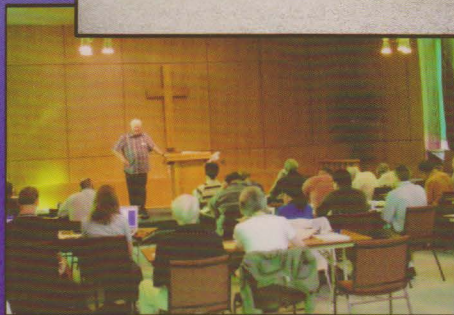
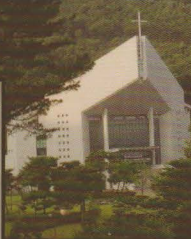
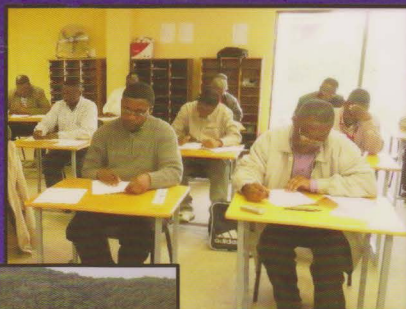


HADDINGTON HOUSE JOURNAL

An International Theological Journal



Volume 12

2010

Editorial Policy

1. The journal will seek to provide an annual publication reflective of the theological basis and ethos of the Trust for students, laity and ministers 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.
4. The journal will endeavour to highlight, by way of articles and reviews, works to assist students and others in their ongoing studies and training.
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.
7. The journal will also endeavour to include some news about the wider international, evangelical community of churches and their efforts in mission or theological work.
8. Prior to publication, all articles and reviews will be read by select individuals who uphold the theological basis and ethos of the Trust. It will be their task to comment, proof and ensure the quality of the journal.

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Back cover – “Article Contributors” – top to bottom: Gerda van der Merwe, David Eung-Yul Ryoo, John S. Ross, Warren Charlton, Jack C. Whytock.

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Editor's Preface

I want to draw our readers' attention to the new bi-line for our journal – "An International Theological Journal". We believe this is very important and aptly describes our goal to be international in content and readership. While this has been our goal for several years, we hope the bi-line will serve as an "up-front" reminder to our readers.

Now, on this international theme, I want in particular to highlight the two Andrew Murray articles under "General Articles". As far as we are aware, this is the first time these have appeared in English. Their origin is South Africa, where our translator, Gerda van der Merwe, presently lives. Journals are to foster on-going exchange of thought and research, and this first installment of Andrew Murray's "notes" on the Heidelberg Catechism was included, in part, for this reason. Furthermore, we sincerely hope that these expositions will lead to spiritual edification and reflection.

One of our academic articles is on Rev. Dr. John McNicol, an outstanding Canadian, evangelical Presbyterian. However, this is not merely of provincial interest, as McNicol's involvement included many international connections (for example, serving on the boards of SIM and CIM and training students). Also, we believe that exploring McNicol's theology has contemporary application and contributes to the on-going discussion on the purpose and mandate of a Bible college. McNicol saw a clear distinction between the theological colleges which train the officers of God's army and the Bible colleges which train the rank and file of the army. Many institutions are presently grappling with their identity and purpose. McNicol stands as a leader worthy to study and learn from today.

Since 2009 was the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin, we have reviewed works which we have deemed unique in the recent publishing boom related to Calvin studies. We have endeavoured to concentrate on works that come from the European corridor in order to enrich our global awareness and not confine ourselves to works chiefly coming forth from North America.

One of our reviewers wrote to me that "one can learn a lot from a book review". I completely concur. The book reviews and notices offer a wealth of information, and I do believe they are invaluable. We endeavour to include books under review which will benefit the global Christian community.

The journal is also aimed at being a helpful teaching tool. I continually draw upon articles to share with classes where I teach. We are delighted to include Dr. John Ross' fine article on Tiyo Soga; I look forward to using this in Modern Church History and Missions classes and likewise encourage others to do the same. I also believe Dr. David Ryoo's article will be helpful for teaching. Furthermore, both authors reflect the international nature of our journal; one teaches at Dumisani in South Africa and the other at Chongshin in South Korea.

Once again, I say thank you to each contributor for so generously giving of your time through writing. May the Lord use the journal to instruct and edify.

*Jack C. Whytock,
Editor*

Sermon: This Is Our Calling – Be Faithful¹

Jack C. Whytock

Sermon Text: 1 Timothy 6:20-21

“Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith. Grace be with you.” (NIV)

Are you passionate about your faith and about living the Christian life? The world needs passionate Christians. The Lord wants passionate believers. The Church needs passionate disciples. “Passionate” means having strong desires, feelings and convictions – not being apathetic or careless. Are you passionate for the Lord?

Now, why do I start with this question? Because the Apostle Paul, who wrote this text (1 Tim. 6:20-21), was passionate for the Lord, and he wrote a concluding appeal to Timothy, a young disciple, to be a faithful and passionate disciple.

This appeal for believers to BE FAITHFUL contains four pleas that I want to share with you:

- 1) **Be faithful to the gospel way.**
- 2) **Stay focused.**
- 3) **Listen to the warnings. Do NOT wander.**
- 4) **Seek grace.**

1. Be faithful to the gospel. (verse 20a)

a.) Be faithful and guard what is entrusted to you.

Paul tells us if we are going to be faithful we must GUARD or WATCH OVER what has been given to us. Do you have a safety deposit box at the CIBC or Bank of America or Barclays or Bank of Nova Scotia? That box is there to guard your valuables. In Paul’s day there was no such thing as a safety deposit box, so when you went on a trip, you found a person who was very reliable and you left your valuables with that person. You said to him or

¹ This sermon was preached in 2009 through a translator at the Prince Edward Island Korean Church.

her, “Guard what I have entrusted to you” – do not lose it or let anyone steal it. In the same way, Paul commanded Timothy to guard what Paul had entrusted to him – watch over it, be faithful to it.

b.) What was Timothy to be faithful towards?

Paul does not give the answer directly in verse 20. Rather, Paul assumes that Timothy now knows this answer. He has been telling Timothy what he has to guard and with what he has to be faithful all through this letter. Thus, Timothy now knows the answer to the question, “To what am I to be faithful?” See 1 Timothy 1:15, “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners . . .” and also 1 Timothy 2:5 and 6, “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men . . .”. In other words, Timothy, be faithful to the whole truth of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you do not talk about Jesus and His work as God’s Son at the cross, then you are not faithful. It is JESUS CHRIST and His BLOOD as the ONLY WAY, TRUTH AND LIFE.

Jude says it this way: “. . . contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude vs. 3). The gospel is the most precious word in all the world. I must believe this; I must not turn to any other word.

c.) Be faithful to spread this gospel.

I know Christians who say they are committed to all aspects of the gospel of the Good News of Jesus Christ but never help to see it spread. I call them “Ghetto Christians” or “Fortress Christians”. They appear very loyal to the gospel, but they have no passion for missions and spreading the gospel and no sense of personal testimony as salt and light Christians. They seem content just to believe the gospel but are not passionate to spread the gospel. Friends, that is not being faithful to the gospel. We are only fooling ourselves if we think that is being faithful.

d.) Be faithful to the gospel way.

I will only mention this in passing. I believe at the beginning of this letter Paul is not only exhorting Timothy to guard the doctrine of what is the gospel but also the goal to bear gospel fruit. That gospel fruit is love and a good conscience. That is why, in part, I have formulated this point as “Be faithful to the gospel way”.

Here then is my first point – you must be passionately faithful to the gospel of the blood of Jesus Christ – He died for you. There is no other gospel but God’s Son Jesus Christ. You are called to be passionately faithful to this and to the spread of this gospel. It has been entrusted to you personally and you must make certain you remain in this gospel way.

2. Stay focused. (verse 20b)

Paul knew that there are many temptations to hinder one from STAYING FOCUSED on the gospel. It is like trying to focus on many objects when taking a photograph. You must focus your lens on one object from which everything else will have perspective.

It is very easy in the Christian life to lose our focus – Jesus Christ. How do we lose focus? There are many ways. We can become so concerned about work, career, family, advancement, education, friends – all good things in balance – that we lose sight of the very essential quality of living first for Christ. He is the focal point from which everything else gains perspective.

There is another way to lose focus, and that is by starting to listen to the wrong teachers and talkers. Paul warns Timothy to turn away from two groups of folks: those who engage in “godless chatter” and, secondly, those who oppose sound truth and are, in essence, false teachers.

a.) Stay focused – avoid the godless chatter.

Who are these folks? Well, they are empty talkers. I could even say empty preachers and empty people. All they want to do is talk about silly arguments – just talk and talk and talk. They are the kind that throw up bizarre and strange arguments that are of no importance. They just want to turn Christianity into a big discussion group. Now, discussion is good, and I hope that you attend Bible studies where discussion occurs, but not empty talk. You will learn there are some people who will try to take you into their arguments, and they go nowhere. They are not humble or teachable, just arguers. Always remember that you cannot argue someone into the Kingdom of God, but that this is the work of the Holy Spirit blessing the testimony of the gospel. Do not try to do the work of the Holy Spirit. Give the simple gospel and show love, but do not try to just argue all the time. It will not work. It is the Spirit Who humbles, convicts and brings to faith. Paul is saying to be faithful to the gospel you need to remain focused on Christ, and some Christians have fallen into the trap of becoming argumentative with empty talkers which will go nowhere. Give the simple gospel, love people and do not forget that you cannot argue people into the Kingdom.

b.) Stay focused – avoid the false teachers.

Young Christians will face much temptation from false teachers who will tell them the Bible is not such a good book. They will also face false teachers who will deny the one way of Jesus Christ alone. In Paul’s day he saw a budding movement from false teachers which years later would develop into a large cult. He was warning Timothy to be faithful to the Word, to stay focused on Christ and not to listen to false teachings. These false teachers undermine the gospel of Jesus Christ alone. Can you name some false teachers? Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses are two obvious examples. Then there are more sophisticated ones like preachers who add to the

requirements of salvation or professors in universities who say all religions are the same and no one really needs to believe in Jesus alone. **STAY FOCUSED** and be faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ alone.

Here is my second point then – you must be passionately faithful to the gospel of the blood of Jesus Christ, and you are to stay focused on this message. I ask you, are you staying focused?

3. Listen to the warnings not to wander. (verse 21a)

Verse 21 tells us that there are people who start the Christian life and then after time begin to WANDER away from the Lord. The best way to understand what Paul is saying is to read the parable of The Sower which Jesus gave in Matthew 13:1-9 and 18-23. Many do receive the word for a season, and then things begin to choke out Christ from the centre of their lives. Yes, the word was given and the seeds did sprout, but then the thorns choked it out. Jesus interprets His parable with these words: “The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful” (Matthew 13:22). I see in 1 Timothy at least three different kinds of wandering – doctrinal wandering, false ascetic wandering and materialistic wandering. Each deserves a sermon in its own right.

I will highlight five warning signs to tell us if we are starting to wander from being faithful to the gospel. I am sure there are more but here are five signs of warning to wanderers from being faithful.

#1. A lack of love for the Scripture. Less attention given to reading the Word of God and study of the Scripture – this is a clear warning sign that wandering from faithfulness may be starting. Read the Word and ask the Spirit to give you understanding.

#2. A decrease in love for God’s children. When your fellowship grows cold and you spend less and less time with fellow believers, this is a clear warning sign that you are starting to wander away. The Lord says to you, “Come back now and be faithful.” Fellow believers are “members of one body” and were baptized with one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

#3. A decrease or a lack of devotion to the Lord as evident in a decline in prayer. Prayer is the believer’s communion house with the Lord. Prayer is the believer’s confessional room. Prayer is the believer’s power supply for spiritual strength and energy. The Lord wants our voices to address Him through prayer. If we are not praying personally, then we are in a dangerous place and are vulnerable to wandering.

#4. A slow change in our thinking. Now what do I mean by that? I have observed over time that solid Christians who start wandering from the Lord start to change their convictions. Once they were clear on what the Lord

expects of Christians, for example on moral issues like abortion or homosexuality. However, over time they start to come under the influence of other thinkers and start to wander away from clear moral standards. In other words, they begin to slowly change their thinking towards compromise. Now, every Christian should be growing in their thoughts and changing positively but always moving toward conformity to the Word of God not toward compromise. There is a big difference. Is your thinking being renewed by the Word of God and the power of the Spirit? (Romans 12:2)

#5 A choking out of our passion for evangelism and mission. Again, some have started with desires for evangelism and mission, but over time this is simply choked out. If this happens, it is a warning sign that wandering from the call to BE FAITHFUL has begun.

Friends, the Apostle Paul here is like a doctor seeing a patient. Let's call the patient "Mr. Christian". Paul examines the patient, Mr. Christian, and he says, "Oh dear, I see some signs that you are beginning to wander away from the call to be faithful to the gospel. I see that you have a lack of devotion to the Scripture; you have no interest in real fellowship with fellow born-again Christians. I see that you have no desire for personal prayer. I see that you are changing your thinking on clear biblical standards for holy living, and I see almost no passion for missions in your life. As Paul, the physician, I now must give my diagnosis: you are wandering from your first love. I now charge you to repent personally and return to being a faithful disciple of Jesus, Mr. Christian."

Here is my third point – diagnose yourself with Dr. Paul helping you. Are you wandering from faithfulness? Ask the Lord to renew your focus.

4. Seek grace. (verse 21b)

Now, there is one thing every Christian needs if he or she is going to BE FAITHFUL – God's Grace! Paul ends verse 21 with a beautiful benediction. Paul's whole understanding of the Christian life is that we live and walk by grace. No one comes to the Lord but by grace. Grace truly is amazing! Grace transformed us and brought about a new life in the Lord Jesus within us. What is grace? Grace is really descriptive of the whole work of God's tremendous mercy towards undeserving sinners. God loved me and He gave me new life through His Son. God saved me by grace – nothing I did could save me. Only by grace was I saved. Now, if I am to live a faithful life for the Lord, I must walk not in my own strength; each step must be taken by His grace. That is why I believe when Paul gives his passionate plea for Timothy, a young disciple, and hence to all believers, to be faithful, he also says, "Now what you need is grace to be faithful." Grace forgives failure, grace picks you up when you wander, grace empowers you to speak for the Lord and not

compromise. We need the power of God's grace. God's grace is sufficient!

In the next letter to Timothy, Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 1:14 these words: "Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you – guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us." That is a great verse! There it is again – guard the gospel that you have, but there is one secret – you must rely upon the grace of God which flows to you by the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion:

The Lord wants you to be a passionate and committed disciple of His kingdom. Are you living only half for the Lord or is He your whole Lord? Paul is speaking to you by the Holy Spirit – God wants you to be faithful to the blood of Christ, the gospel. He does not want you to lose your focus. He is warning you like a doctor of the signs of wandering from the good way. But he gives you hope. Brothers and sisters, you can be faithful by God's grace.



Communion Table Addresses

J. Harvey Bishop *

** The late Rev. James Harvey Bishop was born on Prince Edward Island and attended the Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown; Dalhousie University, Halifax; and the Free Church of Scotland College, Edinburgh. He was ordained in 1938 and served the Church of Scotland, Prince Edward Island, and also the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Rev. Bishop died in 2008 in his one hundredth year, having been ordained for seventy years. The following meditations are communion table addresses and have been published by kind permission of his daughter, Naomi Bondt. The manuscript copies can be found in the Public Archives and Records Office of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown (Acc. #4332).*



Address One

Today we perform a solemn act. Those who come to the table for the first time are professing before men and angels that they choose Christ as their Saviour and Lord, as their Righteousness and Peace, as their Portion, and are professing it is their desire to follow the Lord.

Those who have come often to sit at the Lord's table are renewing their engagement to be the Lord's.

Those who may be coming for the last time, may your portion be that of Mary who sat at Jesus' feet, and of whom Jesus said, "Mary has chosen (that good) the better part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42).

There is the first time for all of us to be seated at the Lord's table – and there is the last time.

For those who have not yet come to the Lord's table; this may be the last opportunity afforded you to so remember the Lord's death until He comes.

This is a solemn occasion –

There is always the last time – the last time to be in church; the last time to serve God; the last time to do a good deed; the last time to speak a good word; the last time to attend Communion; the last time to read the Bible; the last time to pray; the last opportunity in life

Our text: **" . . . whosoever he be who forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple"** (Luke 14:33).

- 1) Have we forsaken all our own (so called) righteousness, trusting in our doings?
- 2) Have we forsaken self, pride of self, selfish ways?
- 3) Have we forsaken envy, jealousy, ill-will, dislike, hate, strife, dissension, division, murmuring, complaining, faultfinding, backbiting, trouble-making, nosiness, untruthfulness, curiosity, talking about others (*maliciously*)?
- 4) Have we forsaken all for Christ, so that Christ is all that we desire – as Paul writes, “I wish (*determined not*) to know (*anything*) nothing among you, save Jesus Christ; and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2).
- 5) Have we forsaken the esteem of the world – desiring worldly notice, worldly applause, to be seen of men and desiring to be somebodies?
- 6) Have we forsaken our own self-importance, as though the world cannot get along without us. Let us remember no-one is indispensable.
- 7) Have we forsaken all our sins? Our idols? Our fleshly pleasures?

Is there anything we are holding on to?

He that forsaketh not all that he hath been holding onto, keeping, hiding in his heart, cannot be one of mine.

Amen.

Address Two

1 Corinthians 11:24

The ritual of the Lord’s Supper is given by Paul. He had received it from the Lord, and so delivered it to the Church in Corinth. From the upper room to a Grecian city is a long way, but there was continuity and oneness of spirit.

What is the significance of the Lord’s Supper? What meaning has it? Has it much meaning to many people?

- 1) **Historical** – received of the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:23). Jesus sought to be remembered by this action. The Lord Himself originated this ordinance. The occasion was the night of His betrayal. Another feast was being celebrated, and whilst celebrating (the Passover) Jesus foresaw His sufferings and the cross and instituted this ordinance – with only the disciples present – “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19; Mark 14: 22-24). Bread and wine were used – unleavened bread and Passover wine. These were symbols of His body and blood – broken and shed. He is present by these symbols and those who partake in faith, by faith feed on Him, His death and sacrifice for sin.
- 2) **Memorial** – “This do in remembrance of me.” Remember, do not forget. Jesus said, “Henceforth I call you not servants, but...friends” (John 15:15). It is the privilege of a friend to remember, to keep alive the memory of a loved-one. The Passover looked back to Exodus remembering; the Lord’s Supper looks back to Calvary remembering.

This is a memorial, not a Mass! This is a supper, not a sacrifice! Here, no minister or priest, stands between God and man. Altogether, around the table with Christ at *the centre*. All share the same elements, eat and drink.

The evangelical view is – the Lord’s Supper is not the repetition of a sacrifice – the elements are not changed – the memorial centre is the living Christ (being remembered in His death), and partakers are blessed, not by the mere partaking by the mouth, but by partaking in faith.

3) **Prophetical** – “till he come” (1 Corinthians 11:26)

The fact of His second coming is mentioned in the NT and He spoke of it Himself. Here, in the final act of remembrance, He includes the hope of His return.

The cross is linked with the Communion and the Communion is connected with the second coming – bearing witness not only to the first Advent, but also to the hope of the second Advent.

At the table we look back, in faith, to the sacrifice of the cross for redemption; we look forward to His coming again. Between the cross and the Second Coming is the Communion service.

4) **Evangelical** – “ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26). At the Lord’s Supper we are proclaiming the very heart of the Gospel. Here we confess “I believe...”, God-ward, we confess faith before God; man-ward, we confess Christ as Saviour and King.

To share in this feast, one with the other, “let a man examine himself” (1 Cor. 11:28). Examine himself and not another.

Address Three

Communion (1 Corinthians 11:23)

This ordinance is one of the means of grace. It leads us to Christ;

- (a) by the ear – the word;
- (b) by the eye – seeing the symbols;
- (c) by the taste – partaking, taste and see, by faith;
- (d) by the affections – response inwardly.

This doctrine must be most effectual which stirs up most of our outward senses – hearing, seeing, tasting and feeling (affections). These all move the heart and are most effectual as a means of grace. The ordinance stirs up the outward senses to arouse the inward affections.

- 1) This ordinance is referred to as the **Sacrament**. The word *Sacrament* is not in Scripture – but it means anything that binds or brings under obligation (the use of the word also gives the idea of mystery. In Greek – mystery – which is unknown until revealed; in Latin – sacrament,

mystery, a symbol or rite with a spiritual meaning).

The Sacrament consists of two elements, outward, visible signs and an inward, spiritual grace thereby signified. The sign in the Sacrament is united to what is signified – they cannot be separated. Bread is common bread, but when joined with the evidence of the Word – this Word-and-element – is a Sacrament, a sign and seal; sign, signifying, seal, a sealing ordinance.

Sign – bread and wine distributed in a ceremony, signifying– yet, Christ is so present in the ceremony, that if by faith the bread and wine are partaken, Christ is actually partaken of (not by the mouth but by faith) and is received. The mouth to our spiritual life to eat is faith.

If our digestive system is not in order, if our stomach is upset, food cannot be taken properly. It is offensive or perhaps will cause further sickness. So spiritually, if our spiritual digestive system is out, we cannot receive Him as we ought. Cause of spiritual digestive upset is worldliness, etc. We get no good from the ordinance, unless we eat and digest by faith – unless we have a good spiritual appetite. And partaking with a good spiritual appetite, by faith, we bring ourselves under obligation, as a vow, to be true and loyal to our Lord. “I’ll pay my vows to the Lord” (Psalm 116).

- 2) **Supper of the Lord** – a meal, different from a common meal. It is a supper to increase holiness (1 Corinthians 11:20).
- 3) **Table of the Lord** – 1 Corinthians 10:21, not an altar, but a table. To sit at – to commune with each other, fellowship.
- 4) **Communion** – with Him and with each other.

Advice. “Let a man examine himself” (1 Corinthians 11:28). Conscience – self-judgement, heart knowledge.

Conscience – is appointed to be a keeper, a careful attender, bears testimony, observes, records; placed or given as an accuser; a true witness against one, to judge and condemn or otherwise. Conscience – the worm that dieth not. Christ is the Lord of the conscience.

Examine – have we grace, a work of grace in our life. Is there a living faith in our heart? Has the Holy Spirit begun to work in us? Are we children of light?

Sacraments are like rainbows – a rainbow is a sign that no flood will destroy. Sacraments, a sign God will not destroy us by an overflowing flood of His wrath.

Amen



VERSAMELDE WERKE
Dr. ANDREW MURRAY

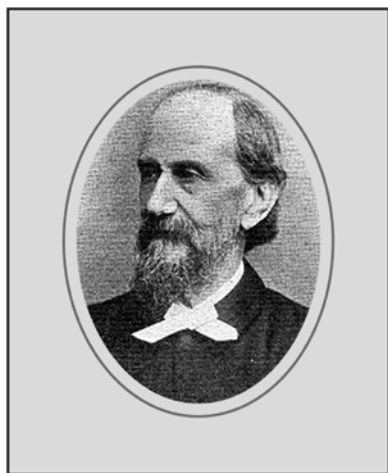
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1945

Editor's Introduction to Andrew Murray on the Heidelberg Catechism

Andrew Murray (1828-1917) is a Christian leader who has intrigued me for many years. I have concluded that there are many more complexities to him than both his critics and his supporters have acknowledged. One area of Murray's life which has not received proper attention is the sermonic written material which he produced while preaching through the Heidelberg Catechism. From what I have been able to determine, these have remained in Afrikaans only. Furthermore, even the Afrikaans text has not been well circulated and has not undergone extensive reprinting, unlike his many other works.¹ It is a significant work for many reasons. Murray came to the defense of the theology contained in the Heidelberg Catechism Question 60 on the extent of sin. This certainly identified Murray as no modernist, as is demonstrated by his *A Lecture on the Modern Theology*,² another almost forgotten Murray work. It is fascinating to read of Andrew Murray being described as belonging to the "ultraorthodox party" of the Dutch Reformed Church in the 1860s. The layers of Andrew Murray have not always been duly appreciated nor investigated. The Murray of 1900 must also be read by this story told above.



Andrew Murray (1828-1917)

It was J. I. Packer who wrote in his *A Passion for Holiness*³ that he first wanted to entitle his book, *With Christ in the School of Holiness*, "a deliberate echo, almost a steal, of *With Christ in the School of Prayer* by Andrew Murray, a much appreciated South African devotional author of two generations ago."⁴ Packer then proceeded to write of three essential points of convergence with Murray on holiness. In the end, the title did not come out as contemplated. Why do I take the time to relate this story? Because Packer, who is known to identify areas of weakness in

¹ Murray's sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism are found in the 1945 *Versamelde Werke Dr. Andrew Murray*. See illustration on the facing page.

² Andrew Murray, *A Lecture on the Modern Theology* (Cape Town: Pike and Byles, 1868).

³ British edition title, or with the North American title, *Rediscovered Holiness*.

⁴ J. I. Packer, *A Passion for Holiness* (Leicester: Crossway Books, 1992), 15.

the “Keswick theology” of the past – yet here is the balance – also freely admits that Murray (and others viewed as part of Keswick) clearly have something to offer the Church universal today. It is time for another “read through” of Andrew Murray.⁵

What follows here are the beginnings of a translation project of Murray’s sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism. It was only natural that Murray did such as he stood in the tradition and customs of the ministry of the Dutch Reformed Church of the nineteenth century. These two selections have been translated by Gerda van der Merwe, the former registrar at Mukhanyo Theological College, South Africa. We owe a great debt to Gerda for helping to bring the English world this material. An editorial committee has been formed for consultation and to continue this project with the hope of seeing all of Murray’s material on the Heidelberg Catechism published as a single volume in English. It should be added that this is not undertaken only as an academic exercise to bring Afrikaans Andrew Murray to light. We want to come with humility to learn from this man of God and uncover more shades of complexity in him than we imagined. As editor, I welcome correspondence from the international community about this project.

J. C. W.



Andrew Murray’s grave, Wellington, South Africa

⁵ See also Kenneth Ferguson, “Waiting Upon God”, *The Monthly Record* (August, 2009): 10.

Heidelberg Catechism First Sunday: The Only Comfort

Andrew Murray

*“...for I know whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that he is able to
Keep that which I have committed unto
Him against that day.” (2 Timothy 1:12)*

The Catechism, or teaching on the Christian doctrines as taught in the Dutch Reformed Churches and schools, is the booklet from which we preach in our churches. The aim thereof is to equip members of the church to give an account of their faith. The way by which this goal is attempted to be reached is to give them the language of faith so that anyone who wants to confess his faith with a sincere heart may know how he should speak.

In the first question, “*What is thy only comfort in life and in death,*” the Catechism indicates that it does not want to handle or discuss God’s Word as an abstract system, as is all too frequently done, but as the joyful gospel in which each has a personal interest. It comes to the person who is a lost sinner who is in need of redemption and of the comfort it can afford in life as well as in death. It is necessary that where the confession of faith is to be given, the faith should first be sincere and alive. For this reason, the Catechism answers throughout its teaching in the first person, because the knowledge of the way to salvation is of no use if it is not a personal issue. In answer to the first question, the Catechism then gives a short summary of the faith and the unutterable joy that can be had by the one who believes. The second question deals with the way by which someone can obtain this comfort and will be dealt with later on in this teaching. Thus in Lord’s Day One we will talk about *The Only Comfort in Life and in Death*, and we will hear (I) wherein the comfort is; and (II) the way in which it can be obtained.

I

1 Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A. That I am not my own,
but belong—
body and soul,
in life and in death—
to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood,
 and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.
 He also watches over me in such a way
 that not a hair can fall from my head
 without the will of my Father in heaven:
 in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.

Because I belong to him,
 Christ, by his Holy Spirit,
 assures me of eternal life
 and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready
 from now on to live for him.¹

The answer to the first question is one of the loveliest confessions of faith that can ever be found. In the words thereof we hear the joyful tone of faith of the men of the Reformation with whom there was neither fear nor doubt about their state before God. In their struggle against Rome, they learnt to understand what faith was: the casting and leaving of self onto God's Word and God's power and therefore the firm foundation of an unshakeable faith. They wanted to educate all their learners in such a joyous, clear faith. For that reason they did not hesitate to place these glorious words on the lips of the children for whom they used this textbook. Everyone had to know that it was the confession of faith to which the Christian is called and to which he has a right. Likewise, everyone had to know the means by which God had to be honoured and pleased and the means by which the Christian should receive courage and strength, even to offering up everything to his Lord in the martyr's fire.

We want to go through each part of the confession simply and section by section with the aim of understanding the content correctly and also of coming under the full impression of this glorious faith.

That I am not my own, but belong – body and soul

“That I”, this is how the church wants me to start my confession. *“That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.”*

“...am not my own, but belong unto Jesus” – this is the language of simple assurance of faith which the Catechism not only requires from older, advanced Christians but also of young believers. It is not the big, strong children who have the greatest need of the assurance of the love of their father, but especially the youngest and the weakest. Similarly, for the youngest Christian, the assurance of faith is a necessity of life. He will learn to speak these words as soon as he is willing to disregard himself and put his trust in the faithfulness of his Lord alone.

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What strikes us here first is that the comfort is not sought in the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, nor in the hope of heaven, but in something that goes much deeper in the life of faith, yes, something that sums up salvation in its actual roots – the personal relationship to the Lord Jesus. In the preaching of the gospel this is not brought to the fore often enough. The doctrine of being made righteous through free grace is often preached orthodoxly and with great seriousness while worriedly seeking to understand and hold onto it; and yet the Christian does not find rest in the joy that is promised. The main cause is that often the preaching and the message of salvation lack what makes up the Godly glory; that is, the Son of God came *personally*, not only to die, but to seek the sinner as His property, to take him up in His friendship and love, and to give him the living certainty that he *belongs* to Jesus Christ *personally*. Where faith sees this and holds on to it, it holds a comfort which neither death, nor life, nor any created being can take away. When the soul sees Jesus as God in His almighty power; as man in His tender, compassionate love; as the Crucified, Who with His blood purchased a people for Himself; as the Exalted that has all power on the throne, then the phrase “*that I belong to Jesus Christ*” is enough for him – a complete salvation. And he learns to understand and say it more and more.

“*That I, with body and soul...*” – the body and the temporal, no less than the soul with the spiritual, the whole, wonderful composition that makes up the life of that “*I*” – *in life and death*: the smallest trouble of life no less than the enormous transition to eternity summarized in death, “*do not belong to myself*” – no, I am not in the least my own property, nor do I have to care for myself, nor please myself – *I do not belong to myself, but to my trusted Saviour, Jesus Christ*. Whereas faith first knows Jesus as Saviour, it only needs to take note of His faithfulness in order to enjoy the comfort that man needs. He who started a good work will complete it; nothing shall separate me from the love of Him who with His blood bought me and took me as His property.

This glorious language of assurance of faith is so totally in correspondence with the doctrine of Holy Scripture. It would have been good for the church and the life of Godly bliss of its members if men had preached assurance of faith as it is written in the first question of the Catechism: as the *duty* and the *right* of each Christian, even of the young Christian. There were times when someone would be viewed as arrogant if he wanted to make the language of this answer his own; there were times when they almost did not know anymore that a healthy faith always brings forth its own assurance, because it teaches the sinner to keep himself occupied with his faithful Saviour to Whom he belongs. Let everyone who still doubts what the Reformed doctrine on this truth is or who still wants to be delivered of doubts about his own state meditate on our reply, memorize it and prayerfully take it to heart. God’s Spirit wants to teach Christians to speak this language freely and joyfully.

He bought me with His blood

Aiming at us knowing what the firm foundation is on which this salvation rests, as well as knowing the rich treasure of blessings and comfort that is locked up therein, the Catechism teaches us in six words or so to give close account of our assurance of faith: I belong to Jesus Christ, Who paid for all my sins completely through His precious blood. Thus speaks the believer on the grounds of the Holy Scriptures.

Paul says: “. . . ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price . . .” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and 7:23). “. . . For thou . . . hast redeemed us to God by thy blood . . .” (Revelation 5:9) is the song of the redeemed in heaven. It is through faith in His blood that the believer obtains the firm assurance that he belongs to Jesus.

According to the Word of God, the blood of Christ was shed for our sins. We were captives under the power of sin, bound with the chains of the law and without hope to be freed from that prison unless we could pay the last penny. Through the shedding of His blood, Christ bore all my debts and paid for my sins completely. “(*Jesus Christ*). . . Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. . .” (Romans 3:25). The blood is presented as the object of faith; those who believe in it receive redemption. That blood not only gives me the right to redemption but also gives the Redeemer the right to me; the payment of the debt through the blood gives Him the right, the complete right of ownership of everyone that believes in that blood. Through faith the Christian now belongs to “. . . *the church . . . which he hath purchased with his own blood*” (Acts 20:28). It is through faith in that blood, in the Godly power thereof, in the promise of God that calls me to come and wash in it, in the faithfulness of Him who will never forget the property He bought, that the believer says, “*It is my only comfort that I belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, who paid all my sins completely through His precious blood.*”

He delivered me from the devil

And freed me from the tyranny of the devil. The sinner is not only under the power of the law of God in order that he might be delivered through the payment of the debt, he is also under the power of Satan. Satan is not only a tempter; that is what he was to the Lord Jesus and what he is for the people of God. However, he is also a mighty prince that forces the sinner to serve him. It is through the law of God that Satan has power over us. God said that when we sin, we come under Satan’s power. The Lord Jesus not only delivers us from the power of the law but also from the power of the devil, Satan. Christ came into contact with the devil as a tempter in the desert and as the power of darkness through His suffering, and He legitimately and completely conquered Satan. Each redeemed person is like a sheep that has been saved by the Good Shepherd from the mouth of the lion; the Good Shepherd treasures him as His precious property and protects him. The

believer knows that Satan does not have the least power over him and, like a sheep that rests on the shoulder of the Shepherd, he sings, *I belong to my faithful Redeemer Jesus Christ, who saved me from the tyranny of the devil.*

He protects me

He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven: in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. We expect from every reasonable person that when he buys something at a high price, he will faithfully care for it. We know for certain that a shepherd who risks his life to save one of his sheep from a lion will lead it safely to its destination. The one who knows what he professes says, *I belong to Jesus Christ*, and he also knows that his Redeemer is his Protector. The more the believer meditates on who his faithful Saviour is, the more he becomes convinced that Jesus Christ is willing to care for his body and soul every moment. The Christian must simply allow the Holy Spirit to explain the meaning of the saying, *I belong to Jesus Christ*, and his soul will pronounce this as his only and all-sufficient comfort: *He protects me* – so faithfully and powerfully as if I am a member of His body, yes, the apple of His eye. *He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head*, how much more that no evil will have power over my soul; yes, also that all, even the least wrong, even the largest and heaviest, even the smallest and most insignificant, *must contribute to my salvation.* O Glorious comfort, to be able to say this, *That I am not my own, but belong – body and soul, in life and in death – to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.*

He seals me through His Spirit

Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life. Many have considered this comfort “I belong to Jesus” and thought, “Yes, it is all glorious if I could only know how I could obtain that assurance.” Listen here! The believing confessor does not have this assurance in himself, in his sincerity or in the firmness of his faith. Absolutely not! Wherein then? It is in the assurance that the Lord Jesus Himself gives through the Holy Spirit. The owner of a book writes his name in it. An ox knows his owner and a donkey the trough of his owner. A child knows who his father is and a soldier knows whom he is serving. Would God allow that His people not know that they belong to Him? This thought is absurd, in conflict with the whole of Scripture. The Father has made a definite and all glorious provision that each one of His redeemed will be sealed as the Lord’s property. The Father has given the Holy Spirit to the Son to give to us; so that we will know what God gave us through grace; so that He with our spirit can confess that we are children of God; so that He is the guarantee, the sure proof and taste of eternal life. Thus I know with a Godly and steadfast certainty that I, in my life and death, belong to my faithful Redeemer Jesus Christ.

He sanctifies me for His service

And makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him. One expects service from your property, and Jesus is serious about His right of ownership of me. He wants me *to live for him*, as His sole property, with no will other than to please Him. He knows that I am not able to do it. His acceptance of me is not made subject to a promise I made to serve Him faithfully. No, His acceptance is subject to His promise that He will equip me to do so. In that promise I had the courage to say that I was His property; I understood that He himself, through His Spirit, would create in me the will as well as the work. For that reason I say, *I belong to Jesus; therefore He makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him.*

To live for Him

This becomes the motto of the life of faith and of sanctification. Just as Jesus is and was in the redemption of everything, so He becomes it in the life of the redeemed. In the words *I belong to Jesus*, complete redemption is introduced as a personal relationship of love in which Jesus has been incorporated; *I belong to Him* just as a member of my body belongs to me, as a child belongs to his father. I do not belong to myself but to my father. The believer goes over completely from his own side into this personal relationship: *I live for Him; He makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him.*

When you are able to say all this, you have the only comfort in life and in death. You have the knowledge of the salvation and joy He wants to bring to you. Do you ask how to obtain it? Listen now.

II

The way in which this comfort can be obtained

2 Q. What must you know to live and die in the joy of this comfort?

A. Three things:

- first, how great my sin and misery are;
- second, how I am set free from all my sins and misery;
- third, how I am to thank God for such deliverance.²

The Catechism clearly explains the goal it proposes. It wants to bring each one of you to speak this glorious language of faith: It is my only comfort *that I am not my own, but belong – body and soul, in life and in death – to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ* and enjoy all that is included therein. For those who can already say this, the Catechism wants to teach them to understand it more completely and to confess it so that others are

² Reprinted with permission ©1975 Christian Reformed Church of North America.

encouraged to desire such salvation. The major cause for so many to miss that comfort and salvation is ignorance. The power of Satan is the power of darkness; blindness and ignorance are major causes why many go lost. The Catechism wants to direct your attention to three main factors wherein ignorance reveals itself, so that the light of God's Word will make you see what is necessary for you.

