by a reasonable unity of doctrine, practice and worship.

But second…

II. An Eclectic Approach to Ministries and Offices

The meager attendance at the first General Assemblies drew attention to the fact that the Church of Scotland, as a Reformed entity, was still more of an "idea" than a reality. It was one thing to say that this Protestant church now existed in law. But where were the personnel to come from when there had been no Protestant colleges or seminaries to prepare leadership? In facing this challenge, the Church of Scotland set the bar higher than many other young Protestant churches of that day. Not only in England but even in Geneva, many individuals were employed in pastoral leadership who were barely distinguishable from pre-Reformation Catholic priests (in fact many of them had been just that). They could not be dismissed or replaced until and unless more qualified replacements were available. Yet, in Protestant Scotland, a much more rigorous system had come into play.[22]

In 1560, there may not have been more than 12 qualified Protestant ministers in all of Scotland (and upwards of 1100 parishes). Almost all of these individuals had formerly been monks or priests who had come to endorse the Reformation by 1560.[23] How would they manage with so few? Just by establishing a range of additional recognized ministries which in time, would prove to be no longer necessary. Three examples:

1) **The Superintendent** was a person adequately qualified to serve as a Protestant minister, but who – in addition to providing pastoral ministry in a single congregation – was responsible for travelling widely through an assigned territory of hundreds of square miles to plant new congregations, to advise congregations lacking pastors and to recruit candidates for the ministry.[24] The

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by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1868) and *The Liturgy of John Knox Revised by the Church of Scotland in 1564* (London & Glasgow: Hamilton, Adams & Co, 1886).

[22] The challenges faced by the Scottish Reformed Church in this period are helpfully summarized by Robert M. Healey in "The Preaching Ministry in Scotland's *First Book of Discipline*", *Church History* 58. 3 (1989), 339-353.

[23] The sources from which the first Protestant ministers of Reformed Scotland were drawn is explored in detail by James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), chap. 4, "Recruitment for the Ministry in Reformation Scotland".

[24] The Scottish superintendent is described in the *First Book of Discipline* (1560) in a segment, which because it is not introduced by the standard numbered heading, is understood to be a last-minute insertion. See James K. Cameron, *The First Book of Discipline* (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1972), 115-128.

intention was to find ten or twelve such men; in reality, they located only five. It was a quarter-century before these individuals worked themselves out of a job. But the superintendent kept pastor-less churches open and functioning by relying on two kinds of persons, one of which was…

2) **The Reader,** who was first and foremost a professing Christian of upright life.[25] Like the superintendent, he was also quite possibly a former Catholic priest or monk who professed support for the Reformation, but was not considered trustworthy enough or well-prepared enough to function as a pastor in his own right. A reader was authorized to lead simple services of Scripture reading and prayers with the prayers taken out of the agreed-upon *Form of Prayers* (later called *Book of Common Order*). The only sermon he could deliver was one earlier prepared by an approved pastor. Readers were not permitted to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper (these because they were required to be twinned with proclamation, would require the visit of the Superintendent or a visiting minister). Over time, some who began as readers advanced to a stage of greater usefulness, i.e. exhortation.

3) **The Exhorter** was a person who similarly may have earlier been a monk or priest – or then again may have been a baker or a school teacher. This was an individual who had a strong Bible knowledge and who was judged capable of giving an address or an exhortation from the Scripture.[26] Again, this temporary office did not necessarily carry with it authorization to conduct weddings or to administer baptism and the Lord's Supper. In those early decades, particularly a country congregation would have considered itself fortunate to have an exhorter lead its services – rather than only a reader. Some exhorters eventually proved themselves sufficiently that they gained the status of full ministers.

The process of helping these servants of the church to 'upgrade' their theological preparation was made available, region by region, in a weekly 'exercise' held each Monday. Senior, better-educated ministers would deliver rigorous model sermons and demonstrate how to draw out the doctrine and application for the benefit of less experienced ministers and exhorters. In their weekly 'exercise', the Scots were maintaining a practice which the English Puritans called the weekly 'prophesying', the Dutch called the 'coetus', and

[25] Cameron, *First Book*, "Fourth Head", 105
[26] Cameron, *First Book,* Fifth head, 111-112.

the Genevans called the weekly 'congregation'. The practice seems to be traceable to Zurich in Zwingli's time; in Zurich this was the "prophezei". In Reformation Scotland, each six or eight congregations were expected to collectively support the Monday 'exercise' in their locale.[27] It was really a form of what we would today call Theological Education by Extension.

Given the vast territories supervised by the superintendents, assisted by readers and exhorters (and the few pastors available) the basic geographical unit of the Reformed church soon emerged as the 'synod' – a much larger geographical territory than the eventual 'presbytery'; a presbytery could only be more narrowly defined when a higher proportion of congregations were served by qualified ministers. The standard for 'admission' (not ordination) to the ministry was high: The pastor must be one who "they judge apt to feed the flock of Jesus Christ, who must be examined as well in life and manners, as in doctrine and knowledge".[28]

A congregation was assured of the right to nominate a candidate for their pastoral vacancy; if they failed to nominate a candidate within forty days of beginning their search, the superintendent could intervene to provide a name. Every such candidate was subject to examination in doctrine and life by the superintendent and other nearby ministers; he was also required to preach a public trial sermon on an assigned text. If approved, he was publicly presented with a Bible and led into the pulpit. This simple gesture (and not the laying on of hands) was a symbol of his formal installation as pastor. He had thus been "admitted to the ministry".[29]

But what should strike us is that the Reformed Church of Scotland, which had gone on record in its *First Book of Discipline* as maintaining that the ordinary offices of the church were the pastor, the elder and the deacon was ready to work constructively with the 'raw' situation in which this biblical standard could not yet be maintained. The reformers did not mortgage the future by putting into these offices individuals who were not adequately prepared to fill them, i.e. individuals who, because ill-prepared, would discredit themselves and perpetuate error and superstition. They utilized readers and exhorters to help them function in the prolonged period necessary to produce a new generation of Christian leaders. The five superintendents of regions (ten had been hoped for) augmented their own work of pastoral oversight by securing colleagues, designated "commissioners", so that all ministry would be supervised. All who exercised this supervision (superintendents as well as commissioners) were themselves made answerable at regular intervals.

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[27] James K. Cameron, ed. *The First Book,* Ninth Head, 187-188

[28] James K. Cameron, ed. *The First Book* Fourth head, 96

[29] The use of the practice of laying on of hands, not originally in favour in 1560, was re-introduced in the 1570's. See James Kirk, ed. *The Second Book of Discipline* (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1980), Head III, item 12, 180.

And this reasonable eclecticism did not die with those first decades. Fresh signs of it appeared in the 19th century, when the population of Scottish cities mushroomed due to industrialization. The Church of Scotland then instituted the ministry of "Bible Women" and "Church Sisters" so as to best respond to the needs for ministry to women and children in crowded urban tenements.[30]

III. A Restrained yet Eclectic Approach to Liturgy, Sacraments and Sung Praise

Leading Scottish Reformers such as John Knox and his associate, John Winram, stood in reaction to the Roman Catholic teaching they had formerly upheld (Knox had been a priest and Winram a Dominican monk). They also stood in reaction to what they considered to be remaining traces of superstition in the Tudor-era Church of England – in whose ministry both served in years when they were unwelcome in Scotland. Such men and their comrades sought simplicity, a close and unvarnished following of N.T. practice.

After the death of English King Edward VI in 1553, Knox and Winram had joined hundreds of other English Protestant refugees in European cities such as Emden, Frankfurt, Zurich and Geneva. Knox and Winram sought – while in Europe – to be free from what they considered as questionable features of Tudor Anglican worship: obligatory reading of prayers, kneeling at the Communion, and the wearing of prescribed ministerial garments for the administration of the Communion. In consequence, when they went home to join in the final push to establish the Reformation in Scotland in 1559-60, they were adamant that the worship of the Scottish Reformed Church would be free of such obligations. This was the approach emphasized in the service-book Knox and his close associate, Christopher Goodman, brought home to Scotland from Geneva in 1559.

Yet please understand that no Scottish Reformer of 1560 favored a style of worship that left everything to the impulse of the moment. The Assembly, in employing the pre-existent *Form of Prayers* of the English refugees at Geneva, provided a *Book of Common Order* that provided orders of service for all major occasions; it contained model prayers that could be used either 'as-is' or with modification. Proper ways of baptizing and administering the communion were set out (always, they must be preceded by preaching of the Word), as was the proper way of admitting superintendents and pastors to their offices of ministry.

Consistent with this principled yet eclectic approach, in 1566 when the neighboring Church of England began to insist afresh upon an unvarying use of the *Book of Common Prayer* and required forms of ministerial dress (with scores of Anglican pastors refusing to do so), the Scottish Reformers took

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[30] L.O. Macdonald, "Women in Presbyterian Churches" in the Nigel M. Cameron, ed. *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 883-888.

objection. They drafted a letter to the Church of England appealing for liberty for their brothers.[31]

In the administration both of baptism and of the Lord's Supper, the Scottish emphasis was on simplicity:

> In Baptism we acknowledge nothing to be used except the element of water only (that the word and declaration of the promises ought to precede), wherefore whosoever presumes in Baptism to use oil, salt, wax, spittle… and [the sign of] crossing accuseth the perfect institution of Christ Jesus of imperfection….
>
> The Table of the Lord is then most rightly ministered when it approaches most near to Christ's own action. But plain it is that at that Supper Christ Jesus sat with his disciples; and therefore do we judge that sitting at a table is most convenient to that holy action….[32]

It was required that both sacraments be administered 'in the face of the congregation', i.e. in public worship, rather than privately. Interestingly – just because the frequency of the Lord's Supper is for some Christians today a bone of contention – monthly administration of the Lord's Supper was recommended in the *Book of Common Order* for town churches, with a lower frequency of observance in the country due to the ministerial shortage. *The First Book of Discipline* of 1560*,* which underwent ongoing revision soon after the release of the *Book of Common Order* (1564) with its aids to public worship, acknowledged how difficult it was to maintain even this level of frequency given the shortage of ministers; it fell back on the general policy of four communions annually.[33]

As to Holy Days or Feast Days, these were done away with – with Sunday, the Lord's Day becoming the sole day of Christian significance. In 1566, the Church of Scotland received copies of the cooperative confession jointly

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[31] As printed in Kingswood Hewat, *Makers of the Scottish Church at the Reformation*, (Edinburgh: MacNiven and Wallace, 1920), 240,241

[32] Cameron, *First Book of Discipline,* Second Head, 91

[33] Maxwell, *The Liturgical Portions of John Knox's Genevan Service Book* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1931), 121 Church of Scotland, *The Liturgy of John Knox: Received by the Church of Scotland in 1564* (Glasgow: Thomas D. Morton, 1886), p. 138. Cameron, *First Book of Discipline,* Ninth head, 183. Those interested in the question of how Presbyterians struggled to increase the frequency with which the Communion was administered can consult the author's *In Search of Ancient Roots: The Christian Past and the Evangelical Identity Crisis* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2017), chap. 7, "Eighteenth Century Evangelicals and the Frequency of the Lord's Supper".

produced by the various Reformed cantons of Switzerland. This was the "Second Helvetic Confession". The Swiss wanted to know "did the Scots approve?" The Scots wrote a formal letter emphasizing how highly they thought of this collaborative effort – except for one thing: the Second Helvetic Confession had made room for such special days of the Christian year which were directly associated with the earthly career of Jesus Christ: Annunciation, Birth, Death, Resurrection and Ascension. But the Scots were not convinced:

> These festivals at the present time obtain no place among us: for we dare not religiously celebrate any other feast-day than what the divine oracles have prescribed. Everything else, as we have said, we teach, approve and most willingly embrace.[34]

Understand that this meant *no* celebration of Christmas!

Marriages were prepared for by an announcing of the 'banns' (the intention to marry) three Sundays in advance; such marriages were solemnized at the close of Sunday worship services rather than on separate festive occasions.

And we should take special note that this same *Book of Common Order* (copies of which ordinary Christians were encouraged to own) contained the rudiments of a psalter-hymnal. Select Psalms of David were provided in meter for singing, as were certain other biblical materials. These included in versified form (for singing) the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, the Veni Creator (Holy Spirit), the Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis), Apostles Creed (12 Articles) and Song of Mary (the Magnificat). While it is true that hymn singing on a large scale was not commenced until the 1700's, the principle that biblical material beyond the Psalms might be sung was recognized from the first. It will be of interest to some readers to know that there are underway in Scotland today serious efforts to examine what this earliest congregational singing can have been like.[35]

Conclusion

Hopefully, this essay has made its case. It is not enough for us to have as our conversation partners *merely* Christians of our own generation. The Christian leaders of Scotland's Reformation in the first 50 years have important things to tell us about the breadth and scope of our Assemblies, about principled

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[34] John Douglas, rector of the University of St. Andrews led the signatories. The letter is reprinted in Kingswood Hewat, *Makers of the Scottish Church at the Reformation*, 322, 323. Their difference with the Swiss over the commemoration of particular days in the earthly life of Christ focused upon the Second Helvetic Confession (1566) chap. xxiv, "Of Feasts, Fasts and the Choice of Meats". The Second Helvetic Confession is accessible in Cochrane, *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966) and Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom* (New York: Harpers, 1877), vol. III.

[35] Resources for Understanding Early Scottish Psalmody are provided at: http://www.wode.div.ed.ac.uk/

eclectic ways of seeing the kingdom of Jesus Christ advance and of the importance of a holy simplicity in our ways of worshipping God. I firmly believe that we will be the poorer if we allow this legacy to go unrecognized for much longer.

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*these volumes show some influence of the Scoto-Catholic or High Church tendency emerging within Presbyterianism in late 19th century

A brief overview of the Reformation in Hungary: its strengths, weaknesses and some of its consequences for today

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Hungary today is a tiny country in Central Europe with a population of less than 10 million people[1]. However, if one visits the wall dedicated to the Reformation in Geneva, one finds Stephen Bocskai (1557-1606) standing along with Gaspard de Coliny and other prominent figures from that era. He – as a Hungarian Prince – played a significant role in the defense of the Reformed faith. This shows that our small nation was affected by this great movement, contributed to the preservation of the Reformed faith, and even its present history is much related to what happened centuries ago. But how did all this begin?

I. A historical survey of the early years – in a nutshell

The teachings of the Reformation reached Hungary quite early primarily via German influence. There were significant German colonies in major Hungarian cities and especially in Transylvania[2] of which nearly all embraced

[1] In 2011 at the general census a bit more than 1.15 million people declared to have some kind of ties with the historic Reformed religion. Of these, only around 400,000 are on church rolls. However, it should be noted that the Hungarian Reformed Church has a nominal membership (if someone was baptized and never attends church, still thinks of him/herself as "Reformed"). According to the most generous estimates around 0.5% of these people on church rolls hold to some kind of Evangelical – not necessarily Reformed – convictions. Thus true Reformed believers are extremely rare today.

[2] Hungary lost this region after the First World War (Treaty of Trianon – 1920). Now it belongs to Romania.

the Lutheran faith by 1545[3]. These ideas penetrated the circles of the aristocracy as well, thus the need of reforms was welcomed at the top of the society. Later some of these aristocrats and landlords became the supporters of the Reformers.

Certain other factors facilitated the spreading of the ideas of the Reformation in the Hungarian lands as well. The population was quite disappointed with the machinations of the pope, especially after the lost battle of Mohács (1526) against the Turks. Hungarians saw this defeat as God's chastisement upon the debauchery of the Papist church. One scholar mentions another aspect: "A large part of the country was occupied by the Turks and they tended to favor Protestantism as against Roman Catholics, presumably because the former were less likely to support attempts by princes of the West, Roman Catholics, to reconquer the region.[4]

So in God's providence even the national tragedy of Mohács helped the cause of Reformation to some extent. But the biggest impact was achieved by the early pioneers who fought the battle for God's truth. Here are the names of the most influential Hungarian Reformers: János Sylvester (1504-1552), Bíró Mátyas Dévai (1500-1545), István Szegedi Kiss (1505-1572), Gáspár Károlyi (1529-1592), Péter Méliusz Juhász (1532-1572) and Imre Ozorai. Nearly all of them studied at least for some years in Wittenberg. The biggest patron of the Hungarians from the University of Wittenberg was none other than Philipp Melanchthon; he provided food and shelter for many students at his place. After returning home, these men set Hungary on fire with their fierce preaching and teaching.

II. The strengths of the Hungarian Reformation

There are certain features of the Hungarian Reformation worthy of being mentioned since these proved to be helpful in the success of the movement. I will highlight just five of them:

1) A relatively quick translation of the Bible into the Hungarian language. Following Luther, the Hungarians realized that the Word of God should be available for everyone in their own language. One reformer lamented over the performance of a Catholic priest this way: "he sings and speaks in Latin, but the people understand nothing – he could rather speak to a wall, the result would be the same."[5] By 1541 the first translation of the New Testament was completed by János Sylvester. Then a few decades later, Gáspár Károlyi translated the entire Bible by 1588. He printed its first edition in 1590 in a small place called Vizsoly in Northern Hungary. This had a tremendous impact

[3] Dr. Imre Révész, *Church History*, published by the Transcibiscian Reformed Church District, Vol. II., Debrecen, 1936, p. 8

[4] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, Vol. II., Harper Publishing, San Francisco, 1975, p. 740

[5] Mihály Bucsay, *The History of Protestantism in Hungary*, Gondolat Publishing, Budapest, 1985, p. 21

on the Hungarian people and their language. The Reformers started preaching in Hungarian and this was much appreciated by the common people.

2) A strong emphasis was put on the subscription to and the use of Confessions and Catechisms[6]. The Synod of Debrecen adopted the Second Helvetic Confession in 1567. Later in 1646 the Heidelberg Catechism was officially accepted as a second standard regulating beliefs and church life. But even up to this point the church was not without catechisms. Calvin's Geneva Catechism had been in use in Northern Hungary since 1564[7]. The Hungarian Reformers also wrote their own catechisms which were widely used. Among the most noted catechism writers we should mention Péter Méliusz Juhász (he published his Catechism in 1562), Tamás Félegyházi (1579), István Patai (1592). But the most popular Catechism was the one written by János Siderius. This was in use in parallel with the Heidelberg Catechism until the mid-18th century. All catechisms were well constructed and treated all important subjects at length. For example, Péter Méliusz Juhász's Catechism had 332 questions/answers, nearly as many as Calvin's Geneva Catechism.

3) The Hungarian Reformers kept in touch with their mentors. This protected them from being isolated and drawn into their particular problems. It also gave them some confidence that they were a part of a larger family. I already noted the close relationship between some Hungarian students and Melanchthon. But letters went out from Hungary to other places as well. There was intense correspondence with Heinrich Bullinger from Zurich. Bullinger wrote over 13,000 letters – more than the other Reformers together – and some of these went to Hungary. The Hungarian Reformers were asking for directions and counsel on a variety of theological and practical issues; this included questions on how to relate to the Papists or to the Turks[8], etc. They even wrote letters – and this is less known – to Wolfgang Musculus.

4) *Doctrinal orthodoxy.* The Hungarian Reformers were able to articulate very well the key doctrines and were not ashamed of the gospel. They were prolific writers, publishing numerous books dismantling the Papist religion. Some of them had impressive apologetic skills and easily entered public debates. According to one story, Bíró Mátyás Dévai was ready to sit on a barrel with gun power to debate a Catholic priest (the loser would have been blown up). The priest refused to accept this arrangement and quickly left the scene. It is by no mistake that Dévai was called the Luther of Hungary. Others – such as Péter Méliusz Juhász – were able defenders of the Trinity. Anti-trinitarian ideas spread out mostly from Transylvania due to the activity of Georgio

[6] Unfortunately today the confessions are treated as historical documents – they are no longer normative in the life of the Hungarian Reformed Church.

[7] József Barca in *Studia et Acta Ecclesiastica*, published by the Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church, Vol. 3, Budapest, 1973, p. 852

[8] Daniel Timmerman, *Bullinger on Islam: Theory and Practice*, Unio Cum Christo, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2017, p. 128

Biandrata, who was an Italian medical doctor at the court of John Sigismund Zápolya. So the Reformers had to deal with this issue as well.

5) *A willingness to accept persecution and suffering.* After 1526 the country was divided into three parts. This caused a lot of grief in the hearts of many – the Reformers included. On top of this, the Reformed faith was under pressure being clogged between two Empires, the Turks and the Habsburgs. In spite of all these difficulties, our forefathers stood boldly on the Word of God. Later, during the time of counter-Reformation, many of them were ready to die, go into prison or to be taken as galley slaves without denying their evangelical convictions. These latter ones were delivered in 1676 from Naples by the famous admiral Michiel de Ruyter.

III. The weaknesses of the Hungarian Reformation

We need to elaborate on this at some length, since these facts are less known even in academic circles in the Western world. Although the Hungarian Reformers clarified the main theological issues, a solid foundation for the church was not properly established. When we check some of the practical matters, serious flaws appear that affected a lot the Hungarian Reformed Church (HRC) for the coming centuries. This is why by the end of the 19th century the HRC had already lost the three marks of a true church[9].

a) *Nominal membership*. The *cuius region eius religio* principle proved to be detrimental to the church in the long-term. It helped in the beginning when some of the landlords offered refuge to the Reformers. But landlords sometimes changed colours, not because of their own conviction but rather for political reasons (such as being opposed to Papist Habsburgs). Thus the people on their land followed them automatically. Toward the end of the 16th century nearly 90% of Hungarians became Protestant, but later this dropped back to 20%. This was due not only to the persecution and other factors, but primarily to the lack of convictions among laity.

