



HADDINGTON HOUSE JOURNAL

Volume 10

2008

CONTENTS

General Articles

Part 1: Sermon – Jesus Knows the Churches	7
Part 2: Listening Intently to an African Preacher	13
Sermon: Brethren, Pray for Us (John Newton)	15
Self-Evaluation in Preaching	21
An Interview with Dr. Paul (Joong Kee) No.....	45
“Hidden Art”: The Christian Worldview Expressed Through Cake.....	51
Rethinking the Promise of Proverbs 22:6	65

Book Reviews

Follis, Bryan, <i>Truth with Love: The Apologetics of Francis Schaeffer</i>	73
McGowan, A. T. B., ed. <i>Always Reforming</i>	77
Evans, Craig, <i>Fabricating Jesus</i>	80
Scotti, Rita, <i>Basilica – The Splendor and the Scandal</i>	84

Book Notices

Department of Biblical Theology.....	87
Department of Systematic Theology.....	92
Department of Historical Theology.....	94
Department of Applied Theology	98

Academic Articles

A Didactic Review on Current Systematic Theology Issues.....	109
Integrating Knowledge with Faith: Paul’s Philosophy of Christian Education	117
Jonathan Edwards’ <i>Religious Affections</i> as a Paradigm for Evangelical Spirituality...	141
Reformation and Revival	163

CONTRIBUTORS

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1. The journal will seek to provide students, laity and ministers with an annual publication to develop their minds and souls through in-depth articles and reviews reflective of the theological basis and ethos of the Trust.
2. The journal will seek to keep readers informed about new books or other publications and thus to be a means of encouraging their 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, reviews or book notices, works to assist students in their studies and others in their ongoing training.
5. The journal will encourage the cultivation of writing and provide an avenue for publication and the 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 evangelical Presbyterian community of churches or 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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2008

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Editor's Preface

The 2008 *Haddington House Journal* truly reflects one of our editorial goals: "to include some news about the wider evangelical Presbyterian community of churches or efforts in missions or theological work". Beginning with the opening sermon by the past moderator of the General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, someone very concerned about the development of African Christian leaders, and his appended article on being a sermon listener, "Listening Intently to an African Preacher", to the last article in the journal written by the Principal of Mukhanyo Theological College, South Africa, there is a wonderful fellowship of Christian brothers and sisters literally from around the world contributing to this volume. This encourages me, as it is easy to move in a sectarian direction and forget to live and practice the fellowship of the universal or catholic Church. I believe the reading of this year's volume will help us all to be more aware of the great extent of the Lord's Body labouring together on earth.

A related sub-theme which I see emerging in this year's journal is a strong missiological tone. Not only does this volume bring together writers from around the world, but I believe you will see and learn more about work and writing on missions today. The book notices alone will inform you of some of the latest books on the subject.

Our endeavour is to strike a balance in the journal with a unique combination of articles: those for general edification and those for academic advancement. We also have included news about recent publications which we think will be of interest to many of our readers.

We are pleased to see that, with this our tenth volume, we are gaining more standing order subscriptions, both with individuals and libraries around the world. Please note that information is included at the back about past volumes which we still have in stock.

In volume nine, 2007, we spoke about the major publishing venture of 2006, the release of the *Africa Bible Commentary*. Readers will be pleased to learn that this work is now being translated into Kiswahili. This is of tremendous significance as there are about ninety million Kiswahili speakers in Central and East Africa. As one noteworthy ancient African said, "God seems nearer to a people when he speaks their language." May this translation endeavour be blessed!

Our thanks to all who have written for volume ten. Once again we send out this volume with prayer that the Body may be edified.

J. C. Whytock,
Editor

Part 1: Sermon – Jesus Knows the Churches¹

Paul Heidebrecht *

** Dr. Paul Heidebrecht is executive director of Christian Leaders for Africa, which represents and promotes Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology in Nairobi, Kenya, to churches in North America. Dr. Heidebrecht was born in Canada and has taught part-time at Reformed Theological Seminary and Wheaton College. He holds a Ph.D. in education from the University of Illinois. He now lives in West Chicago, Illinois.*



Today I draw your attention to chapters two and three of the book of Revelation. You will recognize them as containing the letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor. Letters dictated to the apostle John by Jesus himself. Letters to seven actual congregations. The seven cities are located in what is now Turkey, though some are just archaeological digs. The seven churches are all less than fifty years old. They represent a cross-section of the church in its first century. They are not unlike a cross-section of the American church or even perhaps the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

It is rather startling to hear Jesus speaking directly to a local church. What if He spoke to your church or to mine? What would He say? It may be that in speaking to these seven churches, He intended for us to apply His messages to our congregations. Let's assume that's the case.