The first thing is the knowledge of sin and misery. Everyone says that they have sinned and that misery comes from sin, but how few people really know what sin and misery are! Unless you know and grieve and become concerned about it, true comfort cannot enter your life. Come, all who long for this comfort, and sit as pupils to learn this first and all-important lesson: how great your sin and misery are. If you correctly see to what extent you have transgressed God's holy law, how corrupt your nature is, and how powerless you are to undo the transgressions of the past or to overcome them in future; if you see how just and how frightening and how certain the eternal judgment of God is of you and your sin, then will the comfort of the knowledge, *I belong to Jesus*, become desirable and indispensable to you. The knowledge of sin takes away the false rest and self-righteousness from the sinner, teaches him to bow before God in brokenness and self-loathing, and in this way prepares the heart to accept Godly redemption.

The second point about which ignorance exists is redemption. Even if all of us own a Bible and even if we are all educated therein, it is astonishing how astoundingly wrong or gloomy are the concepts most people have about salvation. In this way they are being kept away from it. There is no correct knowledge of the wonderful Person, the work that He has done, or the perfect salvation that He has prepared and presented as a gift. Furthermore, there is no understanding of the simplicity of faith and the enormous change it brings about when we become part of Christ and His righteousness. Come, listen to what God wants to reveal to you, and it will be shown to you that the whole, eternal salvation is within your reach. The way is also prepared for you to rejoice: *I am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ*.

Then the way is prepared for the third part. Oh, how many who sincerely search for the Lord (and also think that they believe) enjoy and confess so little of the comfort that is wrought through faith because they do not know what it means that the saved should belong to the Lord totally and only. They do not know that there is grace which enables them to prove through their whole lives their gratitude to God, that the Lord truly makes them *willing and able to live for Him*. The knowledge of these three things – Misery, Redemption and Gratitude – will each contribute to teach us that confession must be done with increasing cheerfulness. Thus in a more abundant and unequalled way we will experience the comfort and heavenly power which is brought about through boasting: *That I am not my own but belong – with body and soul, in life and death – to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ*.

There you now have the main purpose that is aimed at with these sermons

on the Catechism. It is not only to prove the biblical foundation of the Reformed doctrine to you. It is not only to increase the knowledge for you to rejoice in the full orthodoxy of your faith. No, however necessary these few things are, the Catechism has another, much higher and much more glorious goal. The first question is the entrance to all that it wants to teach us: *That I belong to Jesus Christ*; He who owns the key to this treasure chest can time after time come back to unlock and appropriate that which another cannot find. In the answer you truly find the sum and total of the gospel. Eye and attention is averted from everything; Christ, and what He does, is the comfort in life and in death. To belong to Him as being bought by Him, as His redeemed, as being protected by Him, as sealed by Him, as sanctified by Him, as His property in complete reality – this is the salvation to which the Catechism, to which the Church and to which *I* want to take you.

Who would be willing to accept His invitation? I pray you all, come, listen! Let it now be your intention to also become part of this salvation. Start now to allow the Spirit of God to admonish you for your sins and acknowledge that you have done wrong to this Christ and dishonoured Him by withholding His rightful property, yourself, from Him. Return to this Saviour who calls for you and seeks you as the lost sheep you are. Offer yourself now to Him to be His property and to live for Him. Do not see it as risking too much to start using the glorious language of faith from the Catechism and to make it your own. Learn the words by heart. Prayerfully and believingly say it; by saying it, faith will grow. And so you also will become one of the tens of thousands who, with growing understanding and growing joy, knows no other answer to the question about their hope and comfort in life and in death than this glorious answer: *That I am not my own but belong – with body and soul, in life and death – to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, who has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.*

May the Lord God make us partakers of all of this, and may it be the language of us all.

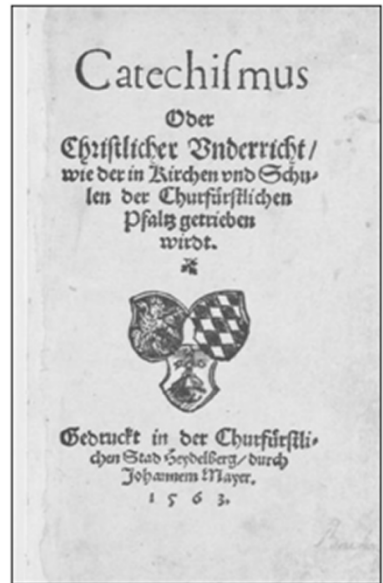
To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins through His blood and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be all the glory and the power for all eternity! Amen. (Revelation 1:5b, 6)

Heidelberg Catechism Twentieth Sunday: On God, the Holy Spirit

Andrew Murray

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen¹*

Concerning the Articles of Faith as found in the Apostles' Creed, we were taught that they are divided into three parts: the first about God the Father and our creation; the second about God the Son and our redemption; the third about God the Spirit and our sanctification. It is this third part that we now come to in question 53: "*What do you believe about the Holy Spirit?*" Just as indispensable as the knowledge of God our Creator and Father and Christ our Redeemer and Judge, is the knowledge of the work of the Holy Spirit. Without Him there can be no real knowledge of the Father and the Son. Without knowing Him we do not know how to find and enjoy the love of the Father and the mercy of the Son correctly. Let us approach in faith and with a desire for salvation to hear what we are taught through the Word of God about the blessed work of the Holy Spirit. Notice that the teaching will point out five aspects of the highest value that we will discuss consecutively.²



¹ "The Apostles' Creed", *Trinity Hymnal*, rev. ed. (Atlanta/Philadelphia: Great Commission Publications, 1990), 845.

² Here Murray is following the five biblical reference divisions accorded to the 53rd answer.

53 Q. What do you believe about the Holy Spirit?

A. Firstly that He is, together with the Father and the Son, truly and eternally God.

Secondly, that He is also given to me that I, through true faith in Christ may have part in His kindness, His consolation and eternal presence.³

53 Q. What do you believe concerning "the Holy Spirit"?

A. First, he, as well as the Father and the Son, is eternal God.

Second, he has been given to me personally, so that, by true faith, he makes me share in Christ and all his blessings, comforts me, and remains with me forever.⁴

I

The Spirit is God

Firstly that He is, together with the Father and the Son, truly and eternally God. This first part of our reply deals with the person of the Holy Spirit. On the eighth Sunday, through the interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity, we had the opportunity to discuss this at length. The Spirit is the third of the three persons of the Godhead, as much an independent person as the Father and the Son, and as much a Godly person. This truth is not a doctrine to be accepted and then to be put aside as if it has no specific value for us. No, in what we are now going to consider, it is essential that we will remind ourselves that He, on whom we are so totally dependent for the experience of salvation that Christ has prepared, in fact truly is God, one with the Father and the Son. The Spirit has the Father and the Son in Himself; only to the extent that we get to know and honour Him can He powerfully reveal the Son and the Father in us. The more the believer puts this in the foreground, the stronger shall be his faith to truly expect the full blessing and power the Spirit can bring.

Remember that we have seen previously what power this truth has: the Mediator must be God. My Saviour is God. Similarly, this truth, the Spirit must be God, the Spirit is God, will increasingly reveal to us the joy of salvation and the possibilities of a life of faith. The power that works within us to bring about belief and work, the outpouring and revelation of the love of God in the heart, the real unity with the Lord as members of His body, and so much more finds firm ground in this: the Spirit is God, one with the Father and the Son. As such, He gives the testimony in our hearts that God is our Father because He, as the life of the Father, breathes in us. As such, He makes us partakers of Christ and is the Comforter in the place of Christ. As

³ This is a translation by Gerda van der Merwe of the Afrikaans version of the Catechism as found in Murray.

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such, He abides with us eternally, meaning with a continuing, unintermittent presence every moment of our earthly lives.

Christian, ponder this, immerse yourself in it. Lose yourself in this: the Holy Spirit, the Spirit that is in you, is God! Worship God as the Trinity and thank Him with a joy that has never been known before. The third person, God the Spirit, lives in you.

II

The Spirit was given to me

I believe secondly, that He was also given to me. This is how the true believer expresses his faith. With this he thinks, though not exclusively, of the outpouring of the Spirit from heaven on the day of Pentecost. He was then given to the church to stay with them forever but not in such a way as if all there was of the Spirit in heaven descended onto the earth. No, He is in heaven as well as on earth; He is in Christ the Head and in the congregation, His body, at the same time. And at rebirth every believer receives of the Spirit, as well as from believers around him through the communion of the Word, as from the exalted Lord in heaven. Every believer is not only reborn so that there is in him a new spirit, but he truly receives the Holy Spirit to live in the new spirit.

Let us extend ourselves to understand that the Holy Spirit really lives in us. If He was given to us, can He in any other way be our property than through inhabitation? When we think of the Father, we think of the invisible and concealed God, highly exalted in heaven. When we think of the Son, then we think of God who appeared in the flesh, God in Jesus Christ, lifted up on the cross and exalted on the throne. When we think of the Spirit, we must not think of someone above or outside us. No, when we confess in the Catechism, “*I believe that He is also given to me*”, we mean that He moved into my inner being and lives there in order, through His Godly power, to be my life and to do all His work in me. This inhabitation is a Godly mystery but at the same time something of which the Christian can have the glorious certainty and experience.

Many believers fear to express the Spirit because they experience so little, yes sometimes nothing, of the working of it. My brother, when Jesus was on earth, He was truly God on earth, though it often seemed as if He was nobody special because there was no recognized sign of Godly power. If someone did not believe in Him and He could do no powerful deeds, can it be regarded that He was not God?⁵ Only faith recognized Him and could evoke the manifestation of His Power. In the same way, you should not look for the signs and power of the Holy Spirit in you to know that He is in you.

⁵ Matthew 13:58; 17:20.

No, He keeps Himself very concealed in your inner being. The Holy Spirit, who said that He gives Himself to you, wants you to glorify God through faith. He wants you to trust His silent, secret work in you, even when you do not see it. Please accept the word of faith which the Catechism gives you and repeat it often. It will become a blessing to you: *I believe in the Holy Spirit; I believe that He was given to me.*

The effect of such faith will soon become evident. You will begin to understand that inward religion is the main issue in the New Testament: “The kingdom of God is in you” (Luke 17:21). In reading the Bible, in praying, as well as in living and working for God, you will learn not to ask the help of the Holy Spirit as if He should come from above or outside of you, but from inside you, like a tool that the Father gives you more powerfully as you honour the Spirit within you. Fear and consideration will come over you not to hinder Him through human wisdom and power; but you will experience a holy silence of the soul as of one that is under the guidance of a concealed but mightily working Guide. The thought of such heavenly guidance will be difficult to understand at first; but as you hold on to your faith and practise it, your soul will become accustomed to it. And you will understand that the essence of your life should be a daily practice in faith in the Triune God: the Father, from Whom are the Son (in Whom you are) and the Holy Spirit (Who is in you). Believer, here is the blessing of your salvation that you will need today and day after day: the Holy Spirit is in you to work all that your God and Christ promised you. Do not let it discourage you that He works silently and covertly. His work in you will become stronger as you profess it with more conviction: *I believe in the Holy Spirit; I believe that He was given to me.*

III

The Spirit makes me a partaker of Christ

“He was given to me to make me, through faith in Christ, a partaker of His merciful deeds.”⁶

These words wonderfully represent to us the work of the Holy Spirit. Too often the merciful actions of Christ, His righteousness, His guidance and His power are discussed as if they were gifts that could be received apart from Him and without possessing Him. No, just as the disciples had to accept Jesus as their Lord and follow Him as they who belonged to Him before they could enjoy His wonderful teaching and work, so should the believer know that the prosperity and power of his spiritual life will depend on his partaking of Christ. Just as the bride automatically becomes part of the house and abundance of the bridegroom if she possesses him, so must this be first and foremost in the life of faith: to know what it means to possess Christ.

⁶ The 1975 English translation here of the Heidelberg Catechism reads, “by true faith, he makes me share in Christ and all his *blessings*”.

The specific and unique work of the Holy Spirit is to partake in Christ. He is indeed the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Son. He could not come until Christ was glorified. He first had to undergo the full earthly life of Jesus in the perfecting and sanctification of Christ through suffering. The Spirit had to possess the humanity of Jesus completely so that He, as the totally complete Spirit of Jesus, could bring the same life into being in us as it was in Christ. He was sent from the exalted throne of the Lord so that all the fruit of the work of salvation, as it is acknowledged in heaven, and all the power of the Lord Jesus in His glory could become our inner property. Through a Godly and living communication, He makes us partakers of Christ. Christ becomes our life.

Makes us partakers of Christ and all His merciful deeds. What all His merciful deeds are can only be understood from the point of view of His threefold duty. The more we ponder the work of the Holy Spirit in the Word, the more we see that it is summed up in His suffering or illumination, His sanctification or renewal and His strengthening or making fruitful.

This explains the three offices. Christ is the Prophet; that is, the Word, the Wisdom, the Truth of God. As the Spirit of wisdom and truth in the Word, He makes Christ our Wisdom so that we, through the knowledge of Him, His image and His life, see God's will for us, our calling and our destination.

Christ is Priest. It was through the Spirit that Christ as Priest accomplished His offer. It was as Priest that He poured out the Holy Spirit. It is through the Spirit that the blood of reconciliation, purification and sanctification work continuously and the unification with the Holy Spirit is accomplished.

Christ is King to rule, to use and to strengthen to His service. The Spirit is the power of Christ. He enables believers to accomplish the whole will and work of the Lord, to wrestle and to conquer.

And all this through faith. To make me partake of Christ and all His merciful deeds through true faith. This does not necessarily speak of the beginning of faith at the time of conversion but of the life of faith and the daily joy in Christ and His deeds of mercy unto which the Spirit enables us. It happens through ever increasing and strengthening faith. As much as there is of the Holy Spirit, there is of true faith. If I want to increase in true faith . .

7
..

⁷ This sentence was not completed in Dr. Murray's manuscript copy which was the text used for the 1945 printed version.

IV

The Spirit comforts me

You know why the church speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit in such detail. On the last night, when the Lord gave the promise of the Holy Spirit, He called Him the Comforter. The word thus translated actually means the mediator or advocate (refer to the note in the margin of the state translation, John 14:15) and is, like the last mentioned word in Latin, *advocatus*, one that is called in to assist a person in his lawsuit. It is the same word that is translated for the Lord Jesus as Advocate (1 John 2:1) when the Lord said: “*The Father will send you another Comforter*” (John 14:16), where He meant that He Himself was the first in whose place the Other would come. Here He teaches us of the work of the Comforter or Advocate, the other One. Indeed the entire work of the Holy Spirit would be a completion and appropriation of His work. The work of the Lord Jesus as Advocate in heaven is to represent us with the Father in heaven; the work of the Spirit, *the other Advocate on earth*, is to make the work of Jesus in heaven known to us and in this way be the Representative of Jesus. The second of these, the other Comforter or Advocate, has but one task: what the Advocate does in heaven is revealed and strengthened in a living and powerful reality to the inner man.

Should we understand the word Comforter in the correct, full sense of the word, we would achieve the same result. What was the sorrow for which the Spirit would comfort them? The one great sorrow that filled them was the death of Jesus Christ, the loss of their beloved Lord’s physical presence. But that sorrow would be changed to joy when the Spirit came. And this for the specific reason that the Spirit would reveal the Lord Jesus’ heavenly and spiritual presence to the inner man. Because the Father was in the Son and spoke through Him, Jesus could say: “. . . he that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9 KJV). In the same way, because Christ is in the Spirit, the believer receives with the Spirit the exalted Christ. In this way the Spirit is the Comforter and the Representative of Jesus Christ which makes Him now just as present in reality as when His disciples were on earth. All complaints and sorrow, the missing of the presence of the Lord, all weakness and darkness have one cause: we do not know the power of the Spirit in the fullness of His heavenly position as Comforter, for He can make Jesus just as present now so that there will be no sign of shortage or sorrow. The complete joy that Jesus maintains and distributes as the Comforter in heaven (Hebrews 7:25) is imparted through Him continuously as Advocate to our experience in fullness. Our Comforter is God the Holy Spirit in whom God the Redeemer is personally represented.

V

The Spirit stays with me

To stay with me eternally. These words of the Catechism were taken from the words of Jesus: “*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you forever*” (John 14:16). By saying this, the Lord does not want to point our thoughts to what we normally believe – eternity after death. No, He is thinking of Himself and His leaving. His physical presence was always limited to space and time. The disciples could not always have Him with them; now with His death and going to the Father, He would be parted from them. He promises them another Comforter that will stay with them *for all eternity*, unintermittent and continuously. No place or circumstance could be imagined whereby for one moment the presence, comfort and power which makes them part of Christ and His mercy be absent from them. Eternal life that knows no change or end would already be the share of the disciples here on earth.



Pulpit in the Moederkerk, Wellington, South Africa

– JCW photo

The Moravian Missions Strategy: Christ-Centered, Spirit-Driven, Mission-Minded

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Introduction

John Mark Terry writes that “though William Carey is rightly regarded as the father of the modern missions movement, the Pietists, especially the Moravians, were really the first modern missionaries”.¹ His contention is right, because Carey did not create the Protestant missionary movement from a vacuum. Sixty years before Carey left for India and 150 years before Hudson Taylor landed in China, the Moravians already had dispatched two missionaries to the West Indian island of St. Thomas to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Within twenty years of the commencement of their missionary activities, the Moravian Brethren had started more missions than Anglicans and other Protestants had during the two preceding centuries.² Their marvelous success was largely due to the fact that from the beginning they recognized that the evangelization of the world was the most pressing of all the obligations that rested upon the Christian Church and that the carrying out of this obligation was the “common affair” of the Brethren community.³

¹ John Mark Terry, *Evangelism: A Concise History* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 91.

² Charles H. Robinson, *History of Christian Missions* (New York: Scribners, 1915), 49.

³ Robinson, *History of Christian Missions*, 50. Mulholland also makes a similar contention that the Moravians were the first Protestants to put into practice the idea that evangelizing the lost is the duty of the whole church, not just of a missionary society or a few individuals (Kenneth B. Mulholland, “Moravians, Puritans, and the Modern Missionary Movement”, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156 [1999]: 222). Schattschneider evaluates the mission movement of the Moravians: “The haphazard

The Moravian Church has left a record of world evangelization that is without parallel in the post-New Testament era. Their success in missions was the fruit of committed missionaries and their God-centered heart for lost souls. They were not only God-centered people but mission-driven people. Paul Pierson writes, “The Moravians became committed to world missions as a church; that is, the whole church became a missionary society.”⁴ Their legendary dedication to world evangelization raises some questions: Who are the Moravians? What drove the Brethren to set out for unknown lands at the cost of their families and their own lives? Did they have some specific mission methodologies? The answers to these questions will offer readers a better understanding of our precious Christian history and a fuller insight into modern missions.

This paper explores the Moravian missions strategy. First of all, we will briefly survey their origins and historical development. This task will include surveying Reformers like Hus and Pietists such as Spener, Francke and Zinzendorf. We will then explore and analyze the uniqueness of the Moravian missions strategies.

Historical Development of Moravian Missions

1. The Name of the Church

Unitas Fratrum is the ancient name by which the Moravian Church was first known. It is a Latin phrase meaning, “Unity of Brethren”, which is still used as their official name. People of this church are called Moravians because the church got its start in Moravia and Bohemia.

The history of the Moravian Church is usually divided into two eras: first, the time of the Ancient Unity which sprung to life in Moravia and Bohemia after the martyrdom of John Hus; and second, the time of the Renewed Church which flourished in Germany after a party of religious refugees found a safe haven on the estate of Count Zinzendorf.⁵

attempts of Protestants to undertake crosscultural missionary activity received their first infusion of form and content from Zinzendorf and Moravians.” See David A. Schattschneider, “Pioneers in Mission: Zinzendorf and the Moravians”, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 8 (April 1984): 63.

⁴ Paul E. Pierson, “Total Commitment to World Missions”, *Christian History* 1 (1982): 6.

⁵ Herbert Spaugh, “A Short Introduction to the History, Customs and Practices of the Moravian Church” [on-line], accessed 19 October 2008; available from <http://www.everydaycounselor.com/archive/sh/history.htm>; Internet.

2. John Hus

John Hus, who is regarded by the Moravian Church as one of its main figures, was born of peasant parents in the Bohemian village of Husinec about 1369.⁶ He studied at the University of Prague as a theological student, where he became adept with the tools of logic, philosophy and theology. After taking his bachelor's degree in 1394 and his master's degree in 1396, he became a Roman Catholic priest in 1400.



His theology relied heavily upon the writings of Wycliffe, who emphasized the Bible as the primary authority of the church. In those days, the conflict over Wycliffe was becoming sharper at the university. The more Wycliffe was condemned by the entrenched powers, the stronger Hus moved to defend him.⁷ His emphasis on the Bible led him to declare that all Christians had the right and duty to read and interpret the Bible for themselves, which is similar to the contention of Wycliffe.

In 1415, Hus was summoned to appear before the Council of Constance to recant his teaching. Hus was ordered to make his choice – recant and be imprisoned for life or refuse and be burned alive. He refused to recant, so on July 6, 1415, Hus was stripped of his rank in the church and led to the site of his execution.

3. Formation of the *Unitas Fratrum*

The martyrdom of Hus intensified the anti-Roman feeling in Bohemia. His followers increased; and in March of 1457, they gathered in the village of Kunwald in Bohemia to form a society which they first called “The Brethren of the Law of Christ”.⁸ Despite the occasional persecution, the Brethren prospered during the Reformation and increased in number. When Martin Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the Wittenberg church and spread the flame of the Protestant Reformation, the *Unitas Fratrum* was delighted with the reforms demanded by Luther. Even though

⁶ John R. Weinlick and Albert H. Frank, *The Moravian Church through the Ages* (Bethlehem, PA: The Moravian Church in America, 1966; revised, 1989), 9. His birth date, however, is somewhat doubtful. Langton writes that it is usually given as between 1373 and 1375. See Edward Langton, *History of the Moravian Church: The Story of the First International Protestant Church* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1956), 15.

⁷ Weinlick and Frank, *The Moravian Church*, 11.

⁸ Spough, “Short Introduction to History”. As some mistook the title for that of a new monastic order, they changed it; and thus the designation became “The Unity of the Brethren” (*Unitas Fratrum*). See Langton, *History of the Moravian Church*, 30.

the merger between the Brethren and Luther did not succeed,⁹ the Brethren kept a strong relationship with Luther and other Reformers.¹⁰

The Brethren grew not only in Bohemia but in Moravia as well. In 1722, two families led by Christian David fled from Moravia because of persecution and by the invitation of Count Zinzendorf settled on his domain of Berthelsdorf in Saxony. Following their settlement, about three hundred Brethren emigrated from Moravia and Bohemia to the new location. They built a town called Herrnhut, “The Lord’s Watch”, which became the center of the renewed Church of the Brethren. We have explored the historical setting of the birth of the Brethren Church, and now we will examine Pietism, which was another factor in the formation of the Moravian Church.

4. Pietism

When the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) ended, Europe was in shambles. Many Protestants had lost their passion and clung to dead orthodoxy. World-wide missions was not a main concern for the Reformers.¹¹ The Lutheran Church emphasized that only the apostles were privileged to fulfill the Great Commission.¹² Therefore, missions was not considered the responsibility of the church. From the ashes of this situation, a movement called Pietism began to emerge. Pietism tried to complete the spirit of the Reformation by emphasizing the transformation in life. Pietists emphasized spiritual experience and practical application in life.

⁹ Their disagreement revolved over theological issues. Luther believed that man was saved and justified by faith alone, whereas the Brethren believed that faith must be expressed through daily Christian living. They insisted that it was not a matter of faith or works, but of “faith that works”, insisting that faith ought to be visible in the lives of those who profess it. See Spaugh, “Short Introduction to History”.

¹⁰ Bucer, one of the renowned Reformers, once wrote to the Brethren, “I believe ye are the only people at this day, who, together with a pure doctrine, exercise a genuine and well-adapted discipline, which is not grievous, but profitable.” See Langton, *History of the Moravian Church*, 43.

¹¹ Mulholland indicates four reasons why there was no mission movement: theological reasons, geographical reasons, ecclesiastical reasons and organizational reasons. See Kenneth B. Mulholland, “From Luther to Carey: Pietism and the Modern Missionary Movement”, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156 (January-March 1999): 86-87. Tucker also finds some similar reasons of inactive Protestant missions involvement. Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 67.

¹² James A. Scherer, *Justinian Welz: Essays by an Early Prophet of Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 28.

i. Philip Jacob Spener

Spener (1635-1705), the father of Lutheran Pietism, published his book *Pia Desideria* in 1670, which is considered to be the starting point of German Pietism. In his masterpiece *Pia Desideria*, Spener emphasized the importance of the Christian's inner transformation and its expression in his life.¹³ In his call for reform Spener focused on six concrete proposals:



- (1) A more extensive use of the Word of God.
- (2) More exercise of the spiritual priesthood.
- (3) It is not enough to have knowledge of Christianity, for Christianity consists of practice.
- (4) Great care must be exercised in the conduct of religious controversies.
- (5) Seminaries are to be places of spiritual formation, not just places of intellectual exercises.
- (6) Seminaries are to provide practical experience in ministry.¹⁴

His proposals for reform met a diverse response. At last Spener was forced to leave the church; he moved to Berlin. There he established the University of Halle, near Berlin, where he challenged August Hermann Francke, the leader of Pietism at the University of Halle.

ii. August Hermann Francke



Francke (1663-1727) was a younger contemporary of Spener and taught Pietist beliefs at the University of Halle. In his mid-twenties, Francke experienced what he believed to be the new birth.¹⁵ Francke explained the agenda for Pietism briefly: "A life changed, a church revived, a nation reformed, a world evangelized."¹⁶ The University of Halle became a chief center of Pietism. This is the school where Zinzendorf, the leader of the Moravians, was educated.

¹³ Philipp Jakob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964). See especially 116-17.

¹⁴ Spener, *Pia Desideria*, 87-122.

¹⁵ Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Reformation to the Present*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 896.

¹⁶ August Hermann Francke, quoted in "Gallery of Leading Figures", *Christian History* 5 (1986): 13.

iii. Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf



Having examined the pre-Reformers and Pietism, we will now turn to Zinzendorf, who is the greatest leader in the Moravian Church. Zinzendorf was born on May 26, 1700, in Saxony, Dresden, into an aristocratic family. He was only six weeks old when his father died; he was only four years old when his mother married again. The young Count Zinzendorf was handed over to the tender care of his grandmother, Catherine von Gersdorf. She had a close relationship with Pietist leaders such as Spener and Francke. His grandmother's talent was handed down to Zinzendorf, and the relationship with the Pietists cultivated within him deep religious inclinations.

When Zinzendorf graduated from university, his family sent him on a tour of Europe. In the course of his travels, he came to an art gallery in Dusseldorf where he saw a painting entitled *Ecce Homo* by Domenico Feti. This painting had a shocking effect upon him. It was a picture of the thorn-crowned Christ. He read an inscription under the picture: "*Hoc feci pro te; Quid facis pro me?*" (This I have done for you; what have you done for me?) The memory of this question haunted Zinzendorf throughout his life. He wrote in his diary, "I have loved Him for a long time, but I have actually not done anything for Him. From now on I will do whatever He leads me to do."¹⁷

The opportunity for Zinzendorf to accomplish his zealous Christian service came in 1722, when a group of Protestant refugees sought shelter on his estate at Berthelsdorf. Their leader, Christian David, impressed Zinzendorf with stories of persecution of the Brethren. Zinzendorf invited them to settle on his land, which settlement was named Herrnhut, "The Lord's Watch". This event became a turning point in the development of the Moravian movement.¹⁸

Even though there were occasional problems owing to the diverse backgrounds of the residents, the whole atmosphere changed in 1727. On August 13, 1727, a period of spiritual renewal was climaxed at a communion service with a great revival, which marked the coming of the Holy Spirit to Herrnhut.¹⁹ This great night of revival immediately replaced the distrust and dissension of the past with brotherly love and brought a new passion for missions, which became the chief characteristics of the Moravian Church.²⁰

¹⁷ J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church: The Renewed Unitas Fratrum 1722-1957* (Bethlehem, PA: The Moravian Church in America, 1967), 9.

¹⁸ Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, 70.

¹⁹ Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, 70.

²⁰ Weinlick and Frank write that this memorable communion service on August 13 is regarded as the real birthday of the Renewed Unitas Fratrum. See John R. Weinlick

Zinzendorf invited a slave to Herrnhut to tell his story of the need for the gospel among his fellow slaves. Twenty-six people immediately volunteered, and the Moravian Missionary Movement was launched.²¹ Within a year, the first two Moravian missionaries had been commissioned to the Virgin Islands; and in the two decades that followed, the Moravians sent out more missionaries than all Protestants had sent out in the previous two centuries.²²

Missions Strategy

It is almost impossible to maintain that before sending out missionaries the Moravian Church deliberately established specific missions strategies on how to preach the gospel or on how to start churches. Their strategy did not derive from an elaborate plan, but it was an accumulated lesson which the missionaries learned when they were ministering on the field. As they pursued the ideal of the apostles of Jesus in the early church, they tried to follow the model employed in the New Testament. This is why modern missions can find many useful strategies that are still applicable today. We will examine their missions strategies.

1. Christ-Centered Message

First Corinthians 2:2, “Christ crucified and nothing else”, may be the most significant and lasting motto for their missionary work. Earlier missionaries attempted to persuade people by offering elaborate proofs for the existence of God in the style of a theology lecture. Zinzendorf, however, urged the missionaries to tell the story of Jesus Christ.

There was a turning point which caused them to emphasize the story of Jesus. In spite of several years of hard work, missionaries in Greenland did not convert any natives. However, the time came when the message of the missionaries was received. They abandoned preaching abstract theological doctrine and simply preached Jesus Christ, and their first successes followed immediately. When Kajarnak, a native of Greenland, heard the story of Jesus, he came forward with his eager question, “What is that? Tell me that again.”²³ The native broke the silence and indifference by showing his interest in the story of Jesus.

In 1740, the Moravian missionaries made an important change in the methods which they had hitherto adopted of presenting the gospel to the Greenland natives. When the great success in Greenland was public knowledge, Zinzendorf rejected the old rationalistic method of preaching and

and Albert H. Frank, *The Moravian Church Through the Ages: The Story of a Worldwide, Pre-Reformation Protestant Church* (Bethlehem, PA: The Moravian Church in America, 1989), 58.

²¹ Mulholland, “Moravians”, 224.

²² Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, 71.

²³ Hutton, *Short History of the Moravian Church*, 154.

proclaimed, "Henceforth, we shall preach nothing but the love of the slaughtered Lamb."²⁴ Their prayers, their litanies, their hymns, their conversation and their sermons had only one theme: the wounds, the blood and the death of Jesus.²⁵

The Moravians became witnesses of Christ and Him crucified. Their theology became Christology, and their creed was two words: "the Cross".²⁶ In their preaching they just went straight to the point and told about the life and, especially, the death of Jesus Christ. Since the time of that revival by the story of Jesus Christ, "the foolish doctrine of the Cross" has been the absolute center of their message.

2. *Dependence on the Holy Spirit*

The Moravians carried out their mission through the power of the Holy Spirit. They believed that missionary activity is a part of the divine plan of God as He uses committed people of God through the Holy Spirit. There was an event of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit during their communion in Herrnhut in 1727, which worked as a driving force for the Moravians to focus on foreign missions. Greenfield describes this revival: "He [the Holy Spirit] came upon its members gathered at the table of the Lord and baptized them all into one body, and filled them with a strong, unquenchable passion to execute the Savior's great commission, and to let all mankind know of His Cross and of His salvation."²⁷

In delivering the message of Jesus Christ, the Moravians depended on the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. They believed that it is the Holy Spirit Who searches the souls for His lost people and opens their hearts to respond to the preaching of the missionary. In this sense, "the Holy Spirit is the only missionary, and human beings are agents of the Spirit".²⁸ Missionaries are simply sent to those whom the Spirit has already prepared to accept the Lord Jesus.

3. *Fervent Prayer*

Prayer has served as one of the most powerful factors in the Moravian missions strategy from its inception. The Moravians have a strong belief in the power of prayer in their missions. It was from the spiritual renewal in Herrnhut that prayer became a pivotal part of Moravian evangelism. When the spiritual revival occurred on August 13, 1727, a Spirit of grace and

²⁴ Spough, "Short Introduction to the History".

²⁵ John Greenfield, *Power from on High or The Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Great Moravian Revival 1727-1927* (London: Hunt, Barnard & Co., Ltd, 1931), 46.

²⁶ Greenfield, *Power from on High*, 45.

²⁷ Greenfield, *Power from on High*, 20.

²⁸ David A. Schattschneider, "Pioneers in Mission: Zinzendorf and the Moravians", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 8 (April 1984): 65.

supplication was poured out upon the congregation at Herrnhut. The thought struck some brothers and sisters that it might be well to set apart certain hours for the purpose of prayer.²⁹ On August 26, twenty-four brothers and the same number of sisters covenanted together to continue to pray from one midnight to the next, dividing the twenty-four hours of night and day. More people were added to pray. Since then, they have begun a round-the-clock prayer watch, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

For over a hundred years, the Moravians shared in the “Hourly Intercession” at home and abroad, on land and sea. The prayer vigil by Zinzendorf and the Moravians sensitized them to attempt the unheard of mission to reach others for Christ.³⁰ Six months after the beginning of the prayer watch, Zinzendorf challenged them with a bold evangelism aimed at the West Indies, Greenland and Turkey; twenty-six Moravians volunteered for world missions to go wherever the Lord led.³¹ It is needless to say that the fervent intercession of the Moravians, which lasted one hundred years, has worked as the main force of world evangelization.

4. Pietism

The Moravians lived a life of Pietism, and it left a great impression on those to whom they ministered on the mission field. Pietists put their emphasis on the Bible as the source of religious authority, religious renewal of the individual, the new life in Christ and the obligation to witness to it day by day.³²

Mulholland’s indication of the characteristics of Pietist missions well explains how the Moravian missions were executed in the Pietistic manner:

- (1) Pietists educated the people. Pietists established schools wherever they went because they believed people should be taught to read so that they could read the Bible.
- (2) Pietists made the Bible available in the language of the people.
- (3) Pietists sought to know the culture. They insisted that missionaries learn the language and the culture of the people with whom they worked.
- (4) Pietists preached for personal conversion. They endeavored to bring people to a personal decision for Christ.

²⁹ Greenfield, *Power from on High*, 28.

³⁰ Tarr, “Prayer Meeting That Lasted 100 Years”, 18.

³¹ Tarr, “Prayer Meeting That Lasted 100 Years”, 18.

³² F. Ernest Stoeffler, “Religious Roots of the Early Moravian and Methodist Movement”, *Methodist History* 24 (April 1986): 139.

- (5) Pietists advocated church indigenization. They moved quickly to establish local congregations led by native pastors.³³

The Moravians studied the Bible and put into practice what they learned. They prayed for one another and encouraged each other. Since Pietism teaches that genuine renewal looks outward to the unreached people in a foreign land, the Moravians left for the places where lost souls were waiting. On the mission fields, they lived as Pietists, and their lives touched the natives.

5. Contextualization

The Moravians tried to live in each culture like its natives. They became all things to all people in order to lead the people to Christ. Zinzendorf advised his missionaries in Greenland not to speak of Christ as a sacrifice, since shamanism did not know such concepts. He asked the Moravian missionaries not to dominate the natives but to live humbly among them.³⁴

Their zealous efforts at contextualization in preaching is explained in Zinzendorf's statement: "If the greatest need of the heathen is a needle, then we should call our Savior a needle."³⁵ His extreme statement is vulnerable to refutation, but his principle shows how fervently he wanted to reach people utilizing their context.

Zinzendorf hoped that the traditional denominations would simply not be transplanted in new areas of the Christian world.³⁶ He did not want missionaries to polish up their churches on the mission field and ask the natives to understand what the Christian religion is like. Count Zinzendorf warned, "Do not measure souls according to the Herrnhut yardstick."³⁷ In the settlement of the Indians, the Moravians shared their life as one community with the natives.

The greatest strategy for contextualization was Bible translation. Moravian missionaries were encouraged to learn the languages of the people whom they served. They resolutely tackled new languages without many of the modern aids. Many Moravians went on to become outstandingly fluent and proficient in these new languages and began translating Scripture and hymns for local use.³⁸ In the settlement of Georgia, the Moravians appointed two Moravian women to study the Indian language so that they might dedicate themselves to the Indian service.³⁹ The distribution of the Bible

³³ Mulholland, "From Luther to Carey", 93-94.

³⁴ Weinlick and Frank, *Moravian Church Through the Ages*, 78.

³⁵ Richard Tiplady, "Moravian Community, Spirituality, and Mission", in *Global Missiology for the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000), 505.

³⁶ Schattschneider, "Pioneer in Mission", 66.

³⁷ Schattschneider, "Pioneer in Mission", 66.

³⁸ Grant, "Europe's Moravians", 222.

³⁹ Fries, *Moravians in Georgia, 1735-1740*, 124.

translated into the language of the natives contributed much to the lasting influence of the revival.

6. Tentmaking

The Moravian missionaries established tentmaking as a way of missionary strategy. When they set out for mission fields, they were provided with their fare. On reaching their destination, they had to support themselves.⁴⁰ As most of the Moravians were of the artisan class, it seemed natural that the missionaries should take their trade with them when they were sent to foreign lands.