This was evident in the coming centuries as well. Religion was chosen depending on one's political views, family traditions, etc., and not necessarily heart beliefs. One scholar puts it this way: "For a long time the issues were divided thus: to be Protestant meant to be Hungarian and to be Roman Catholic meant to be German, or more precisely, to be Protestant meant to stand for the rights of the nation and liberty, to be Roman Catholic meant to stand for denationalization and the betrayal of liberty."[10] At the beginning of the 20th century, the HRC was the largest Protestant denomination in the Carpathian basin. But as one of their acclaimed theologian admits: "the Reformed Church was a state/nominal church, where people became members by the

[9] The true preaching of the Word, the proper distribution of the sacraments and the administration of church discipline.

[10] Péter Török, *Hungarian State-Church Relationships: A Socio-Historical Analysis*, PhD Dissertation – University of Toronto, 2000, p. 97

administration of infant baptism."[11] So no authentic and credible profession of faith was required for admittance into membership.

b) *Confusion regarding offices and the form of church government*. The HRC is the only Reformed denomination which had bishops and superintendents from its beginnings. It was and it is a much clericalized church where ruling elders play a very small role. In fact, ruling elders were not in place for centuries. The first local session was activated 150 years after the Reformation in the town of Pápa, but this was rather an exception and not a common practice.

One may find it interesting that only the Synod of Buda (1791) decreed that local sessions should be organized and ruling elders should be elected in all congregations. This was reaffirmed in 1821-22, when the session/consistory was named as the governing body of the local church. But when they finally started ordaining ruling elders, those men were not biblically qualified to occupy this office[12]. So we can look upon this system as a mixture of Episcopal and Erastian government. To make a long story short: there was never a proper Presbyterian government instituted in the HRC.

The same applies to the deacons – this office is still non-existent – even 500 years after the Reformation! Instead, what they do in some places is hire social workers (using state money) and call them deacons.

c) *Financial dependency on the landlords and state authorities*. Giving was always a heart issue, but unconverted and nominal people cannot give *ex anima*. Over the centuries this led to a perpetual dependency on landlords and later on politicians and governments. These subventions increased rapidly, especially from 1892 onward. By 1908, the government had pledged to pay the equivalent of 600,000 US dollars[13] annually to the Lutheran and Reformed Church. This practice culminated in October 2017, when an agreement was signed by the government and the leaders of the HRC. As stated in the document, the government takes financial responsibility for various activities and ministries of the church.[14] By this the HRC tacitly admitted its inability to

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[11] Dr. Álmos Ete Sípos, *Ask the Lord of the Harvest*, Harmat Publishing House, Budapest, 2006, p. 49

[12] Instead of paying attention to the qualifications from 1Timothy 3:1-7, the custom was to elect someone who is influential enough in the community: a nobleman, a major, a businessman, a politician. Then later – in the second half of 20th century – women were allowed to be both teaching and ruling elders at large scale.

[13] This would be around 15 million USD today.

[14] To have an idea of the quantum of this support: just for the various teaching institutions of the HRC this agreement allocates no less than 32,7 million USD/year (8,5 billion Forint). The church also requested the continuation of the policy of annuity in compensation for properties confiscated by communists. There are other channels for state funding as well, which we will not mention here. Knowing these, it is perplexing to see that some evangelical Reformed churches from abroad are still helping this state church financially.

finance herself and thus became heavily exposed to state influence. Some say, this is the last nail in the coffin.

IV. Some repercussions of these weaknesses in the last two centuries

The HRC was never able to recover from its weaknesses and the lack of a good foundation. Consequently, the whole structure was weak and lacking in spiritual vigour. Here is what followed as a result of this:

a) *A weak church cannot stand against the waves of various theological and philosophical trends.* This explains why theological liberalism was so easily embraced by the HRC. Pastors who studied in Germany or Switzerland came home with new ideas. Then the theological seminaries were taken over by these teachers who taught higher criticism. It was not uncommon to have professors who denied core biblical doctrines. For example, the establishment of the first Reformed Seminary in Budapest in 1855 speaks loudly about the influences the church was already under in the mid-19th century. One of the most famous professors was Mór Ballagi, who taught there for 22 years. He was an able scholar, teaching a variety of subjects. However, as a theologian he was an adept proponent of "higher criticism and speculative rationalism; that was the main reason why, in the last years of his life, he was so strongly criticized by the opponents of the liberal trend of theology."[15] Criticized, but never disciplined or removed from the seminary – in spite of the fact that in 1862 he denied the resurrection of Jesus.[16]

b) *Lack of evangelism and missionary spirit*. In a nominal state church, evangelism isn't necessary. However, in the last two centuries several associations were formed within the HRC which started pushing the so-called "inner mission" – an attempt to evangelize the 'membership'. Even these efforts were many times opposed by the superior bodies, especially the bishops, since the preservation of unity was paramount. Any revival or even individual conversions were seen as a threat to this sacred unity. As for the foreign mission, that was not even on the agenda. Rev. Gyula Forgács (1879-1941), who was one of the promoters of foreign mission within the HRC, stated bluntly that the Protestant churches in Hungary – especially the Reformed Churches – "have no interest at all in foreign mission."[17] This showed the spiritual condition of the church. A church which loves Christ and takes seriously the Great Commission cannot be idle in mission.

Although the HRC boasted two and a half million members at the beginning of the 20th century, it was the first candidate in the contest of churches which

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[15] Kálmán Benda in *The History of the Reformed Theological Academy in Budapest (1855-1955*), 1955, p. 245

[16] This was 31 years before Dr. Charles A. Briggs from Union Theological Seminary was suspended from gospel ministry. So Hungary was way ahead of the United States in spreading liberalism! The only difference is that in Hungary there was no proper church discipline administered.

[17] Dr. Anne-Marie Kool, *God Moves in a Mysterious Way*, Harmat Publishing House, Budapest, 1995, p. 251

sent out the fewest missionaries (especially if we compare it with the large number of missionaries sent out by Scottish churches whose membership was much more modest). To illustrate this, consider the HRC in Transylvania, who sent out Sándor Babos in 1933 to be a foreign missionary in China (Manchuria). At the thanksgiving service, Bishop Sándor Makkai said, "We sent out Sándor Babos as the *first* missionary pastor from Transylvania to an unknown world and unknown people…"[18] He was the first and only foreign missionary till that point! No missionary had been sent out for hundreds of years before! But even in this case, Babos had behind him the financial support of the Scottish churches.

c) *A consistent opposition to any reforms*. For the sake of unity at all cost, the higher echelons of the church opposed any attempt to reform the church during these centuries. Back in 1646, at the Synod of Szatmárnémeti, there was a group of Hungarian Puritans who wanted to correct the course of the church, especially its government. Needless to say, they were defeated. Then later – during the last two centuries – other evangelical associations[19] were formed seeking renewal and reformation. Some of these associations were pietistic, others more Reformed, but none of them had any lasting impact on this shiftless denomination. Furthermore, the hierarchy of the church constantly accused these small associations of seeking schism. Thus all of these modest attempts to facilitate changes in the church failed. After the fall of the iron curtain, the HRC wasted again the historical possibility of returning to the old paths (Jer 6:16) and to the Word of God. As a result, there is an exodus going on today. Few evangelicals are willing to stay within this denomination[20]. New churches are being formed, since it became evident that the HRC is beyond the point where it can be reformed.

The reader might think that I am a bit harsh with my assessment of the spiritual condition of the state Reformed Church. As a Hungarian who loves the Hungarian people, I can assure you this is not the case. Unfortunately, the Reformed faith and Calvinism today are large, empty slogans; cultural baggage. One conservative professor who taught for many years in Hungary at various seminaries stated: "Theologically, like other denominations, the HRC is in a confused state. It runs four theological seminaries, and higher criticism is taught in each of them. Barthianism has been the dominant influence, even from before the Communist take-over. In fact, in Hungary it is a mistake to equate the title 'Reformed' with true Calvinism."[21]

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[18] Sándor Némethy, *In the Shadows of Pagodas*, Hungarian Reformed Foreign Mission Association, Budapest, 1944, p. 25

[19] Christian Endeavour Society (CE), Hungarian Evangelical Christian Student Association (MEKDESZ), etc.

[20] Those who stay in have to compromise their practice in order to conform to the nominal and liberal setting.

[21] Dr. Robert E. L. Rodgers, *Hungary's Ineffective Church*, Evangelical Times, 1999, August issue

We can even travel back in time and ponder Dr. Merle D'Aubigné's words. He wrote a foreword to a church history of Hungary in 1853. His diagnosis – even back then – was very much along the same lines. Listen to what he has to say:

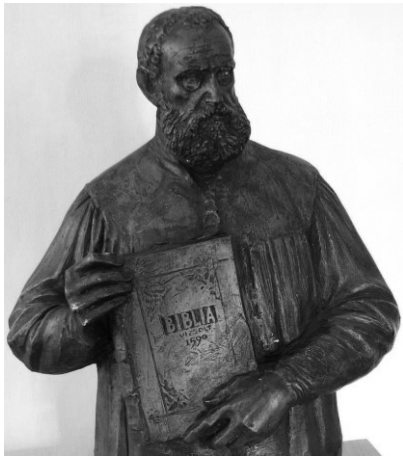
… the Protestant Church of Hungary erred by departing from this divine authority, and therefore did not escape that blight of rationalism which swept over the whole of Europe during the second half of the eighteenth century… There were some ministers – blind guides – who thus yielded to the spirit of the age and thought themselves wise in their folly. This was the inward canker of the Hungarian Church – an evil more dangerous in its consequences than the most cruel persecution… The first thing needful, then, to restore the Hungarian Church, is to establish within it the perfect and undivided control of the will of God as revealed to us in Holy Scriptures. This was the working principle of our glorious Reformation… It is to this divine authority that Protestant Hungary ought to give in her hearty allegiance. She has sought a cure for her wounds in the sphere of politics, when she should, before all else, have sought it in the sphere of Christianity.[22]

We agree wholeheartedly with the above cure. But those who are within this church are still turning a deaf ear to this.

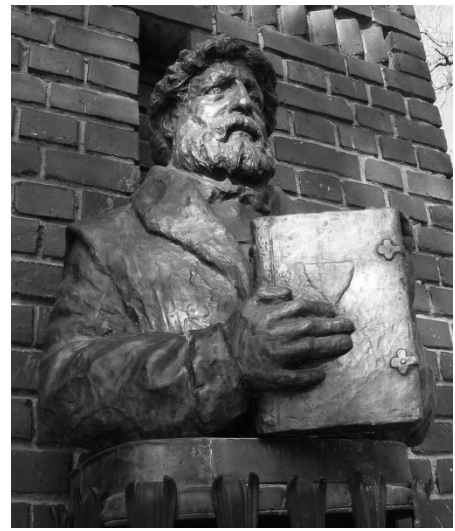
Last year Hungarians commemorated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Huge amounts of government money were spent via the HRC for these celebrations. Unfortunately, the true gospel and the central doctrines of the Reformation remained hidden under the veil of outward festivities. The message of the Reformation was reinterpreted and falsely contextualized. Indeed, there was a lot of talk on culture, language, education, Christian values, social impact, national heritage, etc. Just the essentials were missing.

Brothers, pray for Hungary and the adjacent lands populated by Magyars. Hungary today is a vast mission field which needs to be reached again by the true Reformed faith. And this task cannot be entrusted to this state church. Will you consider partnering with us?

[22] J. H. Merle D'Aubigné's Introduction to *History of the Protestant Church in Hungary* by Georg Bauhofer, reprint by MoPress & Sprinkle Publications, 2001, pp. vii-ix



Gáspár Károlyi – the translator of the entire Bible (above)



István Szegedi Kis (right)



Péter Méliusz Juhász (above)

John Frame's Theology of Life
John Frame, *Theology of My Life: A Theological and Apologetic Memoir.*
Eugene, OR: Cascade Press, 2017. 250 pp., paper.
ISBN 978-1532613760. A Review Article.

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Karl Barth is reported to have said somewhere that most of the pastors in the German Reformed Church of his day were frustrated systematic theology professors. This caricature, if somewhat exaggerated, has at least a grain of truth to it. It also applies beyond Germany. The most coveted and respected positions in the theological world are in the academy, then come prestigious city pastorates, followed by smaller suburban and rural ones. For those who don't succeed in these arenas, there is always the foreign mission field.

John Frame, one of the most outstanding Reformed theologians of our day, reversed these priorities in terms of his ministry goals, while settling somewhat reluctantly for seminary teaching. He first aspired to foreign mission work, then to pastoral ministry, but finding himself to be temperamentally unsuited to both, he became a seminary professor, to the lasting benefit of the church universal. In *Theology of My Life,* he offers a personal reflection on how this came about. The book comes with a seven-page foreword by one of Frame's more gifted students, Andrée Sue Peterson, now well known as a columnist with WORLD magazine.

Early Years

John McElphatrick Frame was born in Pittsburgh in 1939, the eldest of four. His father worked for Westinghouse Electric, retiring in 1973 as the company's Director of Labor Relations. He died of leukemia in 1980. John's mother was a talented actress and musician who studied at the University of Wisconsin but did not graduate due to financial restraints during the Great

Depression. Following her marriage, she was a "homemaker and occasional volunteer worker. Early on she acted in community theater" (p. 2). She was John's first piano teacher and taught him to read and write before he started school, to which he attributes his early academic success.[1] She died in 1996.

Academic success was a priority to John's parents, spiritual nurture less so.[2] It was an age when the church was still respected and pastors' views appeared in newspapers. John's parents "thought that the kids should have a religious education" (p. 3). Thus, John attended Sunday School at the Edgewood Presbyterian Church and, from the age of six resulting from a move, at Beverly Heights United Presbyterian Church, where he developed the reputation of being "the worst-behaved kid in the class" (p. 4).

Music played a big part in John's life from an early age. He took first piano, then organ lessons, which led to his being asked to play at various church functions. He loved playing hymns and eventually had to face the question: "How could I lead the church in singing these wonderful songs without believing their message" (p. 8)? It was not that he ever disbelieved. This was before the Supreme Court declared prayer and religious education to be unconstitutional in schools. The general perception was that the church taught about the Bible, whereas the public school taught about the world in general, and there was no reason to question either.

Beverly Heights was an evangelical congregation in what was then the United Presbyterian Church. It joined the Evangelical Presbyterian Church a few years ago. As a young teenager, John came under the influence of successive youth pastors who encouraged him to make his faith personal. He also attended a Billy Graham crusade where some of his friends "went forward" and subsequently led changed lives. A seminary student was invited to give a Graham-like gospel message to the church's youth group. He urged them to have a *personal* relationship with Christ. When those who trusted Jesus as their *personal* Lord and Savior were invited to raise their hands, John Frame did so. Reflecting back on that experience, he notes that "whether my new birth took place that night or some time before, I was by age fourteen a follower of Jesus Christ. Church was not a game anymore, not a mere social club. Christ was truly the center of my life. God had sought me out (John 4:23) and had found me" (p. 10).

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[1] Socially awkward and athletically challenged, John excelled in academics. "When I was in first grade, sixth graders would bring their geography texts to me and I would read them fluently (without of course understanding them very well). Eventually the teachers put me at my own table in the classroom and gave me more advanced books to read, 'enrichment' projects to keep me interested" (6).

[2] At one point in the book, Frame mentions his father having been an elder at Beverly Heights United Presbyterian Church. This comes as a surprise, given what is written earlier about him. If there was a spiritual change, it is not mentioned.

Student Days

Frame's parents played a significant role in his choice of college, as well as in other life decisions. They arranged visits to Princeton, Yale and "the smaller (but still elite) colleges of Williams and Amherst." In the end, he was accepted by all four and chose Princeton where he majored in philosophy and wrote a thesis on, "Spinoza, Ontological Proof and Faith." He sought to demonstrate that "the ontological argument for the existence of God was really a way of declaring one's presuppositional values, and therefore of confessing one's faith." In this he was reflecting the influence of Cornelius Van Til to whose works he had been introduced by Donald Fullerton of the Princeton Evangelical Fellowship (of whom more later). He was also helped by the reading of C.S. Lewis, especially *Mere Christianity* and *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. Frame notes that "Van Til was not fond of C.S. Lewis. But in effect he broadened Lewis's argument in *Miracles*, arguing that all debates on all matters, not only debates about miracles, depended on assumed worldviews (presuppositions)" (p. 42). This helped Frame understand that the arguments of unbelieving professors (in particular, militantly atheistic Walter Kaufmann) were themselves based on presuppositions. Van Til also argued that "non-Christian presuppositions make coherent thought impossible. And of course, to think as Christians, we needed to think on the presupposition of Scripture" (p. 42). So, Frame concludes, "God renewed my confidence in the Bible through Van Til's ministry to me." James I. Packer's *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* also "played a major role in my thinking at this early point…Like Van Til, Packer was saying that even our reasoning must be subject to the lordship of Christ" (p. 42).

One significant detail in Frame's account of his Princeton studies was a metaphysics course with G. Dennis O'Brien. O'Brien dealt in some depth with three thinkers: Aristotle, Spinoza, and John Dewey.

> Aristotle defended a metaphysics of *things*, Spinoza a metaphysics of *facts*, and Dewey a metaphysics of *processes*. The positions of these men were in disagreement. But the disagreements were not over facts, O'Brien thought, but over ways with the facts…So it was almost as if Aristotle, Spinoza, and Dewey were saying the same thing from three different perspectives. At this point, 'perspectivalism' entered my philosophical vocabulary" (p. 43-44).

In later years, 'perspectivalism' would become the hallmark of his teaching and writing, although as we shall see, he meant something quite different by it.

In general, Frame's major courses in philosophy were "outstanding" (p. 39). He makes only a passing reference to a course in "Recent and

Contemporary Empirical Philosophy," adding somewhat cryptically "but I did not get excited about Wittgenstein until some years later" (p. 40). Very little is said about Wittgenstein in the remainder of the memoir, but at least in methodology and especially in his grading system with its attention to the meaning of words, Frame's later teaching suggested the influence of Wittgenstein's language analysis.

In the course of his first semester at Princeton, Frame sought out the spiritual influence of Donald B. Fullerton, D.D., a Princeton graduate of 1913 who, after years of missionary service followed by teaching at what is now Shelton College, started the Princeton Evangelical Fellowship. Fullerton was a Dispensationalist who "straddled the fence" on the issues of Calvinism and Arminianism but stressed the lordship of Christ, which was to become another central feature of Frame's future teaching career.

Fullerton recommended Van Til's writings on Barth and shared the view that Barth's neo-orthodoxy was another form of liberalism concealed under orthodox terminology. He also admired J. Gresham Machen for his stand against liberalism in the Presbyterian Church. He respected Westminster Seminary (founded in 1929 by Machen), but did not recommend it, as it was not dispensational and premillennial. Frame, however, chose Westminster, mainly because of the help he had received from Van Til. He had also read E.J. Young's *Thy Word is Truth* and Ned Stonehouse's biography of Machen.

Frame's parents objected to his choice, preferring the more prestigious (liberal) seminaries of Princeton, Yale, and Union in New York. Ever the obedient son, Frame offered the newly founded Fuller Seminary in California as a compromise, but his father, on being advised that Fuller, Yale, Princeton and Union were "all good seminaries," opted for the more "prestigious" ones and threatened the loss of financial support if John did not choose one of them. At this point, Frame asserted his "manhood," dropped the compromise, and chose Westminster even if it meant working his way through. However, he found that his parents' "own generosity defeated their plan to cut me off financially" (p. 55).

At Westminster (hereafter WTS), Frame finally had the opportunity to study directly under Van Til. He was also introduced to Herman Dooyeweerd and "Dooyeweerdianism" through the teaching of Van Til's associate, Robert D. Knudsen. In general, through his fellow-students, Frame was introduced to the "truly Reformed," who were often (although not always) of Dutch ancestry and were sometimes called "the Dutchmen," whatever their actual ancestry. These "truly Reformed"

> towed the theological party line meticulously. They also observed a kind of lifestyle that was assumed to be authentically Reformed, which included smoking and drinking and avoided too many expressions of piety like chapel services, prayer meetings, evangelistic adventures, and such. They derided those whom they thought were too emotional about their faith… (p. 67).

These included "fundamentalists" and "evangelicals" who had often come to faith at secular or broadly evangelical colleges and practiced their faith in diametrically opposite ways. A number of them came from the South. Frame was early identified as a "fundie," since he did not smoke or drink and attended chapel regularly. However, he also maintained a high grade point average in his courses, "which fundies were not supposed to do" (p. 68).

Frame was also introduced to the meticulous exegesis of John Murray's approach to systematic theology.

> Students at WTS often said that they had come to the seminary to study with Van Til, but they had stayed to study with John Murray…. Murray was to me a wonderful surprise…. If WTS had taught systematics as many Reformed seminaries had done, by expounding the confessions and the classic Reformed theologians, I would have resisted, and I could easily have graduated an Arminian or dispensationalist. But John Murray's approach was to list Bible proof-texts for each doctrine (and the problem texts emphasized by that doctrine's opponents) and exegete them meticulously in his deep Scottish brogue, so that there could be no question of what the Scriptures taught (p. 61-62).

Although Frame does not say so, Murray also provided an antidote to the tension between the "truly Reformed" and "fundies" at Westminster. He was respected by both factions, as well as his colleagues, although always considered to be somewhat different. He was no "fundie" and enjoyed a good cigar as much as any "Dutchman," but he breathed an air of profound piety that reflected his Scots Highland-Puritan background, a form of Reformed piety closer to that of the "Old Princeton" of the Hodges and Warfield than anything otherwise present at WTS in those days. Murray also, through the influence of Gerhardus Vos his teacher at Princeton, and his (Vos's) approach to biblical theology that undergirded Murray's exegetical approach to systematics, combined the best of the Dutch Reformed tradition with his own.[3]

A biblical-theological approach carried over into the practical theology department through Edmund Clowney's emphasis that "a sermon should be mainly devoted to showing how its text advances the redemptive narrative. The preacher should not use Bible characters as moral examples (what Clowney called 'moralism') but should show how they anticipate or reflect Christ in his redemptive work" (p. 57). Frame notes that he did not entirely agree with Clowney's critique of moralism, since the Bible itself presents

[3] Vos's influence also pervaded the entire program at Westminster. Indeed, it could be said that the two major influences at Westminster were the Dutchmen Vos and Van Til, but neither fit the caricature described above.

characters in its stories as examples of faithful or unfaithful living. "Certainly there is no contradiction between advancing the redemptive-historical narrative and presenting characters as moral examples" (p. 57). Despite this disagreement, Frame remembers that Clowney's own sermons "typically moved me more than any others, because they remarkably directed my attention to Christ, the lord of the word" (p. 57).[4]

All in all, WTS "was a great theological feast" (p. 55). Having gained a solid theological foundation there, and as winner of the Westminster Graduate Fellowship for having the highest grade point average, Frame was now ready, much to his parents' relief, to pursue doctoral studies at a "respectable" seminary. Of three options, he chose Yale. He wanted his dissertation to be "the beginning of a new movement against the presuppositions of theological liberalism" (p. 82). So, he thought he would "examine all the arguments used by liberal theologians to oppose propositional revelation, and refute them" (p. 82). However, the dissertation became unmanageable and was never completed. Instead, Frame graduated with a M. Phil. based on two years of graduate courses and completion of the comprehensive doctoral exams. He had also served as a teaching assistant in the Department of Philosophy, although not with great success.

These student years were interspersed with worship and ministry at his home church, summer pastoral internships (while at WTS), and overseas travels (while at Princeton) including L'Abri Fellowship in Switzerland and Africa (with visits to the headquarters of the African Inland Mission and the Sudan Interior Mission). All of these experiences reinforced Frame's conviction that he was not called to the pastorate or the mission field. He left Yale in a spirit of disappointment, thinking he had taken a wrong turn and not knowing where to go next. But then WTS called.

Teaching at Westminster (Philadelphia)

When Frame had been a student at WTS, the widespread assumption was that Norman Shepherd was the natural successor to John Murray in Systematic Theology. Indeed Shepherd, who had been doing graduate studies with G. C. Berkouwer at the Free University of Amsterdam, did return to teach, but first in the New Testament department, following the death of Ned B. Stonehouse. Frame took a course with Shepherd on New Testament Biblical Theology. Later, following Murray's retirement, Shepherd moved to the Systematics department. He needed help and so reached out to Frame who, following a successful faculty interview, became his associate.

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[4] In my own student days, I recall Frame joking with reference to Clowney's *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1956), that he himself might one day write a book called *Preaching and Systematic Theology.* That day has not yet come, and is unlikely to, since Frame does not consider preaching to be one of his strengths, and says his wife agrees!

Frame soon developed a reputation as a "boy wonder" (because of his youthful looks) and for his perspectival approach to the courses he taught. He defined theology as "the application of Scripture by persons to every area of life" (p. 94). Following Murray's example, he sought to base his pedagogy on a direct interaction with Scripture rather than with other past and present theologians. But it was Van Til who got him thinking about approaching each doctrine of Scripture from three perspectives. Van Til, in his *Christian-Theistic Ethics,* distinguished between the goal, the motive, and the standard of Christian behaviour. For Frame these became the situational, existential and normative perspectives. Further, as perspectivalism migrated from Ethics to the Doctrine of God, "We have a goal because God is in *control*. The *motives* of our inner subjectivity are ethically important, because God has made us in his image, to be his temples. That is, our inward life, our heart is a dwelling place of God, a place for his *presence*. And the *standard* of ethics is nothing other than God's own word, especially that set forth in Scripture. That standard expresses his *authority*. So I had a second triad, based on three characteristics of God: his control, authority, and presence" (p. 96). This led to a study of the concept of *lordship* in the Bible and thus to a theology of lordship expressed triperspectivally. This approach came to be expressed in all of Frame's teaching and later in his published works. At times he wonders if this is a truth deeply embedded in the nature of the Trinity, and he has recently published an explanation and defense of triperspectivalism that takes this position.[5] At other times, he has been content "to regard it as a helpful pedagogical structure or narrative, a set of hooks on which the student can place various biblical doctrines" (p. 97). As such, perhaps, it functions somewhat similarly to the traditional three-point method of preaching, which I confess I have not been able to master any more than I have Frame's perspectivalism.

In later years, Frame was to develop a close friendship and working relationship with Vern Poythress, who came to teach New Testament in 1976 and developed a similar "multiperspectival" approach. Although they no longer teach at the same seminary, Frame and Poythress cooperate in a joint blog "John Frame & Vern Poythress: Triperspectival Theology for the Church" (*www.frame-poythress.org*). Included in the many books and articles listed there is Frame's "Primer on Perspectivalism."

One of the things Frame most appreciated about WTS, both as a student and a teacher, was its commitment to "creativity within the bounds of orthodoxy." Its faculty did not merely pass on the Reformed tradition (as Hodge had boasted Princeton did, teaching nothing new). It was and is thoroughly Reformed, but its professors were encouraged to find new ways of

[5] *Theology in Three Dimensions: A Guide to Triperspectivalism and Its Significance (*Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2017).

expressing that tradition, rooted in the redemptive-historical approach to biblical exegesis and in Van Til's challenging of traditional apologetic methods. Murray's and Van Til's names were foremost in this creative orthodoxy, but another who particularly impressed Frame was Meredith G. Kline, whose research into extra biblical suzerainty treaties shed light on the biblical covenants. Kline taught the "framework hypothesis" of creation rather than the day-age view of E.J. Young. (Kline also differed with Murray on the nature of the biblical covenants and the so-called covenant of works. He eventually left Westminster to teach at Gordon-Conwell Seminary but did return in later years as a guest lecturer, and he also became a colleague of Frame's at Westminster in California (hereafter WTSC). Jay Adams joined the faculty in 1968 to teach preaching but became known for his "nouthetic" view of biblical counseling, with its antithetical approach to secular psychology, which Frame (and Adams) saw as an application of Van Tillian principles. (Later, Harvie Conn would apply the same principles, along with those of biblical theology, to missional issues such as contextualization.)

"Creativity within the bounds of orthodoxy," however, can lead to conflict and controversy. In his article, "Machen and His Warrior Children," Frame documents some of those that predated his own teaching career. The first major conflict in which he became personally involved was not with colleagues but rather students who had been influenced by the philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd (hence "Dooyeweerdianism"). In this book, Frame nowhere defines Dooyeweerdianism, but he does in a number of other writings, including in *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology.*

Dooyeweerd made a sharp distinction between pretheoretical (or naïve) experience and theoretical thought. "Pretheoretical experience sees the world as a whole. Theory abstracts various aspects of this world for close study, but is in danger of losing connections, the sense of coherence and wholeness. Further, theory is in danger of considering itself *autonomous*."[6] Theoretical thought, according to Dooyeweerd, consists of no less than fifteen modal aspects or law spheres, from the lowest (numerical) to the highest (faith).

Dooyeweerd and Van Til were friends and collaborators, both saw themselves as developing the legacy of Abraham Kuyper; but they parted company over Dooyeweerd's understanding of the Word of God. As Frame explains it, for Dooyeweerd, "the Word of God is a supratemporal reality that speaks to the human heart in a realm beyond all theory and concept. Scripture, however, is a temporal book. It is directed toward the faith aspect, studied by the science of theology…. Scripture's focus on faith is exclusive, so that Scripture may not address the concerns of other spheres…The disturbing conclusion that I reach from all of this is that for Dooyeweerd, revelation…does not direct the philosopher or the scientist in any propositional

[6] John Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (P & R Publishing Co., 2015), 518.

way…Dooyeweerd never thought through in a theologically responsible way what Scripture teaches about itself. So his philosophy has not succeeded in avoiding the dangers of autonomy. In fact, it has been something of a regression from Kuyper's vision of God's Word embracing all of life" (p. 521).

Disciples of Dooyeweerd charged traditional Reformed theology (including Frame's) with being "scholastic" and "dualistic." Eventually they founded the Institute of Christian Studies in Toronto, and "their very young faculty scoured North America, seeking to radicalize young Reformed people to embrace their cause." Frame asserts, "I was not willing to accept passively the assimilation of the Reformed movement to a group of young militants. Eventually, I became myself a somewhat militant opponent of Doyeweerdianism." However, by 1975 "the controversy calmed down, after some peacemaking on both sides…. Students attracted to Dooyeweerd tended to attend the Institute for Christian Studies rather that WTS, and when they came to WTS they sought to learn from us rather than to attack our position. The issues became matters of academic discussion rather than grounds for institutional warfare." (p. 109)

As the Dooyeweerdian controversy died down, another erupted and was to be all-consuming for a number of years. John Murray's successor Norman Shepherd began to teach that "we are justified either by faith or works, as long as we regard them as *instruments* but not as grounds of justification. The ground of justification is the righteousness of Christ alone" (p. 112). Shepherd subsequently refined and modified his position. By the time I took his course on the Holy Spirit in 1977, he was teaching that we are justified *in the way of* faith and obedience, citing Paul's teaching on the obedience of faith and faith working through love. He also rejected the language of instrumentation as a holdover from Aristotelean philosophy. Some on the faculty and in his presbytery, however, charged him with compromising the Reformed doctrine of justification by grace through faith, since the concept of works implied merit. Shepherd, for his part, saw himself as opposing the concepts of "cheap grace" and "easy believism" rampant in evangelicalism.

As Frame puts it, Shepherd "rejected the popular theory that James takes *justified* in a very different sense from Paul. Rather…James understands justification as Paul does, as that which makes us right with God, justification in the 'forensic' sense. The conclusion that we should take from James…is that we are justified by a faith that works. A faith that doesn't work is a dead faith, that is, no faith at all" (p. 114)

My own view was and is that Shepherd was attempting to do with justification what John Murray did with sanctification. Murray wrote a ground-breaking article on what he called "Definitive Sanctification," pointing out that sanctification is used in the New Testament not only in a progressive sense, as traditionally understood, but to affirm that believers are set apart as already

holy in Christ.[7] Although some would deny it, this seems not unlike the Pentecostal distinction between positional and progressive sanctification.

Shepherd, it seemed to me, was attempting to do the same with justification. But he lacked Murray's precision and regularly changed his language, leading to further confusion. Frame saw Shepherd's teaching as similar to the adage that "it's faith alone that saves, but the faith that saves is never alone" and consistent with the wording of the Westminster Confession of Faith 11. 2. But Shepherd went further and drew an inference that "since works are a necessary element of saving faith, and since saving faith is necessary to justification, works are therefore necessary to justification" (p. 114). The word "necessary" became a sticking point, and because Shepherd refused to drop it, the controversy raged on and ultimately led to his dismissal, not because he was found to be teaching heresy, but essentially to bring the matter to a close and stop the loss of financial support it had caused.

Frame opines, "There did not seem to be any likely way to end the controversy. In every vote that was taken in faculty, in the board, and in the presbytery, Norman was vindicated or at least not condemned. But his opponents were never willing to be quiet. So the end of one phase of the controversy was the beginning of another. I believe the seminary's decision to fire him in 1982 was unjust. However, it's hard to imagine the controversy being resolved in any other way" (p. 116).

Frame does not say anything at this point in his book about his other systematics colleague, Robert (Bob) Strimple. He does mention Strimple later in his (Strimple's) administrative role as president of WTSC. In some respects, Strimple could lay claim to being John Murray's true successor. He was (and presumably is) a painstakingly careful exegete of Scripture unencumbered by overarching dogmatic (as in Shepherd) or philosophical (as in Frame) considerations.

Another controversy, that was church rather than seminary related, was on how to address the issue of abortion. Around 1970 Frame was appointed by the Orthodox Presbyterian General Assembly to a committee to study the matter. This was before the 1973 *Roe v Wade* Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion nationally, but many individual states had already done so. Frame chaired the committee and was the main author of the ensuing majority report that was presented to the 1971 General Assembly. Controversy ensued. A number of commissioners argued that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) did not believe in making statements on "political and social issues" (p. 110). In the end, however, the seriousness of the issue warranted an exception and the following year the report was approved and published one year before *Roe v. Wade*.

Frame's report became a standard in pro-life literature. It is clearly dated in terms of current issues such as embryo research, but the exegetical work is

[7] John Murray, "Definitive Sanctification," in *Calvin Theological Journal,* April 1967.

timeless, careful and convincing. For instance, Frame convincingly argues that the passage in Exodus 21:22-25 often used to argue for a lesser status for the unborn on the assumption that it refers to a miscarriage should instead be understood as referring to a premature birth. Following a thorough exegesis of all relevant passages (e.g. Psalm 51:5, Psalm 139:13, Jeremiah 1:5, Luke 1: 41, 44, Luke 2:21 etc.), the report concludes that while it cannot be conclusively argued from Scripture that the embryo/fetus is a human person from conception, "the Christian is under scriptural obligation *to act on the assumption that* the unborn is a person from conception." [8]

Paul Woolley, late Professor of Church History at WTS, dissented from the majority report. While agreeing with it in the main, he found it to be a piece of "rationalistic folly" to propose that

> a fertilized egg is, from the moment of fertilization, a human person. It may possess the potentiality of becoming a person. It is to be noted that the majority report is too wise to do this. But it affirms that the Christian is under scriptural obligation to act as though this were the case. This is even worse. It is at this point that the Christian is compelled to differ with the majority report. [9]

Although Woolley's position was a minority one on both the committee and the General Assembly, I would judge it to have been the evangelical consensus up to that time. Prior to *Roe v Wade*, abortion was generally considered to be a "Catholic" issue. A turning point was the Koop-Shaeffer film series, "Whatever Happened to the Human Race?" that premiered in Philadelphia in 1979.

Besides these public debates, Frame experienced conflict with the OPC congregation that he had come to think of as his home church. Through the influence of an elder of Dutch Reformed background, Covenant OPC in Blue Bell (outside Philadelphia) began to become more "truly Reformed" with an emphasis on church discipline, psalm singing, and opposition to choirs and solos in public worship. In Frame's view the church "had decided, in effect, to become a Dutch museum piece rather than to carry out the Great Commission in its neighbourhood." Then,

> there was a fateful Saturday a few weeks before my departure for California, when two elders came to my home around 10 AM and talked with me into the afternoon. Their message…was that because I did not support the church's position…and because my teaching in the church

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[8] *Report of the Committee to Study the Matter of Abortion: Presented to the Thirty-Eighth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, May 24-29, 1971* (Philadelphia, PA: The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1971), 14.

[9] Paul Woolley, "Report of the Committee to Study the Matter of Abortion: The Report of the Minority" in *Ibid*., 22.

> did not seem orthodox to them, I was not in their view truly Reformed. After I left…they would do what they could to erase my influence from the congregation. There would no longer be a choir, and people would be instructed that my teaching was of a non-Reformed character. (p. 121).

Frame was devastated.

Teaching at Westminster (California)

Some people thrive on controversy. John Frame does not. Reserved and peaceful by nature, he prefers to avoid it. This was part of his reason for leaving WTS in Philadelphia to help establish a new seminary in Escondido, California. There he also became involved with a church plant, New Life Church, modelled on the church by the same name in the Philadelphia area pastored by Jack Miller, who also taught in the Practical Theology department at the seminary. Dick Kaufmann, a protégé of Miller's became the founding pastor and led its ministry for a number of years before moving to work with Tim Keller in New York.

Frame was in charge of the music ministry. "New Life worship" had become known in the OPC for its blended worship, including contemporary Christian music. Although a skilled organist with a preference for classical music, Frame learned to play what he was to call CCM and defended it against critics, in part because much of it uses the actual words of Scripture. This led to the publication of two books, *Worship in Spirit and Truth* and *Contemporary Christian Music*. It also led to further controversy with those who saw these publications as evidence that Frame was not "truly Reformed" and did not subscribe to the regulative principle of worship.

A hugely positive result of the move westward (although not dependent on it) was Frame's marriage in his forties to Mary Grace O'Donnell (née Cummings, from a prominent OPC family). Mary had been previously married and divorced. Frame, who had known her for several years wrote to Mary following her divorce, "originally with the purpose of expressing sadness and promising prayer," (as well as to demonstrate that she was the "innocent" party and thus free to remarry), but in the end "mentioned the possibility of further correspondence with courtship in view." They were married on June 2, 1984.

Mary brought three children into the marriage and there were the predictable early conflicts with hurt and angry children. The Frames sought the counselling help of Jay Adams, who was now a colleague in Escondido, as he had previously been in Philadelphia. It was the birth of two sons of their own that "decisively made us a family" (p. 134). Mary by all accounts was and is a remarkable blessing. Besides caring for her husband and children, she opened her home to the homeless, introducing her new husband to practical forms of ministry which he financed but did not feel naturally suited to. The homeless ministry, however, brought discomfort to the children and so was

discontinued when the Frames later moved to Orlando, Florida and Reformed Theological Seminary. Mary also homeschooled her children, a practice similarly discontinued in Orlando.

Frame's early years at WTSC were happy ones that finally afforded him the time to write books and articles, his first major project being the publication of *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (1987). This was to be the first of four volumes in what came to be known as Frame's Lordship series, centred around the theme of divine lordship and expressed in terms of his triperspectival model. The remaining volumes would be published after Frame left WTSC.

Frame describes his early years at Escondido as "Collegiality in California." However, this was not to last, as controversy continued to pursue him. The first was the revival of an old criticism that he wasn't sufficiently faithful to the teachings of Cornelius Van Til, whose presuppositional approach to apologetics had become a litmus test of orthodoxy at WTS in Philadelphia. In California, as Frame shows, it became increasingly less so. He was, however, challenged by a colleague, Meredith G. Kline, who complained that he (Frame) was not sufficiently Van Tillian. After a personal confrontation, Kline pursued his criticism of Frame, writing a letter to President Robert Strimple, which Strimple treated with "benign neglect." The discussion stopped for a few years, but then Frame began to hear suspicions from some students about the orthodoxy of his own teaching and suspected that Kline was behind these suspicions. Frame discusses them in some detail. From Kline's point of view, Frame was not only insufficiently Van Tillian, he was too close to Norman Shepherd on justification and Greg Bahnsen on theonomy, both of whom Kline strongly opposed. Frame had admired Kline's "creativity within the bounds of orthodoxy" in Old Testament studies but now found that he "had come to routinely oppose such creativity in others, at least when they differed with his ideas" (p. 152).

However, while Kline found Frame to be not sufficiently Van Tillian, some of Frame's students began to find him *too* Van Tillian, or at least that his positions and arguments "were not sufficient to deal with the objections to presuppositionalism" and his "teaching methods were not helpful in preparing students to be good apologists" (p. 153). These criticisms were made publicly during a lecture in the Modern Mind course. Frame tried to respond with his customary grace, but he was naturally devastated. (He does admit that this incident occurred during a period of decline in mental sharpness, as he was developing symptoms of sleep apnea. As a fellow sufferer I can sympathize!)

Sensing some confusion about his apologetic approach, Frame set himself to review all of Van Til's writings and produced two books, *Apologetics to the*

Glory of God (1994)[10] and *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought*, the latter being published in 1995, the hundredth anniversary of Van Til's birth. Frame does have some differences with Van Til in details of his approach and is more sympathetic to aspects of the "classical" approach than Van Til was, but he remains clearly presuppositional in his basic position. He also has the merit of being extremely clear and readable, whereas Van Til's writings can be obtuse and difficult to understand. (Another unrelated, but important book published during WTSC days, in 1991, was *Evangelical Reunion*.)

Frame describes the rise of what he saw as various factions, including one that raised questions about his commitment to the regulative principle of worship. In his own mind, Frame did not and does not reject the regulative principle but does reject some traditional applications of it. However, his definition of the principle "that everything in worship must have biblical warrant" itself differs from the more restrictive traditional definition "that what is not commanded is forbidden."[11] This original definition has been applied to such issues as musical instruments, choirs, religious holidays and "man-made" hymns – issues that it is difficult to find explicit warrant for in the New Testament. There is, therefore, some basis for accusing Frame of at least holding to a modified version of the regulative principle, but he is far from alone in this among Reformed leaders.

As noted previously, another distinctive of Frame's, following Murray (with whom, incidentally he differed on the regulative principle), has been his commitment to developing theological positions directly from the text of Scripture rather than from historical theology. He has been quite critical of other Reformed theologians (e.g. Berkouwer) on this score and has become severely critical of Westminster in California which has developed in this direction, especially under the presidency of church historian Robert Godfrey. This led to the charge that Frame (along with another colleague) was "unconfessional" because he did not develop his theology from the Reformed confessions. In responding by letter to this criticism, Frame's natural graciousness gave way to "negative reflections on some colleagues and some students by name," for which he later apologized. Despite efforts at reconciliation, the letter "burned all bridges" between Frame and WTSC. Besides, there were rumours that a colleague might be bringing charges against

[10] Since revised and republished as *Apologetics: A Justification of Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2015).

[11] Frame responds, "Yes, it differs from it verbally. But 'command' is not, I think, significantly different from 'warrant,' unless you think that a command must be 'explicit.' And most people who insist on the language of 'commands' do not insist on explicitness, but engage in considerable theological inference from biblical texts. In that practice of inference, they depart from the idea of explicitness. I have thought that what they were seeking, therefore, is better expressed by the term 'warrant' (Email correspondence, February 26, 2018).

Frame for his doctrine of the Trinity.[12] It was time to seek employment elsewhere.

Teaching at Reformed Seminary (Orlando)

The last chapter of Frame's memoir is titled, "Winsomely Reformed at RTS." This is a reference to Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida (one of several branches from the original RTS in Jackson, Mississippi). It was here that Frame happily ended his teaching career with retirement in 2017 at the age of 77. Before landing at RTS, Frame gave serious consideration to joining the faculty of Trinity Evangelical School of Theology (TEDS) in Deerfield, Illinois (a suburb of Chicago). This raised the intriguing question of whether he was better suited to being a Reformed influence in a broadly evangelical seminary, where he would have some Reformed, but not Presbyterian or paedobaptist colleagues like D.A. Carson and John Woodbridge. Other Reformed scholars at TEDS were former students of Frame's (Wayne Grudem, Kevin Vanhoozer, Willem VanGemeren.) In the end, Frame's interest in TEDS foundered on the need to either subscribe to its premillennial statement of faith or else go through some process that would allow him to take exception to it.