There may be some reasons. First of all, the Moravian Brethren at Herrnhut could not afford to support the missionaries. A village of six hundred people had to support two hundred missionaries.⁴¹ Therefore, the missionaries worked for a living. Second, they worked for the sake of the transmission of the gospel. Zinzendorf felt that not only would their practice and teaching of trades lift the economic level of the people to whom they were sent, but the exercising of the trades would also provide a way of natural interaction with these same people.⁴²

William Danger's *Profit for the Lord*⁴³ deals thoroughly with the economic activities of Moravian missions in the West Indies, Labrador, Surinam and Africa. This is a sign of recognition that a Christian missionary had an obligation to help his neighbor not only in spiritual needs but also in physical needs. Zinzendorf not only held strong opinions on the necessity of work, he himself was an indefatigable worker.⁴⁴ He believed with St. Paul that Christians must work so that they may not become a burden to others but have something to give to the needy. Working for a living or for the benefit of the natives was not always easy; however, it helped the natives to feel the sense of community with the missionaries.

7. Layperson Missionary

What surprises us is the fact that all of the Moravian missionaries were lay people who were not given any theological training. They were common

⁴⁰ In order for self-support in the mission fields, most of the Moravian missionaries were artisans such as potters, carpenters, butchers, farmers, doctors or tailors.

⁴¹ Mulholland, "Moravians", 224. Tucker observes that all Moravians were expected to be evangelists, and there was little differentiation between those who ministered on the home field and those who went abroad. It was very natural for the missionaries to work for their survival. See Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, 80.

⁴² Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, 80.

⁴³ William J. Danker, *Profit for the Lord: Economic Activities in Moravian Missions and the Basel Mission Trading Company* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971).

⁴⁴ Danker, *Profit for the Lord*, 32.

artisans in those days.⁴⁵ Leonard Dober, a potter, and David Nitschmann, a carpenter, were the first two missionaries to the West Indies, and the next two missionaries to Greenland were gravediggers. Like the apostles in the early church, they were unlearned and ignorant men; and like them, they were despised by the cultured people of their day.⁴⁶ But they were men of passion and piety.⁴⁷ What they lacked in knowledge from theological education they made up in zeal for Christ and love for lost souls.

Zinzendorf did not really pay much attention to the educational qualifications of the missionaries. He emphasized passion and love for Jesus more than formal education. This attitude was influential for a long time in the Moravian Church. The synods of 1818 and 1825 declined the establishment of a college for missionary training. Their decision does not mean that they ignored the need of theological education, but rather that they put more emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit and the commitment of the missionaries. The great fruit of the Moravians shows that the best missionaries are those equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit and with a burning heart for the unreached.

Zinzendorf laid emphasis not only upon the spiritual qualifications for a missionary, but he also stressed that they should be men of character. As self-supporting lay persons, the Moravian missionaries worked with the natives, witnessing their faith not only by their words but also by their exemplary lives.

8. Commitment to Mission

Since the time when they commenced sending out their missionaries, the Moravians have not ceased their fervent heart for unreached people. Zinzendorf used to say, "I have one passion, and it is Him, only Him." Paul Pierson wrote, "The Moravians became committed to world missions as a church; that is, the whole church became a missionary society."⁴⁸

Their single-minded spirit for world evangelization oftentimes affected their family life. Sometimes they left their wives and families behind for the cause of Christ.⁴⁹ Young men were encouraged to remain single for an

⁴⁵ In this sense, the Moravians opened the ministry to the lay people, which preceded Hudson Taylor in this development by over one hundred years.

⁴⁶ Herbert J. Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 79-80.

⁴⁷ Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission*, 80.

⁴⁸ Paul E. Pierson, "Total Commitment to World Missions", *Christian History* 1 (1982): 6.

⁴⁹ Zinzendorf is no exception for this. During his travels abroad and his exile for several years, his wife, Erdmuth, was left alone. When she died, he showed his bitter grief: "... the count's sorrow was aggravated by remorse. He had not been fair to Erdmuth. Cynics to the contrary, he had not been unfaithful to her during their long

effective mission; and when marriage was allowed, the spouse was often chosen by lot.⁵⁰ The chief example of being single-minded for world evangelization was Zinzendorf himself. His entire life shows how he loved Jesus and tried to win lost souls. He invested his entire life as well as his whole fortune for mission by not only administering at home but also visiting mission fields himself. His word has challenged the Brethren and enkindled their dedication: "My joy, until I die . . . to win souls for the Lamb." When Sorensen, one of the Brethren missionaries, was asked if he were ready to go to Labrador, he replied: "Yes, tomorrow, if I am only given a pair of shoes."⁵¹

9. *Seekers Search*

The Moravians went to receptive people. Because they believed that the Holy Spirit is the primary missionary, they counseled their missionaries, "Seek out the first fruit. Seek out those people whom the Holy Spirit has prepared and bring the good news to them."⁵² Zinzendorf wrote in his letter to his friend some months before the departure from Herrnhut of the first missionaries, "[T]he missionaries were not to attempt the conversion of whole nations but were to look for individual seekers."⁵³ He believed that Christ is the Lord of the mission, and that the church simply follows Him in bringing the gospel to those whom Jesus has already prepared to hear it through the Spirit. Therefore, the preliminary activity of the Holy Spirit among the hearers is most important for missionaries.

Zinzendorf called the selected souls who respond to the gospel "the first fruit", "the bundles of the living", "a lodge in the vineyard", or "a holy beginning".⁵⁴ He believed that two biblical episodes illustrated how the first fruits would be identified. The first is Cornelius and his encounter with Peter (Acts 10:1-48), and the second is the Ethiopian eunuch and his encounter with Philip (Acts 8:26-39). According to Zinzendorf's understanding, Cornelius and the Ethiopian eunuch were seeking after religious truth, which means that the Holy Spirit was working within them. The Holy Spirit also guided the missionaries to those who were seeking after Him.⁵⁵ This strategy relieved the missionaries from the burden of unrealistic expectations on the

periods of separation; but he had been extremely thoughtless. He had forgotten that she was a woman, a wife, and a mother." See Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 225.

⁵⁰ Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, 72.

⁵¹ Kane, *Concise History of the Christian World Mission*, 80.

⁵² Mulholland, "Moravians", 225.

⁵³ Weinlick and Frank, *Moravian Church through the Ages*, 78.

⁵⁴ S. Baudert, "Zinzendorf's Thought on Missions Related to His View of the World", *International Review of Missions* 21 (July 1932): 399.

⁵⁵ Zinzendorf, *Nine Public Lectures*, 53.

mission field. When people were not receptive or when they were vehemently opposed to the gospel, the Moravians left for other lands.

10. Radical Simplicity

Even though Zinzendorf himself was widely read in a broad range of subjects and fluent in several languages, he did not produce a systematic mission strategy. This philosophy of missions is only found throughout his writings. Zinzendorf, however, believed in the presence of the Savior in missions through the work of the Holy Spirit. The basic thread uniting his ideas can be called “radical simplicity in the Spirit”.⁵⁶ His simple dependence upon the Holy Spirit has influenced all Moravian missionaries. Weinlick and Frank write about this simplicity: “Concerning their faith and practice, they sought to maintain simplicity, with emphasis upon everything Christian living.”⁵⁷

We can find their simplicity in three simple questions about their life.⁵⁸ First, to whom is the missionary sent? The Moravians believed that a missionary is sent because he is called by God for His chosen people. Therefore, when they are called as missionaries, they did not show any hesitation. Zinzendorf simply followed the commission of Jesus to go to the entire world, which he called “the Savior’s own teaching method”,⁵⁹ and the Moravians simply followed the Great Commission. Second, what does the missionary preach? Zinzendorf counseled the missionaries to preach only Jesus. He rejected the traditional method of preaching and urged the missionaries to go to the point directly. Third, how does the missionary live in a new culture? Zinzendorf did not give many instructions about missionary behavior because too many specific rules would be restrictive. They were simply urged to follow the power of the Holy Spirit and to lead a morally blameless life. The life and message of the Moravians was simple, but their fruit was life-saving work.

Conclusion

In this paper we have attempted to explore the Moravian missions strategy. Even though their strategies are not without some weaknesses, they provide much insight into contemporary world evangelization. Their Christ-centered preaching, dependence on the Holy Spirit and fervent prayer served their vision of world evangelization. Their life of Pietism, passion for lost souls and contextualization served as effective means of reaching the native people. Financial independence from their home church naturally led the lay missionaries to mingle with the people for whom they were working. The

⁵⁶ Schttschneider, “Pioneers in Mission”, 65.

⁵⁷ Weinlick and Frank, *Moravian Church through the Ages*, 23.

⁵⁸ See Schttschneider, “Pioneers in Mission”, 65-66.

⁵⁹ Schttschneider, “Pioneers in Mission”, 65

emphasis on the individual seekers made them more dependent upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The radical simplicity of their lives and their wholehearted commitment to the Great Commission served as the driving forces for fulfilling their vision of world evangelization.

We are looking forward to seeing the day when the entire congregation of our church recognizes the Great Commission as everyone's task and, like the Moravian Church, carries out the life of a missionary at home or abroad for the expansion of God's kingdom until our precious Lord comes.



Herrnhut

Colonial American Presbyterianism, A Review Article

Jack C. Whytock

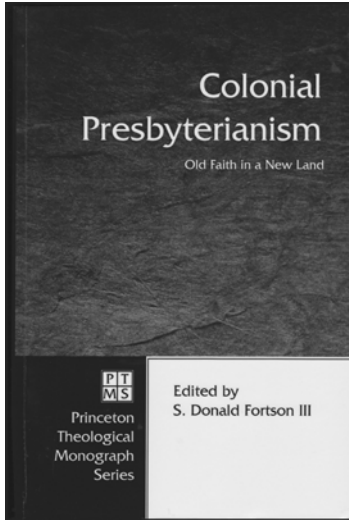
- ***Colonial Presbyterianism: Old Faith in a New Land.* Edited by S. Donald Fortson III. Princeton Theological Monograph Series. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2007, 236 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-59752-531-2**
- ***The Presbyterian Creed: A Confessional Tradition in America, 1729-1870.* S. Donald Fortson III. Studies in Christian History and Thought. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009, 276 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-60608-480-9**

For students of colonial American Presbyterian history, these works are two “must reads” and invaluable references. Donald Fortson III’s name appears on each, thereby uniting the two books under review as they clearly reflect his area of interest and expertise – colonial American Presbyterianism. He presently teaches at Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina, and is an ordained minister of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

The first book, *Colonial Presbyterianism: Old Faith in a New Land*, was published as part of the Princeton Theological Monograph Series. This series has some entries that clearly fit into the area of historical theology, such as John A. Vissers’ *The Neo-Orthodox Theology of W. W. Bryden*. However, many explore specific topics of systematic theology.

Colonial Presbyterianism has ten contributors; and, as Fortson states in his preface, “Readers may notice some diversity in the interpretations offered by the contributors as the story is narrated from different perspectives. This kind of variety is nothing new for Presbyterian historians. As early as the nineteenth century, Presbyterians would offer diverse interpretations on the colonial era as they continued to debate the residual issues that had been passed on to their generation” (p. xi). I so appreciated this gracious, bold and “up-front” statement at the beginning of this book. Recently I have been alarmed by the virtual revisionist, conservative, “party-line” interpretation being circulated in some circles. Fortson acknowledges the complexity of interpretations and does not try to gloss over these, but the volume also allows for healthy exchange.

This volume centres around the year 1706, when the first presbytery was formed in Colonial America. However, it does not just focus upon this event. In my estimation the top three essays of the ten were the following: Samuel T. Logan, Jr.'s "Puritans, Presbyterians, and New England" (pp. 1-25); David



B. Calhoun's "The Log College" (pp. 47-61); and David Fortson's "The Adopting Act Compromise" (pp. 63-85). Logan's essay is very thought provoking and needs to be read together with Appendix A, "The Saybrook Platform" (pp. 219-222). He clearly writes with a rich background on Edwards and brings alive the context of the Great Awakening and colonial Presbyterianism and Congregationalism. As a Canadian reading Logan's essay, I could not help but think of the first ordination and presbytery meeting in Nova Scotia in 1770. The parallels are absolutely striking; however, I will refrain from intruding into this review with that story.

Calhoun's article on the Log College may not be enticing because the story is so popularly known, but Calhoun's footnotes alone are worth a very careful read. The author reminds the reader of Princeton Seminary's founding professor and the esteem in which Archibald Alexander held the work of the Log College and these revival preachers (p. 47). Calhoun further reminds us that Alexander basically chastised Charles Hodge for being quite negative on the New Side leaders. Evidently, Alexander's challenge came to temper Hodge's initial thoughts, and he later wrote with applause (p. 47) – all in the footnotes. But I did not just read Calhoun's footnotes; the main text of his essay is very rich and full of many things over which to reflect. For example, consider this paragraph:

Furthermore, the Old Side held that it was sufficient to examine a prospective minister's learning and knowledge; the New Side put equal, if not more, importance on the candidates' spiritual qualifications. Tennent's purpose was to train faithful men for the ministry. He believed that "fervent piety" was the first and foremost qualification of a minister. Tennent never tired of reminding his students that they must "keep close to the written Word of God," and so keep their hearts "in all diligence." He urged them to cultivate in their lives "a Godlike temper which is pleased with anything that makes for the glory of God." He warned them against "mere formality and hypocrisy." The Log College men and

the New Side Presbyterian Church “were not satisfied with doctrinal correctness alone; doctrine had to be attached to personal piety” (p. 53).

Fortson’s essay “The Adopting Act Compromise” (pp. 63-85) is in some ways a condensation of part of the second book, *The Presbyterian Creed*, into one essay. Obviously, it is not as extensive chronologically; but if one wants a shorter version covering many of the same interpretive ideas, this essay is it. He identifies the parties and, in particular, the Irish context of subscription and really presents a remarkable essay. The title of the essay itself will not go over with all because by adding the noun “compromise”, he has given his interpretation. Now, the question remains, is Fortson’s interpretation correct? I will let readers make their own judgment as they read his historical data. I for one was convinced.

Other helpful essays include Brian LeBeau’s “Jonathan Dickinson and the Reasonableness of Christianity” (pp. 113-134), which is a fine piece of writing and one of the best I have seen on Dickinson. William Barker’s “The Heresy Trial of Samuel Hemphill (1735)” (pp. 87-111) also makes for very interesting reading. Other contributors include D. Clair Davis, C. N. Wilborn, D. G. Hart, James H. Smylie and L. Gordon Tait.

As with all collections, essay styles vary and the reader’s interest will vary. Nevertheless, this is a “must” collection on American colonial Presbyterianism. As one reads the collection, one will quickly make the application to “What about today?”

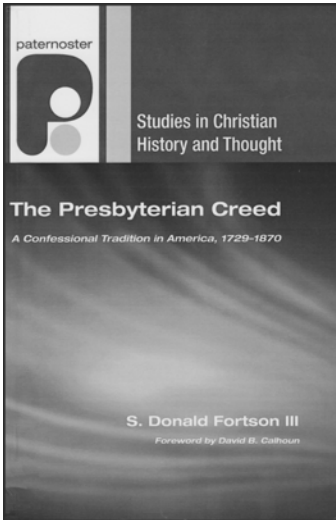
The second book, *The Presbyterian Creed: A Confessional Tradition in America, 1729-1870*, is in the series Studies in Christian History and Thought published by Paternoster in the United Kingdom and in America by Wipf and Stock, 2008 and 2009 respectively. The author very succinctly states in his preface why he has written this book. I quote this in full:

Several factors motivated the author to write this book. First, is the widespread ignorance of this period among Christian laymen, seminary students and pastors. It is a forgotten era but has much light to shed on contemporary discussions of what is [sic] means to be Presbyterian and Evangelical. Secondly, there is still significant misunderstanding about the nature of New School Presbyterianism and simplistic distortion of New School views on confessional subscription. The third motivating factor is a response to the truncated telling of the Presbyterian story which suggests that the Southern Old School Church was the last bastion of orthodoxy in the late nineteenth century. This book will humbly attempt to display the whole scope of Presbyterian perspectives on confessional subscription during the time frame of our study. It is my hope that the telling of this American Presbyterian story (1729-1870) will encourage the Church to pursue biblical faithfulness in

the present generation (p. xix).

Even if the reader disagrees with Fortson's conclusions, the reasons he states for writing this work are very well articulated.

The book begins with a very tightly worded foreword by David B. Calhoun, formerly Professor of Church History at Covenant Theological Seminary. Calhoun writes that Fortson is not so much breaking into new source material but rather is breaking new ground "in interpretation and application" (p. xiii). He goes on to state, "This book demonstrates that the American Presbyterian church (or churches) have held somewhat differing views on confessional subscription, but it also shows that the enduring view (through the reunions of the 19th century) has been a moderate rejection of extremes, a long lasting commitment to the genius of the Adopting Act of 1729" (pp. xiii-xiv). What follow then are eleven chapters and a conclusion.



The first chapter is parallel to the essay reviewed above in the collection *Colonial*

Presbyterianism. Chapter two deals with the New Side/Old Side divisions of the eighteenth century and is a good contextual summary of the essence of this division – a worthwhile read in its own. Chapters three ("New Divinity and Revivalism"), four ("Missions, Education and Taylorism"), five ("A House Divided") and six ("The Great Schism") help to provide a wonderful contextual history leading up to the nineteenth century American division into New School/Old School. Chapters seven and eight deal specifically with New School Presbyterians and "Old School Charles Hodge" respectively. Perhaps chapter nine could be broadened out. Logically these topics are followed by the nineteenth century reunions of New School/Old School bodies, and that story is told skillfully in chapters nine, ten and eleven.

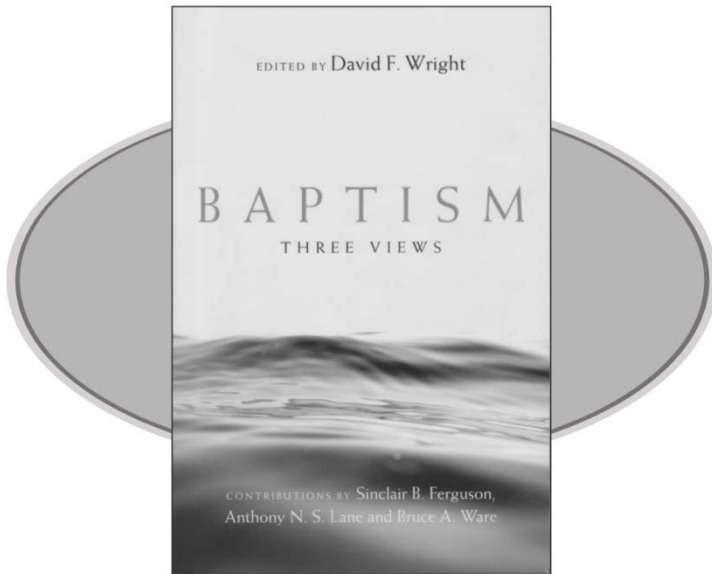
The book ends with a finely crafted conclusion, which will no doubt receive much attention by all readers. Though only three pages in length (pp. 239-241), there is much here. I will refrain from quoting any lines and give a challenge to all who enjoy the study of North American Presbyterian history to buy the book and read this very carefully. Make sure you read more than the conclusion, but ponder the conclusion well.

Here are two very helpful books which deserve serious study. Classes on American Presbyterian history will be well served by these. Ministers will benefit in a serious study of them. *The Presbyterian Creed* has obvious consistency and unity of presentation, chiefly because it is a solo voice. *Colonial Presbyterianism*, since it is a collection, actually reveals some of

the fracture lines of contemporary interpretation. Both books very much stimulated my thinking about the Church, then and now.

Book Reviews

***Baptism: Three Views.* Edited by David F. Wright. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009, 200pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-3856-1**



There has often been a close and valued fellowship among believers holding differing views on the question of baptism. This has been especially so in recent years. Often speakers representing different positions share the platform at conferences. But on the whole it has been felt prudent to avoid the subject in such fraternal assemblies.

Each of the three contributors to this book sets forth a distinct position – that of the credobaptist (supporter of believer's baptism) is represented by Prof. Bruce Ware of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, and that of the paedobaptist (supporter of infant baptism) is represented by Sinclair Ferguson, now minister at First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, South Carolina. A novel third position called the Duel Practice View is advanced by Prof. Anthony Lane of the London School of Theology. Unfortunately due to ill health, the editor, who had done much work on the

project, was unable to provide an introduction; and this task had to be performed by Daniel G. Reid. We are informed that David Wright died before the work was published.

The plan of the treatment is first, an essay (about thirty pages) by one of the contributors. This is followed by two evaluations, one by each of the other protagonists. Finally the writer of the essay gives a concluding response. This pattern is repeated for each position. By this means, it is intended to give the reader a good assessment of the merits of each side in the debate. It makes for very interesting reading.

Sinclair Ferguson in his main essay provides a superb statement of the Reformed paedobaptist view. This is acknowledged by both of the other contributors. Bruce Ware, though in disagreement with it, gives this appraisal: "It stands as one of the finest and most able defenses I have read. I believe that it helps demonstrate how some, indeed many, find this view compelling" (p. 113). Anthony Lane's response is likewise appreciative. He says: ". . . a very able exposition of the Reformed covenant theology approach to infant baptism. Almost I am persuaded – but not quite" (p. 121). Anyone, then, looking for a good statement of the Reformed paedobaptist theology on this matter will find it here.

It is important to note that there is a lack of consensus as to the import of baptism. As Ferguson says, "Explanations of its meaning sometimes differ radically. Without grasping this radical difference in interpretation, isolating the issues involved in the baptismal debate proves virtually impossible. To a certain extent participants in the debate talk past one another" (pp. 84-85).

Bruce Ware gives a spirited defense of the credobaptist view. He contends that the Greek words *bapto* and *baptizo* mean immersion. And he asserts that immersion implies that the subjects were not infants and that therefore adults alone are to be baptized. This is a common method of treating the subject by antipaedobaptists, but it introduces a needless element of confusion into the debate. There is a significant history of the immersion of infants in the history of the church. On the other hand, the early Baptists excluded infants but did not insist on immersion. Presbyterians recognize the validity of all three modes (aspersion, sprinkling and immersion), but have generally preferred pouring or sprinkling. In the New Testament, the word *baptizo* is used of the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost. The word *baptismos* is used of the sprinklings of the Mosaic economy (Heb. 9:10). In our view, the issue of the mode of baptism should be discussed separately.¹

The relationship between baptism and circumcision is central to the discussion of this subject. For Ferguson, baptism has "the same symbolic significance in relation to fellowship with God as did circumcision" (p. 87). Prof. Ware says that circumcision functioned on two levels, one in regard to "the ethnic and national distinctiveness of Israel" and the other in respect to

¹ An excellent biblical study on the mode of baptism may be found in John Murray's book, *Christian Baptism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1992).

“the true and spiritual Israel” (p. 45). He says that the new covenant pertains exclusively to the people of God, those who profess faith. But the historic Reformed view is that the new covenant is essentially a new dispensation of the covenant. It is imposed and there are curses as well as blessings. It is a serious thing to be a covenant breaker. Infants of believers are bound by God’s covenant, and that is why they should be baptized.

Prof. Ware appeals to the number of instances of adult baptisms in the book of Acts as proof of the credobaptist view. However, it must be noted that the difference is not over whether adults were baptized but whether infants were excluded. He holds that since infants cannot believe, inward spiritual life is not possible (see pp. 27-28). Ferguson makes a response to this in the following words: “If so”, he says, “infant salvation is impossible, and it is difficult to know what to make of the Spirit’s work on the humanity of our Lord and his forerunner John while each was in his mother’s womb” (p. 56).

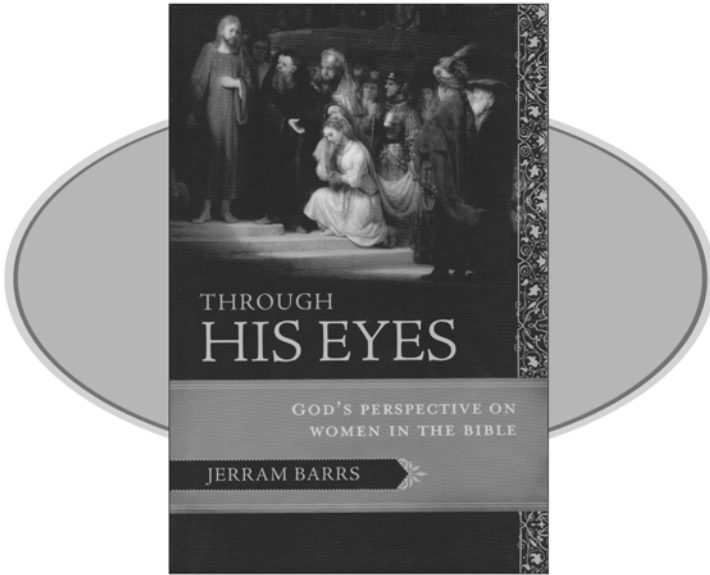
Professor Anthony Lane presents a novel approach – the Duel Practice View. He has a very good analysis of the evidence of the early church regarding the subjects of baptism and shows how concerns over the forgiveness of post-baptismal sin affected the practice of the church in the third and fourth centuries. He makes the point that while evidence of infant baptism may be limited, there is never any indication that it was regarded as improper. He compares a researcher on this subject to a seismologist in New York who can detect an earthquake in Los Angeles. Applying this analogy to the early church, he thinks that the fact of different practices suggests dual practice in the time of the Apostles. At its best, the theory falls short of biblical authority.

It is doubtful that the book will go far in settling disputes on this controversial subject. However, it provides much material for reflection, and it should be helpful to students in showing how each side deals with the questions involved. The format with its essays and responses makes for a very valuable discussion.

Reviewed by Rev. William R. Underhay, a retired minister of the Free Church of Scotland, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. Rev. Underhay is a graduate of Victoria University College, University of Toronto and the Free Church College, Edinburgh.



Through His Eyes: God's Perspective on Women in the Bible.
Jerram Barrs. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009, 352 pp., paper.
ISBN 978-1-4335-0224-8



Throughout history and from culture to culture, the role of women in home, society and church has been fiercely debated. The treatment of women has varied and continues to vary according to an understanding and appreciation of our place in each of these three spheres. Many women reading this introduction will immediately articulate, at least mentally, how they are viewed, by men in particular, and will be able to draw a direct link between those views and the experiences of their lives so far. Jerram Barr's work in *Through His Eyes* carefully and lovingly attempts to set forth the biblical disclosure of God's view of women and His particular care and understanding of this part of creation that He has fashioned. Jerram Barrs is founder and resident scholar of The Francis Schaeffer Institute at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.

The book is divided into twenty-one chapters. Each chapter is a study of a particular portion of Scripture, most centering on a woman in the Bible. The first three chapters deal with Eve as Barrs uses the study of Eve to set forth the basic premise of his book concerning God's perspective on women.

I suspect chapter one may be easier for many to ascent to than chapter two. Chapter one deals with Eve at creation. Barrs explains that God created Eve from Adam to be his equal, his helper and his complement. "This creational likeness and complementariness is the foundation for monogamous, lifelong marriage" (p. 20). Then comes chapter two and an

exposition of Genesis 3:1-24 whereby the author explains the seven-pointed curse of the law. When he gets to his fourth point, there is an obvious depth of pastoral understanding: “The impact of the curse on Adam is to ‘rule over’ his wife (Genesis 3:16), to turn his headship into domination. This is the temptation of men in general, to treat a wife – whom he should regard as his equal and partner – as ‘his woman,’ to use her like a servant, to regard her as an object for doing his bidding or for meeting his needs for sex, companionship, food, laundry, a comfortable home, a source of pride before other men” (pp. 34-35). How many of us have seen this in the church, not to mention the world?

Following studies on Eve at Creation and Eve at the Fall, Barrs looks at Eve as “the Bearer of the Promise of Redemption”. He writes: “One of the great wonders of this promise is that in his kindness, mercy, and gentleness God tells the woman Eve – the one who listened to Satan’s deceitful lies – that she is the one through whom this deliverer will come into the world” (p. 52). The kindness, mercy and gentleness of God become the themes for the rest of the book as Barrs carefully tells the stories of Sarah, Tamar, Rahab, Deborah, Naomi, Ruth, Hannah, Abigail, Tamar, Esther, Mary, the Samaritan woman, Mary and Martha. In each case, I was challenged and greatly encouraged.

Barrs explains in his introduction that he originally gave these studies to a group of women at a church in his home city. The encouragement the Lord brought to them as they heard of His care and love for the women of the Bible prompted Barrs to publish his work. Barrs comments, “One particular example that stands out in my memory was that the study of the rape of Tamar by her half-brother Amnon encouraged women to be able to talk for the first time in their lives about sexual abuse they had endured, a couple of them fifty or sixty years before” (p. 9).

Readers will be curious to know how Barrs views the passage in Act 2 where Peter quotes the prophet Joel (Acts 2:17-18). This is certainly where Barrs will be challenged by many in conservative circles who teach that woman can only learn from men and are never to be in a reciprocal relationship whereby men might learn from them. Barrs carefully sets forth the reasons that this is a false premise and then concludes with very strong language: “This is the height of spiritual arrogance and a denial of the nature of Christ’s kingdom for a man to say that he cannot and will not listen to or learn from a woman. Will such a man remove the works of Deborah or Hannah or Mary from Scripture? Does such a man deny that he can learn anything from his mother, from his sister, from his wife, or from his daughter? . . . Peter declares that the prayers of such a man, who does not acknowledge that his wife is joint-heir of the grace of life, are hindered” (pp. 311-312).

The next logical question is, “Does Barrs go on to deal with ‘the restrictive passages’?” He answers this question by explaining that he has

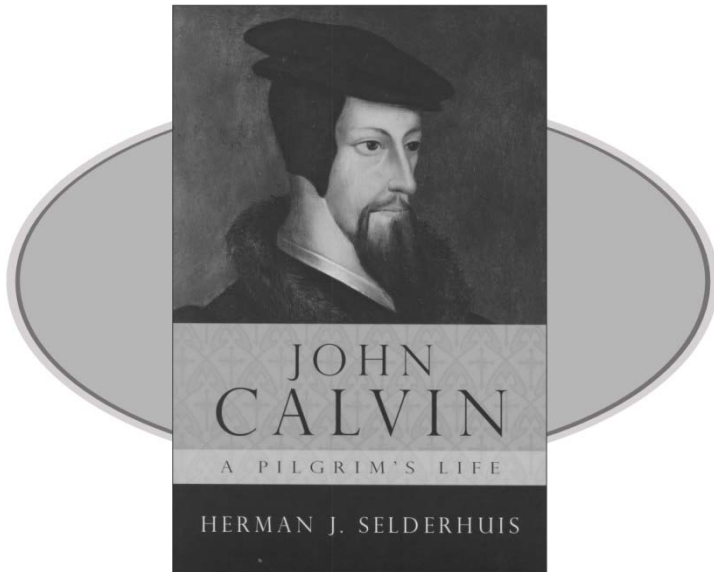
taught on these passages, as have many others, in various settings and his views can be accessed on the Covenant Seminary website. He did not include them in this book because he wanted to look at the more extensive material concerning God's care and respect for women that is included in the Bible yet often neglected. I believe the appendix, "A Wedding Sermon for Eve and Adam after the Promise of Redemption", is helpful in maintaining the balance of this book and in giving the reader an insight into Barr's commitment to approach the Word as an organic whole. In one of his footnotes to this chapter, Barrs sums up his position, "It should be evident from the first chapter of this book that I believe both in the equality of men and women in marriage and in the structure of headship that God has given in marriage" (p. 340). You really must read the book to see how beautifully these themes are unfolded.

The book has a lovely layout that makes it ready to use as a group study; each chapter is followed by questions for discussion and Scripture reading in preparation for the next chapter. The questions are not directed exclusively toward women, and it is clear that Barrs hopes many men will take up this study and be edified. The Scripture index and the general index are helpful. The endnotes definitely add to the depth of the text. I do wish it was a hard back as paper backs are more difficult to work with when one is flipping from endnotes to text to indexes, etc. I join Barrs in his obviously sincere desire, "My prayer is that the Lord will use this book to be an encouragement to both women and men, for we all need to see women through God's eyes" (p.11).

Reviewed by Nancy J. Whytock, Haddington House



***John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life.* Herman J. Selderhuis. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009, 259 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-2921-7**



The year 2009 being the 500th anniversary of the Genevan Reformer's birth, there has followed a great spate of books treating Calvin's life and career. If the curious Christian had never before taken time to read a volume treating this great man of Christian history, the centenary year has surely provided a suitable occasion. But *where* was a curious reader to begin given the avalanche of choices?

The book under review by Herman Selderhuis, the esteemed Reformed church historian of Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, (a book which is itself a part of this literary outpouring connected with the centennial year) is probably *not* the right starting point for one looking to read a first book on Calvin's career. But if you have previously read a standard biography of Calvin, Selderhuis' *A Pilgrim's Life* would make an excellent follow-up. This historian, aiming at the reader who already has a rudimentary knowledge of the stages of the Genevan's life and activity, provides the kind of "colour" material that better helps us to see Calvin as a three-dimensional person – a man of strong feeling, of vivid memory and warm friendship. And strikingly, Selderhuis does this almost entirely reliant on Calvin's massive surviving correspondence with friends across Europe. The difference can be illustrated *thus*.

We see more clearly Calvin's *humanity*. Every biographer of Calvin will

tell us that he suffered the loss of his mother while still a young boy, of his father while still a young man, and his native country (France) through exile shortly thereafter. Selderhuis, through a long familiarity with Calvin's correspondence, is able to show us how these early experiences left such an impression on the Reformer that he regularly referred to them in his dealings with others. Similarly, the indignity suffered in his forced exile from his adoptive city, Geneva, in 1538 and the pain he felt at the death of his wife, Idelette, in 1549 were items that he referred to again and again when consoling and advising others. How good to realize then that Calvin had much more to him than preaching, writing and debating. There was this tender side also.

Further, Selderhuis helps us to see Calvin's *stridency*. Regularly overruled by the city government, Calvin would use his pulpit and his pen to tell his version of things. Where colleagues and contemporaries differed with Calvin or would not see things his way, there was often a price to pay. Some friendships ended when Calvin's counsel was not heeded; sometimes very long-standing correspondence was nearly cut off without explanation.

What emerges from *A Pilgrim's Life* is a portrait of Calvin which – while characterized by loyalty and admiration – is free from excessive adulation. The author feels no obligation to take Calvin's part in any and every confrontation in which he found himself. Selderhuis, working from within the conservative side of the Dutch Reformed tradition, shows a commendable fascination with how Calvin's preferences and traits have often been transmitted to the church tradition at the head of which he stands. According to Selderhuis, we have Calvin to thank for the preference for psalm-singing, the maintenance of home-visits by elders prior to Sundays on which the Lord's Supper is administered, and also for the great readiness to "split" with former comrades over issues deemed to be of great principle – which have often characterized the Reformed tradition.

All this deserves high commendation. The Calvin 500 festivities of 2009, whatever they may have succeeded in advancing by way of modern appreciation for the great Reformer, have not significantly expanded our ability to draw *critically* on Calvin's life and career. As the celebratory year draws near to an end, we are left too much at the mercy of persons and authors whose approach to Calvin and the Reformation is, at bottom, one which commends a drawing of the sixteenth century into the twenty-first. On this plan, our great need is to be and to live more like sixteenth-century people. Selderhuis' sane approach properly recognizes the distance of time and culture which separates modern Protestant Christians from Calvin's time (such that we cannot simply copy it). We justifiably no longer consent to the burning of witches and heretics. He pinpoints also the operation within the Reformed tradition of a kind of "law of unintended consequences" which has sometimes yielded effects other than were originally intended. Thus, today Calvin's emphasis on extreme austerity and simplicity in houses of worship

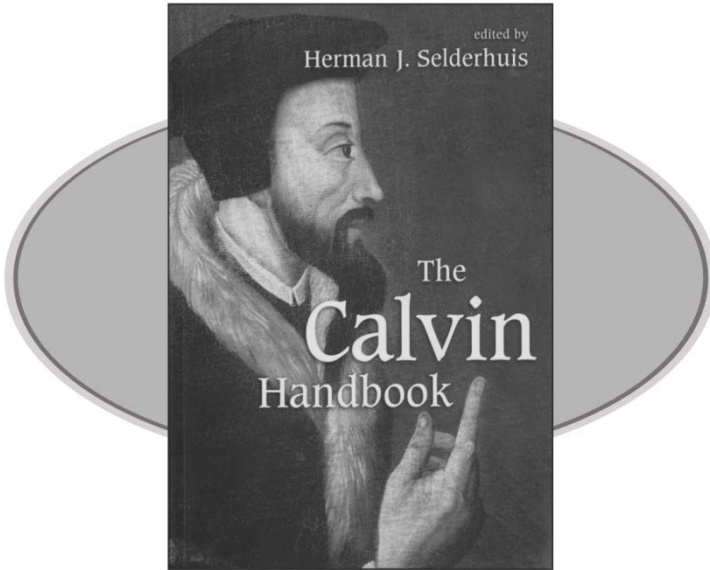
and the ordering of services can hamstring his modern followers in coming to terms with a culture very different from that of four centuries ago.

Read a standard biography of Calvin. There is much to be learned from established works such as that of Williston Walker (1906), Emmanuel Stickelberger (1954), Jean Cadier (1960), T.H.L. Parker (1975) and Alister McGrath (1990). But when you have digested one, take Selderhuis as your second and observe how the combination makes for a sane and balanced whole.

Reviewed by Kenneth J. Stewart, Professor of Theological Studies at Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia, since 1997 and the author of two books and the forthcoming Ten Myths About Calvinism (IVP, 2010). He is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in America and has a Ph. D. from the University of Edinburgh.



***The Calvin Handbook.* Edited by Herman J. Selderhuis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 585 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8026-6230-3**



When I was in theological college, the “Calvin handbook” of the day was John T. McNeill’s *History and Character of Calvinism*, which Oxford University Press first released in 1954 and has kept in print ever since. It has served quite well for two generations, but I suspect its day has now passed with the translation into English of *The Calvin Handbook* under the editorial hand of one of the finest living Calvin scholars today, Herman J. Selderhuis. McNeill’s volume reflects the knowledge and ability of one man in creating such a single Calvin handbook, and he certainly was knowledgeable. Yet Selderhuis’ work has the obvious advantage of amassing a group of internationally renowned Calvin scholars whereby their area of specialization is brought into the whole. It would be difficult today for one writer to produce the same depth that these scholars as a collective whole have brought. I liken this new work to a great sympathy of musical specialists, each well-trained on a particular instrument and for a particular part but united by the steady ear, heart and hand of the master conductor. *The Calvin Handbook* reads like one is hearing a finely led symphony orchestra under the master conductor, Herman J. Selderhuis. I have yet to find discordant sounds from the symphony contributors – and what an impressive list they are – fifty-eight in all.

The Calvin Handbook basically does three things: it gives a biographical overview of John Calvin; next, it unpacks Calvin’s theology; and, finally, it

attempts to explore the influence of Calvin, all “based on the most recent research” (p. viii).

After a brief twenty-two page section, “Orientation”, on “images” of Calvin, the works of Calvin and the state of Calvin research, the book proceeds to the biographical section. This is organized under headings, the first of which is “Stations” and includes four categories: France and Basel, first stay in Geneva, Strasbourg and the second stay in Geneva. After “Stations” (pp. 23-56), still in the biographical section, comes “Historical Connections” (pp. 57-124), which looks at Calvin’s connections in nine geographical areas, beginning with Wittenberg and ending with the British isles. The biographical (“Person”) section then concludes with “Theological Relations”, reviewing this through the themes of the Church Fathers, Humanists, Jews, Anabaptists, Opponents and Students. Missing here was Calvin’s theological relations with fellow Reformers because this was really covered under “Historical Connections”. The biographical section of the handbook is outstanding. It is well-organized, readable, concise in bibliographical suggestions and accurate in content.

Next follows an overview of Calvin’s theology through three categories: the types of works he produced (e.g. sermons, commentaries, letters, etc.), the themes of his theology and the structures of his theological argument. The types of works section reads well and again provides an excellent introduction to Calvin’s literary output. I have formerly kept Bierma’s translation of W. de Greef’s *The Writings of John Calvin* beside me when thinking through the types of material written by Calvin. This section in *The Calvin Handbook* now places much of this into a larger single volume. Thus in terms of textbooks for class work, perhaps one can now work with one book, namely *The Calvin Handbook*. Under “Themes” in Calvin’s theology, fourteen themes are included, and those familiar with the contents and order of the four books of the *Institutes* will see a pattern which is most helpful. Again, we now have within one volume a thematic summation and analysis of the main themes in Calvin’s theology. This is good for teaching, especially if one does not want to overwhelm a class with several works. There are no major gaps in almost 140 pages dealing with the themes of Calvin’s theology. I personally found it to be more even than *A Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis*², which came out in 2008.

The section on “Structures” in Calvin’s theology is one of the shortest in *The Calvin Handbook*, which should be the case in such a handbook. This area of structures has been somewhat debated historically by theologians. The contributors here state their material, and some readers will feel their points were not elucidated completely. It is not the heart of the handbook, nor does it deserve more space.

² Reviewed in the *Haddington House Journal* 2009, 98-100.

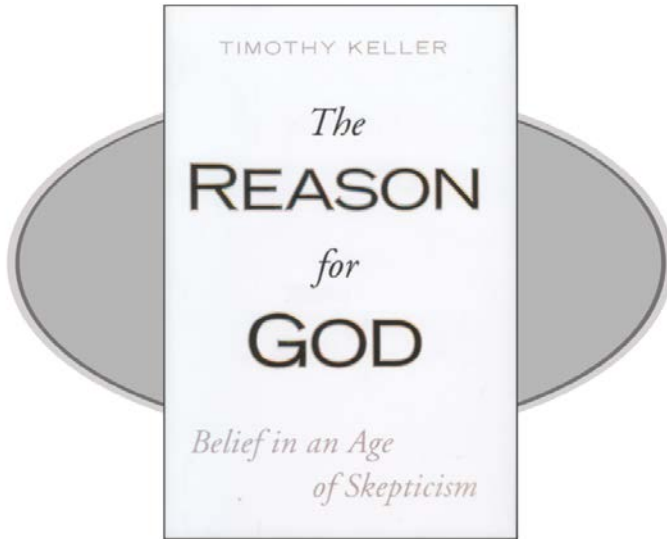
The third and final section is that very elusive one at times, “Influence and Reception” (pp. 397-526). In many regards, this can be where the opinions of readers will differ the most. The contributors have generally tried not to simply become embroiled in their agenda and debate their points of view. A handbook should acquaint readers with the overall contours, and then the writer is free to offer his conclusions. Generally this was followed, such as in the much debated area of Calvin and his influence politically.

There are eight themes of influence that are taken up: the law and canon law, liturgy, art and literature, education and pedagogy, politics and social life, science, marriage and family life, and spirituality. This is followed by an examination of Calvin’s influence “Historically”, starting with Reformed Orthodoxy; then by century (eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth) – a most daunting task; then in Africa, Asia and America. If I were to make a slight criticism of this book, it would be only with this third part on Calvin’s “Influence and Reception”. Yet, I find myself hesitating here because I think this section is more subjective and much more difficult to chronicle. For example, Australia/New Zealand is noticeably absent; “America” appears to almost exclusively be the United States of America; and many would no doubt wonder if Africa receives a full enough scope.

Overall, *The Calvin Handbook* receives full marks and will no doubt remain a ready standard in the field for the next several years. I heartily recommend it for a textbook for pertinent courses. Theological colleges will need to purchase it for their libraries – it will be a must. The bibliographies concluding each section are concise, the indices are well done and the extensive bibliography at the end will be most useful as an up-to-date basic bibliography (thirty-six pages is actually “basic” for this subject!).

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock, Haddington House

***The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism.* Timothy J. Keller. New York: Dutton, 2008, 293 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-525-95049-3**



Though Keller's book is addressed to unbelievers, particularly atheists (though it speaks to those of formal non-Christian religions too), it is well worth reading for Christians. Those who learn nothing new from his arguments may learn from his style. Even skeptical reviewers applaud him for dealing with them and their views respectfully, courteously.³ Using this approach on a day to day basis for doubters he encounters in New York, Keller is seeing converts.

Some unconvinced doubters claim he oversimplifies and sometimes fails to look at the strongest forms of some arguments against Christian belief.⁴ Keller's book covers a wide range of material. To avoid complaints of oversimplification, he would have to write a book for each chapter, and even then some would think he should have been more thorough.

³ E.g. Holly Wielkoszewski, "Serious and Measured Consideration", February 5, 2009. http://www.amazon.com/Reason-God-Belief-Age-Skepticism/product-reviews/1594483493/ref=cm_cr_pr_link_next_3?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=0&pageNumber=3.

⁴ Holly Wielkoszewski, "Serious and Measured Consideration", February 5, 2009. http://www.amazon.com/Reason-God-Belief-Age-Skepticism/product-reviews/1594483493/ref=cm_cr_pr_link_next_3?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=0&pageNumber=3.

Some also accuse him of poor logic and simply of failure to prove the existence of God.⁵ However, Keller explicitly says that proving the existence of God to an unbeliever in the sense that the argument compels belief is impossible (p. 120). Only as God's Spirit removes the blinders of sin will an unbeliever see a "proof". It appears to me that for the most part the complaints of poor logic rest on failure to look at Keller's goal. The critics assume he is trying to prove God's existence. In fact, he is only trying to show the failure of arguments against God's existence and that there are good reasons for belief in God.

A big plus for the book is that it is very easy to read. While Keller deals with profound issues, he does not get into convoluted reasoning but makes it clear and simple.

The author divides the book into two sections plus an introduction, an "intermission" and an epilogue. The introduction and epilogue are important in themselves, while "The Dance of God", the last chapter of the second section, deserves its own major heading. That chapter alone is worth the price of the book.

The introduction sets the scene by relaying Keller's experience in inner city New York and the way he himself came to know God. He starts with the reality that both faith and skepticism are growing in our culture. Then in part one, he looks at seven of the most significant skeptical challenges to Christian faith and answers them. However, it is not enough to answer the challenges. He goes on in part two to look at seven positive reasons for recognizing God and following Him, showing dilemmas people must answer before they can claim their rejection of God is reasonable. The last chapter of part two, "The Dance of God", argues that people should *want* to believe in the God Who reveals Himself in the Bible. He is immensely attractive, and He alone gives hope and meaning to this world. The epilogue addresses skeptics who may now be considering commitment to Christ; lays out the gospel; warns against some easy, deceptive paths; and encourages them to trust in Him.

In the introduction, Keller makes an observation that shapes much of the remainder of the study: "All doubts, however skeptical and cynical they may seem, are really a set of alternate beliefs. You cannot doubt Belief A except from a position of faith in Belief B. For example, if you doubt Christianity because 'There can't be just one true religion', you must recognize that this statement is itself an act of faith. No one can prove it empirically, and it is not a universal truth that everyone accepts" (p. xvii).

Keller repeatedly shows that doubts about Christian belief start with premises that are self-contradictory. If "there is no truth" (as many claim today), then that statement itself is not true, which means there is truth. An argument that discredits itself does not have any force against belief in God.

⁵ Peter, "A disturbing look into the evangelical Christian mindset", March 24, 2008. http://www.amazon.com/Reason-God-Belief-Age-Skepticism/product-reviews/1594483493/ref=cm_cr_pr_link_next_2?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=0&pageNumber=2.

Chapter one explores the objection, “There can’t be just one true religion”. Keller points out that this statement is just as exclusive and just as unprovable as the affirmation that Christianity (or Islam, etc.) is the only true religion. It is a religious claim that insists that all other religious beliefs are false. If making such claims is wrong, then this objection is wrong.

Chapter two looks at the problem of suffering. Keller notes that while we may see no reason for it, no justice in it, that does not mean God has no reason or is unjust. If God is big enough to be held responsible, He is big enough to be beyond our comprehension. Keller argues that “Evil and Suffering May Be (If Anything) Evidence *for* God” (p. 25). That section heading is unfortunate and leads some astray. In fact, Keller does not argue that the evil itself is evidence for God but that our *awareness* of it being evil is evidence for God. From the point of view of the atheistic evolutionist, the word “evil” should be meaningless – “natural selection *depends* on death, destruction and violence” (p. 26). So the recognition that something is evil points beyond natural selection to God. But so what? What do we say to the person who has lost a loved one or otherwise faced pain and is angry with God? Keller points us to Christ, God taking on our flesh to suffer with and for us in order to redeem us. God cares for us in our suffering more than we can imagine, and in the end He will take it all away from His people. We will find that our trials have made our future life infinitely more joyful. Is this a superficial answer to the problem of evil? Much more could be said; many books have been written on just this subject. However, Keller’s discussion is not superficial in that he both points out fundamental flaws in the argument that the existence of evil shows that the God of the Bible cannot exist and points out the way to comfort for the sufferer.

Against the accusations that Christianity is a straitjacket, is culturally rigid, is limiting and is not inclusive, Keller makes an interesting point: “Christianity has taken more culturally diverse forms than other faiths” (p. 45). People of every culture have found a home in Christ’s church. That speaks of an openness that no other faith can match. Further, as he points out, the people who object to the limits the Bible puts on our behaviour find it necessary to put limits on other people’s behaviour at least in some degree. What happened to their claim that such limits are unacceptable?

But how can a loving God send people to hell? Keller points out that the concept of a personal, loving God is found only in the Bible. Those who reject belief in Christ because He condemns people to hell are rejecting the basis of their complaint. No other religion proposes a God of such personal love. Here we see a second argument regularly used by Keller. Often the attack on Christian faith rests on views whose only foundation is the Christian faith. To attack God because of such views is to saw off the limb on which you are sitting.

Keller answers other objections such as the injustices done by the church, the idea that science disproves Christianity and the challenges to the

trustworthiness of the Bible.

If we agree that the arguments against Christian belief are flawed, that does not prove that Christianity is true. Similarly, we cannot demonstrate these arguments in a way that will compel people to believe. Keller says that in place of proofs of God, we should look for “the clues to his reality that he has written into the universe, including into us” (p. 123). We should look at the world and ask which world view best accounts for it.

In the second part of his book, Keller directs our attention to things that point us to God; among these is our sense of beauty and purpose and our rational thought. Naturalistic evolutionists argue that these traits are mechanical, merely present because they have a survival value. He turns their argument on its head by pointing out that if there is no God, if we are just the accidental result of an evolutionary process, then our idea of reason exists only because it has survival value, not because it is true. That means we have no reason to trust our reason, unless we look to a God Who made a reasonable universe!

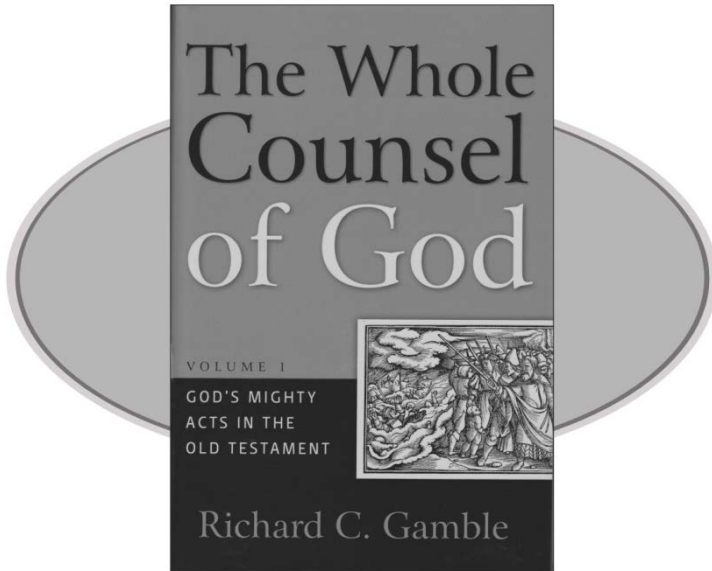
As Keller moves towards the end of the book, he increasingly points to the beauty of God. In the end, he declares that if we understand it, we should *want* the Christian message to be true. The author looks at the resurrection, not only presenting reason for believing it happened but also noting that it affirms that this world matters. He shows that the Christian message reveals provision for dealing with the sin, the evil and the failure we all see in ourselves. There is motivation for looking very seriously to see if it may be true.

The book presents a multi-poled approach. First Keller shows that the major challenges to Christian belief are not strong; indeed most of them are self-contradictory. Then he shows that there are good reasons for believing in the God revealed in the Bible. He finishes by highlighting the attractiveness of God, offering an implicit answer to those who say, “Fine, but I don’t really care”. All in all, it is a book well worth reading.

Reviewed by Donald A. Codling. Rev. Codling recently retired as the minister at Bedford Presbyterian Church, Bedford, Nova Scotia, where he served for over twenty-five years. He continues to serve as the Stated Clerk of the Eastern Canada Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America.



***The Whole Counsel of God, Volume One: God's Mighty Acts in the Old Testament.* Richard C. Gamble. Philipsburg: P&R, 2009, 719 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-87552-191-6**



It must be said at the outset that this review is provisional. Its subject is volume one of a three volume work. To be fair to the author, comments on this first volume must be considered as open to revision when the set is complete. However, as it will be a few years before that time arrives, some words of description and comment must be made in order to be fair to prospective purchasers of the book at hand.

In terms of physical description, this book is a well made hardback intended to be used. Its page size, font, font size and layout are easy on the eye, allowing readers to focus their attention on the content. Footnotes appear on almost every page. These notes are in a much smaller font size than the main text yet can be read without difficulty.

The book opens with a table of contents and an analytical outline. Both are helpful in themselves; yet, even bringing the two together leaves out some very useful information. From the former, the parts (1-5), the chapters (1-30), and the page number on which each chapter begins can be ascertained. In the latter, the structure of the book is outlined by being broken down into parts, chapters, sections and sub-sections. Many of the sections are strong enough units in themselves to warrant further study for their own sake. While the titles of these various divisions are found in bold print in the text of the book, the numeration used in the outline (e.g., 5.29.I.A) is not. Leaving

the numeration out of the text does make for a tidier page; but, it also removes one way of locating information quickly. To a reviewer, this is a slight annoyance. However, to students, burning the midnight oil over an essay, it might prove a cause of stumbling. Readers who make repeated use of this book will more than likely pencil in page numbers beside the headings listed in the analytical outline.

Following these introductory aids, the reader enters into the body of the work. Part one deals with methodology. There are discussions of biblical theology and systematic theology. Part two deals with revelation in the period from Creation to the Flood. Topics covered include six day creation and Framework Theories (Gamble rejects the latter), anthropology, the Fall, and the covenants made with Adam and Noah. There is no mention of a Covenant of Works. Part three deals with the period of Abraham and Moses. Covenant is a major subject in this part of the book, as is ethics. There are brief studies of the Patriarchs. There is an exposition of the Ten Commandments. Brief introductions to the last three books of the Pentateuch and a chapter on Old Testament ecclesiology bring part three to a conclusion. Part four deals with the days of the prophets and includes the Wisdom Literature. The bulk of this part is made up of introductions to the remaining books of the Old Testament. There is then a “theology proper” of the Old Testament which covers the person and works of God as revealed in these Scriptures. While this is the largest part of the book in number of pages, it also covers most of the Old Testament. There is not much detail in these introductions. Part five deals with Israel’s response to the mighty acts of God done in the Old Testament era. Here are discussions on faith and righteousness and on the church/world divide. The volume concludes with a Scripture index and the person and subject index. There is no bibliography.

The Whole Counsel of God is a title which raises expectations. The blurb on the back cover gives expression to these expectations by stating that the author “offers a comprehensive theology attuned to the methodological advantages of biblical theology combined with the strengths of historical and systematic theology”. Does the book live up to them? Alas, the answer is no; or, at least, not in this volume alone.

This book is a series of introductions. It is an introduction to a theological method which is shaped by biblical theology. It is an introductory biblical theology of the Old Testament, much of the content of which parallels that found in an introduction to the books of that Testament. It introduces and then, as it were, walks away leaving readers to carry on the conversation with this “comprehensive theology attuned to the methodological advantages of biblical theology combined with the strengths of historical and systematic theology” whom they have only just met. This is where the inclusion of a bibliography and some suggestions for further reading would have made all the difference. Perhaps they will appear in a later volume.

Of course, the most important of these introductions is that of the author’s proposed theological method. To flesh out the brief summary of the contents

of the book given earlier, the first two chapters of part one end with a summary expressed in six propositions: foundational to all theology is “inscripturated revelation”; theology cannot ignore general revelation; systematic theology cannot be taught by the unregenerate; biblical theology is indispensable to systematic theology; systematic theology is different from biblical theology; and systematic theology must be regulated by the principles of biblical theology. The third chapter comes to the conclusion that the method to be used is one in which systematic theology is structured around the history of special revelation.

When this method is applied in part two, the author begins with creation and then moves on to anthropology. As he treats the subject of man, he addresses the issues of man as a bipartite or tripartite being (he says the former) and the imputation of Adam’s sin. This is done by way of short topical essays which draw on later – i.e. New Testament – revelation. Creation and the Fall are the prolegomena, and the narrative is supplemented by such later revelation as is required to set the scene for what was once termed the unfolding drama of redemption.

In parts three and four, the application changes in that there are much fewer supplementary topical sections. Here the book becomes much more of a biblical theology textbook with the material divided generally under the headings of faith, law and ecclesiology. There are occasional uses of later revelation: e.g., when the author discusses the case of that righteous man Lot. However, the incident of Abraham’s offering up of Isaac is treated typologically, and the exegesis is not informed by Hebrews 11 or James 2. Then, in keeping with the author’s presuppositions, theology proper comes at the end of part four where the accumulated information of God’s self-disclosure is summarized. There is not much historical theological discussion in this volume, but there are hints of more to come in later volumes.

This book seems to have a problem with finding its level. Parts one and two assume and demand more of readers than do parts three, four and five. On page 90 the author says, “The idea that God is epistemologically foundational to human knowledge, and the notion that the differences between God as Creator and humanity as creation are epistemologically important, are not new concepts in systematic theology.” Then on page 680, he says, “Someone who thinks that God does not exist is called an atheist.” Perhaps the spread of the intended readership is so wide that not everyone can be addressed at the same time. For those involved in theological education, the usefulness of this volume might well decline as the book progresses; whereas, for readers simply wanting to come to terms with the Old Testament, its usefulness might well increase as the book progresses.

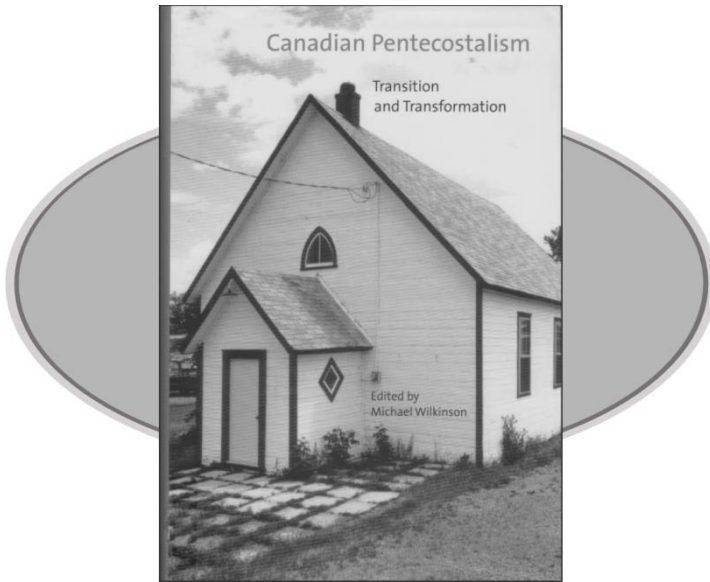
If the prospective purchaser is looking for an accessible biblical theology of the Old Testament, then this book is well worth buying. If, on the other hand, the prospective purchaser is looking for the Holy Grail (the set of volumes which will follow creedal development and the formulation of

doctrines over the centuries and bring the results of that search into interaction with perspectives of biblical theology), then it might be well to wait until all three volumes are available before coming to a decision.

D. Douglas Gebbie is a regular reviewer for this journal. Rev. Gebbie is a native of Scotland and was educated at Glasgow College of Technology and the Free Church of Scotland College, Edinburgh. Before his induction to the Presbyterian Reformed Church (PRC) in Chesley, Ontario, he served Free Church of Scotland charges in Raasay and Achiltibuie and pastored the PRC's congregation in Portland, Oregon.



Canadian Pentecostalism: Transition and Transformation.
Edited by Michael Wilkinson. Montreal: McGill-Queen's
University Press, 2009, 308 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-7735-3457-5



Appropriately titled *Canadian Pentecostalism*, this book provides a helpful overview and introduction to the development of Pentecostalism in Canada for many outside the movement. The book is arranged as a series of essays written by a variety of scholars who write from their particular fields of study including history, sociology and theology. The editor, Michael Wilkinson, is an associate professor of sociology at Trinity Western University and has written *The Spirit Said Go: Pentecostal Immigrants in Canada* (p. xii). The unifying concern that brings these short essays together is the attempt to answer the questions about the origin of Pentecostalism, the distinctiveness of Canadian Pentecostalism and the tension that exists within Pentecostalism between being “spirit-led” and “organization driven” (p. 6).

The book is organized into three main sections. Part one deals with the origins and development of Pentecostalism. The focus of this section is to understand that early Pentecostalism should not be mistaken as synonymous with present-day Pentecostalism. Part two moves on to the various aspects of the Canadian Pentecostal experience and describes for the reader what this movement looks like in practice. The final section looks at the institutionalization and globalization of Pentecostalism and highlights the impact of the movement.

Michael Giacomo recognizes that it is necessary to frame the discussion of the origin and development of Pentecostalism by providing a definition of the movement. He explains that the most common characteristic of Pentecostalism is its emphasis upon the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, especially speaking in tongues. It is for this reason that some have defined Pentecostalism as the actual experience or practice of speaking in tongues (p. 15). However, this definition is shown to be lacking. Pentecostalism is now five generations old and has been institutionalized, yet the reality is that not everyone who attends Pentecostal churches speaks in tongues. Giacomo proposes a broader definition that takes into consideration the many that practise speaking in tongues but have no affiliation with traditional Pentecostal denominations (p. 16). This broader definition recognizes three waves that are linked by a common spirituality and yet are very distinct movements (p. 16).

The first wave of contemporary Pentecostalism may rightly be called classical Pentecostals; characterized by prophecy, healings and speaking in tongues. They trace their origins to one of three distinct events in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century (p. 17). The second wave is known as the charismatic renewal. This movement is characterized by those who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the accompanying speaking in tongues and who have remained in the mainline historic churches. During the 1940s and 1950s, healing evangelists became a key component in bringing the Pentecostal experience to mainline Christians. In 1967, the charismatic movement was embraced by Roman Catholics after Vatican II (p. 20). The third wave came in the 1980s amongst conservative Protestants. This group recognizes the validity of spiritual gifts; however, they do not place the same emphasis on speaking in tongues as the two prior waves (p. 21).

So what is so unique about Canadian Pentecostalism that merits a book to be written to address the subject? Wilkinson shows that the unique history and culture in Canada provides a distinct framework for Pentecostalism, though it shares the common themes and influences of the Pentecostal movements in both Britain and the United States (p. 34).

One such theme that is evident early in Wilkinson's work is the centrality of the book of Acts and the emphasis on speaking in tongues in the interpretation of the Christian life. One example of this is the language of restoration that became very popular in early Pentecostalism. Thomas Robinson explains, "By making *glossolalia* a fundamental element in the restoration and by emphasizing other recent elements such as sanctification and healing as the essence of 'apostolic' Christianity, Pentecostals found that they could write off most of Christian history as less than apostolic . . ." (p. 40). This focus on restoration was reflected in Pentecostal preaching, typically known as the "Latter Rain", which is a line from the book of Joel. What made the book of Joel so appealing to reference was that in the early

church the book of Joel was used to explain the phenomena of *glossolalia* or speaking in tongues (p. 41).

Just as Acts 2 becomes instructive for understanding the gifts of the Spirit, so it becomes instructive for understanding baptism in the Oneness movement. The Oneness movement was another teaching that gained a hearing and was embraced by many within Pentecostal circles. This teaching included the practice of baptism in the name of Jesus alone instead of the classic Trinitarian formula. The reasoning was again based in Acts 2 where only the name of Jesus is given. Debates over the nature of God arose as Oneness Pentecostals sought to reconcile this passage with the classic Trinitarian passage of Matthew 28:19, and the result was that aspects of modalism began to be embraced (p. 44). While Oneness Pentecostals cooperated with Trinitarian Pentecostals in the early stages, it did not last. Beginning in 1940, Oneness Pentecostals became increasingly isolated from other Pentecostals due to the influence of American Pentecostals (p. 49).

Early Canadian Pentecostalism can also be examined by its vision of Canada. This movement offered criticism of the social situation in Canada by way of eschatological imagery. It portrayed the imminent return of Christ as evidenced by the ability to speak in tongues but also envisioned a more equitable world as a foretaste of the world to come (p. 59). While early Pentecostals shared many of the concerns of the social gospel, they did not actively engage in political action. They believed the means for societal reform was through personal transformation and not social action (p. 75). Early Pentecostalism then should not be equated with present-day Pentecostalism as the movement dealt with a range of trends that developed from its emphasis on the book of Acts and speaking in tongues.

The second section of this book considers various aspects of Canadian Pentecostal experience. An essay by Bruce Guenther provides the reader with a window to understanding the challenges that Pentecostals faced in the realm of theological education in early 1920s. As noted in the chapter on Pentecostal spirituality, believers are taught to be compliant with the leading of the Holy Spirit. While this teaching should not necessarily create a dichotomy, the graduates of Western Bible College (established by 1925) found themselves working amongst a group who preferred a simple emphasis on the major Bible “truths” (pp. 100, 103). This is an interesting chapter to read if the reader remembers to keep in mind the writer’s objective of showing the tension between being spirit-led and organizationally driven.

In highlighting four unique ways that Pentecostals appropriate Scripture, Mittelstadt and other contributors do well to provide simple lists to help to keep over-arching concepts of the Pentecostal perspective in mind. The final chapters on Pentecostal experience deal with Native Pentecostalism in British Columbia and female leadership. The chapter on Native Pentecostalism highlights some of the attractive aspects of Pentecostalism that provided a common ground for reaching out to native communities. Pamela Holmes’

essay on female leadership is coloured with a passionate cry for egalitarianism in ministry. This chapter deals with what has restricted the ministry of women historically and what has continued to be an area of tension.

The third and final section of the book deals with the institutionalization and globalization of Pentecostalism beginning with an overview of the charismatic renewal within the Canadian Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. The chapter on the charismatic movement in the Canadian Anglican church is the product of a country-wide research project studying their beliefs and practices. The chapter on the Canadian Roman Catholic Church is an illuminating chapter to understand the different aspects that prepared fertile soil for the renewal (pp. 217-218). The remaining three chapters of the book consider Pentecostalism from a global perspective which includes “the Toronto Blessing” and the challenge of migration of Pentecostals to Canada.

This book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in being introduced to the Pentecostal church and in gaining insight on the impact of Pentecostalism in Canada. It demonstrates the impact that a religious movement has not only on the society but also the impact upon other branches of Christianity. *Canadian Pentecostalism* places particular emphasis on appreciating the impact of Pentecostal theology within the Canadian Anglican Church and Roman Catholic Church. The reader will be forced to see that denominations have an influence upon each other. Secondly, this book is helpful for understanding Canadian church history because there is a tendency to focus either exclusively or predominantly on the classic mainline denominations at the expense of a broader survey of Christian perspectives. The book addresses a rather unique aspect of Canadian church history. While Pentecostals did not show up on the Canadian Census until 1911, estimates today project that Pentecostals and Charismatics may represent as much as 15% of the Canadian population (p. 5). Anyone who wants to truly understand Canadian church history certainly must understand a movement that has impacted a large percentage of the population. Finally, this book provides a window into Pentecostalism that allows the reader to gain an insight into the development that has taken place within the Pentecostal movement. This may in turn encourage the reader’s self-examination of his or her perspective on Christian living, particularly of the doctrinal emphases that give shape to their understanding of the Christian life.

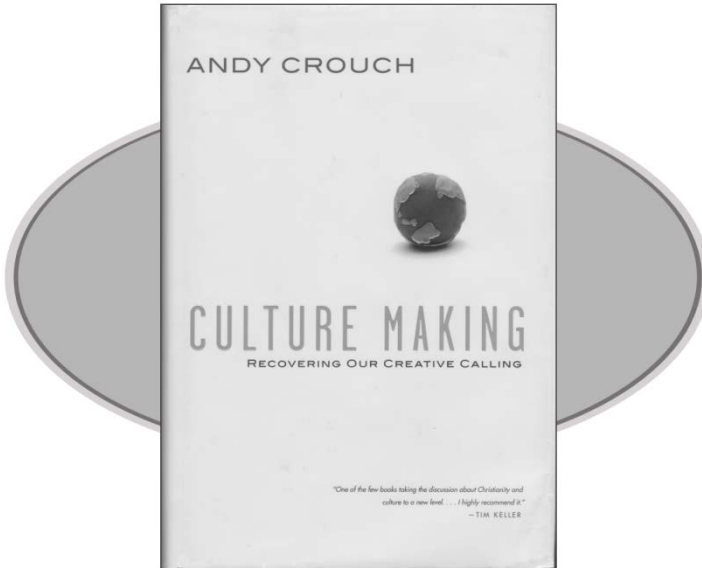
Canadian Pentecostalism attempts to provide a comprehensive overview on a very broad topic. Although it manages to bring the reader along, it is limited as to how much attention it can give to each topic. The layout of the three sections of the book helps the reader to sort all the information that is given. Each of the chapters may not have deserved equal space to be allotted to their particular aspect of study, but each of the chapters shows a different facet of Pentecostalism. The reader may wish more discussion was given to

how Trinitarian Pentecostalism emerged after Oneness Pentecostalism was said to be embraced by almost all Canadian Pentecostals. While less insight is given to any current analysis of the denomination, this book successfully provides an overview that stimulates further readings on Pentecostalism.

Peter K. Aiken is a lay preacher who lives on Prince Edward Island. He is a graduate of the University of Prince Edward Island with a business degree and currently works for an investment firm and studies part-time at Haddington House. His wife is Michelle, and they have a newborn son, Simon Elliot.



***Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling.* Andy Crouch. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008, 284 pp, hc. ISBN 978-0-8308-3394-8**



Most of us find it all too easy, perhaps even unconsciously, to buy into terminology and responses that are trendy in whatever our particular circle is. This may be particularly true today for the Christian considering how to understand and then respond to, interact with and, if possible, impact the world in which we live. So a work which arrests us, causing thorough, thoughtful, searching reexamination is truly a gift. Such a gift is Andy Crouch's recent book, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*.

Crouch divides the subject into three parts. Part one is entitled "Culture". Here he lays the foundation for the book, beginning by examining the meaning of the word – both in the multiple ways it is used in current speech and in the sense in which he will use the terminology. He shows the fallacy of speaking of "the culture" as though it were a single entity, when in actuality it is plural, with diversity, variety and history. He speaks of culture as "...what we make of the world", meaning both "...human effort to take the world as it's given to us and make something else" and making sense of the world as we find it (p. 23). He reminds us that culture is cumulative. What we experience as the culture of today is the cumulative result of creativity to date, creating the limits of what is possible and what is impossible. For example, he illustrates with the U.S. interstate highway system – someone's creative idea which changed the landscape of the U.S., greatly impacting the culture, and made some things possible (a four-day

drive across the country) and some things impossible (a quiet drive in many parts of the country). And particularly, he sees culture creation both as God's mandate to man and as the logical outcome of man being made in the image of the Creator God. "Just as God in Genesis is revealed both as Creator and Ruler (Setter of boundaries) so humanity, made in His image, functions likewise – and the product is 'culture' " (p. 36).

Another aspect of culture explored in part one is the consideration of the affected public. There are different spheres of culture; hence we speak of the culture of a university or of one's workplace, church or even home. He points out that when we consider culture, we tend to think of the biggest end of the scale, which, of course, is that least easily impacted by one small person. However, we can do a great deal about the culture of our homes and may have considerable impact upon the culture of our workplace, our church and even our community. To quote Crouch, "Family is culture at its smallest – and its most powerful" (p. 46).

Crouch then considers how one evaluates cultural change, observing that the elements of culture most easily changed (e.g., fashion) are also those with the least substantial enduring impact. Truly significant change takes a long-term investment and much patience.

He also examines the major attitudes and reactions Christians have historically displayed toward culture – including condemning and critiquing it, withdrawing from it, engaging evangelically with it, copying it with a Christian emphasis, and consuming it – and the danger of a response to one aspect of the culture becoming an unthinking, permanent, broad posture rather than finding a positive and biblical way forward.

So, how does one impact culture? Crouch replies, "The only way to change culture is to create more of it. . . . If culture is to change, it will be because some new tangible . . . thing is presented to a wide enough public that it begins to reshape their world" (p. 67). He concludes part one stating:

If there is a constructive way forward for Christians in the midst of our broken but also beautiful cultures, it will require us to recover these two biblical postures of cultivation and creation. And that recovery will involve revisiting the biblical story itself, where we discover that God is more intimately and eternally concerned with culture than we have yet come to believe (p. 98).

For those who may question the validity of this thesis, Crouch proceeds in part two ("Gospel") to lead the reader through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation from a cultural perspective.

The final section, part three, is "Calling", presenting perhaps unexpected challenges for Christians. Far from proclaiming that the time has come to "change the world", Crouch points out how poorly we achieve change even in our own lives and warns, "Beware of world changers – they have not yet learned the true meaning of sin" (p. 200). Having shown the futility and error

of “world-changing” ideology, he then reminds the reader that “. . . the Maker of the world is still at work ‘changing the world’” and invites the reader to consider how He goes about this and how we might “join his culture making and live out our own calling to make something of the world, without slowly and subtly giving into the temptation to take his place” (p. 201). Crouch also points the reader to think about issues of power in culture making and the reality and necessity of community – we don’t make significant change or offer significant cultural goods operating alone.

Crouch concludes:

So do you want to make culture? Find a community, a small group who can lovingly fuel your dreams and puncture your illusions. Find friends and form a family who are willing to see grace at work in one another’s lives, who can discern together which gifts and which crosses each has been called to bear. Find people who have a holy respect for power and a holy willingness to spend their power alongside the powerless. Find some partners in the wild and wonderful world beyond church doors. And then, together, make something of the world (p. 263).

In *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*, Andy Crouch offers a work that is challenging yet accessible and very readable. Whether or not the reader finds himself in agreement with Crouch on every point, I think all will come away with clearer thinking and a different perspective on this important subject as well as, hopefully, greater vision and purpose.

Reviewed by Christina Lehmann, Haddington House



Book Notices

In *Book Notices* we inform readers about works which have been recently added to the Haddington House Library. Most entrants are currently in print, but on occasion we include rare and valuable books we have acquired which students and patrons may want to come and consult. *Book Notices* are made in keeping with our editorial policy; that is, to help our readers in the stewardship of their resources and time. The *Journal* uses the standard abbreviation ‘hc’ to denote hard cover. The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) has been included with all books when available.