After a fairly lengthy process that involved checking out schools and churches as well as the seminary, the Frames left their "paradise lost" in California for another paradise in Orlando. Family and church life thrived, as did Frame's teaching and writing career. He found the students at RTS to be "wonderful" (p. 203) and enjoyed genuine collegiality with a number of faculty, including some old friends who were genuinely committed to being "winsomely Reformed." The move to Orlando also inaugurated "the most fruitful time" of Frame's life in writing and publishing. The second volume of his Lordship series, *Doctrine of God*, although already written before the move, was released in 2002. Shorter writings followed. A popular introduction to theology, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord*, was published in 2006*, Doctrine of the Christian Life* in 2008 and *Doctrine of the Word of God* in 2010, which of all of his books is the one Frame likes best. A Festschrift in his honour, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, to which he personally contributed, was published in 2009. 2012 saw the publication of *The Academic Captivity of Theology*, a development of a much earlier "Proposal for a New Seminary" that advocated

[12] Frame doesn't say why such a serious charge might be brought against him, but explained in personal correspondence that it was because of his defense of Van Til's unusual formulation, "one person, three persons"
(email, December 16, 2017) What Van Til meant by this, which seems hardly unorthodox, is that the God who exists as three persons is a personal being, not an impersonal sum of the three persons.

a less academic and more community-based approach to theological education.[13]

Frame's massive *Systematic Theology* (2013), with a laudatory foreword by J. I. Packer and a multitude of endorsements, is in one sense "a summation of all my work in systematic theology" (p. 211)[14]. His *History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (2015) is an expansion of Frame's "lectures for one course in History of Philosophy and Christian Thought" (p. 212) as well as of similar courses at both Westminsters. Three volumes of *Selected Shorter Writings* were published by 2017.

With a few exceptions, all of Frame's books have been published by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. in Phillipsburg, NJ. The exceptions include *Evangelical Reunion* (Baker, 1991), *The Academic Captivity of the Church* (Whitefield Media, 2013), the memoir being reviewed here (Cascade Press, 2017) and perhaps his most controversial book, *The Escondido Theology: A Reformed Analysis of Two Kingdom Theology* (Whitefield Media, 2011). This last book is significant in that it represents a deliberate choice to re-enter the waters of controversy by critiquing his former colleagues at WTSC.

The sub-title of the book implies that the theology being critiqued is not "truly Reformed," which is an interesting charge to be made by someone who has opposed claims by others to be the sole champions of authentic Reformed theology. The book is in fact a collection of book reviews, not all of which are

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[13] At least in his early teaching career, Frame was known as a tough marker. He clearly admired academic ability and regularly made the best student papers available for the rest of us to read and learn from. At the same time, he respected those less academically gifted whose ministry gifts were different from his. Over the years, he has been exceedingly kind to a host of students past and present (myself included) who have sought his advice on various issues. Since the advent of email, he has responded quickly and thoroughly without any hint that his valuable time is being infringed on. In this way, he has modelled, at least in part, the kind of community-based training advocated in his "Proposal for a New Seminary."

[14] Frame's *Systematic Theology* is not without its critics. For instance, in an otherwise appreciative review, Kevin DeYoung notes: "I find his thinking deeper and stronger on the doctrine of God, knowledge of God, and word of God (topics on which he's already written at length), then on, say, soteriology or ecclesiology. Frame takes around 400 pages to cover the doctrine of God, with close to another 100 on the knowledge of God, and almost 200 on the word of God, while his sections on the person and work of Christ are only 20 pages respectively, the *ordo salutis* around 75 pages, ecclesiology about 60, and eschatology 25 pages. The 20 pages on the person of Christ are very good–clear and to the point–but they just aren't as developed as some material earlier in the book." DeYoung also finds Frame's triperspectivalism to be "extremely tenuous," although he has friends who find it "extremely enlightening" (November 13, 2013*). Frame responds, "Of course, I do reply to these criticisms in the book itself, for what that reply may be worth"* (Email, February 26, 2018).

directly related to two kingdom theology. In his first chapter, Frame identifies two main issues of concern: a sharp separation between law and gospel and the two kingdoms doctrine. Both doctrines are traditionally associated with Lutheranism more than Calvinism, but among the Escondido theologians they have taken on a somewhat novel bent based on the teachings of Meredith G. Kline, who distinguished between the Mosaic covenant as a covenant of law and the Abrahamic covenant as a covenant of grace; and also, between the Noahic covenant as a covenant with all mankind and the Abrahamic as a redemptive covenant with Israel. Frame also takes exception to the Escondido theologian's reliance on what he calls "historical-confessional" theology. He critiques these perspectives from the point of view of neo-Calvinism as that was developed by Abraham Kuyper and his successors, noting especially Kuyper's famous claim that "there is not one square inch of the entire creation about which Jesus Christ does not cry out, 'This is mine!'"[15]

In his preface, Frame notes that in one sense, he is the worst possible person to take on the task of critiquing the Escondido theology. This is because of his personal history with the theologians he critiques. On the other hand, he may be the best, even the only one so qualified, based on that same experience. He leaves the reader to judge whether or not he is "settling scores here, or criticizing this movement for personal reasons."[16] Despite his attempts to avoid personal criticisms, he does admit to a few and there is an uncharacteristic use of intemperate language, such as that those who teach the views he critiques are a "faction, even a 'sect'" and that "in the end their teaching is harmful to Evangelicalism and Reformed Christianity."[17]

In his memoir, Frame explains that he sent *The Escondido Theology* to his default publisher (P & R), but while it was still under review and time passed, he "came to the view that the book was not a P & R title." For one thing, P & R had published one of the books he criticized and his "critique was so sharp" that "I thought they may have felt under pressure to choose sides."[18] After his seeking the advice of a few friends, the book was eventually published by Whitefield Media Productions in Florida. After the book was published, Frame laments, "the cyberworld exploded with fervent attacks on my writing and my person. I had hoped that the book would lead to some thoughtful discussion about these important issues, but that was not to be."[19]

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[15] Quoted in John Frame, *The Escondido Theology: A Reformed Response to Two Kingdom Theology* (Lakeland, FL: Whitefield Media Productions, 2011), 5.

[16] Ibid, xli.

[17] Ibid., xl

[18] Ibid., 207.

[19] Ibid., 208.

I asked Frame why his memoir was not published by P & R and he replied that he did submit it there, but it was thought to be "too harsh on WTSC and too positive towards RTS."[20] Personally, I found it to be a fascinating read that, among other things, explained his departure from WTSC to RTS. But it does raise questions about the wisdom of naming names and going public with personal disputes. It is natural to want to defend oneself against what one deems to be unfair charges, and Frame was clearly hurt several times by erstwhile friends and colleagues. However, speaking from personal experience on a much smaller scale, defending oneself seldom has beneficial results.

Conclusion

At the outset of this article, we called John Frame one of the most outstanding Reformed theologians of our time. Few would disagree with this. Following the example of John Murray, he based his theology on biblical exegesis rather than interaction with the Reformed tradition. His critics, however, accuse him of paying insufficient attention to that tradition. His impressive *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* evidences a broad grasp of the Christian tradition in general, including the Reformation, but there is very little attention to the post Reformation period out of which the Reformed confessions emerged. And even there, Frame tends to approach his subject from the perspective of philosophical rather than strictly theological developments. While he (briefly) expresses appreciation for the rise of pietism as a reaction to Protestant scholasticism, there is nothing about the corresponding Puritan movement or such magisterial theologians as John Owen, who combined scholastic methodology with warm-hearted piety. This has reinforced the above criticism.[21]

His own distinctively perspectival approach has its roots in his philosophical studies, tweaked by his study of Van Til. The overall structure of triperspectivalism (normative, situational, existential) is surely helpful in applying biblical teaching to specific situations as experienced in life, but in my opinion it can be overdone when it is found everywhere as Frame tends to do. Thus, I fall somewhere between those who, in Kevin DeYoung's words find it "extremely enlightening" and DeYoung himself who finds it "exceedingly tenuous."

Frame has been a leading expositor of Cornelius Van Til's presuppositional approach to apologetics. He is not uncritical of Van Til and differs with him in some details. This has led to the charge that he is not sufficiently Van Tillian, as for instance in his sympathetic interpretation of C.S. Lewis, of whom Van

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[20] Email, 17 July, 2017.

[21] See, for instance, John V. Fesko, "(Dis)engaging our Reformed Fathers (?): A Review of John Frame's *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*: A Review Article" in *Ordained Servant: A Journal for Church Officers*, January 2018, https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=669&issue_id=131

Til was dismissive. Frame in turn criticizes those who, in his view, follow Van Til slavishly. Personally, I have found Frame's more practical and pastoral approach to be very helpful, especially in *Apologetics to the Glory of God*. (Since his memoir was published, he has also written *Christianity Considered: A Guide for Skeptics and Seekers,* forthcoming in May of this year.)

Frame has been criticized as less than Reformed in his understanding of and application of the regulative principle of worship. As I read of his troubles with the OPC church in Blue Bell and its movement towards more traditionally Reformed worship, I couldn't help thinking that Frame's mentor, John Murray, would have sided with the Blue Bell elders, although doubtless with more grace. No doubt Frame's musical gifts and background have contributed to his reworking of the regulative principle. At the same time, his defence of contemporary Christian music on biblical grounds despite his personal preference for classical music is evidence of his desire to subject even his personal preferences to biblical scrutiny.

As we saw, Frame was involved in controversy much of his professional life. This went against his retiring and peacemaking nature, but he did not shy away from defending truth or opposing error as he perceived it. He was, however, most at home with the "winsomely Reformed" atmosphere he found at RTS in Orlando. The title of his festschrift *Speaking the Truth in Love* captures well both his love of truth and the pastoral heart with which he approached his academic career. This is surely what makes him an outstanding Reformed theologian.

Cross-Cultural Stumbling Blocks on the Mission Field – Yesterday and Today

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19th Century Missionaries and the Attitude of Superiority

In their book *Mission in an African Way* Oduro, Pretorius, Nussbaum and Born critically reflect on the role of European and North American Protestant missionaries who came to Africa in the 19th century:

> When the missionaries came to Africa they did not simply bring the Gospel message, they also brought Western culture. The issue was not pure Christianity against impure indigenous belief, but Christianity plus Western culture on the one hand, and indigenous African beliefs and culture on the other hand….The important difference between genuine elements of
> Christianity and Western culture was generally not understood and valued.[1]

[1] T. Oduro, H. Pretorius, S. Nussbaum & B. Born, *Mission in an African Way: A Practical Introduction to African Instituted Churches and their Sense of Mission* (Wellington: Christian Literature Fund / Bible Media, 2008), 37.

As the reason for such an attitude the authors identify a strong sense of cultural and spiritual superiority among the Western missionaries.[2] They believed that their own culture with its customs and values was not just more advanced than African cultures but matchless in every way. Missionaries, Oduro and his co-authors argue, were convinced that for new Christians their traditional African cultures were not only 'undesirable' but also 'dangerous'. In addition, these Western missionaries were also heavily shaped in their thinking and practise by the Enlightenment which had freed them from the superstitious beliefs and customs of the Middles Ages.[3] Lesotha points out that the missionaries, like many of their contemporaries, had accepted the myth of the 'Dark Continent'.[4] They believed that in contrast to Europe or North America 'Africa was an embodiment of savagery, intractable ignorance, callous barbarity, and an epicentre of evil'[5].

According to the authors of *Mission in an African Way*, such an attitude of cultural and spiritual superiority had far reaching implications. It resulted in a number of serious mistakes which the Protestant missionaries made.[6] Thus, missionaries treated their African church members in a paternalistic way and did not take their African worldview seriously. They rejected traditional customs and beliefs, such as beliefs in ancestors and witchcraft, as superstition and refused to discuss them with their African converts.[7] Furthermore, they ignored the importance of dreams and visions in African cultures by discarding them as imagination or fantasy. Western missionaries also introduced book-based education which gave African Christians 'a sense of self-worth and independence' but left no room for the rich African oral tradition wherein knowledge and wisdom was passed on from the older to the younger generation.[8]

In a paper entitled *Missionaries Go Home: The Integrity of Mission in Africa*, Adamo and Enuwosa mention further examples of a superiority

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[2] Oduro, Pretorius, Nussbaum & Born, *Mission in an African Way: A Practical Introduction to African Instituted Churches and their Sense of Mission*, 37 & 39.
[3] Oduro, Pretorius, Nussbaum & Born, *Mission in an African Way: A Practical Introduction to African Instituted Churches and their Sense of Mission*, 39.
[4] P. Lesotha, 'Postcolonial Reading of Nineteenth-century Missionaries' Musical Texts: The Case of Lifela Tsa Sione and Lifela Tsa Bakriste', *Black Theology* 12/2 (2014):139-140.
[5] Lesotha, 'Postcolonial Reading of Nineteenth-century Missionaries' Musical Texts: The Case of Lifela Tsa Sione and Lifela Tsa Bakriste', 140.
[6] Oduro, Pretorius, Nussbaum & Born, *Mission in an African Way: A Practical Introduction to African Instituted Churches and their Sense of Mission*, 40.
[7] Oduro, Pretorius, Nussbaum & Born, *Mission in an African Way: A Practical Introduction to African Instituted Churches and their Sense of Mission*, 44.
[8] Oduro, Pretorius, Nussbaum & Born, *Mission in an African Way: A Practical Introduction to African Instituted Churches and their Sense of Mission*, 45.

attitude. They write the following about the treatment of indigenous clergy by missionaries in Nigeria:

> The missionaries were also high-handed in dealing with the Africans. There was racial discrimination in the appointment of bishops. The ordination of ministers [was] done in favour of the British. The conditions of service made by the missionaries for African clergies were poor and offensive to many Africans. A case study here is the treatment, which Western missionaries gave to Bishop Ajayi Crowther in Nigeria. Crowther was the first African bishop. The white missionaries under him were not loyal. They were disobedient and racial. In 1889, white missionaries under Crowther, incited the CMS youth from Cambridge to write a damaging report on the black bishop. They did and the CMS authority stripped Crowther of all power. He died in 1891.[9]

While it is true that there were missionaries who had an attitude of superiority towards indigenous people and made inexcusable mistakes like the ones mentioned above, it would be wrong to suggest that this was true for all missionaries. There are too many examples in African church history of Western missionaries who came to Africa exercising a great deal of humility and displaying sacrificial servanthood. Hiebert distinguishes between the early Protestant missionaries and those who came to Africa in the late 19th century.[10] He argues that the former showed a high degree of love, sacrifice, and cross-cultural sensitivity whereas the latter believed in the superiority of European and North American civilisation. Likewise, Pieter G. Boon states that the early Moravian missionaries in South Africa 'excelled in the essential qualities of humbleness, friendliness and faithfulness'.[11] Elphick stresses that the early Protestant missionaries in Southern Africa, like van Johannes Theodorus van der Kemp, did not display any signs of a superiority attitude.[12] On the contrary, they not only showed a great interest in the cultures of the indigenous people but also challenged the views of their white fellowmen and women:

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[9] D.T. Adamo & J. Enuwosa, 'Missionaries Go Home: The Integrity of Mission in Africa. Paper for the IAMS Assembly Malaysia 2004', http://www.missionstudies.org/archive/conference/1papers/fp/Adamo_&_Enuwosa_Full_paper.pdf; date of access: 03.08.2016.

[10] P.G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 287.

[11] P.G. Boon, *Hans Peter Hallbeck and the Cradle of Missions in South Africa: A Theological-critical Study,* Unpublished doctoral dissertation (Bloemfontein: University of the Free Sate, 2015), 400.

[12] R. Elphick, *The Equality of Believers: Protestant Missionaries and the Racial Politics of South Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

> To early Protestant missionaries like Van der Kemp, the gospel affirmed that Africans were potential brothers and sisters in Christ. They believed that African languages were the most appropriate instruments of evangelization and that African preachers were the most effective heralds of God's word. These convictions challenged white settlers' confidence that Christianity was a badge of their own superiority and their charter of group privileges.[13]

However, there are also examples of missionaries who served in the second half of the 19th century and who had the characteristics of their predecessors. Thus, Spencer Tjijenda writes the following about the German-Baltic Lutheran missionary Carl Hugo Hahn who worked in Namibia:

> Carl Hugo Hahn…was a true follower of Christ, a peacemaker, church planter and the spiritual father of the Herero nation. He loved our people very dearly and he earnestly wanted to see true spiritual transformation that can only come from hearing, believing, and calling upon the name of Jesus Christ and accepting his gospel…This is what motivated Hahn to be concerned about the spiritual condition of the Herero-Mbanderu people.[14]

If Hahn was the spiritual father of the Hereros, Martin Rautanen deserves the title of spiritual father of the Ovambos, another Namibian people group. Rautanen came to Namibia in 1869 and worked in the country for over fifty years. Rieck comments on his life and ministry:

> His life was incarnational. He lived very humbly among the people he preached to. He respected the authorities of the kings, even when he radically disagreed with them. By and by he won the battle of faith and before long the gospel had taken hold of many people. Today the work in Ovamboland rests on this gospel foundation.[15]

The overall picture which Oduro and his co-authors paint of 19th century Protestant missionaries is surely too negative. With their harsh criticism of the missionaries' critical attitude towards certain cultural and religious practices, such as witchcraft and ancestor worship, they are in danger of promoting another extreme and unhelpful mission approach, namely over-contextualisation or syncretism, i.e. 'the replacement or dilution of essential

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[13] Elphick, *The Equality of Believers: Protestant Missionaries and the Racial Politics of South Africa.*

[14] T.S. Tjijenda, 'Hugo Hahn and the Spiritual Condition of the Herero-Mbanderu People', in *Mission Namibia: Challenges and Opportunities for the Church in the 20th Century*, ed. T. Prill (München: Grin, 2012), 144-145.

[15] J. Rieck, 'Dr Martin Rautanen ('Nakambale') – Apostle of the Ovambos', http://jrieck.blogspot.com/2009/10/missionary-pioneers-in-namibia-3-martin.html date of access: 06.08.2016.

elements of the gospel'[16]. In the same way, it is too simplistic to identify, as they do, the attitude of cultural, spiritual and racial superiority as the core root of all problems. A lack of cross-cultural knowledge and sensitivity certainly contributed to the mistakes missionaries made.

Unlike Carl Hugo Hahn and Martin Rautanen, who both grew up in the multicultural and multilingual context of the Russian Empire,[17] not every missionary who came to Africa from Europe or North America in the 19th century had cross-cultural experience let alone cross-cultural training as it is available today. Some were ordinary farmers or craftsmen[18] who had not been exposed to other cultures before entering the African mission field. Others had undergone an intensive preparation which 'consisted of Latin, Greek, classical literature, philosophy, as well as theological training'[19] but were not necessarily prepared to live among people of other cultures. As Schwartz points out, missionaries at that time were often not trained at all to minister cross-culturally.[20] They received spiritual and professional but no cross-cultural training. As a result, these missionaries were prone to fall into cross-cultural pitfalls and to erect barriers which would hinder the spread of the gospel and the growth of the Church.

21st Century Missionaries

One would assume that more than two hundred years after the first Protestant missionaries came to Africa both the attitude of superiority and the lack of cross-cultural sensitivity belonged to the past. Western and non-Western mission organisations and churches emphasize that they are in partnership with African churches and para-church organisations; and in contrast to their 19th century predecessors, many missionaries today receive some form of cross-cultural training before they leave for Africa. However, experience shows that both do not prevent today's missionaries from falling into the same old pitfalls.

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[16] A.S Moreau, 'Syncretism', *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. W.A Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2001), 1158.

[17] Cf. S. Heininen, 'Martin Rautanen in Namibia and the Mission Board in Helsinki', in *Changing Relations Between Churches in Europe and Africa: The Internationalization of Christianity and Politics in the 20th Century,* eds. K. Kunter & J.H. Schøjrring (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), 56.

[18] Cf. B. Sundkler & C. Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 110.

[19] Lesotha, 'Postcolonial Reading of Nineteenth-century Missionaries' Musical Texts: The Case of Lifela Tsa Sione and Lifela Tsa Bakriste', 140.

[20] G.J. Schwartz, 'Missionary Education: Training for Cross-cultural Christian Ministry' 1973, 1 http://wmausa.org/wp-content/uploads/Missionary-Education-By-Glenn-Schwartz.pdf; date of access 06.08.2016.

Unfortunately, an attitude of superiority and a lack of cross-cultural sensitivity can still be found among 21st century Western and non-Western missionaries who serve on the African continent.

Communication, Language and Superiority

A Christian para-church organisation in Southern Africa was led by both foreign missionaries and local Christians. At the leadership meetings, the local African Christians usually kept very quiet while most of the talking was done by the missionaries. The latter interpreted the silence of the former as ignorance or a lack of interest in the affairs of the organisation. The truth, however, was far from that. The local Christians were very much committed to the organisation but, amongst other reasons for their silence, they felt inferior to the missionaries and the missionaries through their behaviour fostered that feeling.

Though English was the official language of the country, hardly any local person spoke it as his or her native language. For the local members of the leadership team English was a second or third language, while the missionaries from the UK and USA were all English native speakers. Often they would use words or expressions their indigenous colleagues had never heard before. When it came to minute writing, a missionary would have completed the task within a very short time, while for a local member of the team it would take much more effort. All advertising material or press releases were written or proof-read by missionaries. In addition, the missionaries showed no interest in learning any of the local languages. They simply did not see the necessity as they were serving in a country which had English as the sole official language and in which people spoke that language to various degrees.

Though it was not their intention, by using the English language the way they did the missionaries not only exercised power over their indigenous co-leaders but also sent out a message of communicative superiority. This message was emphasised even more by the missionaries' refusal to learn a local language.

Sometimes it happens that missionaries who do not have English as their first language find themselves at the receiving end of such a superiority attitude too. English has become the language of global Christianity. This can be seen in a variety of developments. All over the world the teaching of English, for example, is used by missionaries as an evangelistic tool.[21] Most cross-cultural missionary training colleges run their programmes fully or partly in English, and in many international mission organisations English serves as the lingua franca. When it comes, for example, to the appointment of leaders within such

[21] A. Pennycook & S. Makoni, 'The Modern Mission: The Language Effects of Christianity', *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* 4/1 (2005):141.

organisations, English native speakers often have an advantage over their non-native, English-speaking colleagues. They are preferred not because they are better qualified for the position, but because of their language skills: they tend to have the ability to better articulate themselves in the team language than their Brazilian, Korean or Philippine colleagues.

It can have negative effects when missionaries underestimate the power of language. This is especially true for those missionaries who come from English-speaking countries and who serve in a context where English is used on a daily basis though not as a first language. To have a native's command of English in such a situation means to have power. This is certainly true for those parts of Africa which were under British rule or influence in the past and which still use English as the language of politics, business and education. In order to avoid the mistakes described above and to overcome an attitude of superiority which is rooted in language skills, it is important for missionaries to understand how problematic it can be to speak a privileged language in a multilingual context. Weiß and Schwietring write:

> In multilingual contexts, problematic constellations regularly arise from the fact that one language is elevated to the status of the official language and so [thereby becoming] the language of the elites and the powerful, while other languages are relegated to a lower status and discriminated against. This may be observed in various political and historical contexts, and invariably where a plurality of indigenous and partly unwritten languages are subordinated to an official language in state affairs and transactions. This is particularly clear in post-colonial Africa, where the problems of de-colonialisation amidst the continuance of colonial power structures may be read off from the linguistic relations.[22]

For English-speaking missionaries who serve in such a situation, it is crucial that they are aware of (a) the challenges local Christians and fellow missionaries face by using a language which is not their first language and (b) the role a person's first language plays in general:

> The first language acquired by an individual necessarily becomes his "natural language". Everything that he later thinks and decides can be analysed and interpreted by his understanding, but finally he must always reach back to the level of his natural language. This observation touches on the double function of the first language. The first language lays the foundation for the understanding, its possibilities of grasping

[22] J. Weiß & T. Schwietring, 'The Power of Language: A Philosophical-sociological Reflection' (Goethe-Institut, 2016) http://www.goethe.de/lhr/prj/mac/msp/en1253450.htm; date of access: 02.08.2016.

> things and expressing them. And at the same time it socialises the individual.[23]

One way of gaining an awareness of the challenges that local Christians and fellow missionaries face is for English-speaking missionaries to learn the local language or at least one of the local languages. By learning a local language it will be easier for them to identify with local Christians and missionary colleagues. It will help English-speaking missionaries to understand the difficulties and limitations which occur by being compelled to operate in a second or even third language. In addition, English-speaking missionaries will also gain new insights into a local culture which will enrich them personally and better equip them for their ministries. Missionaries, however, who insist on speaking English only face the danger of staying what they were when they first entered their country of service: cultural outsiders. Without learning a local language they might still gain some cultural knowledge but in most cases it will be a rather superficial knowledge.

In his book titled *Cross-cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility*, Duane Elmer underlines the importance of language learning.[24] According to Elmer, to learn another person's language means to value that person.[25] Not to learn a person's language means to reject that person. For missionaries, language learning is therefore a must. Elmer writes: 'We cannot separate ourselves from the language we speak. It is how we define ourselves and make meaning out of life. Not to know my language is not to know me. Even when short-term missionaries make an effort to learn at least some greetings and a farewell, it communicates that they value others.'[26]

The importance of communicating the gospel in the *heart language* of people is emphasized by the evangelist Luke. In Acts, chapter 2, Luke tells us how Jesus' disciples being filled with the Holy Spirit began to speak in other languages on the day of the first Pentecost. Luke also informs us about the reaction of those who were witnessing this manifestation of God's Spirit:

> When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya

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[23] Weiß & Schwietring, 'The Power of Language: A Philosophical-sociological Reflection'.

[24] D. Elmer, *Cross-cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2006).

[25] Elmer, *Cross-cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility*, 66-67.

[26] Elmer, *Cross-cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility*, 67.

> near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!'[27]

John Stott points out that the glossolalia phenomenon of Acts 2 should be interpreted as 'a deliberate and dramatic reversal of the curse of Babel'[28]. At Babel people were separated by language because of their rebellion against God.[29] Because of their desire to be like God, God caused them to speak in many different languages and dispersed them throughout the earth. However, on the day of Pentecost 'the language barrier was supernaturally overcome as a sign that the nations would now be gathered together in Christ'[30]. The glossolalia phenomenon, however, also demonstrates, as Franklin and Niemandt state, God's acceptance of all languages and the importance He places on them as a means of communicating his truths.[31] Timothy Tennent writes that in Jerusalem the followers of Jesus were 'baptized into the reality of the infinite translatability of the gospel for every language and culture'[32].

National Culture and Superiority

A missionary in an African country insisted that all his co-workers would address him by his first name. Unlike his Western fellow missionaries, his indigenous co-workers were not comfortable with his request. They would have preferred to address him by his clergy title and surname as it was custom in their culture, but out of respect for the missionary they felt obliged to do as he wished. The missionary was aware of the local customs but thought that among fellow Christian believers there was no need to follow this particular cultural norm. On one occasion the missionary was invited to preach in the church of one of his female local co-workers. The sermon was well received and the church leadership expressed their gratitude to the missionary. However, after he had left the church the leaders approached his female colleague. They had noticed that she seemed to be very close to the missionary - she was even on first name terms with him. The leaders were now wondering if she was also in an inappropriate relationship with this married man. The woman felt ashamed and tried her best to explain the situation.

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[27] Acts 2:6-11.
[28] J. Stott, *The Message of Acts* (Leicester: IVP, 2000), 68.
[29] Genesis 11:1-9.
[30] Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 68.
[31] K.J. Franklin & C.J.P. Niemandt, 'Vision 2025 and the Bible Translation Movement', HTS Theological Studies 2013, 69(1):3.
[32] T.C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010), 412.

The Western missionary came from a low-context culture, i.e. an informal culture. Many informal cultures are characterised by a small power distance. 'Power distance refers to the lack of familiar relationship between the levels of authority, such as teacher and student, officer and soldier, boss and employee, even parent and child.'[33] In cultures with a low power distance it is normal to address people by their given names. A dislike for titles and other status symbols, as well as any form of protocol is very common too.[34] Gender difference does not play any or hardly any role; men and women are more or less treated equally.[35]

The culture in the missionary's host country, however, was a formal or high context culture. In formal cultures there are a multitude of rules and norms which dominate people's everyday lives.[36] In formal cultures it matters how people dress, how they eat or how they greet each other. Thus, in the missionary's host country it was expected that people in authority, including church leaders and missionaries, were treated with respect. It was the cultural norm to address them with their titles and surnames. By insisting on being called by his first name, the missionary not only disrespected this cultural norm but also sent out a message of cultural superiority: the local Christians needed to be liberated from this cultural rule and they could achieve this liberation by following the missionary's example. While it is true that every Christian needs to abstain from cultural practices which are sinful, i.e. which go against God's standards as we find them in Scripture, the practice of addressing fellow believers in a formal way does certainly not fall into this category.

When dealing with cultural practices there is the danger for Western missionaries to become victims of their categorical thinking. 'Many who live in Western cultures', writes Elmer, 'see life rather black and white.'[37] He continues:

> They often think in a two-dimensional perspective such as we and they, good and bad, moral and immoral, right and wrong, me and you, church and state, or secular and sacred. Even the proverb "Do you see the glass half full or half empty?" represents a two-dimensional or dichotomistic way of seeing life.[38]

Missionaries whose thinking is shaped in such a way are in danger of making judgements which hinder their ministries and the work of the gospel.

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[33] S.A. Lanier, *Foreign to Familiar* (Hagerstown: McDougal Publishing, 2007), 92.
[34] Lanier, *Foreign to Familiar*, 102.
[35] Lanier, *Foreign to Familiar*, 96.
[36] Lanier, *Foreign to Familiar*, 80.
[37] D. Elmer, *Cross-cultural Connections: Stepping Out and Fitting in Around the World*, (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002), 142.
[38] Elmer, *Cross-cultural Connections: Stepping Out and Fitting in Around the World*, 142.

There is the danger that they condemn a particular cultural norm or practice of their host country as wrong and promote their own cultural way of doing things as the only right way, when in reality none of the two are right or wrong but just different. The conviction that their own cultural practices are right might give them a sense of security,[39] but local people may perceive them as being arrogant and as a result refuse to listen to and cooperate with them.

However, Western missionaries are not the only ones who can fall into the cultural superiority trap. Non-Western missionaries from Asia or Latin America are not immune from confusing the gospel of Christ with their own cultures. Whiteman writes the following about Korean missionaries:

> As part of their missionary training and orientation, they seldom if ever are introduced to the insights of anthropology that would help them discover the nature of their cross-cultural interaction and ministry. And because Korea is one of the most homogenous societies in the world, Korean missionaries easily confuse Christianity with their Korean cultural patterns of worship, so their converts are led to believe that to become a Christian, one must also adopt Korean culture. If we Americans are guilty of wrapping the gospel in the American flag, then Koreans metaphorically wrap the gospel in kimchi (a potent symbol of their culture).[40]

When it comes to dealing with cultural differences on the mission field, the apostle Paul sets a good example for today's mission workers. In his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 9 he mentions some of his missionary principles. One of these principles spelt out here by Paul is the principle of cultural sensitivity or adaptation. We can find it in verses 19 to 23:

> Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means

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[39] Cf. S.G. Lingenfelter & M.K. Mayers, *Ministering Cross-culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), 54.

[40] D.L. Whiteman, 'Anthropology and Mission: The Incarnational Connection', in *Mission & Culture: The Louis J. Luzbetak Lectures*, ed. S.B. Bevans (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2012), 82.

> I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings.[41]

In this passage Paul refers to various people groups who he tried to win for Christ: ethnic Jews, Gentiles, and Gentile Godfearers, as well as the weak. Paul stresses that he 'became like' them in order to win them over for the Christian faith. What does he mean by that? Rudolph argues that these words of Paul need to be interpreted in the context of table fellowship: 'When Paul wrote that he "became as" others, in all likelihood he did not mean that he imitated them like a chameleon, but he closely associated with them through table-fellowship, and conformed to their customs (within the limits of God's law) in keeping with the Jewish ethic of hospitality.'[42] Other scholars interpret Paul's words more broadly. To them Paul is simply stating here his willingness to meet people on their own ground as long as no moral principle is at stake.[43] Johnson puts it this way: 'Paul adopts the cultural customs of those to whom he preaches so that nothing will hinder people's embracing the gospel of Christ.'[44]

When we look at Paul's ministry, we see that he demonstrated this attitude a number of times (e.g. Acts 16:3; 18:18; 21:23-24). In Acts 16:3, for example, we read that Paul, who had vehemently rejected the false teaching that circumcision is necessary for salvation (Gal. 2:3-5), did exactly that: he circumcised his new co-worker Timothy. Paul circumcised Timothy not because of a change of conviction, but because he knew that it would be helpful for his evangelistic mission among the Jews in the Lystra area. He circumcised Timothy out of consideration for them and their customs and scruples. As the son of a mixed marriage Timothy was considered to be Jewish, but for some reason he had not been circumcised.[45] Paul was aware that the Jews might not accept Timothy's ministry if he remained uncircumcised.[46] He knew that with an uncircumcised co-worker he might 'not have access to synagogues, his strategic point of contact in most cities'[47]. In other words, by circumcising his young co-worker Paul removed a potential stumbling block for the salvation of the Jews in Lystra and beyond. He practiced cultural sensitivity, so that their

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[41] *The Holy Bible, New international Version*, 2007.

[42] D.J. Rudolph, *A Jew to the Jews: Jewish Contours of Pauline Flexibility in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 191.

[43] E.g. J. Hargreaves, *A Guide to 1 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1996), 122; S.J. Kistemaker, *I Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 305; R.C. Lenski, *I and II Corinthians* (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1955), 376; L. Morris, *1 Corinthians* (Leicester: IVP, 1993), 136; J. Phillips, *Exploring 1 Corinthians: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 197.

[44] A. F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 147.

[45] I.H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Leicester: IVP, 1999), 259.

[46] J. Stott, *The Message of Acts* (Leicester: IVP, 1991), 254.

[47] W.J. Larkin, *Acts* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1995), 232.

culture would not hinder people from accepting the gospel. The apostle Paul was indeed 'prepared to go to extreme lengths to meet people'[48]. Blomberg comments:

> [I]n morally grey areas of life, such as eating food sacrificed to idols, and their numerous cultural equivalents in any era, Paul bends over backwards to be sensitive to the *non-Christian* mores of society around him so as not to hinder people from accepting the gospel. He does not assume that all aspects of culture are inherently evil but practices what has come to be called the contextualization of the gospel – changing the *forms* of the message precisely in order to *preserve* its content. Then Christianity stands the best chance of being understood and even accepted.[49]

For today's missionaries to exercise cultural sensitivity like the apostle Paul did means not to impose their own norms and practices on unbelievers and fellow believers in their host country – even if the missionaries are convinced that their motives to do so are good. A missionary who asks local people to use his first name might do so with good intentions, i.e. to break down barriers and establish personal relationships; but in a country where even married people do not call themselves by their first names, such a request is very likely seen as sign of ignorance or disrespect.

Church Culture and Superiority

A Western missionary who taught homiletics in a small African Bible college noticed that the sermons preached in the local churches he had visited were almost exclusively non-expository topical sermons. Coming from a church tradition which highly valued not only expository preaching but also sermon series which focussed on biblical books, he decided that a change in the churches' practise was needed. To bring about such a change was a long term project and it had to start with the training of future pastors. At the next curriculum review it was decided that the focus of the preaching classes should be expository preaching. Furthermore, students were no longer asked to preach in the weekly college devotions. The preaching was done exclusively by college staff and trusted guest preachers. For each semester a particular book of the Bible was chosen and each preacher was given one chapter to preach from. While the students appreciated the new preaching style, they felt uncomfortable that topical sermons were no longer preached at the college and hardly dealt with in class. They had the impression that their traditional way

[48] Morris, *1 Corinthians*,136.

[49] C. Blomberg, *I Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 186.

of preaching was considered inferior by their lecturers. As a result, most of the students reversed to the preaching of topical sermons when they entered the ministry after graduation.

The Western missionary rightly believed in the central role which preaching should play in the life and mission of the Church. The biblical authors leave us with no doubt that preaching was central to Jesus' earthly ministry and to the ministry of the apostles. When Jesus started his ministry he said to his disciples: 'Let us go somewhere else - to the nearby villages - so that I can preach there also. That is why I have come'[50]. From Pentecost on the apostles continued with the preaching of the good news. In his first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle writes about his motivation: 'Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!' (1 Cor. 9:16). In Acts 6:4 the apostles underline the primacy of preaching when they declare that they will continue to give their 'attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.' The missionary also recognised the great value of an expository sermon, which Chapell defines as 'a message whose structure and thought are derived from a biblical text, that covers the scope of the text, and that explains the features and context of the text in order to disclose the enduring principles for faithful thinking, living, and worship intended by the Spirit, who inspired the text'[51]. However, by insisting on one particular preaching style he sent out a message of theological superiority, a message which did not convince his students.

The missionary came from a church with a strong low-context orientation. In low-context churches the sermons are usually, as Plueddemann points out, expository sermons which 'concentrate on what the Bible says and less on the immediate felt needs of the people'[52]. The sermons are logically structured and usually delivered in a calm and dignified manner. The worship service in low-context churches usually follows a certain order and starts and finishes precisely at the set times. The songs and hymns, which are sung, tend to contain good biblical theology and often focus on the attributes of God and the work of Christ.

Most of the churches the missionary had visited and to which his students belonged were high-context churches. High context-churches prefer topical sermons which draw on the Scriptures but seek to address the present needs of the congregational members.[53] The sermons are often delivered in a lively

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[50] Mark 1:38.

[51] B. Chapell, *Christ-centred Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 31.

[52] J.E. Plueddemann, *Leading Across Cultures: Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), 87.

[53] Plueddemann, *Leading Across Cultures: Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church*, 87.

way.[54] The same is true for the worship in such churches. There tends to be a lot of body movements among the worshippers and the songs which the congregation sing are often vigorous songs with simple repetitive messages.[55]

In most churches we can find elements of both a high-context and a low-context orientation.[56] There is, however, a danger when one orientation becomes too dominant:

> The danger of a service that is overly high-context is that it can lead to shallow emotionalism, self-centeredness and false teaching, while the danger of overly idea-oriented worship is that it can lead to dead orthodoxy. Paul reminded the church in Corinth to pray and sing with the spirit and with understanding (1 Cor 14:15). Apparently, the temptation of the early church was to dichotomize between a high-context emotionalism and a low-context worship without passion.[57]

Paul's principle of becoming all things to all people also applies to matters of church culture. While it is very helpful to introduce students from a high-context church to the concept of sermon series and expository preaching which focuses on a particular Bible passage, they should also be taught to preach expository topical sermons which are grounded in Scripture and which avoid common mistakes like proof-texting or spiritualising.

Exercising sensitivity in matters of church culture also means to abstain from fighting unnecessary theological battles. If a missionary is called to serve in an African community which cherishes the King James Bible, it is not necessarily helpful if he categorically refuses to use this Bible version and preaches all his sermons exclusively from his ESV or NIV Bible (though he might consider these better translations). In a situation like that the missionary might have to become a King James Bible preacher and teacher if he wants people to listen to and learn from him. This does not mean that over time he cannot introduce people to another Bible translation, but it does not help the cause of the gospel to take a rebel stance on non-gospel matters.

Preparing for Cross-cultural Ministry in the 21st Century

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[54] Cf. A. Wright, 'Lessons learned from my minority experience', in *What Happens When Students are in the Minority: Experiences That Impact Human Performance*, in ed. C.B. Hutchison (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 182.

[55] Plueddemann, *Leading Across Cultures: Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church*, 87.

[56] Plueddemann, *Leading Across Cultures: Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church*, 86.

[57] Plueddemann, *Leading Across Cultures: Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church*, 86.

Over thirty years ago, J. Herbert Kane, in his well-known book titled *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission,* made a passionate appeal in favour of thorough theological and cross-cultural training for future missionaries. Kane wrote:

> Qualifications for missionary service have risen considerably in the last twenty or thirty years, but we still have a long way to go. Many mission boards still accept candidates having only the minimum requirement of one year of biblical studies. Others require a seminary education, but say nothing about professional training in cross-cultural communications; missionary anthropology; history, philosophy, theology of missions; and the non-Christian religions – to say nothing of crucial issues or area studies…The time has come to call a halt to this unsatisfactory procedure…We should do our very best to send out fully qualified missionaries. Anything less is unfair to the national churches and dishonoring to the Lord.[58]

In *Preparing to Serve: Training for Cross-Cultural Mission*, published in 1995, David Harley points out that missionaries without proper training cannot only cause receiving churches to suffer but can also inflict serious pain on themselves. Harley states:

> If missionaries are sent out without adequate preparation the consequences can be disastrous on themselves, their families and their ministry. The high rate of attrition among missionaries is proof of that. Many go out without being warned beforehand of the difficulties they may face. They are unable to speak the language. They have little understanding of the culture and the way things should be done. They experience the pressure of isolation and hostility. They see little response to their ministry. They find it difficult to get used to the climate. They succumb to local ailments. Sickness, fatigue and discouragement take their toll, and eventually they return home dispirited and disillusioned. In the worst cases they remain spiritual cripples for the rest of their lives, condemned by their own sense of failure.[59]

Harley's and Kane's observations are still valid today. Whiteman states that 'the need for training missionaries from the West as well as training non-Western missionaries in cross-cultural understanding has never been greater,

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[58] J.H. Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 1982), 7-8.

[59] C.D. Harley, *Preparing to Serve: Training for Cross-cultural Mission* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1995), 7.

especially in this age of 'the coming of global Christianity''[60]. While the value of cross-cultural preparation and theological training for missionaries is widely recognised in mission circles, in practice, many missionaries still go out ill-equipped for their ministries. Most agencies require some kind of formal Bible and cross-cultural training from their missionaries. However, the standards in this field have been lowered in recent years.[61] Instead of one or two years full-time training at a Bible or missionary training college, it is considered sufficient for candidates to attend a six-week residential course or to complete a basic online course in cross-cultural mission.[62] One reason for this development is that fewer candidates are committed to serving for a longer period or even a life-time in Africa, Asia, Europe or Latin America. To require such workers to attend a missionary training college for two years is seen as unreasonable. There seems to be a fear that such a requirement could deter potential workers from going out.

One can only agree with Harley when he writes that '[b]oth Western and non-Western missionaries need to develop a sensitive appreciation to other cultures'[63]. Missionaries who fail to do so demonstrate 'the same colonial attitude that characterised some missionary endeavour in the past'[64]. When missionaries impose their own leadership styles, evangelistic methods, or church culture on the people they are supposed to serve, they become, as Harley puts it, 'guilty of ecclesiastical imperialism'[65]. A thorough programme of cross-cultural and theological training can prevent missionaries from falling into such a pitfall. That being said, another helpful way of preparing for cross-cultural ministry overseas is cross-cultural ministry at home. Christians who have been involved in international student or refugee ministries or who have attended an expatriate or ethnic minority church back home are usually better equipped to serve abroad than those who have not, including Christians who have only superficial experience with both Christians and non-Christians from other cultures.

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[60] Whiteman, 'Anthropology and Mission: The Incarnational Connection', 83.

[61] T. Prill, 'Evangelical Mission Organisations, Postmodern Controversies, and the New Heartbeat of Mission', *Foundations: An International Journal of Evangelical Theology* 61 (2011):32.