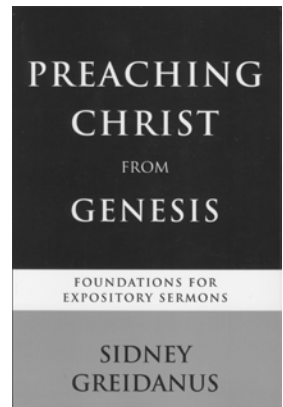
Biblical Theology

***Preaching Christ From Genesis: Foundations for Expository Sermons.* Sidney Greidanus. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, 536 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8028-2586-5**

One cannot overestimate the value of a proper understanding of Genesis in constructing an accurate grasp of the rest of God’s Word. The way Genesis is woven throughout the fabric of the Old and New Testaments and is heavily drawn upon in the book of the Revelation shows that one cannot preach the Bible well without a sufficient grounding here.

Following on from his two previous highly acclaimed works on preaching from The Old Testament, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*¹ and *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*,² Sidney Greidanus gives more detailed attention to Genesis itself, underscoring its preeminence as a foundational book.

The author admits narrative preaching comes with many challenges, not least of which is isolating the Christological significance of these narrative passages. However, in approaching these texts, there is much to encourage the modern preacher. Greidanus unpacks each narrative along a variety of lines, with sections including “Text and Context”, “Literary Features”, “Plot



¹ Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988).

² Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

Line”, “Theocentric Interpretation” and “Textual Theme and Goal”. Under the helpful section “Ways to Preach Christ”, he has included such subheadings as “Redemptive-Historical Progression”, “Promise-Fulfillment”, “Typology”, “Analogy”, “Longitudinal Themes” and “New Testament References”.

The section which I found particularly helpful was (for lack of a better name) “Longitudinal Themes”. This section takes us beyond the narrative to what Moses was trying to communicate to the church of his day as they put their trial and triumphs in perspective. Greidanus shows how the themes of Genesis are woven throughout the overall history of God’s people. For example, Greidanus says we can trace the theme of “new beginnings from a remnant” in the flood narrative through the lives of Abram and Sarai; the remnant of Israel saved to go into the Promised Land after forty years of wandering; the remnant returning after the Babylonian Exile; the beginnings of the church; and, finally, to the remnant spared from judgment to inherit the kingdom of God at the end of time (p. 110). Such themes can be broadly applied to the church in history but also to the life of the individual Christian.

Greidanus covers twenty-three of the more popular narratives in Genesis and in each provides the preacher with a model for exposition as well as a detailed commentary on the more popular sections. To compliment this excellent work, the author has included handy appendices. Here he briefly walks the preacher through the steps in getting from the text to the sermon, provides an expository sermon outline model and concludes with several of his own sample sermons.

A very valuable resource for the preacher passionate to make Christ known in all of Scripture.

Kent I. Compton is the minister of the Western Charge of the Free Church of Scotland, Prince Edward Island. Rev. Compton is a graduate of the University of Prince Edward Island and the Free Church College, Edinburgh. He pastored in Edmonton, Alberta, before returning to the Island. He also serves as a Trustee of Haddington House.

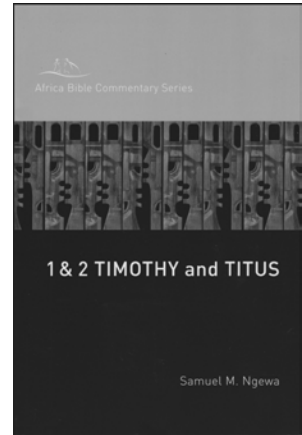


1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. Samuel M. Ngewa. Africa Bible Commentary Series. General editors, Dr. Nupanga Weanzana and Dr. Samuel Ngewa. Grand Rapids /Nairobi: Zondervan/Hippo Books, 2009, 466 pp., paper. ISBN 978-9966-805-38-6

This is the second commentary by Samuel Ngewa which I have spent time reading, the first being his commentary on John. The present volume under review, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, is the first volume for the new Africa Bible Commentary Series, a follow-up, in-depth series to the 2006 single volume *Africa Bible Commentary*. This new series is to be authored either by Anglophone or Francophone African scholars and published under the HippoBooks imprint, “named in honour of the great African theologian Augustine of Hippo” (p. xviii). In many ways it represents the “fourth self” of the three-self formula. Yes, three has now become four! The fourth is to have indigenous Christian communities “self-theologizing”. There is a tension here. Good theology is universal or catholic because it should be for all God’s people regardless of location. Yet at the same time, there is that amazing phenomenon of “speaking in your own language”, which is well beyond the literal sense of an actual language but inclusive of the cultural life, which is much broader. Thus, the commencement of this series is commendable because the transcultural and universal come through, yet the indigenous is heard at the same time.

The author has outlined this commentary into sermonistic units: 1 Timothy has nineteen units, 2 Timothy has fifteen units and Titus has seven units. The units each receive a short thematic title. As I have been going through these the last few weeks, I have not found myself in disagreement with the author’s unit divisions. The author has an excellent ability to organize and summarize well. He shows his scholarly abilities but is also a preacher applying the Word. Unfortunately, not all commentaries do this. Every unit ends with “Questions for Discussion”, many of which I found to be illuminating for preaching.

The author, currently professor of New Testament Studies at the Nairobi Evangelical School of Theology and formerly a professor at Scott Theological College, both in Kenya, very capably interacts with today’s authors who are writing on the pastoral epistles. He holds a Ph.D. in Biblical Interpretation from Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.



Generally, I was convinced by his exegesis. However, as one would expect, there will not be universal agreement on all conclusions of the author; for example, on 1 Timothy 2:9-15, where I did not find myself convinced by the exegesis offered. Here I would add that the series may not be as African as the publishers and editors envisage. The Christian world often universally struggles with the same matters. Thus, we are back to that tension – the transcultural and the indigenous.

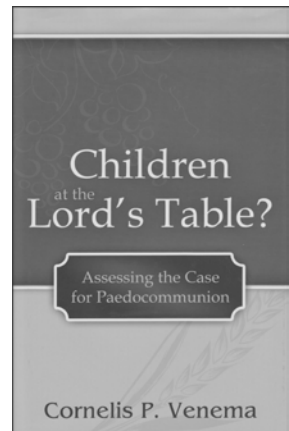
Readers will find much food for thought here. I was reminded in part of the Bible Speaks Today series and John Stott's volumes on the pastoral epistles. This new series, Africa Bible Commentary Series, has the potential to make a contribution to contemporary commentaries of Scripture. As I read the volume, I was again struck how important it is for a preacher to select his illustrations appropriately for the audience he is addressing. *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* is contextually illustrated just as many commentaries of the West are contextually illustrated – food for thought.

Jack C. Whytock

Systematic Theology

***Children at the Lord's Table?: Assessing the Case for Paedocommunion.* Cornelis Venema. Grand Rapids: Christian Heritage Books, 2009, 198 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-60178-059-1**

This is a convincing answer to the advocates of paedocommunion. Venema is both learned and lucid. He takes a firm position in opposition to children being admitted to the Lord's Table on the basis of their baptism, but he does not fail to present the arguments of the other side adequately. The jacket contains commendations from several well known leaders, including one by George W. Knight III which reads: ". . . one of the best treatments of this question, shows that Scripture clearly articulates that those invited to the table are called to come by believing in Christ, and not merely because they have been baptized as infants. I highly recommend this book."



In the introductory chapter, the author distinguishes between allowing children at a young age to make a simple but credible profession of faith and so be admitted to the Lord's Table and the practice of bringing them to the Table on the basis of their baptism or covenant membership. It is this latter view that is the crux of the debate, and it seems that in recent years a number of writers professing the Reformed faith have been attracted to it.

The arguments of the proponents of paedocommunion are challenged on several levels. Evidence is provided from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. In addition, it is shown that the position of the author is supported by both Reformed history and the Reformed confessions. Arguments in favor of paedocommunion from early church history are doubtful to say the least, and the practice in later centuries was affected by growing sacramentalism.

A full chapter is devoted to the passage which, in his words, contains "the most important and compelling piece of New Testament evidence that bears

on the question of paedocommunion . . .” (p. 101). This is 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

Venema is good at giving summaries, and the discussion is concluded with a full chapter entitled, “Concluding Observations and Evaluation”. He says that the biblical argument advanced by those advocating paedocommunion is partly based on the view that the Passover Feast and other Old Testament observances included children of the earliest age and that the Lord’s Supper is the New Testament counterpart of the Passover. He provides a full discussion of these points and, among other things, reminds his readers that the ultimate norm for the church must be the New Testament description of the administration of the new covenant. In his comments on the Corinthian passage, he shows that the historic Reformed teaching is correct in its insistence that those admitted to the Lord’s Table must be professing believers. This is evident because participants are called upon to remember, to believe, to discern.

There is a tendency among some advocates of paedocommunion to regard all members of the Covenant community as being in full and saving communion with the Lord. The Old Testament scriptures provide little support for such a view, and it is clearly not in harmony with much of the parabolic teaching of Jesus. Furthermore, as Venema points out, it raises other theological questions including the efficacy of the sacraments and the perseverance of the saints.

The book is not long (198 pages including the bibliography and indices), and the discussion is easy to follow. The various aspects of the subject are analyzed clearly and the views of the opponents are fairly stated and honestly met. I would give it the highest commendations. For anyone who is concerned about the question of paedocommunion, this work should certainly be studied. And it is suitable for both the professional and non-professional reader.

There is a fine appendix in which the author expounds the historic Reformed teaching on the subject of baptism. This had been written independently of the main thesis of the book.

William R. Underhay

***Spectacular Sins.* John Piper. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008, 121 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4335-0474-7**

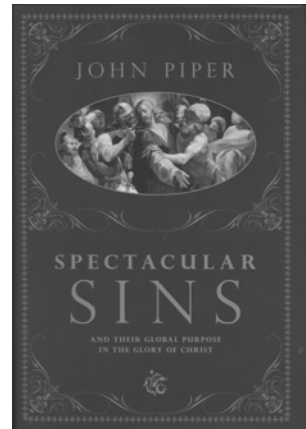
The relationship between evil and the sovereignty of God has been passionately debated for years. The events of 9/11 brought that debate into a sharper focus for this generation. At its heart, a question arises about the ability, and by extension, the ultimate glory of God. One proposed remedy has been the teaching of Open Theism, which simply excuses God of any foreknowledge of such evil.

In this work, John Piper, pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, sets out to tackle some of the more “spectacular sins” recorded in the Bible and to show through them how God’s glory is not only not tarnished but is accentuated.

Piper speaks with a prophetic voice in laying out his reasons for the book. After surveying the deteriorating attitudes towards Christianity, he warns, “The coddled Western world will sooner or later give way to great affliction. And when it does, whose vision of God will hold? Where is the Christian mind and soul being prepared for the horrors to come?” (p. 13) Toward the end of the book, he concludes that this can only happen as we are grounded in “. . . these great historical vistas of God’s sovereignty over sin . . .” (p. 97).

Having considered the biblical teaching of God’s relationship to and control over human evil, he looks more specifically at five of the more “spectacular” manifestations of human evil and how God used them to display His glory: the disobedience of Adam, the pride at the Tower of Babel, the sale of Joseph, the demand of Israel for a king and the betrayal of the Lord Jesus by Judas Iscariot. The foreknowledge, wisdom and determined counsel of God are clearly shown and vindicated in each of these.

The marvel about this relatively small is book is its value at so many levels; first, simply for the peace it affords the Christian. We see that not only the more “spectacular” sins are under God’s sovereign care but also the fiery trials that afflict us from day to day. Secondly, this book is a tool for apologetics. It confronts the question of evil head on and displays the wisdom of God in the amazing ways He wields evil for His glory and the salvation of His people. Rather than evil being the “Achilles heel” of Christianity, it is a theatre for the glory of God. Thirdly, we can appreciate world missions in a different way. The evil permitted, indeed ordained, at Babel left the Redeemer with not one monolithic culture to rescue, but His glory is displayed in that “. . . it magnifies the authority and power of Christ to make disciples in every language. His power is all the more glorious



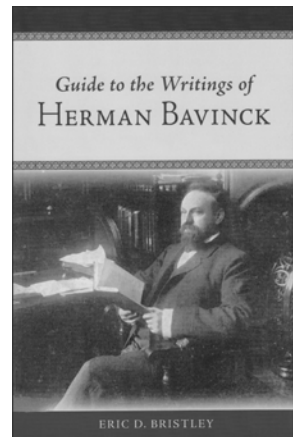
because it breaks into so many different languages and peoples and brings salvation.” Piper adds that if Babel had not happened, “. . . the global glory of the gospel of Christ would not shine as beautifully as it does in the prism of thousands of languages” (p.71-72). One cannot look at the nations in quite the same way.

Rarely have I invested such a small amount of time in a book that yielded such blessing. One is left to conclude “. . . how unsearchable His judgments and ways past finding out” (Rom 11:33). One hopes that this is a subject Piper will revisit with an expanded treatment.

Kent I. Compton

***Guide to the Writings of Herman Bavinck.* Eric D. Bristley. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008, 157 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-60178-054-6**

Until recently, English readers have had limited access to the works of the great Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck. This is surprising given both the esteem in which he was held by many of his contemporaries in North America and the high praise he continues to earn from present-day Reformed theologians. Thanks to the Dutch Reformed Translation Society formed in 1994, the situation is changing. English readers now have access to an increased selection of his works, especially the four volume *Reformed Dogmatics*.³ Because this should stimulate greater interest in Bavinck, Eric Bristley’s *Guide to the Writings of Herman Bavinck* is a timely resource.



The guide unfolds in six parts. The first section is a brief sketch of Bavinck’s life and work. Bavinck lived from 1854-1921. He was raised in the very conservative environment of the *Afscheiding* (Secession) but took the bulk of his theological training in the heart of Dutch liberalism at the University of Leiden. Following a brief pastorate, he served as professor of theology at Kampen (1883-1901) and the Free University (1902-1921). In this sketch, Bristley is concerned that we appreciate Bavinck’s writings in their historical context.

Section two is a reprint of John Bolt’s essay, “Herman Bavinck Speaks English”, taken from the *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 19 (2008). Bolt

³ Readers may find a review of Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Volume 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, gen. ed. John Bolt, trans. Jon Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), in the *Haddington House Journal* 11 (2009): 94-97.

provides an informative, insightful history and analysis of translating Bavinck into English and an outline of some of the significant Bavinck scholarship in English. Bavinck was a prolific writer with a wide range of interests; he published on education, history, philosophy, psychology and culture as well as theology. It is interesting to note that when Bavinck was introduced to North America, “Reformed people were more interested in Bavinck the social thinker and pedagogue than Bavinck the theologian” (p. 30). However, by mid-century “the first scholarly treatments of Bavinck’s theology at the doctoral level were by North Americans, not by his fellow countrymen” (p. 36).

Sections three, four and five consist of a bibliography of Bavinck’s works covering the period 1880 to 2008; archival material located at the Free University of Amsterdam; and a bibliography of the secondary literature on Bavinck. The *Guide* concludes with an index of titles in English, Dutch and Korean.

Bristley’s bibliographical material is interesting, informative and stimulating. He has not only listed Bavinck’s works but has provided excerpts, prefaces, annotations and reviews which allow one to gain both a sense of their content and significance as well as a feel for Bavinck’s thought and approach.

The *Guide* is an invaluable resource for those doing scholarly research on Bavinck. Pastors and theological students probably do not need such a detailed listing of Bavinck’s writings but will profit from reading this book. They will be moved to read his works, especially his *Reformed Dogmatics*, which Richard Gaffin says is “arguably the most important systematic theology ever produced in the Reformed tradition”.⁴

Rev. Howard McPhee is the pastor of the Springdale Christian Reformed Church, Bradford, Ontario, where he has served for the past sixteen years. This is his first book notice for the Journal, and we look forward to his contributions in the future.

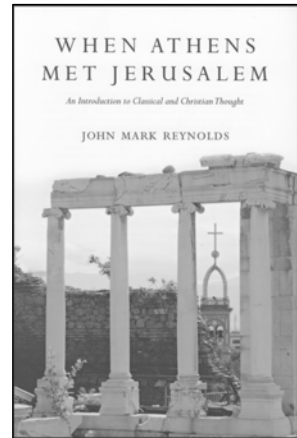


⁴ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 4, gen. ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), back jacket of book.

Historical Theology

***When Athens Met Jerusalem: An Introduction to Classical and Christian Thought.* John Mark Reynolds. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009, 266 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-2923-1**

In his newest book, *When Athens Met Jerusalem*, John Mark Reynolds, Founder and Director of Torrey Honors Institute and Professor of Philosophy at Biola University in California, sets out to provide an overview and framework of classical philosophy and thought for the purpose of showing the strong relationship and debt that Christianity owes to the ancients. The question of just how much a debt Christianity owes to the first philosophers is one Reynolds is not willing to answer immediately. However, a statement made in the introduction helps to sum up the general thesis and relationship that Reynolds believes exists between Athens and Jerusalem.



Jerusalem gave the basic, rational, religious truth on which to build an understanding of the world. It was the starting place for wisdom. Athens gave the technical language and categories to help define and extend the truth. Jerusalem gave the world truth; Athens gave it a valid way to express that truth. Out of this creative harmony came the classical Christian civilizations that shaped most of the world in which we live (p. 18).

Reynolds begins his overview by examining Greek culture before it had philosophy, when Homer and Hesiod's myths were all that was needed to answer questions and interpret the world. This quest for unifying principles to explain the phenomena of the world led to the birth of the first philosopher, Thales, along with other notable early philosophers such as Anaximander, Xenophanes and Parmenides. Reynolds' treatment of the Pre-Socratics is brief; yet even with such a brief treatment, the shared philosophical language between the Pre-Socratics and Christians is brought

out. The best example is Heraclitus and his use of the word *logos*, which will be used to great effect at the beginning of John's Gospel.

After an introduction to Pre-Socratic thought, Reynolds moves onto Socrates and Plato, the subject that will occupy most of the rest of the book. Both philosophers are placed within an historical context so that the reader who has not encountered either of these thinkers before might have a better understanding of what the men are reacting to and how much weight they carry in the history of philosophy. In outlining Plato's definitions of the soul and the concept of "The Good", the reader once again has the opportunity to see how the philosophical language further developed by Plato and Aristotle had a great influence on the Early Church. However, this is the key point: while these men were capable of knowing aspects of truths, they were ultimately not capable of knowing The Truth, the source of all truth and knowledge that is God.

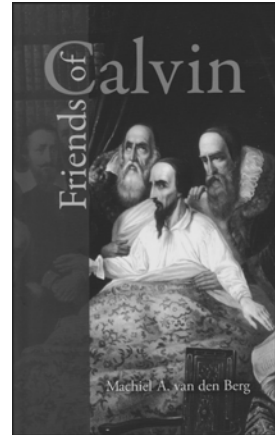
Reynolds advocates for a return to studying the classics so that as Christians we may better understand our starting point in Jerusalem. His book provides a good initiation as it presents a very basic introduction to classical thought; but in covering such a wide segment of the history of philosophy, and in such a quick manner, readers will be left with many questions. However, I believe this is the intended goal of the book; and when curious readers are still not satisfied upon completion, they have at least been given the tools and directions to the primary sources.

Reviewed by Ian A. Whytock, a senior classics student at the University of King's College, Halifax. Ian has a keen interest in history and philosophy. In 2009 he served as the assistant curator at the Confederation Art Gallery, Charlottetown, and was a research assistant for the forthcoming book Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome.



***Friends of Calvin.* Machiel A. van den Berg. Translated by Reinder Bruinsma. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009, 266 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8028-6227-3**

Friends of Calvin allows us to explore Calvin from a different angle than the normal biographical works or thematic theological studies. In this book we see Calvin in the context of whom he knew and with whom he was “friendly”. This work began as a series of separate articles published in the *Gereformeerd Weekblad*. In 2006 these were brought together under the Dutch title *Vrienden van Calvijn* and have now been translated by Reinder Bruinsma into English and published in 2009 under the title *Friends of Calvin*. There is no mention as to what the translator labours at beyond translating and only a very brief biographical statement on the author: “Machiel A. van den Berg is a Reformed preacher



living in the Netherlands. He regularly publishes articles about the history of the Reformation and about Calvin in particular” (back cover). The book contains twenty-four written portraits, averaging about nine pages each (the exception being the portrait of Philip Melancthon, which is about fourteen pages). Several contain likenesses which are mainly drawn from Theodore Beza’s *Icones*. Van den Berg has included the normal literary apparatus of such works: an introduction, bibliography and index of people and places.

The portraits are of many whose names we are familiar with as “friends” of Calvin: Nicolas Cop, William Farel, Pierre Viret, Martin Bucer, John Knox and Theodore Beza. Yet, there are also several names which are far less familiar: Claude d’Hangest, Renée de France, Benoit Textor and Lord and Lady De Falais. This is where I began to query. What criteria did the author use when constituting a list of “friends”? Friendship and correspondence is raised in the introduction, thus I began to conclude that this may have been one criterion – an extensive friendship through correspondence – in addition to those Calvin actually met, or is it a combination of factors? Some clarification was needed in the introduction on this point as other names come to mind as possible inclusions for a written portrait. The author does include friends of Calvin who, with the passage of time, were removed from that category, such as Lord and Lady De Falais (pp. 185-195), “A Dutch Couple” who were excised by Calvin as no longer his friends even to the point of removing the name De Falais from the original dedication to his commentary on First Corinthians (p. 194). This certainly does expand one’s understanding of the complexity of relationships Calvin had.

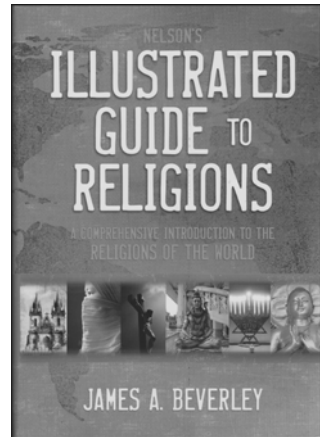
This is an interesting book and does make a certain contribution to ongoing Calvin studies. I cannot see it as being used as a class textbook; but as either a reference work or for those who enjoy reading biographical studies, it is worth while.

Jack C. Whytock

Applied Theology

***Nelson's Illustrated Guide to Religions: A Comprehensive Introduction to the Religions of the World.* James A. Beverley. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009, 850 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-7852-4491-2**

One of the immediately striking features of James Beverley's new book, *Nelson's Illustrated Guide to Religions*, is the fact that it is quite lavishly illustrated. This, coupled with Beverley's good writing style, certainly makes the book a reader-friendly work. This may also account for the weight of the book since obviously high quality paper has been used. Beverley tells us in the preface that "in a general sense this work is a product of over thirty years of study and teaching in the worlds of religion and philosophy" (p. ix). He is certainly an authority from the evangelical Christian community on this subject and is well recognized around the world for such.



This book is substantial – 850 pages – and is divided into nineteen chapters of religious divisions ordered alphabetically from Baha'i to Witchcraft. Yet some of the nineteen divisions contain several subdivisions; for example, the chapter on Mormonism, where Beverley lists several of the distinct Mormon churches (p. 361). Beverley clearly has an enormous breadth of knowledge on his subject as about two hundred religions are covered. The book also contains four very informative appendices, which will be helpful for readers. The chapters on Protestantism and Roman Catholicism are very much an overview and must be read as such.

One slight quibble is a word in the book's subtitle, namely the word "comprehensive". I realize it is used as an adjective to the word "introduction", which does qualify things somewhat. However, since I often work in Africa, I was looking for a chapter devoted to African Traditional Religion, yet it is not there. There is discussion at points on this, but one has to go searching. This is an area which needs fuller coverage; thus I question

the subtitle's accuracy. However, I am left wondering if the subtitle was added by the publisher as it only appears on the jacket cover but not on the title page. So perhaps this was not the author's doing.

Instructors in Bible colleges and evangelical theological institutions will need to ensure that this book gets into their institutional libraries. It is destined to become a standard reference work. Some may use it as a textbook for world religion courses, but for many institutions it will be a standard reference work from which assigned chapters could easily be given to students in preparation for a class seminar. The chapter on the Unification Church (pp. 675-696) could easily be the basis for a student seminar.

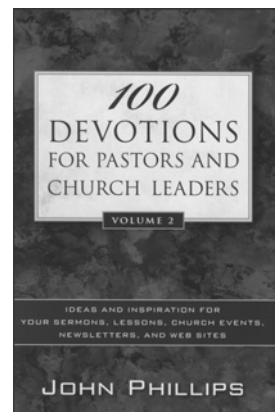
Again, well written, well illustrated, excellent layout with clear sub-headings and boxed themes and good endnotes to each chapter. It was surprising to see there was no separate "Select Bibliography" at the back, and a 109 page index in a single column could easily have been made into double columns and reduced to approximately fifty pages. The book is written from an evangelical standard, and the author interacts intelligently and with an endeavour to honestly represent various religions yet without compromise as a Christian. Perhaps James Beverley's next work will be a handbook of religions with himself as the organizing editor as there are few others who could lead such a project as the content of this book attests.

Jack C. Whytock

***100 Devotions for Pastors and Church Leaders*, vol. 2. John Phillips. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008, 216 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8254-3388-7**

I must admit that I had no exposure to the work of John Phillips before this little devotional; however, he is widely known for his many expository commentaries on the Bible and his work at Moody Evening School.⁵ The purpose of these devotions is to act as a jumping-off point for pastors and Bible teachers in developing sermons, lessons, church events, newsletters and websites. There is no doubting Phillips' commitment to a Christ-centered presentation in all of his devotionals.

As the title indicates, the book consists of one



⁵ For example, John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Luke: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005). There are nineteen volumes in the New Testament portion of this series.

hundred short devotionals, each one and one half to two pages in length. In the course of the book, Phillips includes readings from Genesis chapter one to the book of Revelation. The first forty are from the Old Testament and the remainder from the New Testament – fourteen from the Gospels, thirty-one from Acts and the epistles, fourteen from the first five chapters of Revelation, and a final thematic one.

The reader does need to be alerted to a couple of items in approaching these. Firstly, Phillips engages in fanciful conjecture in some of his selections. For example, when considering the crows that fed the prophet Elijah, Phillips writes, “Elijah must have considered their color, black and glossy. Elijah would doubtless think of the Shulamite, in Solomon’s spirit-born son, and her description of her beloved: ‘His locks’ she said, ‘are bushy, as black as a raven.’ That reminder would take Elijah’s soul by storm, for the Shulamite’s words reached far beyond her own beloved. . . . So, the color of the ravens alone reminded the lonely prophet of Christ” (p. 51). Such conclusions are not helpful in constructing a responsible approach to Christ in the Old Testament. While there is some place for imagination when considering what “possibly” might have been the case in a given situation, it is still the responsibility of the Bible expositor to be able to prove what he says from the text itself. To do otherwise is to draw away from the Word to the author’s flights of imagination as the foundation for devotion.

Secondly, Phillips is a strongly premillennial dispensationalist. This comes out in several of the selections. Ezekiel’s temple, according to Phillips, is “the temple yet to grace the earth when Jesus will reign ‘from the river unto the ends of the earth’ ” (p. 77).

In some places, these weaknesses leave the reader unable to read devotionally. One is left uneasy by the way so much is read into some passages.

Despite these two caveats, the discerning reader will be able to sift much devotional material from these selections. The tone of the devotional is rich with the spirit of the gospel so that the reader cannot help but be suitably stirred to a better understanding of the accomplishments of Christ on his behalf. It will fulfill its remit as a source of “ideas and inspiration” for pastors and church leaders, even if they will not always be convinced with his conclusions.

Kent I. Compton

Academic Articles

Sound the Trumpet: An introduction to the life and ministry of Tiyo Soga, 1829-1871

John S. Ross*

** Dr. John Ross lives in King William's Town, South Africa, where he teaches Church History at Dumisani Theological Institute and researches Eastern Cape mission history. John holds a Ph.D. from the University of Wales (Lampeter). A minister of the Free Church of Scotland, he was formerly CEO of Christian Witness to Israel, has held pastorates in Inverness, Scotland, and Belfast, Northern Ireland, and served as a missionary in Nigeria. Married to Elizabeth, they have three children and nine grandchildren.*



Blow the trumpet,
You, His people;
Sound the trumpet
of His Word.

Let far away nations,
Know it;
Let them turn to Jesus,
And love Him.

English translation of Soga's Xhosa original.

The Early Years: 1829-1846

A number of memorials commemorate Tiyo Soga's life and work. One of the first was the biography written by his close friend and colleague, the Scottish missionary, John Chalmers.¹ This book, now very difficult to obtain, has the honoured place of being the first biography of a black South African, possibly the first biography of any South African. In 1971, Donovan Williams, then Head of the Department of History at the University College of Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, wrote a second

¹ John A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga: A Page of South African Mission Work* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1877). This work forms the primary source of information on Soga's life and ministry.

biography called *Umfundisi*.² In 1983, a collection of Tiyo's own writings was published.³ In 2008, the Amathole District Council funded the publication of *African Intellectuals in 19th and early 20th Century South Africa*, which includes a brief account of Tiyo Soga.⁴

More than one church has been named in honour of Tiyo Soga and at least one branch of the African National Congress political party. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in King William's Town, a congregation which Tiyo helped to establish, commemorates his life in a stained glass window. In October, 2001, at the inaugural *ZK Matthews Memorial Lecture* at the University of Fort Hare, former President Thabo Mbeki listed Tiyo Soga first in a catalogue of black intellectuals, but Soga was far more than an intellectual; as his Xhosa epitaph on the memorial stone at Tutura witnesses, he was, in the English translation offered by his biographer, John Chalmers,

a friend of God, a lover of His Son, inspired by His Spirit, a disciple of His holy Word. A zealous churchman, an ardent patriot, a large-hearted philanthropist, a dutiful son, an affectionate brother, a tender husband, a loving father, a faithful friend, a learned scholar, an eloquent orator and in manners a gentleman. A model Kaffir.⁵

Well may we thank God for the gift of Tiyo Soga.

Tiyo Soga was an aristocrat, descended from a line of great leaders, wise councillors and brave warriors of the Ngqika clan of the Xhosa people living in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. His grandfather, Jottelo, highly respected both as a councillor and a warrior, fought and, it is said, died, in the battle of Amalinde in 1818 when Ngqika's son, Maqoma was overwhelmed by the forces of his rival, Ndlambe.⁶ Tiyo's father, usually referred to with great respect as Old Soga, was also a fighter and an important councillor, who in 1878 died bravely resisting the colonial army.⁷

² Donovan Williams, *Umfundisi: A Biography of Tiyo Soga 1829-1871* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1978). The isiXhosa term *Umfundisi*, meaning 'Teacher,' is a style accorded to Christian ministers, approximating 'Reverend'.

³ Donovan Williams, ed., *The Journal and Selected Writings of the Reverend Tiyo Soga* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1983).

⁴ Mcebisi Ndletyana, ed., *African Intellectuals in 19th and early 20th Century South Africa* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008).

⁵ The term 'Kafir,' variously spelled as Caffre, Kaffir, etc, is derived from an Arabic word indicating a person without religious beliefs. In the mid-nineteenth century the term was used widely with little offence. Today it is considered highly offensive. To avoid language that is derogatory, 'Xhosa' has been substituted throughout this article.

⁶ John Milton, *The Edges of War: A History of the Frontier Wars, 1702-1878* (Cape Town: Jutta, 1983), pp.68f.

⁷ Ibid. p.272.

Old Soga was an impressive man. He was described by the British Ngqika commissioner, Charles Lennox Stretch, as having an imposing physique, striking eyes and the ability to sum up a situation with a glance. He was married to eight wives, fathered thirty-nine children and owned many cattle, all of which tells us he was an important and wealthy person, holding a much respected position both in the Ngqika clan and in wider Xhosa society.

Not far from Old Soga's kraal was the place of Ntsikana (c.1780-1820), reputed to be the first Xhosa convert to Christianity. Like Old Soga, Ntsikana was also one of Ngqika's councillors who as a teenager had had contact with the gospel through the work of the Dutchman Johannes van der Kemp of the London Missionary Society. Subsequently, certain mystical visions and experiences inclined Ntsikana away from his calling as a diviner of traditional Xhosa religion and towards Christianity. He wanted to know more of 'Thixo and his son.'⁸ Instruction was sought, first from Joseph Williams, the missionary at Ngqika's Great Place, on the Kat River and then from John Brownlee of the London Missionary Society at the Tuymie mission. For Ntsikana this life-transforming encounter with the gospel was not merely personal but to be shared, and one of those with whom he shared it was Old Soga. Whether Soga should be ranked as a Christian convert is doubtful; certainly he later declined to support his son and showed little interest in taking sides with the missionaries. Perhaps the most we can say is that he was influenced by Christianity but seemingly did not make any profession of personal faith. Interestingly, however, he refused to allow Tiyo to be circumcised and sent to join the Abakwetha, although there is no evidence that it was Christian principle that led him to take this decision.⁹

Tiyo's father was a very progressive man, willing to take advantage of the best of the new ideas brought into his country by the early settlers. He has the reputation of being the first Xhosa to cultivate his farm with a modern iron plough and to irrigate his land by opening up water channels. He sold his crops of peas, beans, barley and potatoes to the British soldiers for a good profit.

Old Soga's great wife, Nosutu, was a Christian from the Amantinde clan. Tiyo was born in 1829, the seventh of Nosutu's nine children. She gave him the birth name of Zisani, which was shortened to Sani. Later his father called him Tiyo after a great councillor and brave warrior, hoping his son would

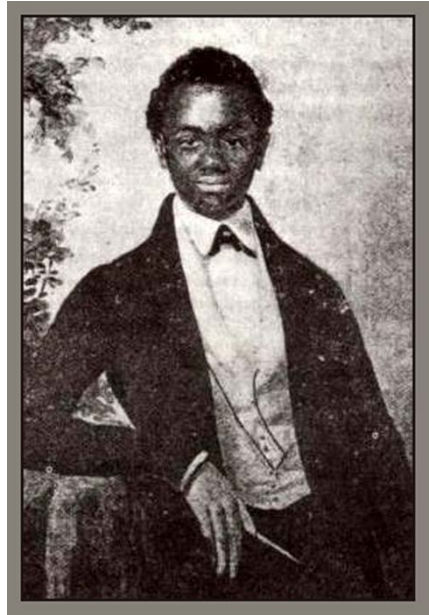
⁸ The amaXhosa name for God is u-Dali, but two other words are also used, Qamata and Thixo, probably of Khoikhoi ('Hottentot') or San ('Bushman') origin. Whilst u-Dali expresses the ideas of Creator and Supreme Being, the term Thixo has been used since at least the advent of the first missionaries as expressing a fuller concept of God more compatible with Christian teaching. Cf. John Henderson Soga, *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, n.d.), p.150.

⁹ For a comment on circumcision in Xhosa society, see fn. 15.

also have an equally important place in the history of his people.¹⁰ Of course, he did, but Tiyo's wisdom was not mere human wisdom; it was, as James 3:17 puts it, the wisdom that is 'pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.' Likewise his courage would not be proved on the battlefield but in the cause of the gospel among his people; however, unlike his father and grandfather, Tiyo did not die in war, but he did lay down his life in his Lord's service.

Old Soga's family kraal was at Gwali, near the Tuymie mission station which had been founded by John Brownlee in 1820.¹¹ By the time Tiyo was reaching manhood, the station was under the guidance of Rev. William Chalmers of the Glasgow Missionary Society.

Tiyo's eldest brother, his father's great son, Festiri, seeing the benefits of the education offered by the missionaries, neglected the cattle he was supposed to be herding and went to school to learn to read. At first, his father was angry and punished him for his carelessness, but seeing his heart was set on receiving an education and knowing he was fully supported by his mother, he yielded. Tiyo's first teacher was Festiri, who passed on what he had learned to the junior members of his family in a little schoolhouse he built himself, with the help of his mother. After his brother, Tiyo's next teacher was William Chalmers, who eventually sent him and Festiri to the central school at the mission station further down the valley. Not far away was the Lovedale Seminary, a secondary school, where in 1844, the fifteen year old Tiyo started his formal education.¹²



Young Tiyo Soga

¹⁰ Williams (op. cit. p.1) speculates that 'Tiyo' is derived from 'Theo', an abbreviation of 'Theodore' but this seems very doubtful in view of Chalmers' description of its derivation (op. cit., p.10).

¹¹ For an accessible modern account of Brownlee's missionary activity, see Basil Holt *Greatheart of the Border: A Life of John Brownlee Pioneer Missionary in South Africa* (King William's Town: South African Missionary Museum, 1976).

¹² The moving story of Lovedale's founding, mission, and deliberate subversion as a multiracial academy by the passing of Henrik Verwoerd's notorious Bantu Education Act 1953 (No.47), is told by Robert Shepherd, its last Principal, in Robert Shepherd, *Lovedale: The Story of a Century, 1841-1941*, (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, n.d.).

It was a challenge to leave behind his family and the familiar sights and sounds of the Amathole hills and his father's kraal. Lovedale, though only a few miles away, was a completely different world where Tiyo would face many new struggles. Run by the Free Church of Scotland, Lovedale's educational policy was multiracial. Sitting side by side in the same class were Xhosa students and the sons of settlers and missionaries. Some students, both black and white, reminded Tiyo that as a newcomer he was the lowest in the class, but this did not worry him; over the coming months he worked steadily, passed all the others, and became top of the class in every subject, except mathematics, in which he came second.

The First Visit to Glasgow: 1846-1848

In 1846, the War of the Axe broke out. On 11 April, a large colonial force under the command of Colonel Henry Somerset crossed the border at Block Drift and invaded Xhosa territory. Lovedale was situated right on the border and on the outbreak of war the seminary was closed and the students sent home. Many, including the Scottish missionaries and Tiyo's mother, Nosutu, fled to nearby Fort Armstrong for safety.