[62] Prill, 'Evangelical Mission Organisations, Postmodern Controversies, and the New Heartbeat of Mission', 33.

[63] Harley, *Preparing to Serve: Training for Cross-cultural Mission*, 9.

[64] Harley, *Preparing to Serve: Training for Cross-cultural Mission*, 9.

[65] Harley, *Preparing to Serve: Training for Cross-cultural Mission*, 9.

Shepherds and Servants: the two offices Christ appointed in his Church

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Introduction: Church government and the gospel-centered mission of the Church

The phrases "church government" and "gospel-centered mission" aren't often put together. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* (WCF), however, sees a strong connection between the two. It affirms that "The Lord Jesus, as king and head of His Church, has therein appointed a government, in the hand of Church officers", and then almost immediately affirms that Christ has committed to these officers "the ministry of the Gospel" (WCF 30.1-2). The Reformed churches are universally agreed on this point: the Lord Jesus alone is "the king and head of His Church"; he has appointed the "government" of his Church, under which the Church pursues its gospel-centred mission in the world; and he has appointed this government in two stages – the "extraordinary" ministry of the apostles, and the "ordinary and perpetual" ministry of those he appointed to lead his Church after them.[1]

[1] WCF (1646) §30.1-2; cf. 25.1, 6; *Westminster Larger Catechism* (WLC 1647) §45. For other Reformed confessions on this point: *First Helvetic Confession* (1536) §18; *Gallic Confession* (1559) §29-30; *Belgic Confession* (1561) §30; World Reformed Fellowship *Statement of Faith* §8.2. For classic discussions, see Calvin, *Institutes* §4.3.1; H. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Vol. 4 – Holy Spirit, Church and New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008): 329. The

There has, however, been a long-running discussion regarding the number of "ordinary and perpetual" offices. The discussion has generally involved three alternatives. The *four-office* view, taking its lead from John Calvin, identifies the offices of "pastor" (= "minister"), "doctor" (= "professor" or "teacher"), "governor" (= "elder"), and "deacon."[2] Despite the influence of Calvin, the majority of the Reformed churches, while recognizing that the Lord gifts his Church with "teachers", have not been convinced of the biblical basis for the *office* of "doctor." The *three-office* view identifies as offices only the roles of "minister", "elder", and "deacon". This view was affirmed in a number of the early Reformed confessions,[3] received its classic defense from C. Hodge and T. Smyth,[4] and has been developed more recently by a number of Reformed scholars and pastors.[5] This view, however, relies on a strong distinction between the offices of "minister" and "elder," which is difficult to demonstrate from the Scriptures. The *two-office* view recognizes only the offices of "elder" and "deacon". This seems to have been the position of the early post-apostolic churches,[6] and was perhaps first recognized in the Reformation period by Johannes à Lasco (d. 1560).[7] It became the consensus position among the "presbyterians" at the Westminster Assembly,[8] and was subsequently

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language of "extraordinary" and "ordinary and perpetual" offices is drawn especially from *The Form of Presbyterial Church Government* (1647), Preface, and §3.

[2] Calvin, *Institutes* § 4.3.3-5. For Reformed confessions that adopt this view, see: *Synod of Middelburg* (1581) §2; *Synod of Gravenhage* (1586) §2; *The Form of Presbyterian Church Government* (1647) §3.

[3] *Gallic Confession* (1559) §29; *Belgic Confession* (1561) §30-31; *Synod of Wezel* (1568) §2, 4–5; *Synod of Emden* (1571) §13–14.

[4] C. Hodge, *Discussions in Church Polity: From the Contributions to the "Princeton Review"* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1878), 118-33, 262-99; T. Smyth, "The Name, Nature and Function of Ruling Elders," "Theories of Eldership (I)," "Theories of Eldership (II)," "Ecclesiastical Catechism," in J. W. Flinn, ed. *Complete Works of Rev. Thomas Smyth, D.D.*, 10 vols. (Columbia SC: R.L. Bryan, 1908), 4:13-164; 167-275; 277-358; 435-519.

[5] R. S. Rayburn, "Three Offices: Minister, Elder, Deacon," *Presbyterion: Covenant Seminary Review* XII: 105-14; M. R. Brown, ed. *Order in the Offices: Essays Defining the Roles of Church Officers* (Duncansville, PA: Classic Presbyterian Government Resources, 1993); E. P. Clowney, *The Church*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove: IVP, 1995), 210-12; D. Macleod, *Priorities for the Church: Rediscovering Leadership and Vision in the Church* (Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2003), 41-56; C. Van Dam, *The Elder* (Philipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2009); D. D. Gebbie, "Two or Three Office: A Slash at the Gordian Knot," *Haddington House Journal* 18 (2016): 137-49.

[6] See esp. *1 Clem* 42.4-5; 44.1-3, 5; 47.6; 57.1; cf. 1.3; *Did*. 15.1; Polycarp, *Phil*. 1.0; 5.2-3; 6.1; cf. Jerome, *Letter CXLVI to Evangelus*; *Letter LXIX to Oceanus* §3 (in D. W. Hall and J. H. Hall, eds., *Paradigms in Polity: Classic Readings in Reformed and Presbyterian Church Government,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 57-60); *Commentary on Titus* (in J.-P. Migne, ed. *Patrologia cursus completus: Series Latina*, 221 vols. (Paris: 1844–1864), 26: 596B–597AB).

[7] See J. à. Lasco, *Opera* (Amsterdam: F. Muller, 1866), II.51.

[8] C. Van Dixhoorn, "Presbyterian Ecclesiologies at the Westminster Assembly," in *The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: Church Polity in the English Speaking World c.1636-1689*, ed. H. Powell

developed in Britain by T. Witherow and J. Bannerman,[9] on the European continent by H. Bavinck,[10] and in the United States by J.H. Thornwell, R.L. Dabney, and T.E. Peck.[11] The two-office view has also been championed by a number of scholars and pastors in recent years.[12]

The question of the number of offices is significant for the life and mission of the Church, but has not been satisfactorily resolved. My goal in this paper, therefore, is to re-examine the question, and to argue that the Lord has appointed two, and only two, offices in his Church: "Shepherds" (= elders / overseers / pastors) to lead, teach, and pray for God's people, while modeling life in Christ for them; and "Servants" (= deacons), to facilitate the church's mission, to manage the practical and material needs of the church, and especially to care for those who are vulnerable, weak, and poor.[13] There is not

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and E. Vernon (Manchester: 2016), 17: "Where the assembly's presbyterians eventually found themselves most unified was in the realm of church polity, or practice. They were united: the New Testament held out only two offices in the church: varieties of elders, and deacons."

[9] T. Witherow, "The New Testament Elder," *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* (1873): 201-28 and J. Bannerman, *The Church of Christ: A treatise on the nature, powers, ordinances, discipline and government of the Christian Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1869), Part IV.

[10] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Vol. 4*, 327-89.

[11] J.H. Thornwell, "The Ruling Elders," "The Ruling Elder a Presbyter," "Resolutions as to the Eldership," and "Presbyterianism and the Eldership," in J. B. Adgar and J. L. Girardeau, eds., *Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974 (1871-73)), 4: 43-142; R. L. Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," in *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1967 (1891)), 2: 119-57; and T. E. Peck, *Notes on Ecclesiology* (Greenville, SC: Presbyterian Press, 2005 (1892)), 179-86.

[12] G. W. Knight III, "Two Offices (Elders/Bishops and Deacons) and Two Orders of Elders (Preaching/Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders): A New Testament Study," *Presbyterion: Covenant Seminary Review* XI (1985): 1-12; "Two Offices and Two Orders of Elders," in *Pressing Toward the Mark: Essays Commemorating Fifty Years of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, ed. C. G. Dennison and R. C. Gamble (Philadelphia: Committee for the Historian of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986), 23-32; *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 175-77; W. D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 306-07; B. L. Merkle, *The Elder and Overseer: One Office in the Early Church*, StBL (New York: Peter Lang, 2003); B. L. Merkle, "Ecclesiology in the Pastoral Epistles," in *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul's theology in the Pastoral Epistles*, ed. A. J. Köstenberger and T. L. Wilder (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 173-98; G. P. Waters, *How Jesus runs the church* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2011), chpt 4.

[13] I adopt the terms "Shepherd" and "Servant" for these offices for two reasons: (i). "Shepherd" and "Servant" are good biblical terms for the two biblical offices ("Shepherd": Eph 4.11; cf. Acts 20.28; 1 Pet 5.2; "Servant": Phil 1.1; 1 Timothy 3.8, 12; cf. Acts 6.1-6); (ii). "Shepherd" and "Servant" are less familiar than the customary "Minister", "Elder", and "Deacon" and so may help us think about the offices in biblically faithful ways rather than merely defaulting to our traditional understandings. I'm not suggesting that any particular church should necessarily adopt these titles for its officers.

space here to explore a number of important related questions. My goal is simple: to lay out the biblical vision for the basic elements of the Church's government at the level of the particular church, and to argue that the Church's gospel-centered mission is best served by teams of Shepherds and Servants working together, leading and serving according to God's design. The argument proceeds in two parts: Part 1 makes a brief argument for recognizing a biblical form of church government; Part 2 examines the evidence for the two-office view.

1. The biblical form of church government

The Reformed discussion regarding the number of offices, of course, assumes that the Scriptures teach on this question. The long-held Reformed conviction is that the central matters of the Church's government – about which the Lord speaks in his Word – are neither ἀδιάφορα ("disputable matters"), nor even *de jure humano* (established "by human right"), but *de jure divino* (established "by divine right"). They are part of the Lord's revealed will for his people.[14] This is why the *Presbyterial Form of Church Government* (1647) speaks of the "ordinary and perpetual" offices: "ordinary" in the sense that they are *ordained* by the Lord, and therefore the regular form that leadership should take in his Church; "perpetual" because they are the form that the Lord intends pastoral leadership to take in his Church not only in the first century, or in the sixteenth century, but until his return.[15]

This conviction has not been shared by other branches of the universal Church. On the one hand, the Roman Catholic Church has tended to downplay any distinction between the "extraordinary" and the "ordinary" offices. In the words of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "the Apostles left bishops as their successors" and "gave them *their own position* of teaching authority".[16] On the basis of this strong continuity between the apostles and the bishops, Rome asserts that faithfulness to the God-given apostolic constitution of the Church is guaranteed by an unbroken chain of "apostolic succession." On the other hand, the churches of the Anglican Communion, and of the evangelical

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[14] cf. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Vol. 4*, 386-87: in the Reformed churches "it was the general conviction that the government of the church must substantially rest on a divine law."

[15] The Bible doesn't use the language of Church "government" or "offices" (but note Acts 1.20 (citing Ps 109.8 = LXX 108.8) and 1 Timothy 3.1: "oversight" (ἐπισκοπή)). It does, however, teach that the Lord has appointed leaders for his Church, and present a consistent pattern of people being formally appointed to public leadership roles, usually through the laying on of hands and prayer (Num 8.10-11; 27.18, 23; Deut 34.9; Acts 6.6; 13.3; 1 Tim 4.14; 1 Tim 5.22; 2 Tim 1.6; cf. Heb 6.2). I use the term "office" as a shorthand for *formally established public leadership roles* in the Church. cf. J. Murray, "Office in the Church," in *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Edinburgh: 1977), 2: 357-58

[16] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* § 77 (emphasis added).

and pentecostal movements, have tended to reject the apostolic institution of the ordinary offices.[17] Those who hold this position often argue that the New Testament (NT) texts are *ad hoc* documents, which reflect a multiplicity of governmental forms, and conclude that the apostolic form/s of church government, reflected in the NT, are not *prescriptive* for the Church but only *descriptive*.[18] On this understanding, faithfulness to the God-given apostolic constitution of the Church is secured by faithfulness to the apostolic gospel in the Scriptures, and may therefore be pursued without reference to the concrete forms of government that the apostles established.[19]

Nevertheless, the Scriptures do provide firm support for the classic Reformed conviction that the "ordinary and perpetual" offices are *prescriptive* for the Church. To be sure, the distinction between prescriptive and descriptive authority is a necessary and important implication of the divine authority and God-given multiformity of Scripture: all of Scripture is "the rule of faith and life" (WCF 1.2), but not every passage rules us in the same way.[20] Bavinck is certainly correct that since "the revelation recorded in Scripture is a historical and organic whole … a dogma that comes to us with authority and intends to be a rule for our life and conduct *must be rooted in and inferred from the entire organism of Scripture*."[21] I don't have space here to make a detailed argument

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[17] e.g. The *Thirty-Nine Articles* §36 does not seek to provide a positive biblical basis for episcopalian polity, but is content that "The Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and Ordering of Priests and Deacons" contains nothing "that of itself is superstitious and ungodly." More recently, J. Webster, "The Self-Organizing Power of the Gospel of Christ: Episcopacy and Community Formation," in *Word and church: essays in Christian dogmatics* (Edinburgh; New York: T & T Clark, 2001), 191-201 provides an argument that God's Church is created by the Word through the Spirit, and also given "oversight" or "office" as a gift, but that this office is not given in any specific form – the form is ἀδιάφορα ("a disputable matter").

[18] In recent scholarship, see, for example, E. Käsemann, "Unity and Multiplicity in the New Testament Doctrine of the Church," in *New Testament Questions of Today*, New Testament Library (London: SCM, 1969), 256-57; G. Fee, "Reflections on Church Order in the Pastoral Epistles, with Further Reflection on the Hermeneutics of Ad Hoc Documents," *JETS* 28 (1985): 141-51 (142-43); M. J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 1094-95; M. Bockmuehl, "Is There a New Testament Doctrine of the Church?," in *Scripture's Doctrine and Theology's Bible: How the New Testament Shapes Christian Dogmatics*, ed. M. Bockmuehl and A. J. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 35.

[19] e.g. R. T. Beckwith, *Elders in every city: the origin and role of the ordained ministry* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003), 11 recognizes that "Earlier in the apostolic age, as is well known, the presbyter-bishop seems to have been one and the same person", but argues, on the basis of tradition, for an episcopalian form of church government.

[20] H. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Vol. 1 – Prolegomena* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 459 traces the prescriptive/descriptive distinction to intramural debates within the Protestant churches of the seventeenth century.

[21] *Reformed Dogmatics 1*, 460 (italics added).

for the prescriptive authority of biblical teaching on the offices. Such an argument, however, might well develop the following five brief observations.

i. *Divine institution*: God himself gave to the Church not only the apostles, but also a range of other leaders, including elders, overseers, and pastors. Indeed, all three members of the Trinity are involved in this gift as God the Father appointed leaders in his Church (1 Cor 12.28), God the Son gave the "pastors and teachers" (Eph 4.11-12), and God the Holy Spirit appointed the Ephesian elders as "overseers" to shepherd God's flock (Acts 20.28).

ii. *Continuity across the covenants*: The unity of one people of God in the one covenant of grace means that we are right to expect a fundamental continuity between the forms of the old covenant Church and the new, even as we also expect a real "newness" to accompany the advent of Christ and the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit.[22] It is significant, then, that the Lord has always led his Church by "elders". There is, in fact, no period in biblical history, from the Exodus onwards, in which God's people are not led by elders.[23] In this context, the book of Acts introduces the elders in the new covenant Church without explanation (Acts 11.30), and indicates, by means of a contrastive parallel, that the "apostles and elders" of the new covenant Church have taken up the role of the "chief priests and elders" of the Jews and replaced them as the leaders of God's new covenant people (Acts 4.5, 8, 23 with Acts 15.2, 4, 6, 22-23).[24] The book of Revelation also seems to indicate that "elders", in some form, remain a part of God's people in the eschatological consummation.[25]

iii. *Consistent apostolic practice*: The apostles appointed "elders in every church" (Acts 14.23; Tit 1.5). This approach was not idiosyncratic to any one apostle, but common to Paul (Tit 1.5), Peter (1 Pet 5.1-4), and

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[22] For the unity of the one people of God in Scripture: Gen 12.3; Isa 2.1-4; Jn 10.16; Matt 8.11; 28.18-20; Rom 11.13-32; Eph 2.11-22; Heb 11.1-40; Rev 5.9-10; 7.1-12. In the Reformed Confessions: *Scots Confession* (1560) §16; *Belgic Confession* (1561) §27; WCF (1646) §7.3, 5-6; 25.1-2.

[23] The Hebrew adjective זקן occurs 174 times in the Hebrew Old Testament (MT) and means either "old/er man" or "elder" depending on its context. The LXX regularly translates זקן with the Greek adjective πρεσβύτερος, which is regularly used as a substantive, and occurs 202 times in the LXX, of which approximately 140 refer to leading officials in Israel ("elders"). The Gospels and Acts include 32 references to the "elders" (πρεσβύτερος) of the Jews.

[24] cf. G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 819-23, esp. 822: "the function of the Jewish Elders in Acts 4 and the Christian Elders in Acts 15 appears virtually identical. Both are in an official position in their respective covenant communities to adjudicate whether a new theological teaching is valid."

[25] οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι: Rev 4.4, 10; 5.8; 11.16; 19.4; cf. πρεσβύτεροι: Rev 5.5-6, 11, 14; 7.11, 13; 14.13.

James (Jas 5.14). Moreover, the apostles appointed elders / overseers not only in Jewish churches, but also in Gentile and mixed churches (Phil 1.1; 1 Tim 5.17; 1 Pet 5.1-4), and across a wide range of geographical regions, so that there were elders / overseers leading the churches in Jerusalem (Acts 11.30; 15.2-6, 22-23; 16.4), in Ephesus (Acts 20.17; 1 Tim 5.17), in Philippi (Phil 1.1), in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet 5.1-4 with 1.1), and in the whole of the dispersion addressed by James (Jas 5.14 with 1.1). While some NT churches were not yet fully ordered (e.g. Corinth), the apostles' concern was to appoint elders in *every* church.[26]

iv. *Universal and enduring regulations*: Paul provides universal and enduring regulations for elders and deacons. In 1 Timothy, Paul's regulations for the offices come at the heart of a discrete section the letter (1 Tim 2.1-3.16) which emphasizes, in various ways, the universal and enduring significance of the instructions it contains: they are grounded in creation (1 Tim 2.8-15), apply to "all people" (1 Tim 2.1, 4-5), and are "how people *ought to conduct themselves* in God's household" (1 Tim 3.14-15). More particularly, Paul introduces the regulations regarding the offices with the formula "here is a trustworthy saying" (1 Tim 3.1), which he otherwise reserves for summaries of the universal and enduring gospel itself.[27] Similarly, in Titus, Paul's command to "appoint elders in every town" (Tit 1.5), who "hold firmly to the trustworthy message" (Tit 1.9), flows directly from Paul's own apostolic commission to announce the gospel in fulfillment of God's eternal purpose (Tit 1.1-3).

v. *Safeguarding and promoting the gospel*: the apostles appointed elders to promote the gospel in the midst of opposition, and to guard the gospel against false teaching.[28] Since persecution from without, and false teaching within, will characterize the Church's life for the whole period

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[26] cf. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Vol. 4*, 343: in the early churches "the office of elder was a familiar, universally present apostolic institution." Note also the more generic descriptions of Christian leaders, which could possibly refer to elders, in the churches in: Rome (Romans 12.8); Thessalonica (1 Thess 5.12); and the churches addressed by Hebrews (Heb 13.7, 17, 24).

[27] 1 Tim 1.15; 4.8-10; 2 Tim 2.11-13; Tit 3.5-8. It is possible that πιστὸς ὁ λόγος in 1 Tim 3.1 refers backwards to 1 Tim 2.15. More likely, however, it refers forwards to 1 Tim 3.1b. See G. W. Knight III, "1 Timothy 3:1 and Its Saying," in *The Faithful Sayings in the Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979 (1968)), 50-61; P. Ellingworth, "The 'True Saying' in 1 Timothy 3:1," *BT* 31 (1980): 443-45.

[28] Note: i. Acts 14.21-23 with 20.27-32; ii. 1 Tim 3.1-7 and 5.17-25 with 1.3-7, 19-20; 3.15-16; 4.1-7; 5.11-16; 6.20-21; iii. Tit 1.5 with 9-16. cf. also 2 Tim 2.2 with 2 Tim 2.14-18, 23-26; 3.1-13.

> between Jesus' resurrection and return,[29] the apostolic institution of elders is designed for the mission and condition of the Church in the whole of the inter-advent age.[30]

Together, these observations provide a strong cumulative case that the Scriptures, taken as "an historical and organic whole" do not merely describe apostolic practice, but reveal the Lord's enduring will for the government of his Church. Faithfulness to the apostolic constitution of the Church involves not only faithfulness to apostolic gospel and its written promulgation in the Scriptures, but also faithfulness to the apostolic pattern of ministry. There *is* a biblical form of church government.

It is important to be clear, however, about the relationship between the biblical form of church government and the gospel-centered mission of the Church. To state it negatively, the biblical form of church government is not part of the *esse* of the Church – not part of its "essence". This has four important negative corollaries. First, *a fully biblical church government is not part of the gospel*. It is an important part of "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20.27), but it is not a matter of first importance (1 Cor 15.3). It is therefore perfectly possible for a particular church to faithfully proclaim the gospel without fully embracing the biblical form of church government. Second, *a fully biblical church government is not one of the marks of the true Church*. The true Church will be found wherever God's Word is proclaimed, the sacraments are administered, and discipleship (with discipline) is pursued, all in the power of the Spirit, because that's how God calls his people to himself, and produces saving faith in Christ, and so builds his Church.[31] Third, *a fully biblical church government is not a means of grace which somehow guarantees church health and growth*. It is tragically possible for a would-be "church" to have the biblical form of church government, but no gospel, no prayer, no love, and no spiritual vitality. If we are ever forced to choose between the two, it is an easy choice. Fourth, *Scripture does not provide all the details of the church's government*, but only the *central matters*, including the offices of Shepherd (elder) and Servant (deacon) and their basic functions. The details of how these officers lead and serve together to enable the whole body of Christ to pursue its gospel-centered mission in the world need to be worked out with prayerful

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[29] Note: Matt 5.11-12; 7.15; 24.9-11, 24; Mk 13.9-13, 22; Lk 6.22; 21.12-17; Jn 16.2; 2 Thess 2.9, 11; 1 Tim 4.1-5; 2 Pet 2.1; 3.1-4; 1 Jn 4.1; Jude 3-4, 14, 17-19; Rev 2.2, 6, 14-15, 20, 24-25.
[30] cf. Beale, *NTBT*, 819-23.
[31] I refer here to the Reformational understanding of the "marks" of the true Church. For the Confessions, see: *Augsburg Confession* (1530), §7; *Scots Confession* (1560), § 20; *Belgic Confession* (1561), § 29; *Thirty-Nine Articles* (1563), §19; WCF (1647) §25.4. There has been some disagreement as to whether church discipline should be considered a "mark". The key point here is that it is possible to preach the word, administer the sacraments, and exercise discipline, without fully embracing the biblical form of church government.

wisdom in culturally appropriate ways (cf. WCF §30.1 with 1.6).[32] Nevertheless, there *is* a biblical form of church government. Thus, to state it more positively, we might say that the biblical form of church government, while not part of the *esse* of the Church, is part of its *de bene esse* – part of its "well-being". It is a *God given means by which the church best pursues its gospel-centered mission in the world*. For this reason, we are right to ask the next question: what is the *shape* of the government that the Lord has given to his Church?

2. Shepherds and Servants

The two-office structure to the Church's government is clearest in texts like Philippians 1.1, where Paul addresses the church "together with the overseers and deacons", and in 1 Timothy 3.1-13, where Paul regulates the offices of "overseer/elder" and "deacon".[33] The full scope of the apostolic teaching, however, requires some attention.

2.1 The Shepherd office

The apostles envisage a single pastoral office – that of the "Shepherd" – and refer to the men appointed to this office by three interchangeable titles: they are "elders", "overseers", and "pastors" or "shepherds". These titles each have a rich history in the OT, and in the NT two of the three are applied to the Lord Jesus himself.[34] The title "elder" (πρεσβύτερος) emphasizes the wisdom and maturity required for the role.[35] The title "overseer" (ἐπίσκοπος) emphasizes the work of carefully governing or "watching over" the Church.[36] The title

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[32] cf. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Vol. 4*, 386-87: in the Reformed churches "it was the general conviction that the government of the church must substantially rest on a divine law. In this connection it was realized, however, that Scripture is not a book of statutes, does not deal in detail with a host of particulars, and leaves a great deal to the discretion of the churches".

[33] A two-tier structure in the NT offices may also be suggested by 1 Peter 4.10-11. See further: Knight III, *Pastoral Epistles*, 175-77.

[34] For Jesus as "Shepherd" (ποιμήν): Matt 25.32; 26.31; Mk 14.27; John 10.2, 11, 14, 16; Heb 13.20; 1 Pet 2.25; 5.4; cf. Matt 15.24; Mk 6.34. For Jesus as "Overseer" (ἐπίσκοπος): 1 Peter 2.25.

[35] For πρεσβύτερος in the OT (LXX), usually translating the Hebrew word for "elder" (זקן) see above (fn. 23). In the NT, πρεσβύτερος occurs 68 times, 16 of which refer to non-apostolic Christian leaders holding a formally recognized position or role in the church (Acts 11.30; 14.23; 15.2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16.4; 20.17; 21.18; 1 Tim 5.17, 19; Tit 1.5; Jas. 5.14; 1 Pet 5.1, 5). For discussion, see "πρεσβύτερος," in *NIDNTTE*, ed. M. Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 4:127-35.

[36] In the OT (LXX), the noun ἐπίσκοπος occurs 15 times, usually translating the Hebrew noun for "overseer" or "leader" (פקיד). In the NT ἐπίσκοπος occurs only 5 times, always with reference either to Jesus (1 Pet 2.25) or Christian leaders other than the apostles (Acts 20.28; Phil 1.1; 1 Tim 3.2; Tit 1.7). cf. "oversight" (ἐπισκοπή): Acts 1.20; 1 Tim 3.1); "to oversee"

"pastor" or "shepherd" (ποιμήν) emphasizes the calling of these leaders to lead, feed, and care for God's "flock", while protecting them from harm.[37]

2.1.1 One pastoral office: Shepherds (elders = overseers = pastors)

Five key passages make it clear that the apostles use the terms "elder", "overseer", and "pastor" or "shepherd" to refer to one and the same role.[38]

i. Acts 20.17-31: Luke narrates how Paul summoned "the elders" (τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους) of the Ephesian church to meet him in Miletus, and then addressed this same group of men as those whom "the Holy Spirit has appointed … as overseers (ἐπισκόπους), to shepherd (ποιμαίνειν) the church of God" (Acts 20.17, 28). The Ephesian "elders" were also "overseers" whose work was "to shepherd" or "pastor" God's church.

ii. 1 Peter 5.1-4: when Peter writes to the churches of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet 1.1), he addresses "the elders (πρεσβυτέρους) among you", and charges them to "shepherd (ποιμάνατε) God's flock … exercising oversight (ἐπισκοποῦντες)" (1 Pet 5.1-2). The apostle Peter thus combines the same three terms as Paul in Acts to refer to the single group of leaders and to describe their work.

iii. Titus 1.5-9: Paul reminds Titus that he left him on the island of Crete for the express purpose that he should "appoint elders in every town" (Tit 1.5: πρεσβυτέρους), and then immediately describes the qualifications required of "the overseer" (Tit 1.7: τὸν ἐπίσκοπον). The switch from the plural "elders" (Tit 1.5: πρεσβυτέρους) to the singular "overseer" (Tit 1.7: τὸν ἐπίσκοπον) does not indicate that Paul now refers to a single individual either within or above a larger group, but is a generic singular, used to refer to a class of persons ("overseers").[39] That is, having commanded Titus to appoint "elders in every town" (Tit 1.5), Paul now describes the kind of person appropriate to the role.

(ἐπισκοπέω): 1 Pet 5.2. For discussion, see "ἐπίσκοπος," in *NIDNTTE*, ed. M. Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 2:248-52.

[37] In the OT (LXX), the noun ποιμήν (translating Hebrew: רעה; "shepherd") occurs 81 times, and the cognate verb ποιμαίνω (translating Hebrew: רעה; "to shepherd") occurs 54 times. In addition to references to the ordinary care for sheep, the language is regularly used as a metaphor for leadership, especially kingship. In the NT, the noun ποιμήν occurs 18 times. Of these occurrences: (i). 11 refer to Jesus as the "shepherd" (Matt 25.32; 26.31; Mk 14.27; John 10.2, 11, 14, 16; Heb 13.20; 1 Pet 2.25; 5.4), and 1 refers to Christian leaders as "shepherds" (Eph 4.11). cf. ποιμαίνω ("to shepherd"): Jn 21.16; Acts 20.28; 1 Pet 5.2. For discussion, see "ποιμήν," in *NIDNTTE*, ed. M. Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 4:81-87.

[38] For a classic discussion, see: J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, 8 ed. (London: Macmillan, 1888), 95-99, esp. 95: "It is a fact now generally recognized by theologian of all shades of opinion, that in the language of the New Testament the same officer in the Church is called indifferently 'bishop' (ἐπίσκοπος) and 'elder' or 'presbyter' (πρεσβύτερος)." More recently: Merkle, "Ecclesiology," 180-90.

[39] cf. Knight III, *Pastoral Epistles*, 290-91; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 390.

iv. 1 Timothy 3.1-7 and 5.17-18: Paul lays out in some detail – again using the generic singular – the qualifications for "the overseer" (1 Tim 3.2: τὸν ἐπίσκοπον).[40] He then proceeds, in 1 Timothy 5.17, to speak, without any introduction or explanation, of "the elders who rule well" (Οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι), some of whom also "labor in the word and teaching". The identification of the generic "overseer" with these "elders" is strongly suggested by common language used to describe how both groups "rule well" (1 Tim 3.4-5 and 5.17: προΐστημι + καλῶς) and "teach" (1 Tim 3.2: διδακτικός; 5.17: διδασκαλία).

v. Ephesians 4.11: Paul speaks of how the risen Lord Jesus "gave" to his Church not only "the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists," but also "the pastors and teachers" (τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους). This is the only place in the NT where Christian leaders are identified as "shepherds" or "pastors" using the noun ποιμήν. Some have seen here a reference to an office which is otherwise not identified in the same way elsewhere in the NT, that of "the pastor-teacher".[41] Paul's syntax, however, indicates that he speaks not of a single group by two names – "the pastor-teachers" – but of two closely related groups – "the pastors and teachers".[42] Given that elders / overseers are elsewhere charged to "shepherd" or "pastor" God's church, using the cognate verb ποιμαίνω (Acts 20.28; 1 Pet 5.2), it seems most likely that the "pastors" among these "pastors and teachers" are the "elders" / "overseers", designated in this case by one of their primary functions rather than their more common titles.[43]

Taken together, these five texts make it clear that in the language of the NT the titles "elder", "overseer", and "pastor" refer to one and the same office: all the elders are pastors; and all the pastors are elders; and all the pastors and elders are overseers.

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[40] Knight III, *Pastoral Epistles*, 155.

[41] e.g. M. Barth, *Ephesians*, 2 vols., AB (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 2: 438-39; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 348.

[42] The single article introducing two *plural* nouns indicates that the two nouns are closely related in some way, *not* that they are identical (cf. Eph 2.20: τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν; also: Matt 3.7; Acts 17.12). Granville Sharp's rule, though often invoked, only applies absolutely when the two nouns in question are *singular*. See: G. Sharp, *Remarks on the Definitive Article in the Greek Text of the New Testament*, 1st Amer. ed. (Philadelphia: B. B. Hopkins, 1807 (1798)), 3); D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 270-85.

[43] The "pastors", then, are a central subset of the broader category of "teachers" (cf. 1 Cor 12.28-29; Rom 12.7); cf. *Greek Grammar*, 284: "all Pastors were to be teachers, though not all teachers were to be Pastors".

2.1.2 Teams of Shepherds in each church

The Scriptures further consistently present plural leadership as the norm for God's people. The OT, it is true, devotes significant space to the remarkable individual leadership of prophets, priests, and kings. In the New Covenant, however, these roles are primarily fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, the one true Prophet, Priest, and King for God's people (cf. WLC 42-45), and secondarily fulfilled in all of God's people in Christ.[44] Nevertheless, alongside the leadership of these remarkable individuals, the OT also presents a consistent pattern of plural leadership. At the national level, "the elders of Israel" (זקני ישראל; LXX: = ἡ γερουσία Ισραηλ or οἱ πρεσβύτεροι Ισραηλ or οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λαοῦ) exercised authority over the entire people throughout the whole of covenant history.[45] At the local level, the elders of particular towns seem to have exercised authority in their towns throughout Israel's history, and this structure persisted at the time of Jesus.[46]

In this context, the apostles established teams of Shepherds in each particular church. Four clear texts establish the principle.

i. The book of Acts records that Paul and Barnabas appointed "elders (plural) in every church" (Acts 14.23: κατ᾽ ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους). The phrase κατ᾽ ἐκκλησίαν is distributive, as parallel constructions make clear, and indicates that the apostles appointed a plurality of elders "in each individual congregation or assembly."[47]

ii. Paul charges Titus to "appoint elders (plural) in every town" (Tit 1.5: κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους). It is possible that Paul commands Titus to appoint a single elder to each of a number of particular churches in each of the towns on Crete. Given, however, the probable size of the towns on Crete in the first century, the recency of Paul's influence on the island (2-3 years at most),[48] and the apostolic practice noted at Acts

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[44] Christ's *munus triplex* ("threefold office") was recognized as early as Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* §1.3.8-9. For the classic discussion, see Calvin, *Institutes* §2.15.1-6; cf. H. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Vol. 3 – Sin and Salvation in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 364-68.

[45] Ex 3.16, 18; 4.29; 12.21; 17.5; 18.12; 24.1, 9; Deut 5.23; 27.1; 29.10; Josh 23.2; 2 Sam 5.3; cf. 2 Sam 17.4, 15; 1 Kgs 8.1, 3; 1 Chron 11.3; 15.25; 2 Chron 5.2, 4; Ezek 14.1; Ezra 6.4; Matt 15.2; 16.21; 21.23; 26.3, 47, 57; 27.1, 3, 12, 20, 41; 28.12; Mk 7.3, 5; 8.31; 11.27; 14.43, 53; 15.1; Lk 7.3; 9.22; 20.1; 22.52; 22.66; Acts 4.5, 8, 23; 6.12; 22.5; 23.14; 24.1; 25.15.

[46] e.g. Deut 19.12; Deut 21.3-6, 19; 22.15-18; 25.7-9; 27.1 Josh 20.4; Jdg 8.16; Ruth 4.2; 1 Sam 16.4; 1 Kgs 21.8, 11; Ezra 10.14: "elders and judges of every city"; Judith 6.16, 21; 7.23; 8.10; 10.6; 11.14; 13.12: "the elders of the town"; 15.8: "the elders of Jerusalem who lived in Jerusalem"; Matt 5.22; Matt 10.17 // Mk 13.9; Jos. *AJ*. 4.214, 287; *BJ*. 2.571; *j. Megillah* 3.74a; *b. Megillah* 26a, b.

[47] W. Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 304 ἐκκλησία § 3.β. For distributive use of κατά + acc. see *BDAG*, 512 § B.1.d. citing, amongst other examples, the similar expressions in Acts 2.46; 5.42; 15.21; 36; 20.20, 23.

[48] cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 386.

14.23, it is far more likely that Paul envisages a single particular church in each town, with a plurality of elders in each particular church.[49]

iii. Paul addresses his letter to the Philippian church "together with the overseers (plural) and deacons" (Phil 1.1: σὺν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις). Again, it is possible that Philippi had multiple Christian congregations at the time of Paul's letter (c. 60-62), each of which was served by a single "overseer". Given, however, the size of the city (10-15,000),[50] the relative youth of the church (10-12 years at most), the lack of any indication of multiple house churches in the city, and the apostolic practice noted at Acts 14.23, it is far more likely that Philippi had one Christian congregation served by a plurality of overseers and deacons.

iv. The apostle James exhorts that if anyone is sick, "he should call for the elders (plural) of the church" (τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας), who are to "pray over him" (Jas 5.14). The instruction strongly suggests plural eldership in a single particular church. Otherwise, how might the one who is sick call on a plurality of elders to pray for him?

In addition to these clear texts, the apostles elsewhere almost always refers to leadership in plural terms (e.g. 1 Thess 5.12; 1 Cor 12.28; Rom 12.8; Eph 4.11; Hebrews 13.7, 17, 24), which leaves the strong impression that plural leadership was the apostolic norm, even where the internal structure of the church's leadership cannot be established with certainty.[51] The apostles and their associates consistently appointed teams of Shepherds – teams of pastoral leaders – to oversee and shepherd God's flock.

2.1.3 Some Shepherds give themselves more fully to the work

At the same time, the apostle Paul does provide for some Shepherds to give themselves more fully to the work of teaching, and commands that these Shepherds are to be especially honored and supported. The key text here is 1 Timothy 5.17: "Let the elders who rule well (οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι) be considered worthy of double honor (διπλῆς τιμῆς), especially those who labor in the word and teaching (μάλιστα οἱ κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ)." Paul does not in this text establish a different office. The men referred to are not given a different title. They are still "elders" (οἱ … πρεσβύτεροι). It is also too much to say that Paul here establishes "two orders"

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[49] cf. Knight III, *Pastoral Epistles*, 289.

[50] See P. Oakes, *Philippians: From People to Letter*, ed. R. Bauckham, vol. 110, SNTSMS (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), 44-50 who bases his estimate on the square acreage of the city, likely population density, and the size of the theatre.

[51] cf. Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 194; G. D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 67; Knight III, *Pastoral Epistles*, 176-77; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 163.

within the one office – "Teaching Elders" and "Ruling Elders".[52] The apostle fundamentally refers to a single group, "the elders who rule well", *all* of whom are worthy of "double honour". He does identify within this single group some who "labour in the word and teaching", but the distinction Paul makes is not one of *kind*, but of *degree*.[53] The "elders who labour" are not performing fundamentally different functions to the others, since earlier in the same letter, the apostle is clear that *all* overseers / elders are both to "rule" (1 Tim 3.4-5: προΐστημι; 5.17: προΐστημι) and to be "able to teach" (1 Tim 3.2: διδακτικός; 5.17: διδασκαλία).[54] There is also no suggestion that these elders engage in a different *kind* of teaching ministry than the rest, since the text does not say "those who labor in *preaching* and teaching," but "in *the word* and in teaching" (οἱ κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ).[55] There is, finally, no suggestion that these elders are more "gifted" in teaching than the others. There is, of course, obvious wisdom in the church identifying those especially gifted to teach, and establishing processes to set them apart to "labour in teaching", but Paul makes no mention here of a special teaching gift.[56] He speaks only of "*those who labor* (οἱ κοπιῶντες)". These Shepherds, then, are those who have given up other labor – other work, other jobs – by which they might have supported themselves and their families, in order to make the work of being a Shepherd their daily work. Thus, while *all* the Shepherds are "worthy of double honor" – both honor and an honorarium, both respect and remuneration – such "double

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[52] The formulation of "two orders within the one office" has been common with Reformed and Presbyterian exegesis. See esp. Knight III, "Two Offices 1985," 1-12; Waters, *How Jesus runs the church*, chpt 4. The distinction is often traced to Dabney, "Theories of the Eldership," 133, but already occurs in Calvin, *Institutes*, § 4.11.1.

[53] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 306-311 argues that 1 Timothy 5.17-18 makes no distinction of any kind among the elders. This relies on translating the adverb μάλιστα as "namely", following T. C. Skeat, ""Especially the Parchments": A Note on 2 Timothy iv. 13," *JTS* 30 (1979): 173-77. This reading may be possible in some instances, but the majority of the 12 NT occurrences most naturally carry the sense "especially" (Acts 20.38; 25.26; 26.3; Gal 6.10; Phil 4.22; 1 Tim 4.10; 5.8, 17; 2 Tim 4.13; Tit 1.10; Phlm 16; 2 Pet 2.10), and this makes good sense in the present context. cf. V. S. Poythress, "The Meaning of μάλιστα in 2 Timothy 4:13 and Related Verses," *JTS* 53 (2002): 523-32.

[54] cf. H. N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 458: "for some the center of gravity was more general leadership, from which, however, one cannot dissociate the teaching aspect"; D. A. Carson, "Some Reflections on Pastoral Leadership," *Themelios* 40, no. 2 (2015): 197: "Some make a sharp distinction between teaching elder and ruling elder, based not least on 1 Timothy 5:17. As far as I can see, however, an elder is an elder/pastor/overseer, never less, and every elder/pastor/overseer must be able to teach (1 Tim 3:2)."

[55] So, correctly, KJV: "especially they who labor in the word and doctrine;" Luther: "besonders, die sich mühen im Wort und in der Lehre." When Paul wants to specify "preaching", he is perfectly capable of doing so (e.g. κηρύσσω 19x; καταγγέλλω 7x).

[56] *contra* Clowney, *The Church*, 212: "In short, then, the gift of teaching distinguishes pastors and teachers from other church elders with whom they share ruling authority in the church."

honor" is *especially* due those who have given up other labor in order to "labor in the word".[57]

The apostle doesn't give us a title for these "laborers". Reformed and Presbyterian churches have tended to refer to them as "Ministers of the Word and Sacrament" or "Teaching Elders" as distinct from "Ruling Elders". The first of these titles ("Minister") is modelled on the way in which the apostles describe Jesus, themselves, and others as "servants" (e.g. Rom 15.8; 1 Cor 3.5; 1 Tim 4.6: διάκονος), and has the advantage of reminding us that those elders who "labour in the Word" are also "servants", first of the Lord, and then of his Church. The apostles, however, also employ the noun διάκονος ("minister" or "servant"), and related terms, to describe a range of different kinds of Christian "servants", and never use it as a recognizable title for an "ordinary and perpetual" pastoral leader in the Church.[58] When they do use the noun as a title for an ongoing role in the Church, it is for the other office that I'm calling "Servant" (= "deacon"). The practice of using the title "Minister" for elders who "labor in the Word", therefore, runs the risk of suggesting that it is only the "Minister" or the "Ministry team" who do Christian ministry, when the biblical vision is for all of God's people serving him – according to their various offices, gifts, and callings – in all of their lives.[59] The second title "Teaching Elder", similarly, has the advantage of recognizing that all elders share the same office, but the significant disadvantage of implying that the "Ruling Elders" *only* rule and don't teach. If that is what it means, the title "Ruling Elder" is unhelpful, because the Scriptures are clear that *all* of the Shepherds must be "able to teach" God's Word (1 Tim 3.2; Tit 1.9). A better way forward, then, might be to refer to the elders who "labor in the Word" as "paid shepherds" or "paid elders" to reflect the fact that these laborers are supported financially and so able to devote more of their time to the work.[60] Whatever we call such elders, the main point here is that the apostles give us

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[57] For this understanding of "double honour", see already Calvin, *Institutes,* § 2.8.35. It is well supported by the context": note 1 Tim 5.18 "for" (γὰρ) + two passages of "Scripture" (Deut 25.4; Luke 10.7) which teach that those who labour deserve their "wages" (μισθός).

[58] See, fn. 78 below.

[59] This does not mean that all forms of Christian service play the same role in God's economy. The "ministry of the word of God" (cf. Acts 6.2), led by the Shepherds, plays a central role in the administration of God's "saving grace". Other forms of ministry, inside and outside the church, play various supporting roles in the administration of God's saving grace, and a wide range of roles in the administration of God's "common grace". Practically, this means that we should usually employ the language of "ministry" with a descriptor, to specify the kind of ministry we mean, whether, for example, it is the ministry of the Word (Acts 6.4), the ministry of care (Acts 6.1-2), or the ministry of government (Rom 13.4).