With Lovedale closed and war raging, the principal, Rev. William Govan, decided to return to Scotland and invited Tiyo to go with him to complete his education in Glasgow. Tiyo's father could not be consulted as he was in the Amathole mountains fighting the British, so Tiyo's mother was asked to give her permission. Nosutu's response was swift and simple:

My son is the property of God; wherever he goes, God goes with him. If my son is willing to go I make no objection, for no harm can befall him even across the sea; he is as much in God's keeping *there* as near to me.¹³

Tiyo eagerly agreed with the plan, and together with Bryce and Richard Ross, the two sons of the missionary Rev. John Ross of Pirie, they set out by ox waggon for Port Elizabeth and from there by ship to Cape Town and the long voyage to Britain.

It is hard to imagine what thoughts passed through Tiyo's mind as he left his mother and sisters at Fort Armstrong, his father among the Xhosa warriors, and his home at the foot of the Amathole mountains. Would this new adventure be disappointing? How would he fit in to life in Scotland? Would he, a black African, be an object of hostile curiosity as he walked the streets of Glasgow? One thing was sure, and Tiyo soon learned it, that when God calls His people into Christian ministry and leadership, He often requires them to step outside their comfort zone and face hardship and

¹³ Chalmers, op. cit., p.39.

misunderstanding. In Scotland Tiyo would learn that there are many battles in doing God's will, but no battle is ever won by running away.

By the beginning of October, the three South African youths had arrived in the city of Glasgow. Like Tiyo, both Bryce and Richard Ross had been born in the Cape and everything in the booming industrial city was as new and strange to them as it was to him. Shortly after his arrival, Tiyo commenced his studies at the Free Church of Scotland Normal Seminary, where he remained until 1848. Like many new arrivals, the seventeen year old Tiyo imagined he had come to a Christian country and that as a result the city of Glasgow would be free of crime, but he soon discovered the truth, the hard way. One day, playing football with his classmates, he put his bag of books on the doorstep of a house facing the street in which they were playing. When the game was over, Tiyo turned to pick up his bag only to discover it had been stolen.

The large John Street United Presbyterian Church in Glasgow took financial responsibility for his education; the minister, Dr William Anderson, showed Tiyo much kindness, understanding his loneliness in the city. In this way, Tiyo was saved from many temptations and dangers that may have led him astray; the seed of the gospel, planted in his heart by his mother, now began to germinate and blossom.

On 7th May, 1848, Tiyo made public profession of his faith, being baptised by Dr Anderson and received as a member of the John Street United Presbyterian Church. An adult submitting to Christian baptism in the United Presbyterian Church was required not only to make an intellectual commitment to Christian doctrine but also, and especially, to testify to a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. When interviewing a candidate for baptism, the ministers and elders of Scottish Presbyterian Churches looked for what is traditionally termed a 'credible profession of faith.' As a result, three important questions were – explicitly or implicitly – addressed to adults professing their faith.

Q. Do you repent of your sins, and profess your faith in God, the Father who has created you, Jesus Christ who has redeemed you, and the Holy Spirit who has enabled you to trust in the grace and love of God?

Q. Do you promise to nourish your faith by the study of God's word and by prayer, in private and at public worship?

Q. Do you promise to live, with the help of the Holy Spirit, a godly life and take your part in the work and witness of this church?

Whilst we cannot be sure that these questions were verbally addressed to Tiyo at the time of his baptism, either by Dr Anderson or the Kirk Session, in private or in public, we can be reasonably sure that the John Street Kirk Session would have adequately satisfied themselves on these grounds before

proceeding to baptise Tiyo and accept him as a communicant member of the John Street Church. We may thus be confident to say that for Tiyo Soga baptism bore witness to his intellectual commitment to Jesus Christ as his teacher, to the dedication of his heart to Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and to his lifelong allegiance to Jesus Christ as his Lord and Master. If there had been any reasonable doubt about any of these elements, the Kirk Session would have refused baptism and Tiyo would have had to remain outside the membership of the congregation until such time as his profession was credible.

Awareness of what was involved in taking this important step of Christian commitment helps us to understand how radical was Tiyo's decision. For him, becoming a Christian was no superficial change of religious allegiance. Nor was he 'converting to Christianity' in the sense of accepting the traditions held by those who had made provision for his education. Rather, he was professing what he believed to be true: that in the depths of his personality, he had been converted by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. So, on 7th May, 1848, Tiyo, independently, publicly and irrevocably, affirmed his commitment to Christ and His gospel. As Donovan Williams has commented, Tiyo Soga 'always saw himself as a Christian first; from this all else followed.'¹⁴

Uniondale: 1848-1850

On 24th October, 1848, Tiyo, accompanied by a new missionary for Tyumie, left Glasgow by express train for London. There he boarded the ship that would bring him back to Africa, arriving at Port Elizabeth on 31st January, 1849. Shortly after returning home, he was given the responsibility with his colleague, Robert Niven, of opening a new mission station at Uniondale, in the Keiskamma valley, approximately twenty-five kilometres east of his home near Tyumie. It was here where he first preached the gospel, probably on New Year's Day, 1849, and here too that he first began to write hymns for the Xhosa hymn book of 1850.

It was also at Uniondale where he first experienced strong opposition to his Christian convictions. When it was noised abroad that Tiyo had not been circumcised, Xhosa fathers took their sons away from his school and some young men even threatened his life if he did not submit to circumcision; but even after his home had been broken into and his property stolen, Tiyo refused to compromise his Christian convictions. In later life Tiyo encouraged Xhosa Christian young men to disentangle the cultural elements of circumcision from those relating to traditional religion and the worship of the ancestors.¹⁵

¹⁴ Williams, *op. cit.*, p.7.

¹⁵ Male circumcision is still regarded as an extremely important, if somewhat controversial, rite of passage for Xhosa young men, marking their transition from

At the outbreak of the War of Mlanjeni, on the morning of Christmas Day 1850, Niven and his family left Uniondale to move to safety. Tiyo and an elder, a man called Busak, remained behind. That afternoon the mission station was attacked and burned to the ground; Tiyo and Busak grabbed a few of their things and ran for their lives to a nearby kraal where they knew they would be safe. This was a hard time for Xhosa Christians. Busak lost everything he owned and about a year later was found dead with assegai wounds. Other local Christians, afraid to leave the area and be denounced by the chief, Sandile, as traitors, hid in a cave in the Amathole mountains.

The outbreak of fighting so badly upset Mrs Niven it was decided they should return to Scotland and take Tiyo with them. For the second time Tiyo found himself leaving Africa for Glasgow. Just before embarking at Cape Town, Tiyo was offered, at a very good salary, the post of a government interpreter; however, he declined the offer, saying he would rather beg in the streets of Glasgow to collect his fees for Theological Hall so that he could learn how to preach the Good News of the Saviour he knew but which his countrymen did not yet know. Although his father refused to make any contribution towards his education, Tiyo did not have to beg on the streets of Glasgow; the John Street Church made generous provision for him.

The Second Visit to Glasgow: 1850-1856

Tiyo prepared himself for ordination first at Glasgow University and then by attending the United Presbyterian Theological Hall. Here he made many friends, influencing some to consider missionary work in South Africa. On Sundays he taught in a Sunday school in one of the poorer parts of the city.

After completing his theological studies, Tiyo was ordained on 23rd December, 1856, by the United Presbyterian Presbytery of Glasgow as a minister of the John Street Church. The remarkable and controversial ordination prayer was offered by the senior minister, Rev. William Anderson. With his hand resting on Tiyo's head, he first earnestly prayed for God's

boyhood to adulthood. Without circumcision males cannot marry, inherit possessions, nor officiate in traditional ritual ceremonies. After circumcision the initiates (*abakwetha*) live together in seclusion to allow time for the healing process, during which they smear white clay on their bodies, eat a prescribed diet and observe numerous rituals. The use of a common blade is considered by some authorities to be linked to the transmission of STDs, especially HIV/AIDS, and is said to be the cause of a number of deaths each year, mainly due to septicaemia. In the 1990s, a programme was started in Alice, not far from Tiyo Soga's birthplace, to encourage the use of surgical scalpels and new blades for each initiate. Soga did not object in principle to circumcision for Christian young men, but insisted it be separated from all its traditional religious overtones and treated as a civil rite. Cf. Chalmers, *op. cit.*, pp.264ff. Currently a number of Xhosa-speaking churches are exploring an alternative in which the operation would be carried out under hospital conditions, with the traditional 'circumcision school' giving way to instruction on biblical manhood.

blessing for his young African friend; then asked God to make the British government change its colonial policy; finally, he sought God's blessing on 'the noble chieftain Sandile.'

The following Sunday, Tiyo was invited to preach his first sermon as an ordained minister in the church of which his old Uniondale colleague, the Rev. Robert Niven, was minister. The building was filled by a large congregation, most of whom had never before heard an African preach a sermon. During the singing of a psalm, Tiyo's hand was resting on the edge of the pulpit. A little boy who was sitting on the pulpit steps and had never seen an African before reached up and ran his finger across the black hand to see if the colour would rub off. Surprised that it would not, he moistened his finger and tried again with no greater success. Looking into the little boy's eyes, it was all Tiyo could do to stop himself laughing out loud at his bewilderment.

Among the many friends Tiyo made in Scotland was Janet Burnside, the young Scottish woman who became his wife. Janet, two years older than Tiyo, had been born in a poor district of Glasgow called the Gorbals, the eldest daughter of Alan Burnside and his wife Isabelle Kirkland. At the time of the wedding, the family address was Craignestock, a street in the Calton district of Glasgow famous for its cotton weaving industry. Here her father was employed in a relatively poorly paid job as a cotton yarn warper, the counterpart to a weaver, preparing looms for the production of cotton cloth.¹⁶ The marriage took place in the western Glasgow suburb of Ibrox on 27th February, 1857, with Rev. John Ker officiating. Poor they might have been, but judging from the invitations Tiyo sent out to some of his friends, humorously announcing his being 'launched into the horrors of matrimony,' their wedding seems to have been a light-hearted and happy event.¹⁷



Janet Burnside Soga

¹⁶ The task of cotton warper is described in Robert John Peake, *Cotton; From the Raw Material to the Finished Product* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, n.d.), p.86.

¹⁷ The marriage certificate may be viewed and downloaded from, <http://www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk>.

Although the newly married couple did not suffer any embarrassment or criticism in Scotland because of their inter-racial marriage, when they returned to the Cape it was a different story. Walking in the streets of Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, they suffered the loudly expressed disapproval of ill-mannered, racially prejudiced colonists, but the Reverend and Mrs Tiyo Soga resolutely refused to be troubled by this small-mindedness. One day after their being stared at, Tiyo wrote that despite the criticism of unfriendly people, the principle of the equality of the races had triumphed.¹⁸

The Soga's arrived back home to discover the country devastated by the Cattle Killing.¹⁹ In the winter of 1856, it was rumoured that the spirits of the ancestors had told the young prophetess Nongqawuse to instruct the people to destroy all their crops and kill their cattle; in return, the ancestors would sweep the Settlers into the sea. After eighty years of colonial aggression and seeing no way to regain their status as an independent people, many were only too ready to believe the prophecies. All across the region cattle were slaughtered and left to rot, granaries were emptied and the ground was left unplanted. The ancestors' promise, so it was said, would be fulfilled on 18th February, 1857, when the sun would rise red; but the sun rose that day just the same as on every other day and proved the prophecy false. The result was not only great disillusionment but a terrible famine in which thousands perished of starvation. For months the roads were full of hungry people moving from place to place seeking food and help.

The Mgwali Years: 1857-1868.

In December 1857, Tiyo and Janet moved to Mgwali, near the German settler village of Stutterheim, and set to work providing food for the starving and homeless people flocking to their little mission station. They wrote to friends in Scotland appealing for financial aid. In one letter, Tiyo reported, 'We are seeing sights that are making our hearts bleed and our eyes weep. It was only yesterday that . . . with my own hands . . . I dug the grave of a mother and two children who had died of sheer starvation.'²⁰ Terrible as it was, worse was to come; as the time for sowing came near, the people were too weak to cultivate the land. Even so, there were good stories too. A young lad of around twelve had been brought in unconscious and at death's door, but kindness and good food, Tiyo wrote, 'are working wonders for him.'²¹ Over the following months, the United Presbyterian Church and other churches in Scotland sent generous funds to alleviate the suffering.

¹⁸ Chalmers, op. cit., p.131f.

¹⁹ For a definitive account of the Cattle Killing episode, see Jeff Pieres, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing of 1856-7* (Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 1989).

²⁰ Chalmers, op. cit., p.142.

²¹ Ibid, p.143.

With their own hands, Tiyo and his colleague Rev. Robert Johnston built a small mud-walled church. Johnston painted the woodwork and Tiyo learned to cut and fit the glass for the windows. Each Sunday they took turns to conduct services, one in English for the few settlers in the area and the other in Xhosa. Tiyo thought that disillusionment with the failed prophecies might open hearts to the gospel, but at first there was resistance. On 21st January, Tiyo wrote, 'Conducted a Xhosa service in the morning . . . there [were] a few Xhosas present.'²² But as time went by, things began to change. In March he wrote, 'There were three red Xhosas present in our services.'²³

On Sunday 10th April, the little church was opened and the Lord's Supper was celebrated with forty communicants. By the end of May, attendance had reached around 150. Tiyo now felt optimistic: 'our little Sanctuary was quite full & the attention sustained in all the Services.'²⁴ By September 1859, the Mgwali church was too small. Tiyo's journal entry for Sunday, 16th September, states, 'Another splendid day in attendance — No room at all — some had to stand outside — a good company of fine young people.'²⁵ On 3rd December he wrote 'a fine company of people, some dressed — others in their Xhosa blankets — Never preached more wretchedly — The house was crowded to excess.'²⁶ Acknowledging God's blessing, Tiyo believed the time was ripe to raise funds for a new and larger building, and wrote in his private journal, 'You bless me, Lord, your work overwhelms me, but the Spirit [enables me]. Let those who are crying over their sins move me to cry over my own, and help me to believe what I am preaching to others. Father, I throw myself on you as I am.'²⁷ Assessing the results of the past year's labour and hoping for yet greater blessing, Tiyo wrote on 29th January, 1860, 'This is still the day of small things. But I thank God that we have been enabled to do even this much — The work is his — May he command the blessing upon it — & may he give us the necessary strength & perseverance in this good work.'²⁸

It would be wrong, however, to give the impression that the work in Mgwali went forward smoothly and without difficulties. A serious accident with a pot of hot glue badly burned Tiyo's face and set his house on fire, which mercifully was soon extinguished. Then, feeling severe pains in his side and chest, he rode to King William's Town to see a doctor only to be told it was an early sign of tuberculosis, from which he eventually died.

²² Donovan Williams, ed., *The Journal and Selected Writings of the Reverend Tiyo Soga* (Cape Town: A. A Balkema, 1983), p.16.

²³ Ibid, p.17.

²⁴ Ibid, p.19.

²⁵ Ibid, p.21.

²⁶ Ibid, p.23.

²⁷ Ibid, p.22.

²⁸ Ibid, p.25.

Then, just as the burden of the work was increasing, Tiyo found himself left alone when Robert Johnston accepted a call to become minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Grahamstown. Whilst believing that Johnston would remember the mission work in Mgwali and raise prayerful and financial support for it, Tiyo was saddened and discouraged by his leaving. Writing from Grahamstown on the day he had participated in Johnston's induction, he wrote, 'I truly wish he had remained in Kaffraria. His departure was to me a great trial, as we have always worked together cordially, and in harmony.'²⁹ Tiyo especially missed Johnston's company and support during the planning and building of the new church at Mgwali, which was built not just at the cost of a large sum of money but at the price of Tiyo's health.

It was difficult to raise funds for the building either from his own Xhosa people or the settlers and missionaries of the King William's Town district. Once, hoping to raise £150, he was disappointed to find the collection produced only £13. As expected, Johnston's congregation in Grahamstown donated generously the sum of £50 and other churches gave £68. In Port Elizabeth, Tiyo's eloquent addresses raised over £200, some from children. Tiyo wrote to the mission board in Scotland, telling how the children had 'stretched out their little hands towards me with pennies, threepences, sixpences and shillings, saying . . . "this is to build your church."³⁰ In all £450 was raised from South African supporters, with the rest coming from friends and supporters in Scotland, including a generous donation from his church at John Street in Glasgow.

In July 1861, the foundation for the new church was laid and about a year later on Sunday 15th June, Tiyo's fine new Mgwali United Presbyterian Church, accommodating 600 people, was opened. That was a day full of great rejoicing, hearty feasting, good fellowship and fine preaching. The seventy-one year old Congregational pioneer, Rev. John Brownlee, rode over from King William's Town to preach at the morning Xhosa service. Tiyo's former teacher and friend, the Rev. William Govan, principal of Lovedale, preached in English at noon. Tiyo's close friend and fellow student, Rev. Bryce Ross of Pirie, preached in the afternoon in Xhosa from the text Matt. 5:9, 'Blessed are the peacemakers', alluding to the work of Tiyo and intending the benediction to rest upon him.

Later, the Rev. James Read of Kat River preached a sermon in Dutch reminding the congregation that men were the same everywhere and all needed to ask the same question: 'What must I do to be saved?' And they should all alike also listen to God's answer, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.' Tiyo's United Presbyterian colleagues, Rev. James Laing and Rev. John Chalmers, were both present, as were his neighbours, Rev. Johann Kropf of the Berlin Mission at Bethel and Thomas Brockway and Henry Kayser of the London Missionary Society at Peulton.

²⁹ Chalmers, *op. cit.*, p.183.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p.197.

With the building work on the church now complete, Tiyo dedicated his time to writing. His great desire was to complete the translation of the first part of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, which he had begun when a student in Glasgow. The work was finished on 21st November, 1866. His journal entry for that day, reads, 'Quarter past nine o'clock, night. Finished, through the goodness of Almighty God, the translation of the first part of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, my fingers aching with writing.'³¹ Tiyo dedicated the book to Lovedale's principal, Dr. William Govan, who arranged for it to be printed by the Lovedale Press.

After the last of the border wars, that of 1878, there was a curious anti-missionary story published in the *Tarkastad Chronicle* which told how after one battle a copy of the Xhosa *Pilgrim's Progress* was found on the body of a dead Xhosa fighter. It was inscribed with the words, 'Lovedale Missionary Institution. First prize in English reading, Junior Division, First Year, awarded to Paul Nkupiso.'³² The *Chronicle* sarcastically ventured the caustic comment that 'The book will be kept as a standing

advertisement of missionary labour.'³³ We do not know who that dead warrior was, as sometime later Nkupiso turned up alive and well at Lovedale, nor have we any notion why he had taken the book with him into battle, nor do we know how he had come by it in the first place. What we do know is that he wanted it, perhaps for superstitious reasons, believing the powerful 'Word' of which the missionaries spoke, might protect him against bullets; however, I like to think that this story may suggest that it was neither white settlers nor the colonial army that had a monopoly on those who read and appreciated *Pilgrim's Progress*; it interested Xhosa patriots too.³⁴



³¹ Ibid, p.340.

³² Shepherd, op. cit., p.210

³³ Idem.

³⁴ Much could be written about the vicious anti-missionary bias of many white settlers who objected to education for black Africans (cf. Shepherd, op. cit., p.16); a

From Mgawli Tiyo established preaching stations at outlying kraals where people were interested and attentive. He was careful always to pay special attention to visiting at the kraals of traditional leaders, where he never lost an opportunity to speak for his Saviour. Once, visiting Sandile's place, he preached to twenty important men though Sandile himself was away from home that day. On another occasion, at Bholo, from whence people walked to services at Mgawli, he found them eagerly leaving their farms to come to hear him. In another place, the chief told him how unhappy they were when he was unable to visit them. Not only did Tiyo preach, but he also started schools and tried to meet basic medical needs. In the manse he kept a well equipped medicine chest and during outbreaks of smallpox went from home to home vaccinating to prevent the disease.

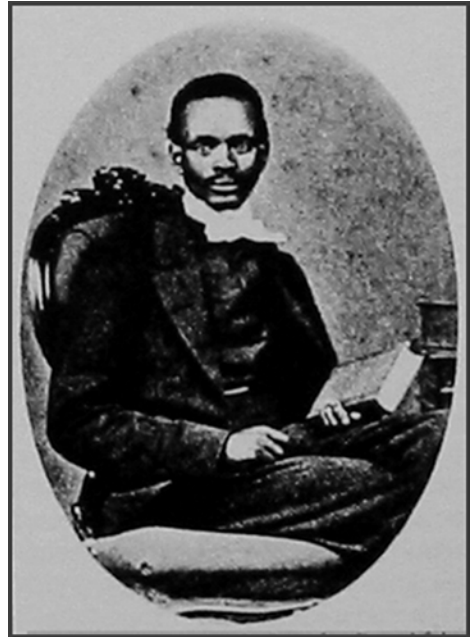
Tiyo Soga had a great ability to unite people. Not only were many of the Xhosa people open to his preaching, but the settlers also came to appreciate his ministry. He preached in large Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican congregations in Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, Grahamstown, Bedford, Alice, King William's Town and even in the Dutch Reformed *Moederkerk* in Cape Town. As a result, much of the early prejudice against him and his wife disappeared. One old white gentleman in King William's Town presented him with two beautifully bound books, one of which is now in the collection of the Amathole Museum, inscribed: 'To the Rev. Tiyo Soga, upon hearing the first sermon preached by him . . . at King William's Town. From an old resident.'

Tiyo also spent time exercising his considerable talent as a hymn-writer, writing hymns for inclusion in a school hymnbook which was published in 1864. He was also a member of the board for the revision of the Xhosa Bible. The translation of the whole Bible had been completed in 1859 and published in a single volume in 1864, but the missionaries were not satisfied with their work and in 1868 it was decided to undertake a major revision. Tiyo was an obvious choice as a member of the revision committee but died before the work was completed.

It was around this time that Tiyo began to be involved in journalism and developed ideas about Africa or Black-consciousness, later to be taken up and developed along secular lines by thinkers and activists such as Steve Biko. In March 1865, during a time of great personal discouragement, Tiyo's close friend and biographer, John Chalmers, wrote an unfortunate and derogatory article entitled 'The Kaffir Race' which was published first in Lovedale's Xhosa and English paper, *Indaba*, and then on 25th April in the *King William's Town Gazette and Kaffrarian Banner*. In this article Chalmers suggested that the Xhosa people would become extinct and forgotten forever unless they worked hard at making a contribution to the life of the Colony. Chalmers' attitude angered Tiyo. Writing to the *Gazette*,

prejudice reflected as the sub-plot of John Buchan's 1910 novel *Prester John*. Similarly, Tiyo Soga acknowledged that for many of the Xhosa the missionaries were little more than 'emissaries of Government', cf. Chalmers, op.cit., p.327.

under the pseudonym *Defensor*, he immediately challenged his friend's ideas. He showed as untenable and illogical Chalmers' criticism that black people were 'indolent,' 'drunken,' 'averse to change,' and consequently 'doomed to extinction,' yet also 'capable.' Likewise, he argued that belief in the doom of the black nations was incompatible with the 'sheet-anchor' missionary slogan that 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch her hands out to God?' On the contrary, Tiyo argued, the Bible taught that God was committed to black Africans; had he not made them 'durable, tenacious and accustomed to adversity?' Not only would they survive, but they would flourish as 'a noble race,' provided they were not deprived of their land, moved around and made to settle wherever the whims of the Colonial government decided. Xhosa people, Tiyo believed, should be aware of their history and proud of their heritage and thereby develop self-respect. They should by all means take advantage of education, improved agricultural techniques, modern clothing and all the other benefits Western culture brought; but they should not fall into the trap of following the example of the worst aspects of "the outlaws and refuse" of the mother country' by, for instance, abusing alcohol. Above all, they should accept Christianity because everything good flowed from that spring. The importance of this correspondence between these two friends cannot be overstated, for their differences did not produce personal ill will. As Williams correctly remarks, 'As far as can be ascertained, the letters are the first of their kind by a black man in South Africa, and contribute to making 1865 the great year for the emergence of Black consciousness.'³⁵



Tiyo Soga

Putting his preaching into practice, Tiyo spoke to his four sons about their future as children from an inter-racial family, 'For your own sakes never appear ashamed that your father was a Xhosa, and that you inherit some African blood. . . .*take your place* in the world as *coloured*, not as *white* men; as *Xhosas*, not as Englishmen.'³⁶

³⁵ Williams, op. cit. p.178.

³⁶ Chalmers, op. cit., p.430.

Tutura and the End: 1868-1871

In 1868, the United Presbyterian Church appointed Tiyo to the new mission station at Tutura, in the Transkei, but he was very pessimistic about the outcome. He knew only too well that it was for political reasons that the king, Sarhili, and his councillors had asked for a missionary but were highly resistant to the Christian gospel. Yet the reality was not as bad as he anticipated: by 1870 about a hundred people attended the little mud walled church, and there was a small group of enquirers who were being instructed in basic Christianity.

In June 1871, Tiyo set out on horseback to establish a new outstation at Mapassa's kraal, but as Mapassa was away from home Tiyo had to wait. The weather turned cold and wet; for a number of days he was trapped in a damp hut with no food and no-one willing to take care of him. On the Saturday, cold and hungry, he rode back to Tutura in the pouring rain to discover his wife and family had gone to Butterworth and would not return for a few days. Suffering from fever, he lay down on a sofa and covered himself with a blanket to try to keep warm. By Sunday morning, he had recovered enough to force himself to preach, but for two weeks afterwards he remained seriously ill.

At the beginning of July, he felt a little stronger; and he agreed to vaccinate villagers who were worried about smallpox and sat on his verandah waiting for help. Once more he overworked and the illness returned. A doctor was sent for, but on 12th August, 1871, Tiyo Soga, only 41 years of age, gently passed away. Sitting at Tiyo's bedside was his close friend Rev. Richard Ross, who had been at Lovedale with him and at Glasgow, too, and in later life had shared in the joys and struggles of Christian ministry. Ross helped Tiyo to change his position in bed. While he gently raised him, he felt the body go limp; and as he looked into his face, Tiyo, 'calmly, gently, as an infant falling asleep, . . . breathed his last breath.'³⁷

Three days later simple funeral services were held in Xhosa and English. Six Xhosa Christians carried the coffin to the grave in the orchard which Tiyo had planted, where his worn out body was laid to rest. Standing at the graveside was his widow, Janet, with her seven children: thirteen year old William Anderson, eleven year old John Henderson, nine year old Allan Kirkland, six year old Jotello Festiri and the little girls, Bella, Frances and Jessie Margaret. There too was his elderly mother, Nosutu, with words of Christian comfort for all the bereaved.

As a minister the United Presbyterian Church, Tiyo had confessed his faith in terms of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. I like to think that the words of the answer to the 37th question of the *Shorter Catechism* had a very special significance that day for his grieving family and friends:

³⁷ Ibid, p.485.

The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

Today, whatever Tiyo Soga may mean to us, and he will mean different things to different people, he would want to remind us that we entirely miss the point unless by faith we receive for ourselves his Saviour, Jesus Christ and see the gospel of God's grace as the true source of all that is good, both in time and eternity. Two lines of one of his hymns sums up everything Tiyo Soga stood for, worked for and hoped for:

Rule! Rule! Lord Jesus;
Through you will come happiness.

John McNicol: Word and Spirit – The Centre of Toronto Bible College's Training

Warren Charlton *

** After twenty-six years of pastoral ministry within the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches, Warren is currently the Chair of Pastoral Studies at the Peace River Bible Institute in Northern Alberta. Warren and Ellen have been married for thirty-nine years and have two married children and six grandchildren. This article is a condensation of the third chapter of his thesis on Dr. John McNicol, for which he was awarded a master's degree by Briercrest Seminary in 2007.*



Biographical Abstract of John McNicol (1869-1956)

John McNicol was born in Hanover, Grey County, Ontario, where his father was a teacher. The family moved to Ottawa, and from there John did classics at University College, University of Toronto (B.A.Hons., 1891). In Toronto he was very involved in the Student Volunteer Movement, the Elizabeth Street Mission and the YMCA. He graduated from Knox College, Toronto, with his B.D. in 1895 and went on to pastor in the Presbyterian Church in Canada in Alymer, Quebec, before going to Toronto Bible College in 1902 to teach English Bible. In 1906 he became principal and remained in that post until 1946 (he continued teaching until 1954). McNicol was a board member of many Christian endeavours, including Sudan Interior Mission, the China Inland Mission and the Upper Canada Tract Society. He attended the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference as one of the Canadian delegates. In 1935 he received the honorary D.D. degree from Knox College. He was a prolific author of articles, monographs and the popular four volume work, *Thinking Through the Bible*. Evidently his most popular article was "Fundamental But Not Dispensational". His wife, Louisa Burpe McNicol, was known affectionately as "The College Mother", and this is to whom he dedicated his books, *Thinking Through the Bible*.



Introduction

After forty years as Principal, McNicol could remind his fellow Canadian evangelicals that the entire educational and training focus of TBC had been built upon two fundamental and transcendent facts that lie at the heart of the Christian faith: the Bible as the living Word of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the corporate life of God's people.¹ Word and Spirit was the regulating centre of the teaching and training emphasis of TBC. To appreciate the significance of his practical theological focus one needs to place it within the three historical realities in which TBC was immersed. These were the Bible school movement, the design of TBC, and the Controversy between Modernists and Fundamentalists.

¹ "Gala Occasion," "Dr John McNicol's Reply," *TBC Recorder*, 52. 4 (December 1946): 13-15.

The Bible School Movement

The Toronto Bible College and the Bible Training School of Vancouver were present in Chicago at a Conference on World Evangelism and Vital Christianity in February 1919 in which a day was devoted to the special task of the Bible Institutes. The consensus among these representatives was that for twenty-five years the Bible school movement had made an important contribution to the life and work of the churches in the USA and Canada. They believed that they were called to fill a much larger place and do a greater work. While up to then the Bible school movement had not felt called to enter the field of academic or theological training, these leaders were convinced that in view of the pressing needs of the church and the world the Bible schools must lengthen their cords and strengthen their stakes. This implied the courses offered should be strengthened and that the academic standards must also be raised, and for some schools, provision should be made for a more thorough training for the ministry.² McNicol shared these same sentiments with fellow Canadians, “Bible Schools have contributed spiritual service to the Christian Church, which the Church has not fully appreciated. There is still a larger field for these institutions to enter in order to meet the needs of the present day.”³



*Toronto Bible College building, 1920
(from a postcard)*

McNicol firmly believed that the Bible school movement had been raised up by the Spirit of God to meet the situations that were current at that time.

The Spirit of God is moving to-day upon the hearts of young men and women throughout the whole church. He is turning them towards the Bible Schools which He has raised up during the past twenty-five years. It is God's doing and He has a purpose in it. The Toronto Bible College is surely called to share in this purpose and in this movement.⁴

It was this sense of being a part of something greater that moved McNicol to remind his readers to recognize that TBC was both the product and the

² Editorial, “A Forward Movement,” *TBC Recorder*, 25.2 (March 1919): 1.

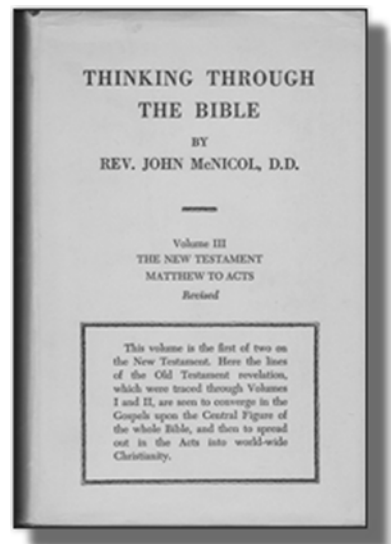
³ Editorial, “An Evening With The Officials,” *TBC Recorder*, 25.2 (March 1919): 2.

⁴ John McNicol, “The Principal's Annual Report,” *TBC Recorder*, 27.3 (June 1921): 3.

manifestation of this free movement of the Spirit of God. The young men and women who came to the school did so with a sense of a divine urge upon them. It behoved the college to recognize this and to devote themselves to equip a body of consecrated young people so they would be fitted for the work of intensive personal evangelism at home and abroad. His conclusion was, "The Bible College, then, is not an isolated fact. It is part of that great movement of the purpose of God by which He is getting His work done in the world in this day and generation. This feature of the . . . College needs to be better and more widely known."⁵

It was, therefore, to catch the Spirit's breath in the sails of TBC that McNicol established his policies of the centrality of the Word of God in their curriculum and the leadership of the Spirit of God within their corporate fellowship. To fulfill these purposes for which the Spirit had raised up the school McNicol believed, "There is no greater need in church life and Christian education to-day than an intelligent, systematic study of the Bible."⁶ While McNicol did not define intelligent or systematic, it is safe to assume that his aim was to expose the students to a study of the Bible that was rigorous in its mental demands and yet systematic in its approach so the entire canonical Scriptures would be covered. McNicol developed his three-year course, "Thinking Through the Bible" in order to keep in step with the Spirit's activities in the Bible school movement. This was seen to be true in those days when the anti-supernaturalism of modernism was a blighting breath among the Canadian churches. In contrast, McNicol asserted that,

What is needed most of all these days is a new consciousness of the eternal realities. We seek above all things to bring the young men and women who come to us into a continuous living contact with these essential realities so that they may carry this consciousness with them out into their work in the world. Thus we would spread our sails for the winds of the Spirit of God and be



⁵ John McNicol, "The Principal's Annual Report," *TBC Recorder*, 33.3 (June 1927): 6. See also his Reports in *TBC Recorder*, 28.2 & 3 (June 1922): 7, and *TBC Recorder*, 30.3 (June 1924): 5.

⁶ John McNicol, "The Principal's Annual Report," *TBC Recorder*, 28.2 & 3 (June 1922): 7.

ready for that renewal which He alone can give and which we so greatly need.⁷

How would TBC introduce these students into a living contact with the essential realities of eternal things? The answer is found in McNicol's practical theology of Word and Spirit. For in the Bible, they encountered another world, a transcendent reality where God is, and out of which he speaks.⁸ This otherworld also pervaded McNicol's idea of the corporate presence of the Holy Spirit among His people. Their lives as God's people were ruled from heaven just as Christ's life while He lived on earth. Through Word and Spirit they were introduced into these realities of God and were enabled to consciously carry these essential realities into the work to which God had called them.

The Design of the Toronto Bible College

TBC's original aim embraced the experiential, the educational, and the practical aspects of Christianity. They aimed at the heart (a consecrated Christian life), the head (an adequate knowledge of the Word of God), and the hand (an effective use of the holy Scriptures in Christian service).⁹ There was an activist spirit at work among young people. The Christian Endeavour, the Baptist Young Peoples' Union, the St. Andrew's Brotherhood, and the Epworth League were producing young people for Christian service at home and abroad.¹⁰ Where were they to get training for such Christian work? They could not all go to the universities and theological colleges. It was in response to this influence that TBC came into existence.¹¹ Yet, what lay at the heart of what McNicol regarded as necessary for training these young people for effective Christian service?

⁷ John McNicol, "The Principal's Annual Report," *TBC Recorder*, 30.3 (June 1924): 5.

⁸ John McNicol, *The Bible's Philosophy of History* (Toronto, ON: Published by the Board of Governors, 1944), 5.

⁹ *Prospectus of the Toronto Bible Training School, 1894*, 987-019 File Box-Registrar's Office-Calendars-TBC-1 found in the Archives – OBC/OTS found in the Wm Horsey Library, Tyndale University College & Seminary in Toronto, ON. "It is designed that the full course of study will extend over two years. The instruction will be Biblical and practical, and will specially aim at these three great ends: - A consecrated Christian life, an adequate knowledge of the Word of God, and an effective use of the Holy Scripture in Christian service."

¹⁰ These young people's organizations were connected to the Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches respectively.

¹¹ A. E. Armstrong, "Gala Occasion," *TBC Recorder*, 52.4 (December 1946): 3-5 found in the Vertical File, McNicol, John 1869-1956 0233-1, Wm Horsey Library, Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, ON. Armstrong made these remarks as a former student of the college in 1896-97.

In preparation for their new building on 16 Spadina Road in 1929, the college reiterated its original purpose of 1894 but added this dimension. "It seeks to give them such a conviction and experience of the reality of Christianity as will enable them to be worthy servants of Christ in any part of the world."¹² It is interesting to note that while the course of studies at the college was lengthened in 1923 from two to three years, and while it still "aimed at furnishing its students with a thorough and systematic knowledge of the English Bible and its practical use,"¹³ McNicol's conviction was that his students could only be worthy servants of Christ in the world if their education was to include the conviction and experience of the reality of Christianity. His aim that TBC be a school that bears witness of the essential reality of Christianity was now at the heart of its design and purpose. Academics and practical training for Christian ministry were important but at the heart of all its courses was this experiential embodiment of the fundamental principles of Christianity. Christian spirituality was not merely a by-product of the school; it was at the very core of all that they did. How did McNicol seek to accomplish these theological, practical, and experiential aims of the school? He explained that their focus was chiefly upon Word and Spirit. Not Word without Spirit or Spirit without Word, but a unified practical theology of Word and Spirit.

The Bible College has never been conformed to any pattern or been made to follow any pre-conceived plan, but it has always kept in view two fundamental Christian verities and sought to give them visible expression. These are the supreme authority of the Word of God in Christian education and the corporate leadership of the Spirit of God in Christian fellowship. They are simple spiritual principles but have profound and far-reaching applications. We have sought to work them out through the years in the building up of our curriculum, in the composition and co-operation of our staff and in the discipline and fellowship of our student body.¹⁴

Controversy between Modernists and Fundamentalists

At McNicol's retirement dinner, both the president of the board and McNicol alluded to the fact that in the history of the college a deliberate

¹² Ibid., 5 and 7 - In the 1939-40 Calendar, under the "Purpose of the College" it reads, "The College does not provide for highly specialized forms of Christian work, but does aim to furnish its students with such a thorough and systematic knowledge of the Word of God and such a conviction of the reality of Christianity as will enable them to be worthy servants of Christ in any part of the world." 7, 987-019 FB-RO-CA-TBC-1 Archives OBC/OTS found in the Wm Horsey Library at Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, ON.