[60] The "light of nature" would also seem to suggest that such "paid shepherds" normally ought to: (i). take the lead role, amongst a team of Shepherds, in teaching congregations of God's people; (ii). be thoroughly trained for the task.

a single pastoral office, that of the "Shepherd" (elder / overseer / pastor), while also providing for some of the Shepherds to particularly labor in the work of teaching, commanding that those who do so should be especially honored and supported.

2.1.4 No other pastoral office

The apostles do not establish any other "ordinary and perpetual" pastoral office in the Church. Three potential arguments for a "third office", however, require a brief discussion.

First, Reformed proponents of the three-office view have sometimes argued that the old covenant distinction between priests / levites, on the one hand, and elders, on the other, justifies an ongoing distinction between "pastors" or "ministers," who are called to preach and teach, and "elders" or "governors," who are called to rule and discipline the Church.[61] There are, however, at least four difficulties with this view. (i). The apostles are clear that the priestly office is fulfilled in Christ,[62] and – differently – in God's people as a whole,[63] but not in any "ordinary and perpetual" new covenant office. This is a point of discontinuity between the administrations of the Old and New Covenants.[64] (ii). The proposed distinction between priests and levites who teach, and elders who govern, cannot be sustained, even on the basis of the OT evidence. The priests and levites did exercise the primary teaching role in the old covenant Church, but there are also clear examples of elders receiving and delivering instructions regarding passover (Exod 12.21-28), prophesying by the Spirit (Num 11.24-25), receiving and teaching the law (Exod 12.21; 19.7; Deut 27.1; 31.9, 28; 32.7), and giving counsel (Ezek 7.26).[65] (iii). The apostles explicitly require that the Shepherds (elders / overseers / pastors) are to be "able to teach" (1 Tim 3.2; cf. Tit 1.9; Eph 4.11-12). It is, therefore, extremely difficult to maintain that the NT restricts the role of elders to government and discipline. (iv). The Scriptures are clear that God's fatherly care, instruction, and discipline of his children provides the paradigm for human leadership, so that loving pastoral leadership, including teaching and discipleship of others, always provides the context for right discipline (e.g. Prov 3.11-12; Heb 12.4-

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[61] The argument goes back to *The Form of Presbyterial Church Government* (1647) § 4 citing Isaiah 66.21 and Matthew 23.34; cf. more recently: Rayburn, "Three Offices," 109-10.

[62] The noun ἱερεύς ("priest") occurs 31 times in the NT, but never in reference to a Christian leader apart from Christ himself (Heb 8.4; 10.21). The cognate noun ἀρχιερεύς ("chief/high priest") occurs 123 times, but also never in reference to a Christian leader other that Christ "our Great High Priest" (Heb 2.17; 3.1; 4.14-15; 5.5, 10; 6.20; 7.26; 8.1; 9.11); cf. Calvin, *Institutes* § 4.18.2: "the right and honor of the priesthood has ceased among mortal men, because Christ, who is immortal, is the one perpetual priest."

[63] 1 Pet 2.5, 9; Rev 1.6: 5.10; 20.6; cf. Exod 19.6.

[64] The apostle Paul sometimes employs priestly language to describe his ministry (Rom 15.16; cf. Phil 2.17), but neither he nor any other leader is ever styled "priest".

[65] *contra* Rayburn, "Three Offices," 109: "The Levites and the priests as ministers of the Word are found in close connection with the prophets … The elders, on the other hand, are never connected to prophecy in this way."

11). It would be very strange, then, if the apostles established a class of leaders ("elders" / "overseers") who were called to "govern", "rule", and "discipline," but *not* proactively teach and disciple. The old covenant distinction between priests / levites and elders, then, does not provide any support for a three-office view which sharply distinguishes between "Ministers" who "teach" and "elders" who "rule."

Second, it might be suggested that the NT references to "prophets",[66] "teachers",[67] and "evangelists"[68] provide some basis for a distinct pastoral office. There is not space here to discuss these gifts in any detail. It is enough to notice that while the apostles recognised and celebrated these God-given gifts to the Church, there is no evidence that they ever: (i). appointed people to such roles;[69] (ii). sought to regulate the appointment of people to such roles;[70] (iii). took measures to establish such leaders in churches where they were lacking, or; (iv). understood the churches to be ordered under people with such gifts, unless they were also elders / overseers.[71] Thus, while these gifts certainly perform functions which overlap with those of the Shepherd office, there is no indication that the apostles established these roles as "ordinary and perpetual" offices in the Church.

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[66] The noun "prophet" (προφήτης) occurs 144 times in the NT. Of these, around 26 refer to what we might call "new covenant prophets": Matt 10.41; 23.34, 37 (?); Lk 11.49; Acts 11.27; 13.1; 15.32; 21.10; 1 Cor 12.28-29; 14.29, 32 (x2), 37; Eph. 2.20; 3.5; 4.11; 1 Thess 2.15 (?); Jas 5.10 (?); Rev. 11.10, 18 (?); 16.6 (?); 18.20 (?), 24 (?); 22.6 (?), 9 (?) (cf. Tit 1.12 which refers to a pagan "prophet").

[67] The noun "teacher" (διδάσκαλος) occurs 59 times in the NT. Five of these references are to Christian "teachers" in the churches: Acts 13.1; 1 Cor 12.28, 29; Eph 4.11; Jas 3.1; cf. Rom 12.7: "the one who teaches" (ὁ διδάσκων); Gal 6.6: "the one who instructs" (ὁ κατηχῶν).

[68] "Evangelist" (εὐαγγελιστής): Acts 21.8; Eph 4.11; 2 Tim 4.5.

[69] Philip, one of the "seven men" appointed to "serve tables" in Acts 6.1-6 was an "evangelist" (Acts 21.8), but the gift is distinct from the "servant" role, and is neither a necessary nor sufficient qualification for it.

[70] The apostles did regulate the *exercise of the gifts* of prophecy and teaching, by denouncing "false teaching / teachers / prophets" (1 Tim 1.3; 2 Pet 2.1; 1 Jn 4.1), by asserting apostolic authority over the prophets (1 Cor 14.37), by insisting that teaching and prophecy be "tested" against the apostolic gospel (1 Cor 12.3; 14.29; 1 Thess 5.19-21; 1 Jn 4.1), and by urging that it be conducted in such a way that it builds the body (1 Cor 12.7; 14.26-33, 39-40). This is different, however, from the regulations in 1 Timothy 3.1-13 and Titus 1.5-9, where Paul places tests on the *people* to be appointed to office.

[71] Paul states that the Lord appointed "teachers" "third" in the Church. The correspondence between Ephesians 4.11 and 1 Corinthians 12.28 suggests that Paul speaks with the same intent but less precision in the latter passage, so that the class of "teachers" whom God has appointed "third" in the Church includes reference to the "Shepherds" but is not limited to them.

Third, it is sometimes suggested that Timothy and Titus provide the prototypes for the office of "Minister", understood as the single pastoral leader of a congregation, or "Bishop" understood as a pastoral leader who stands outside the life of a particular church and oversees multiple churches in a city or region. Certainly, Paul identifies Timothy and Titus by a range of leadership descriptors, and charges them with significant leadership functions, especially teaching. Four factors, however, argue against the identification of these men as the solo "Ministers" or "Bishops" of the churches in Ephesus and on Crete: (i). such solo pastoral ministry is otherwise unknown in the NT; (ii). Paul never applies to Timothy or Titus his standard titles for the pastoral office (neither "elder", nor "overseer", nor "pastor");[72] (iii). Paul regularly sent both men on short-term missions so that, like Paul, they exercised a semi-itinerant ministry, and were never the pastors of a particular flock for any extended length of time;[73] (iv). Paul charged both men with the specific mission of establishing the churches in Ephesus and Crete more firmly in the truth by teaching, refuting error, and especially by appointing a settled eldership, but never commands either of them to appoint an individual successor to their unique role.[74] It is difficult to argue that Timothy and Titus are the first "Ministers" of the church, and even more difficult to argue that they were the first "Bishops" in an episcopalian sense. Timothy and Titus are, rather, best understood as "apostolic delegates", that is, they operated as an extension of the extraordinary ministry of the apostles.[75]

From all of this we are left with a simple conclusion. The apostles: (i). established a single pastoral office for the leadership of the Church between Jesus' resurrection and return – that of the Shepherd (elder / overseer / pastor); (ii). appointed teams of Shepherds to lead each particular church; (iii). provided for some Shepherds to "labour in the Word and teaching".

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[72] Paul calls Timothy: (i). God's "worker" (2 Tim 2.15: ἐργάτης); (ii). "the Lord's slave" (2 Tim 2.24: δοῦλος κυρίου); (iii). a kind of "evangelist" (2 Tim 4.5: εὐαγγελιστής); (iv). a "servant/minister of Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 4.6: διάκονος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ).

[73] Timothy was: (i). left behind in Berea (Acts 17.14); (ii). sent to Thessalonica (1 Thess 3.2-3); (iii). sent later to Macedonia (Acts 19.22); (iv). sent to Corinth (1 Cor 4.17); (v). planned to go to Philippi (Phil 2.19); (vi). left in Ephesus (1 Tim 1.3-4); (vii). called to return to Paul in Rome (2 Tim 4.9, 21). Titus was: (i). left behind on Crete (Tit 1.5); (ii). expected to meet Paul in Nicopolis (Tit 3.12); (iii). sent (?) to Dalmatia (2 Tim 4.10).

[74] 1 Tim 1.3-4; 3.1-7; 4.6-7, 11-16; 5.17-22; 6.2, 17, 20-21; 2 Tim 1.13-14; 2.2, 11-16, 23-26; 4.1-5; Tit 1.5, 11, 13; 2.1, 3, 6-10, 15; 3.1, 9-10.

[75] For this description, see: Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 387: "As is true of Timothy, Titus stands outside the structure of the Cretan church as an apostolic delegate; he is never identified as an Overseer or bishop." (cf. lxxxviii.). For similar conclusions, see: J. N. D. Kelly, *A commentary on the pastoral epistles: I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus*, BNTC (London: A. & C. Black, 1963), 13-14; D. Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2nd ed., TNTC (Leicester: IVP, 1990), 38-39; Knight III, *Pastoral Epistles*, 29; Merkle, "Ecclesiology," 195-97.

2.2 The Servant Office

The Lord Jesus, through the apostles, also established a second "ordinary and perpetual" office in his Church: that of the "Servant" (διάκονος).[76] Unlike the office of "Shepherd", there is no clear OT equivalent to the NT office of the Servant. The OT, of course, speaks often of "service" or "ministry", but neither of the two key Hebrew terms (עבד and שרת) consistently designates a recognizable office among God's people, and there is no indication that such an office existed under some other title.[77] The Servant office, then, is part of what is new about the new covenant Church.

The Greek term διάκονος is most commonly translated "servant" or "minister," and the whole διάκον– word group is used in a range of ways to speak of various kinds of service or assistance, ultimately modelled on that of the Lord Jesus himself, who "came not to be served, but to serve (οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι) and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt 20.28 // Mk 10.45; cf. Luke 12.37; 22.27).[78] In those contexts where διάκονος is used as a title for an office it is usually transliterated "deacon" (Phil 1.1; 1 Tim 3.8, 12; Rom 16.1). The Scriptures provide less teaching on this office than on that of the Shepherd, and the evidence may be discussed more briefly.

2.2.1 The origins of the Servant office: Acts 6

Acts 6.1-6 narrates the origins of the Servant office. To be sure, Acts 6 is a descriptive passage regarding the apostles' actions in the Jerusalem church and does not employ the noun "servant" (διάκονος) as a title for the seven men chosen to "serve tables". For these reasons the passage does not, on its own, provide sufficient biblical basis for an "ordinary and perpetual" office. Nevertheless, the language of "service" is certainly prominent in Acts 6: the apostles appoint seven men to "*serve* tables" (6.2: διακονεῖν τραπέζαις), in the

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[76] cf. *The Form of Presbyterial Church Government* (1647) § 6: "The scripture doth hold out deacons as distinct officers in the church. Whose office is perpetual."

[77] For עבד, see L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 2.773-75. For שרת, *HALOT*, 4.1661-63. The LXX translates these Hebrew terms by a number of different Greek words, but never by words from the διάκον– word group, which it employs only rarely.

[78] The noun διάκονος ("servant" / "minister") occurs 29 times in the NT and carries a range of meanings. It is applied to: (i). Christ himself (Rom 15.8; cf. ironically Gal 2.17); (ii). the apostles and their associates (1 Cor 3.5; 2 Cor 3.6; 6.4; Eph 3.7; 6.21; Col 1.7, 23, 25; 4.7; 1 Tim 4.6); (iii). the false apostles in Corinth (2 Cor 11.23; cf. 2 Cor 11.15 (x 2)); (iv). various generic Christian servants (Matt 20.26; 23.11; Mk 9.35; 10.43; Jn 12.26); (v). those who hold the office of "deacon" in the church (Phil 1.1; 1 Tim 3.8, 12; cf. Rom 16.1); (vi). the Roman governing authority (Rom 13.4 (x 2)). The remaining 3 occurrences have no direct relevance to our question (Matt 22.13; John 2.5, 9). See further: "διακονέω, διακονία, διάκονος," in *NIDNTTE*, ed. M. Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 4: 701-05.

"daily *service*" of food (6.1: ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ τῇ καθημερινῇ), thus allowing the apostles to "devote" themselves "to prayer and to the *service* of the word" (6.4: τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου). Acts 6, moreover, underlines the significance of the "ministry" or "service" of the seven men by setting their "service" in parallel with that of Jesus (Lk 12.37; 22.27), and of the apostles (Acts 6.1, 2, 4), by noting the requirement that those chosen must be men of "good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6.3), and by reporting the apostles' resolve to formally "appoint" (καθίστημι) those chosen by the "laying on of hands" (Acts 6.3, 6). Acts 6, then, narrates the apostles' institution, in the church in Jerusalem, of a formalized ministry role, alongside their own ministry of the Word, which required godly appointees, and played a crucial role in the advance of God's mission through the Church.[79] When this passage is taken together with the apostle Paul's subsequent regulation and recognition of the office of "Servant" (see below), the account in Acts 6 is well understood as narrating the origins of the office.

2.2.2 Apostolic regulation and recognition of the Servant office

In three further key texts from Paul's letters, the apostle regulates and recognizes the office of Servant (διάκονος).

i. 1 Timothy 3.8, 12: Paul follows his instructions regarding the office of "the overseer" (1 Tim 3.1-7) with a set of instructions regarding "Servants" (διακόνους). That the apostle here employs the noun "servant" (διάκονος) in the plural as a title for an office is indicated by the way in which he sets these "Servants" in parallel with "the overseer" (διακόνους ὡσαύτως: "Servants likewise …"), and then stipulates the character qualities and competencies required of those who "serve" (1 Tim 3.10, 13: διακονέω) in the role.

ii. Philippians 1.1: Paul opens his letter to the Philippians by addressing the church "together with the overseers and servants" (σὺν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις). The apostle's reference, in his formal address to the Philippians, to plural "overseers" and plural "servants", simultaneously distinguishes these officers from each other and from the church, and so indicates that alongside the office of "overseer" (= elder / pastor) the church in Philippi had a second office established to serve its life and mission.[80]

iii. Romans 16.1: In the final chapter of his letter to the Romans, Paul describes "our sister Phoebe" as "being also a servant of the church

[79] Two of the seven – Stephen and Philip – went on to proclaim the gospel with great effect (Acts 7.1-60; 8.5-13, 26-40). Since there is no indication that the other five men served in this way, this is best understood as a function of their particular gifts and calling (cf. Acts 21.8), rather than as a necessary function of the office.

[80] M. Silva, *Philippians*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 40-41.

(οὖσαν καὶ διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας) at Cenchreae." This description could merely indicate a generic kind of Christian service, but more likely indicates that Phoebe served in a recognizable office in that church.[81] This is suggested by three observations: a. Paul could have used more natural expressions involving the verb "serve", or the participle "serving", if he had merely intended general Christian service;[82] b. the construction "Phoebe … being … a servant" (Φοίβην … οὖσαν … διάκονον), which has a proper name + the present participle of the verb to be (εἰμί) + a titular noun, draws attention to the titular noun, and is elsewhere used to describe a person serving in office;[83] c. the reference to a particular named church which Phoebe served suggests she played a particular role in that church.

There is no explicit evidence, apart from Acts 6, for the apostles themselves directly appointing Servants in the churches. It is hard to tell, therefore, whether the apostles endeavored to appoint Servants in every church, or only appointed them as the need arose, or generally left the appointment of Servants to the elders, once these had been appointed.[84] Nevertheless, taken together, the narrative in Acts 6, and the three references to "Servants" just cited, provide clear evidence that the apostles established in the Church, alongside the primary office of the Shepherd, the secondary office of the Servant.

Conclusion: Shepherds, Servants, and the whole body of Christ in the gospel-centered mission of God's Church

The Scriptures are clear: the Lord established two – and only two – ordinary and perpetual offices for the ongoing life of the Church: the offices of "Shepherd" (= elder / overseer / pastor) and "Servant" (= deacon). To recognize this, however, is only the beginning of what needs to be said and done in more fully reforming the churches to reflect God's revealed will. I have not here had the space to say anything about the qualifications and character of the people

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[81] For this conclusion, see the classic discussion in J. Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and the Thessalonians*, Calvin's Commentaries (Edinburgh: St. Andrews Press, 1961), *loc. cit.*. More recently, C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed., 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975-79), 2.781; T. R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 686-687. For extended discussion, see: G. R. Perry, "Phoebe of Cenchreae and "Women" of Ephesus: "Deacons" in the Earliest Churches," *Presbyterion* 36, no. 1 (2010): 9-36.

[82] cf. Romans 15.25: διακονῶν; 2 Timothy 1.18: διακονέω.

[83] John 11.49 and 51: Καϊάφας + ὢν + ἀρχιερεὺς ("Caiaphas, being high priest"); Acts 18.12: Γαλλίωνος + ὄντος + ἀνθυπάτου ("Gallio, being proconsul"); Acts 24.10: ὄντα + κριτὴν (Governor Felix, "being judge"). Thus, while he does not make this argument from the syntax, Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and the Thessalonians*, *loc. cit.* observes that Paul commends Phoebe "first on account of her office".

[84] cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 386.

appointed to these roles. Nor has there been space to discuss the work of the Shepherds in *leading* the gospel-centered mission of the church, *teaching* the whole counsel of God from the Scriptures, *praying* with and for God's people, and *modelling* life in Christ. Nor have we been able to explore the complementary work of the Servants in *facilitating* the gospel-centered ministry of the Church, and managing its material resources, with particular reference to the needs of the vulnerable, weak, and poor. Nor have we discussed the work of Shepherds and Servants in wider councils designed to co-ordinate and oversee the gospel-centered mission of all the churches. And beyond that, there has not been space to explore the key role of Shepherds in equipping all of God's people for works of service so that the gospel goes out to the world, and the whole body of Christ grows up to maturity, as each part does its work. For now, however, it is enough to notice that although the "two-office" view has not always or everywhere been recognized in the churches, it has been recently affirmed in the World Reformed Fellowship's *Statement of Faith* 2010 § 8.2. The Lord has ordained that the gospel-centered mission of his Church should be led by Shepherds (elders / overseers / pastors), and facilitated by Servants (deacons). These two offices are the "ordinary and perpetual" offices that the Lord Jesus himself, though his apostles, has established in his Church.

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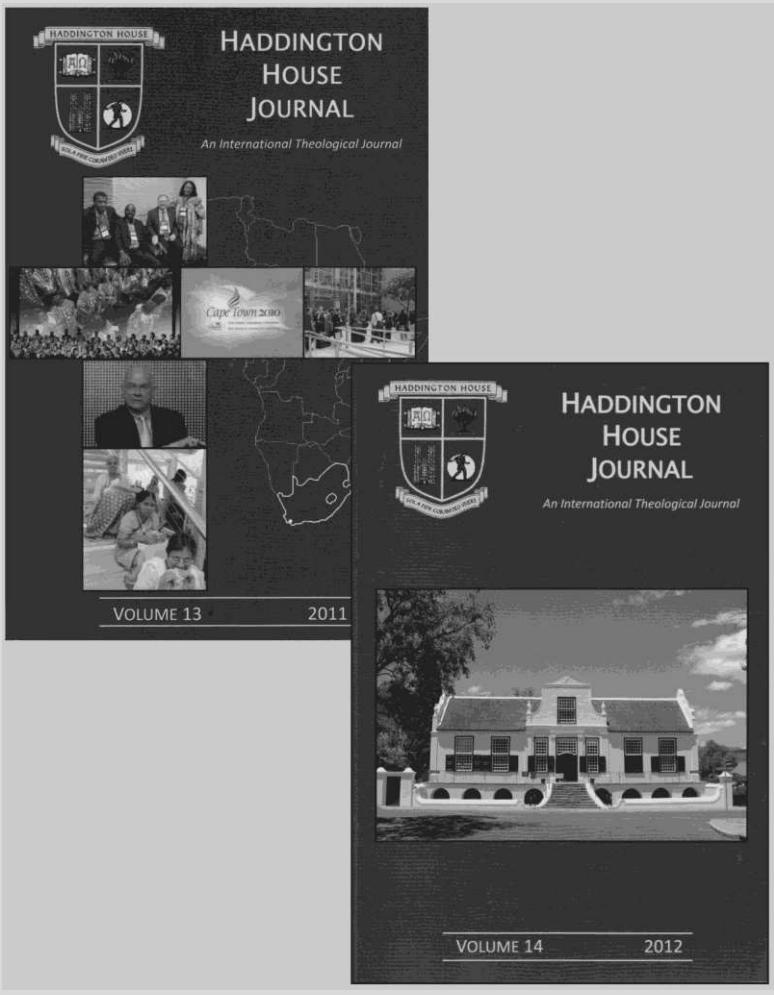
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