¹³ Ibid., 5.

¹⁴ John McNicol, "The Principal's Annual Report," *TBC Recorder*, 44.2 (June 1938): 4.

decision had been made to lead TBC in the path away from theological controversy.¹⁵ This was McNicol's first major decision as principal since the deaths of Elmore Harris and William Stewart, the original founders and leaders of the school. This decision was to establish the character and uniqueness of the college under his leadership.¹⁶ Why did McNicol choose this path of non-involvement in controversy? What precipitated his decision to function apart from this theological controversy in Canada? Were there practical-theological reasons, or was his decision just the result of an evangelical quietism?

In his reply to the honours he had received during his retirement dinner McNicol explained the college's stance regarding the Modernist-Fundamentalist controversy. In turning away from this notable controversy McNicol was seeking to establish a system of Christian training at TBC that bore witness to the two fundamental and transcendent spiritual realities that lived at the heart of his conservative evangelical theology.¹⁷ What spurred him to steer TBC away from the Modernist-Fundamentalist controversy was his practical theology of Word and Spirit. Yet it was not a mere path of non-involvement for flowing out from his theology of Word and Spirit was a very ambitious objective. They were "seeking rather to magnify the living verities of the Christian faith and to illustrate the essential reality of pure Christianity in such a way that the spirit of controversy dies away."¹⁸ In 1941 as he reflected on this decision of 1911, McNicol further explained the ultimate rationale behind it.

We declined to be drawn into the Fundamentalist Controversy or into any church controversy outside . . . We undertook to bear our Christian witness in another way. We sought to make the Bible College an illustration of what we believed to be the essential nature of New Testament Christianity. We sought the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit and tried to workout that principle in all our departments of the College life.¹⁹

McNicol's grand objective in building the educational and corporate life of TBC around these two fundamental and transcendent realities of Word and Spirit was a deeply spiritual reality that he described as "the essential nature of New Testament Christianity."

¹⁵ "A Gala Occasion," *TBC Recorder*, 52.4 (December 1946): 2 and 13-15.

¹⁶ John McNicol, "The Principal's Annual Report," *TBC Recorder*, 47.2 (June 1941): 6.

¹⁷ "A Gala Occasion," *TBC Recorder*, 52.4 (December 1946): 13-15.

¹⁸ John McNicol, "Principal's Annual Report," *TBC Recorder*, 36.3 (June 1930): 7.

¹⁹ John McNicol, "Principal's Annual Statement," *TBC Recorder*, 47.2 (June 1941): 7.

He did not elaborate on what the essential nature of NT Christianity was but it appears to be a spiritual reality that was experiential, emotional, personal, and relational within their corporate life at TBC. It was a life in which the presence and power of the Holy Spirit's leadership was manifested within all departments. In an earlier attempt to describe "The Essential Reality of Christianity,"²⁰ McNicol pointed to the origins of Christianity at the Spirit's descent at Pentecost. "By this event the Holy Spirit established living and abiding relations between the disciples on earth and their risen and ascended Lord in the heavens."²¹ Christianity introduced a new order of life whose source is found in the unseen spiritual reality of the heavenlies. This focus was seen in the experiences of the early Christians. During their times of fellowship, "There was a new atmosphere . . . the atmosphere of that other world into which their Master had gone."²²

McNicol wanted to see this new atmosphere, this new order of life (devotion and delight in Christ) reproduced at TBC in contrast to the destructive spiritual tendencies of modernism and fundamentalism. Under the tutelage of God's Word in their education and the presence of God's Spirit in their fellowship, this essential reality of Christianity as seen in the early church would become a reality. As the college's chief administrator McNicol's decision to avoid controversy was made according to the aims of his theology of Word and Spirit.²³

How did McNicol implement his practical theology with its orientation of the Word of God as the supreme authority in Christian education and the leadership of the Spirit of God in Christian fellowship?²⁴ It is here we must discuss the role of the Bible in TBC's curriculum and the corporate leadership of the Spirit within its fellowship.

The Role of the Bible at TBC

To oversee this discussion we turn to a man after McNicol's own heart, the man who was to succeed him as principal. J. B. Rhodes was an excellent interpreter of what McNicol meant when he claimed, "[TBC] gives the Bible its true place as the vitalizing centre in the scheme of Christian education."²⁵

²⁰ John McNicol, "The Essential Reality in Christianity" 491, *The Biblical Review*, 9.4 (October 1924): 491-510.

²¹ Ibid., 494. "We seek to cultivate those qualities of Christianity that we find manifested in the early Church of the Book of Acts when the sense of Christ's presence was so real to the disciples." See: *Prospectus of the Toronto Bible College, 1947-48*, "Bible College Principles," 6, 987-019 FB-RO-CA-TBC-1 Archives OBC/OTS found at Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, ON."

²² Ibid., 495.

²³ See note 21 above.

²⁴ John McNicol, "The Principal's Annual Report," *TBC Recorder*, 44.2 (June 1938): 4.

²⁵ John McNicol, "Principal's Report," *TBC Recorder*, 25.3 (June 1919): 4-5 and reprinted in subsequent volumes of the *Recorder* 57.3 (September 1951), 59.3

Rhodes addressed the question, “What place does the Bible occupy in the Toronto Bible College?” His answer was, “The central and controlling place.”²⁶ What exactly did that imply about the educational philosophy of TBC and why did they give the English Bible such a central and controlling place? Rhodes drew out five implications of the college’s decision to place the Bible in a place of supremacy within its curriculum. These implications were an echo of McNicol’s own convictions and reflect his understanding of nature of the Bible as the *Word of God*.

The first implication was that TBC had a bibliocentric curriculum. The entire course of studies at TBC was built around the English Bible. The fundamental academic discipline at the school was the systematic study of the entire Bible for five hours per week. This course of studies lasted one hour each day through three years. As McNicol explained, “We kept enlarging the curriculum from time to time, adding one subject after another as we had the means to do so. But we always gave the supreme place to the Bible. We made it the guiding and regulating centre of the whole course . . .”²⁷ As the curriculum widened so that the entire field of theological studies was covered yet no one subject was to interfere with the college’s main task of enabling the students to master the English Bible.²⁸ Like a hub of a wheel, the Bible was the centre from which all the other subjects radiated like spokes. As a rim on a wheel, the Bible controlled, shaped, and held all the other subjects together as a unified whole. The Bible was clearly the queen of TBC’s curriculum. Why was mastering of the English Bible such an emphasis in TBC’s curriculum? How did this emphasis relate to McNicol’s theology of Word and Spirit with its spiritual aim that TBC become a centre in which the essential realities of Christianity were to be seen among all associated with the school?

Rhodes gives us the answer in his second implication. The study of the entire English Bible was regarded as a necessity if the students were to know “the whole counsel of God.” Under McNicol’s leadership, TBC did not follow the pattern of the theological colleges and place its emphasis on the minute study of the Bible in its original languages. Rather its emphasis was

(September 1953), 69.6 (September 1963):14-15, and “50 Years With Toronto Bible College,” *Evangelical Christian*, ed. J. H. Hunter, 2.

²⁶ J. B. Rhodes, “The Bible in the College,” *TBC Recorder*, 48.4 (December 1942): 2-3. This emphasis on the Bible-centred curriculum of TBC was a constant theme in McNicol’s explanation of the school’s uniqueness. “Principal’s Annual Report,” *TBC Recorder*, 40.2 (June 1934): 2-3. “The Principal’s Annual Report,” *TBC Recorder*, 44.2 (June 1938): 4. “The Principal’s Annual Report,” *TBC Recorder*, 47.2 (June 1941): 5-6.

²⁷ John McNicol, “Those Formative Years,” (Address by Dr John McNicol during Founders Day, November 8, 1949, during “Know Your College Week”) *TBC Recorder*, 55.4 (December 1949): 2.

²⁸ Ibid.

on the entire English Bible. Rhodes added, "It is our aim at the Toronto Bible College to take each student through the entire English Bible before graduation."²⁹

McNicol adopted this method of teaching the whole Bible in a consecutive canonical manner because of its twofold structure.

Its two parts, the Old and the New Testaments, are complementary to each other and stand together. They are two stages in the one progressive unfolding of the divine plan . . . The Old Testament is the necessary preparation for the New, and the New Testament is the necessary sequel and fulfilment of the Old . . . Both parts of the Bible together combine to form the Christian Scriptures. Both make up the Word of God, and both are needed for a true and full understanding of the historic revelation which God has given to man.³⁰

His method of teaching the entire English Bible was based upon his theology, not pragmatism. The Spirit who inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures did so in this twofold structure. To keep in step with the Spirit's full progressive revelation of God to humankind McNicol believed the complete Bible must be taught and in the canonical format in which it was given to us. The Christian Scriptures consisted of both testaments together and he felt it was a necessity to teach both. If Spirit and Word are united in the work of divine revelation, then the Scriptures must be taught and understood according to its twofold format. McNicol's theology of Word and Spirit dictated his methodology of teaching the Christian Scriptures, and this method of teaching the whole English Bible was becoming a new emphasis in certain important theological schools in the USA.³¹

What was McNicol's goal in his emphasis on teaching the entire English Bible? It was to give the students not only a thorough knowledge of its contents but also to let the Bible make its own impact upon their life and thought. This was Rhode's third implication of giving the Bible the central and controlling place at TBC. McNicol testified of the two effects that their method of training had borne in the lives of their students. The first was the increasing awareness of the character of God upon the minds of the students. As the progressive revelation of God in the Scriptures was followed in their

²⁹ J. B. Rhodes, "The Bible in the College," *TBC Recorder*, 48.4 (December 1942): 3. This method of approach grew out of McNicol's own experience at Knox College. See: "17th Class of '36 Letter" during the Jubilee Celebrations (1944) found in the Archives-OBC/OTS File Box-Biography-McNicol at Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, ON.

³⁰ John McNicol, *Thinking Through The Bible*, (Toronto, ON: The Upper Canada Tract and Book Society, 1944) Vol. 1, 3.

³¹ J. B. Rhodes, "The Bible in the College," *TBC Recorder*, 48.4 (December 1942): 3. He did not name these certain important American schools.

systematic way, the students came to realize “the profound significance of God’s redeeming purpose for the world.”³² The second effect was found within the personalities of the students. McNicol likened the effect to the opening of a flower to the sun. As each student responded to the revelation of God in His Word, “He is being truly educated . . . drawn out in the true exercise of his own God-given qualities and endowments.”³³ Within the lives of the students Word and Spirit were at work as an indivisible unit. For one to grow in his or her appreciation of God’s purpose of redemption (worship) and to develop in the exercise of their God-given qualities (ministry) is surely a true manifestation of the essential realities of NT Christianity. McNicol’s experiential theology of Word and Spirit shaped the goals of TBC’s educational practice.³⁴

However, to make this twofold impact upon the students “the Scriptures are studied not theoretically but practically, not critically but devotionally.”³⁵ McNicol was not ignorant of critical questions and he dealt with them only so far as was necessary to clear the ground so that the Bible was allowed to speak for itself.³⁶ Consistently, his aim in teaching the Bible for over forty years “has been to enter the inner shrine of the Scriptures and discover the spiritual world in the Bible, the world that makes it the Word of God.”³⁷ That is why his approach to teaching the Bible was exegetical and devotional. By devotional, McNicol, it appears, meant that the study of the Bible in the classroom was designed to move the student to a great devotion or love for the Lord in contrast to gaining merely a greater intellectual knowledge of the contents of the Bible. Such an approach implied that McNicol believed a critical approach was somewhat antagonistic to the Bible as divine revelation and therefore could not expose the students to the direct influence of the Bible. In the critical approach the impact left on the students would be that of the critics’ subjective opinions and not the direct influence of the Bible itself.

McNicol believed the Scriptures, as they were written, were recorded by men inspired of God. He also believed that, “In these Scriptures . . . His Spirit now speaks, and through them He makes known His mind and will to

³² John McNicol, “The Principal’s Annual Report,” *TBC Recorder*, 34.3 (June 1928):

5.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ John McNicol, The Principal’s Annual Report, *TBC Recorder*, 37.3 (June 1931): 7 made this comment about the testimonies students leave in evaluation of their studies at TBC. “In most cases the students have come to discover by their third year that the Bible College is attempting to set forth the pure Christianity of the New Testament in its essential reality, transcending all denominational distinctives and emphasizing no school of thought.”

³⁵ J. B. Rhodes, “The Bible in the College,” *TBC Recorder*, 48.4 (December 1942):

3.

³⁶ John McNicol, *Thinking Through The Bible*, (Toronto, ON: The Upper Canada Tract and Book Society, 1944) Vol. 1, v and 1.

³⁷ Ibid., v.

us.”³⁸ The conviction the Bible was the living Word of God shaped his own attitude in studying the Bible. He explained what he required of himself and his students,

It becomes us . . . to read the Bible through with reverent and earnest attention, that we may know its contents and understand its spirit . . . A reverent and earnest approach means that we bring to bear upon it, all the active powers of our minds and all the light we have, and that we summon our hearts to respond in faith to the truth which it reveals to us.³⁹

McNicol’s choice of words such as “reverent, earnest, mind, heart” reveals a very experiential focus in his approach. He wanted his students to know and experience the power of the Scriptures in their own lives. He wanted them to enter the inner shrine of the Scriptures and discover the spiritual world in the Bible that makes it the Word of God,⁴⁰ for he knew that in so doing their lives would be transformed.

This was Paul Burns’ experience at TBC. He explained how his attitude towards the Bible changed under McNicol’s teaching.

It was then that I began to see in it a world of spiritual reality. I saw that there was more than chapters, verses, dates and facts. Here was a great spiritual world opening before me day by day into which I was called to enter, and in which I was challenged to live. The Bible, then, for the first time became a living message to me, revealing God’s will for my life and thus shaping my thinking, forming my character and guiding my conduct.⁴¹

There were four notable features about McNicol’s method of teaching the Bible. First, he regarded the Bible as the revelation of God to man. It was not a religious book created by humans but God’s revelation of Himself to His creatures. It was the Word of God in human language. McNicol embraced the Bible as the infallible and authoritative word from God. Second, he wanted his students to be exposed in a systematic way to the entire Scriptures as a unit allowing the Bible to interpret itself to the faithful student. The Old Testament would be interpreted in light of the New; and the New Testament would be understood in light of the Old. Therefore, the entire Bible was viewed as the Christian Scriptures. Third, he taught the Bible canonically. The progress of God’s revelation was unveiled through the reading and

³⁸ Ibid., 1.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ John McNicol, *Thinking Through The Bible*, (Toronto, ON: The Upper Canada Tract and Book Society, 1944) Vol. 1, v and 1.

⁴¹ Paul Burns, “Graduation Testimonies, April 1946,” *TBC Recorder*, 52.2 (June 1946): 4.

exposition of each book as found within the Christian canon so that the voice of God was clearly heard.⁴² Fourth, the goal of all his teaching was deeply experiential and very spiritual. In the Bible, they encountered the living God speaking to them face to face. By this systematic exposure to the Bible as God's Word, the essential reality of Christianity blossomed within their soul through the work of the Spirit.⁴³ His method of teaching was rooted in his theology of Word and Spirit.

This does not imply that these spiritual effects within the lives of the students were automatic for as Rhodes demonstrated there was a fourth implication of the role that McNicol placed on the Bible. The rationale for giving the Bible the supreme place in its curriculum, said Rhodes, was McNicol's conviction that the Bible "becomes to us the living Word of the Eternal God as the Holy Spirit speaks to us in it and through it."⁴⁴ In McNicol's theology, the Bible is *THE Book* in that he believed in "the Divine Authority and Plenary Inspiration of the whole of the Old and New Testament Scriptures,"⁴⁵ yet he was not speaking simply of a Book. The Bible is the Word of God as the Spirit-breathed revelation of God, yet the Bible becomes the Word of God as the same Spirit speaks in and through it.⁴⁶ It was this understanding of the Bible that led McNicol to adopt the method of interpretation that he employed in handling the Scriptures. He explained,

We seek first to understand the plain and literal meaning of its language. Then, we discover that behind the literal sense of Scripture there is a spiritual and religious meaning. We find a new world in the Bible, the world from which God speaks. Thus the Scriptures establish their own authority for us. Through them we come to know the mind of God and learn to look upon our world as He would have us see it.⁴⁷

⁴² In this analysis, I am indebted to the observations that W. W. Bryden made at McNicol's retirement dinner, "Gala Occasion," *TBC Recorder* 52.4 (December 1946): 6-8.

⁴³ "Graduating Testimonies," *TBC Recorder*, 41.1 (March 1935): 2-3. See also McNicol's, "Principal's Report," *TBC Recorder*, 40.2 (June 1934): 3.

⁴⁴ J. B. Rhodes, "The Bible in the College," *TBC Recorder*, 48.4 (December 1942): 3.

⁴⁵ *Prospectus of the Toronto Bible College, 1947-48*, "Doctrinal Basis," 7, 987-019 FB-RO-CA-TBC-1 Archives OBC/OTS found at Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, ON.

⁴⁶ J. B. Rhodes, "The Bible in the College," *TBC Recorder*, 48.4 (December 1942): 3. This was Rhodes' explanation of TBC's (and presumably McNicol's) view of the Bible.

⁴⁷ John McNicol, *Thinking Through The Bible*, Vol.1, 2.

McNicol's hermeneutic is interesting for it unites the literal and spiritual. He used the full sweep of historical, critical, literary, and grammatical exegesis to understand the plain and literal meaning of the text to its original readers. Yet he was not afraid to go beyond the obvious literal meaning of the passage to enquire as to what was its spiritual or religious meaning. He did this because he believed that the Bible differs from all other books in being pervaded by the sense of another world, a real spiritual world, the world that God inhabits and from which He speaks to us.⁴⁸ In an address to the leaders of the China Inland Mission Council, McNicol made this observation, "Throughout the written Word walks the living Word; and when we see Christ in this way in all the Scriptures, the Bible becomes to us in very truth the living voice of the living God."⁴⁹

It appears to this researcher that McNicol believed the Bible is always the Word of God written, and yet it appears that he also believed the Bible becomes the Word of God through the dynamic internal work of the Spirit.⁵⁰ In his theology of Word and Spirit the objective and the subjective, the doctrinal and the dynamic, the essential and the existential were indivisibly united. In this approach to the Bible, Rhodes claimed that McNicol was just following the Reformers' theology of Word and Spirit.⁵¹

If this Reformational theology of Word and Spirit shaped McNicol's method of approaching and interpreting the Scriptures, what were the implications for the student? Essentially each student must approach the study of the Bible with, "A devout attitude toward God, and a readiness to do His will as we come to know it, are the essential conditions to recognizing the voice of God in the Bible."⁵² This was the same principle, said McNicol, that Jesus laid down as a test of His own divine authority. "If any willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself" (Jn 7:17).⁵³ The objective testimony of the written Word of God is confirmed by the internal witness of the Spirit of God in the hearts

⁴⁸ John McNicol, *The Bible's Philosophy of History*, (Toronto, ON: Published by the Board of Governors, 1944). 5.

⁴⁹ John McNicol, "The Living Word in the Written Word," *China's Millions*, 30.11 (November 1922): 165. This article came from an address that McNicol gave at the China Inland Mission Conference at Atlantic City, in August 1922 and subsequently printed in their magazine.

⁵⁰ I draw this conclusion for two reasons. In TBC's doctrinal statement regarding the Bible it affirmed that the Bible **is** the Word of God (inspired by God) and yet McNicol seems to hold also to a dynamic understanding that the Bible **becomes** the Word of God in the experience of believers as God speaks to them from the spiritual world that the Bible reveals and to which it bears testimony.

⁵¹ J. B. Rhodes, "The Bible in the College," *TBC Recorder*, 48.4 (December 1942): 3.

⁵² John McNicol, *Thinking Through The Bible*, (Toronto, ON: The Upper Canada Tract and Book Society, 1944) Vol. 1, 2. See Rhodes' article, "The Bible in the College," 3.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

of those who study it with reverent and submissive hearts. Word and Spirit unite in the faithful teaching of the Bible and in its practice in one's daily life.

One other implication to the central and controlling role played by the Bible at TBC was hinted at by Rhodes. By acknowledging the supremacy of the Bible within the curriculum of the college, Rhodes affirmed "in this way He who inspired all Scripture is accorded His rightful leadership in our life and service."⁵⁴ It was right for him to make this allusion to Christ for in McNicol's theology of Word and Spirit, Jesus was its central theme. This Christocentric emphasis in his understanding of the Bible was the focus of a devotional booklet that he wrote entitled, *The Key to the Bible*,

Christ, therefore is the key to all the Bible. He is its central Figure. It all speaks of Him Who is at once our Prophet, our Priest, and our King. We can hear his voice in the Old Testament if we read it in the Light of the New. The New Testament has a richer meaning when we read it as the completion and fulfillment of the Old. It is when we see Christ in this way in all the Scriptures, that the Bible becomes to us the living voice of the living God.⁵⁵

By teaching his students that Christ is the key to a right understanding of the Bible, McNicol was training them in two truths that were vital for their experience of the essential realities of NT Christianity. First, he was training them in a key principle of interpretation, which is to interpret the Old Testament in light of the New Testament. In the experience of the Christian the Old Testament is given its continuing validity and authority by Christ. Second, they were to listen for the voice of Christ in the entire Bible, for it is correctly understood that He speaks to us in the Old and New Testaments. It is as we see and hear Christ in all the Scriptures that the Bible becomes to us the living voice of the living God. One's experience of Christ's lordship in daily life is predicated upon hearing and obeying the voice of Christ in all the Scriptures. Christ and the Scriptures are united in a dynamic spiritual manner. This union of Christ and Scriptures is reflective of McNicol's theology of Word and Spirit. Christ is central to both the witness of the Word of God and of the Spirit of God in the corporate life of the church of God. By holding to the unity of Word and Spirit McNicol was able to focus the hearts of his students upon Christ and encourage them to enjoy fellowship with Him as He is revealed in the Bible. By this, his aim to see produced in their lives a

⁵⁴ J. B. Rhodes, "The Bible in the College," *TBC Recorder*, 48.4 (December 1942): 3.

⁵⁵ John McNicol, *The Key to the Bible*, (Toronto, ON: The Scripture Union, n.d.):15-16 found in the File Box Biography-McNicol-1, Archives of OBC/OTS at Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, ON. See also *Thinking Through The Bible*, Vol.1, IV, "The Unifying Theme of the Bible," 8-15.

corporate witness of the essential realities of Christianity would be realized. In this witness the life and the glory of Christ is central.

To silence the critics of the Bible college academic standards, McNicol pointed his critics to the major role of the Bible in TBC's curriculum.⁵⁶ Here the students were exposed in a daily manner to the Bible as God's Word. They were exposed to the Bible by biblically competent teachers who were academically well trained. The results of such exposure could be seen in their students who carried its message throughout the world.

The Corporate Leadership of the Holy Spirit at TBC

Two transcendent spiritual realities guided McNicol's leadership at TBC. These were God's Word in Christian education and God's Spirit in Christian fellowship. We now turn from the role the Bible played in their curriculum to the role the Spirit played within their fellowship. While these two transcendent realities can be studied separately, we need to reflect that in McNicol's theology and practice they were indivisible. While TBC's curriculum was Word-centred, it was not Word alone but rather Word and Spirit. Word and Spirit shaped the school's Christian educational focus.

On September 16, 1947, McNicol participated for the forty-fifth time in TBC's opening session. As principal-emeritus his job was to welcome a new class of students and outline the essential spiritual principles on which their methods of training operated. Though many changes had taken place at TBC over the years the tried and true methods of their training had not changed. They remained unchanged because their methods were, in McNicol's evaluation, the application of essential spiritual principles that were found in NT Christianity.⁵⁷ McNicol revealed to the new students that life at TBC was rooted in the Christian Scriptures and in Christian spirituality. Word and Spirit were at the heart of TBC's methods of training.

What were those spiritual principles that had been faithfully applied and practised over the years? That morning McNicol outlined three vital principles: 1) the Lordship of Jesus Christ, 2) the fellowship of the Spirit in the corporate life of the College, and 3) the personal freedom of each individual believer at the school.⁵⁸ In his theology these three principles were intertwined like a three-strand rope. They were united in the experience of the students who submitted to these spiritual disciplines. His comments revealed the intent of these principles of training; "We do not talk about them outside. We try to respond to them inside and carry the radiance outside.

⁵⁶ John McNicol, "Principal's Report," *TBC Recorder*, 26.2 & 3 (June 1920): 4-5. The criticisms were "(1) The Bible College course is weak. (2) The Bible College is too aggressive and (3) The Bible College is not aggressive enough."

⁵⁷ John McNicol, "The Principles of T.B.C. Training," *TBC Recorder*, 53.4 (December 1947): 1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1, 2, 5.

They are worked out during the life of the student.”⁵⁹ All three were embraced in order to make a spiritual impact in the life of each student. Shining out from the student body was this witness of the life of the risen and ascended Christ living in them. This was their witness to the presence of the Spirit’s life and leadership within the corporate life of the college.

The practice of the corporate leadership of the Spirit would only work if each student submitted to the lordship of Christ and was willing to practise self-discipline. This was underlined by Witmer’s research of Bible colleges in America. Writing four years after McNicol’s death, Witmer describes this distinctive spiritual principle at TBC.

A feature of Toronto’s program is the emphasis given to the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit demanding obedience to the lordship of Christ in the exercise of self-discipline. Reliance is placed on this principle rather than upon rules to regulate the life of the college.⁶⁰

Witmer correctly linked the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit with the demand for obedience to Christ’s lordship and to the exercise of self-discipline as the one regulative principle of the entire corporate life at TBC. Keeping in step with the Spirit was how the student life of TBC was regulated, not by a multiplicity of rules in a student handbook. This regulative principle was the practical outworking of McNicol’s theology of Word and Spirit. This is seen from what McNicol sought to accomplish by his policy of the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit.

As noted in our examination of the role of the Bible at TBC, McNicol’s aim was to see within his students the development of a reverent and devout faith that was shaped by the otherworldly reality that is found in the Christian Scriptures. We observe this same experiential and otherworldly focus flowing from his understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit within the individual and corporate life of God’s people. His reasons for honouring the presence of the Spirit at TBC were both practical and theological.

First, it was instituted as the true principle of Christian unity in a school that was interdenominational by design. In 1919, McNicol reviewed the importance of the school to the cause of Christ in Canada after twenty-five years in existence. Besides giving “the Bible its true place as the vitalizing centre in the scheme of Christian education,” he also wrote, “It emphasizes the presence and leadership of the Holy Spirit as the true

⁵⁹ Bert Lane, “College Opening, September 17, 1947,” File Box Biography McNicol, Archives of OBC/OTS at Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, ON.

⁶⁰ S. A. Witmer, *The Bible College Story: Education With Dimension* (Manhasset, N.Y.: Channel Press Inc., 1962), 88. See also McNicol’s “Principal’s Report,” *TBC Recorder* 38.2 (June 1938): 5.

principle of Christian unity.”⁶¹ McNicol faced the challenge of promoting Christian unity without disparaging the students’ loyalty to their own denomination. When controversy between modernism and fundamentalism erupted, “The College . . . was being criticized in some quarters because of its interdenominational character. It was charged that our classes were drawing young people away from their own churches.”⁶² McNicol initiated this policy of the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit in order to correct and clarify the students’ ideas about the church (ecclesiology), but he had a very spiritual and practical aim (the unity of the Spirit). By submitting to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, McNicol claimed their students came to “know that they can be truly loyal to their own particular denomination, and at the same time recognize and honour the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in all other parts of the Christian church, and in all other members of the body of Christ.”⁶³ At his retirement dinner McNicol underscored this rationale behind their policy at TBC.

We began to develop a system of training that would emphasize the one essential thing behind all our differences that is common to all the churches – the presence of the Holy Spirit in the corporate life of the Church. Wherever the Church of Christ is there is something given from above. That is the secret of the ecumenical or universal church.⁶⁴

In McNicol’s theology the one essential thing that makes churches of every denomination true churches of Jesus Christ was the presence of the Spirit.⁶⁵ Stackhouse underlines the significance of McNicol’s views.

These are not the words of the stereotypical fundamentalist who certainly would emphasize doctrinal rectitude above all in discerning the authenticity of a church. They are, to be sure, the words of a theologian who did indeed prize orthodoxy and resisted

⁶¹ John McNicol, “Principal’s Report,” *TBC Recorder*, 25.3 (June 1919): 4.

⁶² John McNicol, “Those Formative Years,” (Address by Dr. John McNicol during Founders’ Day, November 8, 1949 during “Know Your College Week”) *TBC Recorder*, 55.4 (December 1949): 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 4. There were over 20 denominations represented within the student body at this time.

⁶⁴ “Gala Occasion,” *TBC Recorder*, 52.4 (December 1946): 13-15.

⁶⁵ John McNicol, “Those Formative Years,” *TBC Recorder*, 55.5 (December 1949): 3. He wrote, “No Church has a monopoly of Divine grace, and that every denomination bears witness to some special aspect of the whole truth of God. Therefore, each of us should be loyal to his own church, and should at the same time try to cultivate a sympathetic understanding of other churches. What makes any church a true church is not the form of its organization or method of its worship or even the creed it professes to believe, but something that is given to it from above, the presence of the Holy Spirit in its midst.”

what he called modernism, and of a man who did prefer Presbyterian polity, worship, and creed to the point that he would not join the United Church. But these are also the convictions of an evangelical whose warm heart testified to the irreducible criterion for discerning the true church, the presence of the Holy Spirit of God.⁶⁶

McNicol's aim in embracing the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit at TBC was to promote an ecumenical unity that was vitally connected to Christian spirituality. McNicol believed that as the students recognized the presence of the Holy Spirit in their corporate life and honoured his presence within their fellowship the unity of the Spirit among believers of all different denominations would become a reality.

In his desire for this corporate unity we witness McNicol's unified theology of Word and Spirit. As the students studied the Bible they were introduced to the unseen world in which the Spirit operates. To live under the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit is to live according to the values of this unseen world to which Word and Spirit bear witness. To practise the corporate leadership of the Spirit in the student body was to live under the rule and reign of Jesus, into whose kingdom they had been translated by the grace of God. Since the Word urges all believers to make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, then as the Holy Spirit controlled the corporate life of TBC's students, unity in the Spirit would be experienced and manifested within their fellowship. It was unity of the Spirit, but not the Spirit without the Word. Spirit and Word were united in producing harmony among this multi-denominational student body.

A second practical purpose, which was closely related to this ecumenical unity, lay behind McNicol's policy of the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit. It was his desire to create among the students a radiant fellowship of love and harmony. The unity of the Spirit was not just a belief that TBC held to as an evangelical institution. It was a spiritual principle that worked itself out internally in the entire life and practices of the college. McNicol explained how it worked.

This New Testament principle of the unity of the Spirit in Christian fellowship carries with it the leadership of the Spirit in any corporate group in which His presence dwells. We put this principle into our system of training and in our methods of administration. Nothing is done among us by the vote of a majority. Everything we have to deal with and decide upon is considered in a common fellowship of thought and prayer until we arrive at unanimity about it. We believe that all the members of a Christian

⁶⁶John Stackhouse Jr., *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 61.

group seeking the mind of the Lord about the same matter will be led to one accord if each member of the group, suppressing all self-interest, desires the will of the Lord done. It is the same Spirit who dwells in each of them, and He can lead them all to have one mind if they truly wait upon His leading.⁶⁷

The secret of harmony among the students and the unanimity in the administration of the college was submission to the Spirit as a corporate body. The corporate leadership of the Spirit was an essential part of both their system of training (educational, experiential, and practical) and methods of administration (decision-making). McNicol described what was expected of each student and staff member at TBC.

We believed that if each of us made a personal surrender to the Lordship of Christ and was not moved by any selfish interest, then the same Holy Spirit who dwells in each of us would lead us finally to be of one mind. This is the real secret of spiritual unanimity . . . It is the recognition of this transcendent fact that has created the radiant atmosphere that characterizes TBC fellowship.⁶⁸

The radiant atmosphere at TBC was otherworldly in the sense that it was vitally connected to the transcendent reality of the Spirit's life and leadership within and among them. It was to this radiant atmosphere that Rhodes pointed when he detailed the unique character of their TBC heritage. He noted the convictions that TBC held in common with other schools but asked, "In what way is life at TBC unique, and what is it that gives to our testimony its distinctive witness?" He elaborated on TBC's uniqueness from an on-campus experience with a missionary leader.

There came to the College one morning a missionary of a well-known society, who was not one of our graduates . . . He explained why he had sought out this place. "While I was out on the field . . . I came into contact several times with TBC graduates. I noticed in them and in their fellowship something different. When I spoke to them about it they simply said; 'O, it's just the spirit of TBC.' There seemed to be something about those TBC folk that was distinctive. And I determined to find out the secret myself."⁶⁹

What was this 'spirit' that others noticed among TBC's students even after they had graduated and were serving on foreign fields? Rhodes noted

⁶⁷John McNicol, "The Principles of T.B.C. Training," *TBC Recorder*, 53.4 (December 1947): 4.

⁶⁸John McNicol, "Those Formative Years," *TBC Recorder*, 55.4 (December 1949): 3.

⁶⁹J. B. Rhodes, "Our TBC Heritage," (Address delivered at the Annual Alumni Conference at opening of current session) *TBC Recorder*, 53.1 (March 1947): 2-3.

that it was not a spirit that they created by their own enthusiasm or camaraderie. It was not developed by their similar interests and aims as young people. It was the presence of the Holy Spirit at work in their midst. Honouring and following the Spirit's leading at the school was the result of McNicol's resolve. He determined that as far as it lay within their power that they would provide the conditions for the college to recognise and honour the leadership of the Holy Spirit within all facets of the school's activities. That was how TBC's unique fellowship was created and it was characterized by a joyous sense of freedom and a willingness to serve others in the spirit of Christian love.⁷⁰

What others witnessed among its graduates was what McNicol had discerned from the early church in the Book of Acts. That was how one magazine described the College's witness.⁷¹ The author was both a graduate and a faculty member so his observations were from firsthand experience. Burns explained that McNicol not only held to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in individual believers but also to the reality that the Spirit reveals His will, and works through a corporate group. This was the method of the early church but it had been ignored or forgotten through the centuries and his article underlined the practical importance of this spiritual principle for the students at TBC.

It teaches young people to recognize the leadership of the Spirit during their years of their training in their group life, so that when they reach the foreign field, for example, and are placed in isolated stations, without colleagues for support, or when working co-operatively with other missionaries, they are able to recognize God's will for themselves and for the group.⁷²

It is interesting to note that the leadership of the Holy Spirit among a corporate group was a spiritual reality in which the students of TBC were trained. The purpose of their training was very practical. It equipped them to serve Christ effectively in isolated situations or with other believers. Here was spirituality that was rooted to the Word of God and lived out in step with the Spirit of God. McNicol's theology of Word and Spirit was aimed at producing this vital and practical Christian spirituality among its students.

The decision to follow the principle of the Spirit's leadership at the college was not only based on the experience of the early church but upon historic factors such as the modernist-fundamentalist controversy. McNicol

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Dixon A. Burns, "The Corporate Leadership of the Holy Spirit, Witness of the Toronto Bible College," *The Christian*, June 5, 1947, n.p., File Box History TBC Archives-OBC/OTS as found in the Library of Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, ON.

⁷² Ibid.

believed that by practising the corporate leadership of the Spirit the school would become an illustration of what was the essential nature of NT Christianity.⁷³ In this way they could overcome “the blighting breath of controversy” by equipping their students to enter into a conscious living contact with eternal realities so they could carry this consciousness into their work in the world.⁷⁴

At the heart of TBC’s methods of training was this passion that the college must not only bear witness of the essential realities of NT Christianity, but that their students should import this spiritual reality among the churches and mission fields to which they had been called to work. McNicol’s theology of the Holy Spirit within a corporate group was not only biblical but also experiential and practical in its impact among others. His decision not to engage in controversy was not due to fear or ignorance but to his passion for the spiritual health of God’s people. In 1930, McNicol wrote about the aims of the college and he reinforced this policy of freedom from any controversy in order to pursue a more positive and constructive course at TBC.

The purpose of the College as stated in the constitution is, “to train men and women for Christian work at home and abroad in the knowledge and practical use of the English Bible on an interdenominational basis.” This is a positive and constructive work. We refuse to turn aside from it to take part in any controversy or to share in any movement for emphasizing special aspects of Christian truth. We are seeking rather to magnify the living verities of the Christian faith and to illustrate the essential reality of pure Christianity in such a way that the spirit of controversy dies away and special emphases find no special place. We believe that we can best serve the cause of Christ in the world by going on with our own constructive work in this way.⁷⁵

Flowing from McNicol’s commitment to the corporate leadership of the Spirit was also the principle of self-government. He explained what it was, how it operated, and what the results were within the life of the college.

A system of student self-government was introduced and carefully fostered . . . and they, too, were trained to take no step without

⁷³ John McNicol, “The Principal’s Annual Statement,” *TBC Recorder*, 47.2 (June 1941): 7.

⁷⁴ John McNicol, “The Principal’s Annual Report,” *TBC Recorder*, 30.3 (June 1924): 5.

⁷⁵ John McNicol, “Principal’s Annual Report,” *TBC Recorder*, 36.3 (June 1930): 7. McNicol could boast in 1940, “It is gratifying to know that the impression which the students make by their corporate witness outside the College is that of genuine, vital Christianity.” The Principal’s Report,” *TBC Recorder*, 46.2 (June 1940): 6.

waiting upon the Lord to seek His mind and will. Under this system the students found themselves free for the development of their own personalities and for the expression of their own Christian experience. This was manifested in a number of different ways. One of the results was a new impetus given to the cultivation of vocal music and the interpretation of Christian song.

The students responded splendidly to this system of training and rose nobly to the responsibilities placed upon them . . . A spirit of Christian fellowship developed that was free from anything artificial. It was natural, spontaneous, and radiant, and the life of the College began to overflow with joy and gladness. It was the unrestrained expression of the Spirit of God in the corporate life of the Christian group, where each member was surrendered to the will of God.⁷⁶

Freedom to develop in their own personalities and experience reminds one of the early church. The Spirit was free not only to produce a spirit of unanimity among the student cabinet, a radiant fellowship among the students, but also to cultivate their gifts of singing and making melody unto the Lord. By honouring the presence of the Spirit, TBC was bearing a corporate witness of the essential realities of NT Christianity to a Canadian Christian community that was suffering destructive spiritual assaults from the modernism and fundamentalism controversy.⁷⁷

Closely aligned with the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit and student self-government was the spiritual principle of self-discipline. The students were trained to die to self so they might experience the victory that is in Christ. This was an attitude that TBC expected of each of its students for the corporate leadership of the Spirit could be grieved by those who asserted their own agenda at the college. The school could declare that, “As this system has been developed through the years it has produced the radiant joy that marks the witness of the Toronto Bible College student body, and pervades the peculiar impact which the College makes upon the Christian community.”⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ John McNicol, “The Principal’s Annual Report,” *TBC Recorder*, 30, 3, (June 1924): 5; “Principal’s Annual Report,” *TBC Recorder*, 36, 3, (June 1930): 7; “Founders Day Address October 28, 1947: A Synopsis of Dr McNicol’s Address on the Beginnings of the Bible College,” *TBC Recorder*, 54, 3, (September 1948): 2-3.

⁷⁸ *Calendar of the Toronto Bible College, 1947-48*, 6, 987-019 File Box-Registrar’s Office-Calendar-TBC-1 Archives – OBC/OTS at Tyndale University College & Seminary Toronto, ON. See also, “Three Outstanding Principles at TBC,” *TBC Recorder*, 55, 2 (June 1949): 8 and *Calendar -1951-52*, n.p.

As mentioned many times, the principle of the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit came from McNicol's study of the primitive church as seen in the NT, particularly the book of Acts. Yet, that was not the complete story. Indeed, did the study of the New Testament precipitate the introduction of this spiritual principle? Or did it initially come from another source? During the jubilee celebrations of 1944, the secretary of the class of 1936 recorded McNicol's historical review of the inner life of the college. He briefly shared that after the deaths of Harris and Stewart and his reappointment as principal, he "had a new direction of the inner working of the College and two more principles were added."⁷⁹ Those two new principles were the English Bible, which was made the basis and centre of the entire curriculum, and "the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit, or the leadership of the Holy Spirit in a corporate Christian group."⁸⁰ McNicol confessed how he was introduced to the idea of the corporate leadership of the Spirit. "I got that from my association with the China Inland Mission in my student days. There is a great deal of the CIM spirit in the College. This was the principle of the New Testament and this principle was accepted by the Board and the Staff."⁸¹

Whether his experience with CIM drove him to look at the corporate leadership of the Spirit in light of the New Testament (which I suspect), or whether his study of life in the early church was illustrated and confirmed by the spirit he found within CIM is a debatable point. However, it does demonstrate that other evangelicals in Canada were implementing the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit as a spiritual principle within their organizations. What makes McNicol's implementation of his policy unique was that he sought to apply it uniformly to every aspect of TBC's life as the consistent outworking of his practical theology of Word and Spirit. What were the results of the implementation of this spiritual principle within the inner life of TBC and its witness within Canada?

Vibrant Christian spirituality in the lives of his students was the fruit as seen by the attention given to the devotional life of the college and the spiritual training of its students.⁸² Such a focus made much of corporate prayer among the students and staff.

Such exuberance for prayer reflected the fullness of the Holy Spirit.⁸³ They sought His leadership regarding decisions of the cabinet. They called

⁷⁹ "From 17th Class of 36 Letter-Jubilee Celebrations," June 1944- File Box Biography McNicol, Archives-OBC/OTS at Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, ON. See also, John McNicol, "Impressions of the China Inland Mission," *China Millions*, 46.9 (September 1938): 137.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² John McNicol, "Principal's Report," *TBC Recorder*, 37, 3, (June 1931): 6.

⁸³ "Revival in the College," *TBC Recorder* 38 (Dec.1932): 2-3; Douglas C. Percy, "God Did Something Different!" *TBC Recorder* 63 (March 1957): 6-7; Martin O. Wedge, "The Missionary Conference That Became a Revival," *TBC Recorder* 71 (March 1965): 3; *Toronto Bible College Calendar - 1950-51*, 32 - File Box

upon the Spirit to anoint their lives and ministries with His power. Corporate prayer was the divine means by which they secured the favour and help of God's Spirit on behalf of many serving in mission fields at home and abroad. Through prayer a felt unity and atmosphere of love pervaded their relationships. This was the fruit of their submission to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and a vital witness of the realities of Christianity as revealed in the early church.

A third consequence of McNicol's adherence to the principle of the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit at TBC was seen in his administration. All decisions of the board of governors, staff, faculty, and student cabinet were made only after reaching unanimity under the Spirit's leadership.⁸⁴

The principle of the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit introduces us to McNicol's reactions to Pentecostalism that was emerging within Canada. This is the connection that historian Ian Rennie makes:

In an era when, through not knowing how to handle the new phenomenon of Pentecostalism, some evangelicals were downplaying their emphasis upon the Spirit, McNicol proceeded quietly and consistently to emphasize the indispensable ministry of the Giver of Life. This was uniquely evident in his stress upon what has been called the Corporate Leadership of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁵

It is true, that McNicol embraced the reality of the Spirit's presence in the church of Christ, but did he appreciate the emphasis that came from Pentecostalism? The 1930 *Recorder's* lead article celebrated the 1900th anniversary of the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost and expressed the hope that people would experience a deeper appreciation of the transcendent fact that the Spirit resides in the church. Attention was drawn to the spate of tracts and books that had been written about the Holy Spirit, especially the baptism of the Spirit. No negative word was mentioned regarding this emphasis, yet balance was sought by reminding the readers that the gift of the Spirit was a corporate as well as an individual gift. The writer expressed TBC's opinion

Registrar's Office, Calendars, TBC-Box 1, Archives at Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, ON. John McNicol, "The Soul of the Toronto Bible College," *TBC Recorder* 49 (March 1943): 1-2. as cited by John Stackhouse Jr., *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, 58.

⁸⁴ Ian Rennie, "Our 90th Year," *Evangelical Recorder*, 90.1 (Spring 1984): 9 summed up this policy in these words, "Under this emphasis, all decisions among students, faculty, and Board, were arrived at by waiting upon God until unity in the Spirit was arrived at. This radical polity of consensus sought to develop both freedom and responsibility in the Spirit." *Minutes of the Board of Governors*, February 1, 1949 – File Box #1-Board of Governors-OBC/OTS Archives at Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, ON.

⁸⁵ Ian Rennie, "Our 90th Year," *Evangelical Recorder*, 90.1 (Spring 1984): 9.

“that one of the deepest needs of the Church today is to recover the leadership of the Holy Spirit and most of her problems would be resolved if congregations and Christian organizations were trained to recognize for themselves the unseen and silent Leader in their midst.”⁸⁶

Word and Spirit was the orienting principle of McNicol’s theology. However, it is crucial to note that his theology was both Christocentric in its focus and experiential in its aim. To enjoy fellowship with the ascended Jesus through the Spirit and the Spirit’s witness of Jesus as revealed in the Word is at the heart of essential NT Christianity.

At McNicol’s death, Dr J. Hunter, editor of the *Evangelical Christian* made these summary comments of McNicol’s life at TBC. “If there is one outstanding spiritual factor in his life it was his emphasis on and dependence upon the Holy Spirit.”⁸⁷ Within his own life, at the heart of his educational philosophy and practices at TBC was his theology of Word and Spirit; not Word alone or Spirit only, but Word and Spirit together.

The presence and power of the Holy Spirit was seen at TBC within the classrooms where His divine-human Word was held as the central and regulating centre of the entire curriculum. The best way to summarize McNicol’s spiritual policies of Word and Spirit is found in the “Class Valedictory” of 1939. This student reviewed his or her time at TBC in these words,

One of the greatest privileges afforded us in this place has been the opportunity of being instructed in every part of the Bible, with recognition that it is the written Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, Who also interprets it in truth. How our hearts have rejoiced to find that the Scriptures which we search, testify of Christ, Who is the Living Word!

In our daily worship and intercession together we have been conscious of the reality that we are one in Christ because we have

⁸⁶ Editorial, “The Bible College Witness to the Presence of the Spirit,” *TBC Recorder*, 36.2 (March 1930): 1-2. While no writer was identified, the sentiments expressed were in agreement with McNicol’s views.

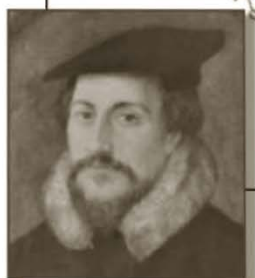
⁸⁷ J. H. Hunter, Editor, “The March of Events, As Seen by the Editors,” Dr John McNicol- Obituary Notice - October 1956, 459-460, File Box Biography-McNicol in the Archives of OBC/OTS at Tyndale University College and Seminary, Toronto, ON. OBC/OTS. In 1952 at McNicol’s 50th anniversary he wrote, “There is one factor of prime importance in connection with the work of the College that must be mentioned which has we believe contributed more than other to the success the institution has attained, and that is the place that Dr. McNicol has always given to the primacy of the Holy Spirit in all that pertained to the administration of the institution.”

been born from above, and that our unity is sustained by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of us all.⁸⁸

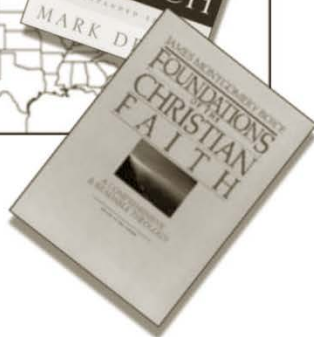
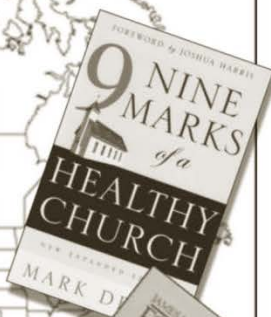
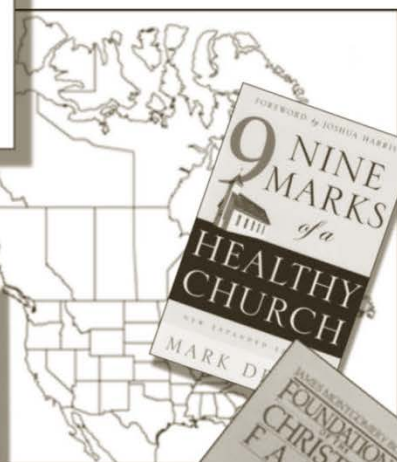
Miedema favourably quotes an unnamed scholar who asserted that, “McNicol’s gift was not theology but spirituality.”⁸⁹ It is true that McNicol was passionately concerned about spirituality, nevertheless the argument of this thesis is that he was an excellent theologian and his passion for Christian spirituality grew out of his theology of Word and Spirit.

⁸⁸ Anonymous, “Class Valedictory,” *The Gateway*, 1939, 32, File Box History TBC-1-Archives of OBC/OTS at Tyndale University College and Seminary, Toronto, ON.

⁸⁹ G. R. Miedema, s.v, “McNicol, John,” *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals*, Timothy Larsen, David Bebbington, and Mark A. Noll, eds., (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 400.



Calvin
1509-2009



Reformed Identity and *Semper Reformanda* as Applied to Discussions on Ecclesiology in North America*

Jack C. Whytock

** This paper was given by invitation at an international conference, “Reformed Identity in the World Today”, in January, 2009, in Potchefstroom, South Africa. The conference was held following the meeting of the Synod of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA) and was part of that denomination’s 150th anniversary celebrations.*

Introduction

It is an honour to speak briefly on an aspect of Reformed identity as it relates to North America. I thank the organizing committee of this conference for the privilege of speaking and also commend them for their vision in organizing this event.

The theme I have selected is one of the critical aspects of Reformed identity, namely *semper reformanda*, or always reforming. Some may view this as an overworked theme, but I would contend that it is at the heart of much of what constitutes Reformed doctrinal and spiritual identity. I am going to take this theme of *semper reformanda*, then apply it to ecclesiology or the doctrine of the church, and finally give some examples of how it is being both discussed and reinterpreted in many circles in North America. I propose three chief points to my paper:

- 1) Reformed Identity and *Semper Reformanda*,
- 2) *Semper Reformanda* and Ecclesiology, and
- 3) Three Examples from North America of Discussions on Ecclesiology and the Marks of the Church.

1. Reformed Identity and *Semper Reformanda*

As Reformed Christian believers we stand by the great *sola* of Scripture alone. We thus affirm that we have a “fixed standard”, the Word of God, the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, by which all things are to be measured and judged in each generation. This applied in the generation of the Reformers just as it does today, and we continue to stand upon the conviction that “all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17, NIV). As Kirk

Wellum recently wrote, “We do not formulate our doctrines based on the shifting sands of public opinion . . .” and, “The scriptures, then, are the standard or touchstone against which we measure our ideas and the ideas of others.”¹

Therefore, the reality is that in each generation there is a need for ongoing reformation in order to bring all thoughts and practices under the scrutiny and the authority of the Word of God. Wellum sees a logical outworking of the concept *semper reformanda* in Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 13:12 (NIV), “Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” We are finite creatures, and we do not see all things as we ought. Thus, there is ever a need for reformation by the fixed standard of the Word of God.²

At the time of the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church had the saying *semper idem*, or in English, “always the same”. This goes so contrary to the complete tenor of the whole of the Scriptures, as God’s people were and always are in need of reformation. The Reformed expression in full was “*ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei*” or in English, “the church reformed and always reforming according to the Word of God”, which is generally shortened to, *semper reformanda*, or “always reforming”. I take great encouragement that this Reformed expression is in accord with the Scriptures and is central to our Reformed identity. It is not my purpose here to now develop a full biblical theology of this conviction.

However, before proceeding we must deal briefly with the issue of attitude as it relates to *semper reformanda*. As Reformed Christians, we should cultivate an attitude of humility mixed with our boldness of confession of faith.³ Often our history asserts our boldness to state the truth and confess the truth as founded upon the Word of God, yet perhaps our tradition has not always cultivated the attitude of humility in the practice of *semper reformanda*. Are we afraid of giving the impression of weakness? Confession of Reformed truth must never ignore the virtue of the attitude of humility. As Wellum states so well:

We should be thankful for what God has revealed and yet at the same time be ready to learn and grow in our understanding of His truth, if that is what the Bible teaches. We have not arrived, nor do we understand everything. God continues to instruct His people and through the Holy Spirit, He shows us how to apply His Word to our situation today.⁴

¹ Kirk Wellum, “Semper Reformanda”, *The Gospel Witness*, November 2008, 4.

² Wellum, 4-5.

³ I concur with Wellum that attitude is important.

⁴ Wellum, 5.

In conclusion then on my first point, our Reformed identity affirms the fixed standard of Scripture alone. Our Reformed identity affirms that we must apply it to today under the leading of the Holy Spirit in ongoing reformation, because we desire to deepen our understanding, nuance how we understand or practice our faith on an issue or matter, and address aspects of the truth today. *Semper reformanda* calls for an attitude of humility, and it should not fall into “change for the sake of change”⁵ but build upon the strength of our Reformed heritage.

2. *Semper Reformanda* and Ecclesiology

Now I want to take this critical aspect of our Reformed identity, *semper reformanda*, and discuss it as it relates to the doctrine of the church within our Reformed heritage. I cannot touch on all aspects of ecclesiology but will be very focused. I have selected the aspect of the “marks of the church”. This aspect has been taken up by almost all strands of Reformed theologians and is found in many of the Reformed confessional statements.

Please indulge me for a moment as I give some historical sketches on the marks. As the Reformed reformers emerged in the sixteenth century, they basically affirmed the Lutheran, (or should I say Martin Luther’s) perspective of the two marks, namely the gospel as central from the Word of God and the use of the two sacraments.⁶ This teaching underwent certain refinements whereby Calvin’s two marks were more cogently expressed as preaching and hearing the Word of God, thus implying the formation of a “community” (to draw upon Edmund Clowney’s phraseology),⁷ and the right use of the two sacraments. Technically, Calvin did not assert the third mark as discipline, even though his two marks come close to affirming such. Calvin’s understanding of the marks of the church continues to intrigue us. In the recent and first English translation of Calvin’s sermons on Acts (2008), Calvin makes this statement in the sermon on “The Three Marks of the

⁵ A. T. B. McGowan recently wrote: “At one end of the theological spectrum, some have invoked *semper reformanda* in order to justify abandoning the core of Reformation theology and departing from received orthodoxy. At the other end of the spectrum, some have forgotten about *semper reformanda* in their progress towards a rigid confessionalism, giving the impression that the final codification of truth has already taken place and that there is no further need for reformation. Between these two extremes, there is a vital task to be performed by the church in every generation; namely, to subject its beliefs and practices to the renewed scrutiny of Holy Scripture” See A. T. B. McGowan, introduction to *Always Reforming*, ed. A.T.B. McGowan (Leicester/Wheaton: IVP, 2006), 13.

⁶ For further discussion on the complexities surrounding the three marks, see my book, *Continental Calvinian Influences On the Scottish Reformation: The First Book of Discipline (1560)* (Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009).

⁷ Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church, Contours of Christian Theology*, gen. ed. Gerald Bray (Downers Grove: IVP, 1995), 103.

Church”: “By what he [Luke] tells us we know the three marks which constitute God’s church, namely, the proclamation of the word of God among us, the Lord’s Supper, and our communion together in true love.”⁸ The reality is that Calvin is much more complex than we have sometimes admitted. Some of the Reformed confessions clearly assert three marks; namely, the Scots Confession and the Belgic Confession. Yet other Reformed Confessions, such as the Westminster Confession of Faith, do not use the terminology “marks of the church”. Universally and historically the whole Reformed community of churches has retained an important place for discipline, although it has not been elevated universally as a distinctive mark. Yet all would affirm it as vital, important and descriptive of the well-being of healthy Christianity. I might also add that all would view such discipline as an essential aspect of what could be argued constitutes Reformed spirituality.

I now ask my rhetorical questions. Do the classical Reformed formulations of the two/three marks and language close to this say everything that is essential concerning not only where we find the true church but also where we find living, healthy Christian congregations? While none of us would want to “throw out” the matter of the implications behind the marks of the church, yet do we not also see that now is the time in our Reformed identity, *semper reformanda*, to humbly listen and discuss a fuller biblical ecclesiological formulation on healthy local ministries and denominations? We are often good at discussing our past, but we are not as good at looking at our present and humbly acknowledging that the outward appearance of the two marks or three marks can keep us from a proper biblical examination of the true health of our local congregations or denominations. Obviously, even a fuller formulation cannot prevent the tendency to reduce the marks to mere outward appearances, but perhaps such a formulation would set forth a deeper challenge to the heart. I am thinking here of the principle Jesus taught in Matthew 15:1-9.

Allow me to sketch some discussions which have taken place over the last twenty-five years on this aspect of Reformed ecclesiology and the “marks” as found in the United States and Canada in the Reformed and Presbyterian community of churches. I use the word “discussion” in a very loose sense here. As I survey the field, as I invite you to as well, I feel very convicted that so little has been said in Reformed ecclesiology concerning the marks of the church as they relate to a vital and healthy church life expressing itself in a holistic manner for the well-being of the community of the Lord.

⁸ John Calvin, *Sermons on the Acts of the Apostles: Chapters 1-7*, trans. Rob Roy McGregor, original Latin edition 1994 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2008), 58.

3. Three Examples From North America of Discussions on Ecclesiology and the Marks of the Church

I realize that I could have selected many other examples; but, for the sake of brevity and also for the purpose of surveying the 1980s, 1990s and into the twenty-first century, I have been highly selective.

Example Number One: *Dr. James Montgomery Boice, Foundations of the Christian Faith*

The late Dr. James Montgomery Boice was the pastor of the historic Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, and was an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in America. He authored *Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive and Readable Theology*, which appeared as three separate volumes in 1978, 1979 and 1981 respectively and finally as one complete, revised edition and volume in 1986.⁹ Boice openly stated that his text corresponded to the four books of Calvin's Institutes. In Boice's work, Book 1 is "The Sovereign God"; Book 2, "God the Redeemer"; Book 3, "Awakening to God"; and Book 4, "God and History".¹⁰ He went on to say,

. . . It is an attempt (a) to cover the same ground in highly readable language yet at the same time (b) to introduce themes which Calvin did not treat but which call for treatment today and (c) to seek to relate all doctrine to contemporary rather than ancient views and problems.¹¹

In Boice's Book 4, he deals with the church and the meaning of history and says, "[In] my discussion of the doctrine of the church, I have been helped immeasurably by others who have explored the nature of the church and its ministry in recent days – Ray C. Stedman, Gene A. Getz and Elton Trueblood. I have also been helped by older thinkers such as James Bannerman. . . ."¹²

In Book 4, Boice has a chapter entitled "The Marks of the Church". Here he lists six marks of the church based upon John 17. The six marks are: joy, holiness, truth, mission, unity and love. It does not appear that Boice is slavishly following Calvin or other Calvinian sixteenth century formulations. Yet, even if one were to argue that Boice is not using the word "marks" in the sixteenth century "classical" sense, one still cannot say that he is rejecting the past because of what he wrote as to who had helped him "immeasurably". As one reads through Boice, one could argue that his marks of holiness and

⁹ James M. Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive and Readable Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1986).

¹⁰ Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 7, 12.

¹¹ Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 12.

¹² Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 12.

truth do come close to the Calvinian formulations of the sixteenth century.¹³ However, his inclusion of the mark of mission arguably looks beyond Calvin to the concept of the healthy church. More will be said about this mark of mission in my concluding remarks. Boice's mark of unity appears to return to the ancient attributes of the church, but again it is not an organizational unity nor conformity but rather a spiritual unity.¹⁴ It is doubtful that Cyprian would agree with this.

Boice makes his most brilliant statements when he comes to his last mark of the church – "love":¹⁵

Subtract love from holiness. What do you find then? You find self-righteousness, the kind of self-contentment that characterized the Pharisees of Christ's day. . . . Take love from truth and you have bitter orthodoxy. . . . Take love from mission and you have imperialism, colonialism in ecclesiastical garb. Take love from unity and you soon have tyranny. Tyranny develops in a hierarchical church where there is no compassion for people or desire to involve them in the decision-making process.¹⁶

Discipline is not excluded by Boice, yet perhaps Boice is really formulating his marks of a "healthy" church. Boice's formulations are rooted in Scripture and use the classical language of Reformed theology, yet at the same time they are caste and shaped in a fuller ecclesiological framework.

Example Number Two: *The Christian Reformed Church of North America's 1995 working paper, "Rethinking Ministry: From Church-Shaped Missions to a Mission-Shaped Church"*

The Christian Reformed Church of North America's 1995 working paper "Rethinking Ministry: From Church-Shaped Missions to a Mission-Shaped Church" created much discussion in the 1990s. Regrettably, it has been eclipsed in many ways in recent years by other topics. If one reads the *Calvin Theological Seminary Journal* for the year following this working paper, one will read two fascinating papers. The first is by Craig van Gelder and Dirk Hart, "The Church Needs to Understand its Missionary Nature: A Response to John Bolt and Richard Muller". The second article is by John Bolt and Richard Muller, "For the Sake of the Church: A Response to Craig van Gelder and Dirk Hart". Of course, at the centre of this 1990s discussion in the Christian Reformed Church, and I must add not limited by any means to

¹³ Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 577-580.

¹⁴ Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 582-584.

¹⁵ With Boice's mark of love, the parallel to Bucer's mark of love for the church is echoed. See William S. Barker, "Marks of the Church", *The Presbyterian Journal* 40, no. 23 (1981): 1.

¹⁶ Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 584-585.

this one Reformed denomination, was the Reformed ecclesiological language of the three marks.¹⁷

Van Gelder and Hart posed questions about how we are to understand the three marks: “Do these define the nature of the church? Do these state all that the Bible presents as being the ministry of the church? Do these provide an adequate framework for understanding the organization and polity of the church?” They concluded with this comment: “A view of the church developed on the foundation of the three marks tends to function in a reductionistic manner. The point is made that although these marks are absolutely necessary, they are not sufficient to understand fully the church’s nature, ministry, and organization.”¹⁸

Writing on this topic has continued to come forth from these men and other authors associated with them. Some of this discussion can at times appear contradictory since “party lines” are often crossed. I think we must engage it more seriously and sort our way through. I found an article by Jonathan Leeman entitled, “What is the Missional Church?”¹⁹ This article is a helpful point of contact and contains some very fascinating conclusions. The wider evangelical constituency is also wrestling with ecclesiological issues and formulations. Evidence of this is seen in the new book edited by Mark Husbands and Daniel Trier entitled, *The Community of the Word: Toward an Evangelical Ecclesiology*.

The discussion I have selected from the 1990s takes me back to the beginning of my paper. We can remain entrenched in the confessionalism of our ecclesiological formulations, we can adopt a “change everything” approach, or we can take the way which will reflect our identity as a Reformed community, *semper reformanda*. Have we mined the Scriptures? Have we listed and considered what is being said within and without? Yes, we can ignore these things and assert our confessional identity. Yet we cannot ignore the common query that is emerging, whether from the 1980s and Boice or the 1990s onwards in the CRCNA: Is there now a need to express our ecclesiological formulations in a more full-orbed way concerning the spirituality and health or well-being of local congregations in terms additional to those of the “marks” in much of confessional Reformed ecclesiology? Can we ignore confessionally matters of the missional nature

¹⁷ Craig van Gelder and Dirk Hart, “The Church Needs to Understand its Missionary Nature: A Response to John Bolt and Richard Muller”, *Calvin Theological Journal* 31, no. 2 (1996): 504-519; and John Bolt and Richard Muller, “For the Sake of the Church: A Response to van Gelder and Hart”, *Calvin Theological Journal* 31, no. 2 (1996): 520-526.

¹⁸ Craig van Gelder and Dirk Hart, “The Church Needs to Understand its Missionary Nature”, 517-518.

¹⁹ Jonathan Leeman, “What in the World is the Missional Church?”, http://www.9marks.org/partner/Article_Display_Page/0,,PTID314526_CHID598014_CHID2265778,00.html (assessed Jan.23, 2009).

of the church, the place of the laity, etc.? Perhaps this is precisely where much of our division is occurring, and in part this is tied to our identity, *semper reformanda*, and our ecclesiological formulas.

Example Number Three: From the Reformed Baptist Nine Marks Movement

This example comes from the Reformed Baptist community of North America. Three books have now popularized it:

- Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Founders Press, 1997, then Crossway, 2000 and 2004),
- Mark Dever, *What Is a Healthy Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), and
- Thabiti Anyabwile, *What is a Healthy Church Member?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008).

Though this may appear to be coming primarily from the Reformed Baptist community, it is much wider than that. Very prominent names from within the Presbyterian Church in America are public endorsers of many of these 9Marks resources. J. Ligon Duncan III, a former Moderator of the PCA General Assembly, wrote: “The future of biblical Christianity in the Western world is inextricably bound to the future of the local church. Mark Dever knows this, and his *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* is a biblical prescription for faithfulness.” Philip Graham Ryken, pastor-successor at Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, wrote, “*Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* is one of the very best, most readable, and useful books for learning how to lead a church into spiritual health. Its focus is not on church growth but on church health.” And R.C. Sproul, a prominent PCA minister and author/theologian, wrote: “This book [Anyabwile’s] provides an excellent and much-needed focus on the individual church member.” Though beginning within the Reformed Baptist community of North America, many Reformed and Presbyterian churches, pastors and ministries are using this material across North America and beyond. A prominent interview conducted by Peter Hastie with Mark Dever appeared in the October 2005 *Australian Presbyterian* magazine. The fact that a five page interview appeared in this Presbyterian magazine reveals that the discussion with the concepts of 9Marks is not an isolated matter within Reformed circles. Interestingly enough, in that interview there was considerable discussion on the “traditional” Reformed marks of the church. Dever’s response was parallel to his published books and is worth quoting at length:

[Hastie:] In what ways do unhealthy churches affect Christians, particularly Christians who may not be very strong?

[Dever:] First, let me say again that I am not talking about the distinction between a true church and a false one. I am talking about the distinctions among true churches. Some are healthier than

others. What happens, I think, when a Christian goes along to an unhealthy but true church? The problem is that they are not challenged and shaped formatively as they should be by Scripture. In these congregations the Bible seems disconnected from life. The result is that people are left stunted in their discipleship because they are not fully called to follow Christ as should happen in a normal healthy congregation.

[Hastie:] You have written a book called *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. The Protestant reformers spoke only about two, or at the most, three. Why nine?

[Dever:] I deal with that exact question in the book's introduction where I talk about the history of the two marks of the churches – the right preaching of the Word and the right administration of the sacraments. My nine marks are practical out-workings of those two.

The first mark that I draw attention to is actually the first mark that the reformers talked about. I'm more specific in that I am talking about expositional preaching. And then, in marks two and three, where I speak about biblical theology and a biblical understanding of the gospel, I am simply tightening up what "right" preaching is. So, my first three marks are really expansions of the first mark that the reformers referred to – the right preaching of the Word of God.

Then marks four to nine are really expansions of that second mark, the right administration of the sacraments. How is it that the church is distinguished from the world? The signs that set the church apart from the world are water baptism and the continual participation of the congregation in the Lord's Supper. This is what distinguishes the church from the world, in a formal sense. What does that look like in our daily lives? Those are the things I talk about in marks four to nine.²⁰

I will not survey all that is associated with 9Marks Ministries, as much of this can be gleaned from their website: <http://www.9marks.org/>. I will just list the nine marks so that we all know what is being spoken about:

Mark One: expositional preaching

Mark Two: biblical theology

Mark Three: the Gospel

Mark Four: a biblical understanding of conversion

¹⁹ Peter Hastie, "Mark Dever talks to Peter Hastie", *Australian Presbyterian* (October 2005): 5. Available at: http://media.salemwebnetwork.com/CComMinistries/media/ace/pdf/ace_20051201_fc2a2bb5-e255-439b-9f3e-45079625a46b.pdf.

Mark Five: a biblical understanding of evangelism

Mark Six: a biblical understanding of church membership

Mark Seven: biblical church discipline

Mark Eight: a concern for discipleship and growth

Mark Nine: biblical church leadership

As quoted above, the main writer, Mark Dever, does not formally discount the Calvinian marks. He writes, “I accept the traditional Protestant understanding of the true church being distinguished or marked off from the false by the right preaching of the Word and the right administration of the sacraments. What I am about in this book [*Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*] is attempting to speak to some marks that set off healthy churches from true but more sickly ones.”²¹

Interestingly, Albert Mohler connects it with the call for reformation and states that “clear evidence of this fact is seen in the loss of a biblical ecclesiology in so many sectors. Reformation is always directed to the church -- and we must pray to see the church reformed in our age.”²² Even a quick analysis of these nine marks points out that Christian spirituality or sanctification, healthy church life, evangelism, missions and the role of the laity are all being spoken of – none of which are removed from preaching and discipline. I am not saying everything is presented in a balanced ecclesiological manner in the 9Marks, nor do those involved make that claim. Perhaps vocation, race, word and deed, and holistic mission are points not stressed enough, but what is stressed is very good. At the very least, there is an effort to move us forward with a healthy Reformed spirituality in local churches. Thus 9Marks is another discussion point, similar to the other two examples briefly noted. Certainly the last word has not been spoken.

Conclusion

We have a Reformed identity, which is to reform all things by the fixed standard of the Word of God – *semper reformanda*. We have great Reformational confessions expressing the essence of the church which is true, and we have excellent mature nuances in our overall confessional heritage at this point. However, the three examples taken from the past thirty years in North America tell us that many continue to wrestle seriously with the Word of God, to apply all it teaches to their ecclesiology, and to hope and pray that this will lead to healthy, organic church life. Most of these discussions are not Rome-directed. Rather, within the context of our generation, they are modern efforts to wrestle with biblical theology, with application to the local church community, and with the earnest prayer that this will lead to a full-orbed presentation on a healthy church.

²⁰ Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, new expanded edition (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 22-24.

²¹ Mark Dever, *Marks of a Healthy Church*, 2.

At some point, those who engage in discussion on Reformed ecclesiology must discuss the church as missional. It was mentioned earlier that Boice, in his six marks, lists mission as one. Again, we are thinking beyond the sixteenth century formulations to a fuller ecclesiology that impresses upon us the reality that out of a healthy church will flow missions. Missions and evangelism are not “worked up” to demonstrate health; rather, they are produced precisely because of good health. Mature Christians involved in a loving, caring body of believers will draw others by the attractiveness of love and will send forth workers because of a deep sense of the mercy and love that they themselves have received in Jesus Christ.

Rather than placing the burden of developing a fuller ecclesiology on one theologian’s shoulders, let us place it on our shoulders collectively. Can we come to a united understanding of a healthy Reformed ecclesiology for the local church which considers humbly and concurs respectfully with our confessional documents yet breathes with unity for the churches today? Can we provide a healthy biblical ecclesiology which is Reformed and always reforming in our generation? I believe we can, and I believe it is at the heart of our Reformed identity to consider such a new affirmation or declaration. We need such a statement drafted today as a testimony to *semper reformanda* and as a means of clarifying biblical ecclesiology and uniting us. I am thinking of something more modest than a full confessional document, perhaps a new united and collective statement regarding Reformed ecclesiology.

The above mentioned discussions never deny the marks of the Word, the sacraments and discipline; rather, they mine deeper for more of the revelation given. I will close with a short example which will serve as a question for you to answer. There is a local Reformed church which is true to Scripture in its preaching. The sacraments are taken seriously. Discipline is taken seriously. For example, there was a member who committed adultery and was disciplined. Yet here is the dilemma. There is no evidence of concern for the lost world in that local church. There is also very little evidence of members understanding their gifts and exercising them. By listening to the singing and observing the number of non-singers, one might also conclude there is very little joy. The reformational marks are in place, but is this church healthy or as healthy as it could be in the ongoing reformation to which we are called?

Part of the difficulty in addressing our confessional heritage comes from trying to locate the content of our modern discussions within our own confessions, which can often prove fairly trying. For example, when I look at my own confessional tradition, Westminster, I find several aspects about the nature of the church in chapter 25, but it is in a somewhat different language from the previous century’s discussion on the marks. Then when I look at chapter 26, I find many aspects of local body life, gifts, mercy, etc., under the topic of the communion of the saints. The theme of missions is muted, yet in

the Larger Catechism under the Lord's Prayer and the petition "Thy kingdom come", there is a clearer missional perspective. It seems reasonable to conclude that a declaration that would pull together many of these ecclesiological aspects of healthy churches would at least bring clarity for modern readers. I cannot help but think it would move towards greater unity as well. The path to get there will not be easy. Such endeavours never are, and they require a great deal of humility. Yet by the grace of Christ, the King and Head of the Church, we can be led by the Spirit away from a rigid *semper idem* toward a greater fullness in our ecclesiological understanding. This is *semper reformanda*.

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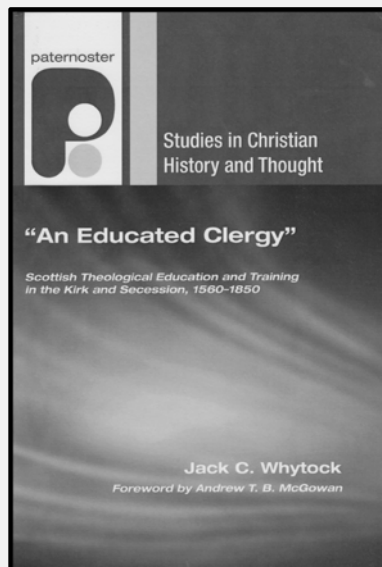
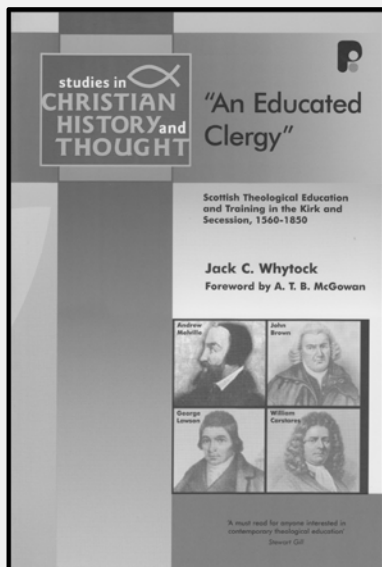
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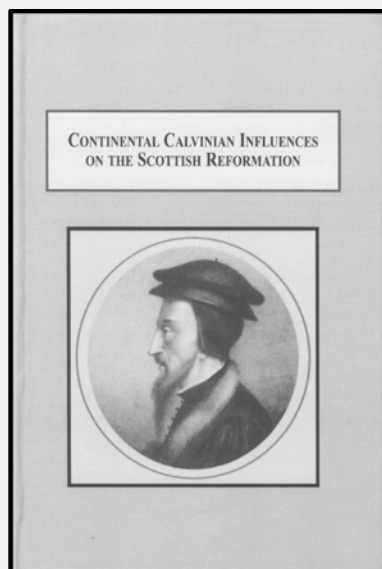
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