Notice how Jesus identifies each congregation. He calls them by their city. Not by denomination, nor by the preacher, nor by the name the church selected to attract visitors. He addresses His words to the

¹ Dr. Heidebrecht delivered this message at the 27th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church on June 22, 2007, in Denver, Colorado, concluding his year as moderator of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

believers in a specific location. It's rather missional, I think. Jesus identifies a church by its mission field. We should try thinking of ourselves as the followers of Jesus living in Ann Arbor, Michigan, or Nairobi, Kenya, or Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

But then Jesus identifies Himself with each church. Actually, He reveals aspects of His glory to the different churches here in Revelation two and three. The First and the Last, the One who is holy and true, who holds the key of David, the Son of God whose eyes are like blazing fire, the ruler of God's creation. The descriptions Jesus uses all refer back to the initial vision of Jesus that John saw in chapter one.



Each church seems to have a particular aspect of Jesus' glory assigned to them. It's almost as if no one church can possibly handle all of Jesus' glory and must take the Son of God in small doses.

Jesus begins each letter with the words, "I know." I discern, I see inside, below the surface, behind the masks. I know the true state of each church. I recognize strengths and weaknesses, obedience and disobedience. Five of the seven churches are commended for things they are doing well. The two that are not are in big trouble. One Jesus calls "dead" and the other He says He is about to spit out of His mouth. His letters to these churches are intended to jolt them out of their complacency.

Actually, Jesus speaks bluntly and critically to five of the seven churches. The two that He exempts, Smyrna and Philadelphia, are both experiencing severe persecution. That's not very comforting for all of

us who live in the “unpersecuted” church. Is it possible we are missing out on something? The apostle Peter wrote about a blessing that comes to those who suffer for the name of Christ. There appears to be a bond between a suffering Savior and a suffering church. I think this is why so many of us are attracted to the church in Africa and Asia and the Middle East. We detect the spiritual maturity of these believers that seems to thrive in poverty and oppression. We recognize that we need them far more than they need us.

Two of the seven, Pergamum and Thyatira, have allowed false teaching to take root. The Evil One has penetrated their ranks and is leading them astray. The false teachers are not only introducing bad doctrine but also immoral behavior and compromises with the worldly culture around them. The greatest dangers to the church always come from within. Had the elders of these churches failed to instruct the people in the Word of God, or had they failed to discipline wayward members, or both? Jesus calls these two churches to repent.

Two of the seven, Ephesus and Laodicea, had even deeper problems according to Jesus. Their failures were of the heart and the soul. Ephesus was actually praised for its hard work and diligence and for resisting bad theology and maintaining the truth – as solid an evangelical church as you will find – but tragically they had lost their first love, their devotion to Jesus, their connection to the love of Jesus for a fallen world. Their hearts were cold. Laodicea was perhaps even worse. They had become indifferent and content with themselves and their worldly comforts. They were smug and satisfied and had no idea how desperate and pathetic they really were. Ephesus and Laodicea should cause us to tremble because both were deluded and didn’t even know they were in trouble. They would have if they had stayed closer to Jesus.

We must not overlook the love Jesus has for all seven churches despite their failures. All seven are given spectacular promises. Special blessings will come to the churches if they are victorious. The imagery of these blessings – eating from the tree of life, hidden manna, a white stone with a new name written on it, walking with Jesus dressed in white – is a challenge to interpret but they all suggest intimacy and closeness to the Triune God in heavenly glory. Exactly what Jesus prayed in John 17 for all His disciples whom He sent into the world in His name.

In his series of sermons on Revelation, Eugene Peterson suggests that Jesus is offering spiritual direction to the seven churches. By spiritual direction, he means positive affirmation, corrective discipline and a promise of His own faithfulness that was intended to motivate the

churches to persevere. Some years ago my wife received formal training in the practice of spiritual direction, and since then she has made herself available to individuals who want to examine their own relationship with God and be encouraged in their journey with Christ. There are times in our walk with the Lord when we all could benefit from spiritual direction, especially if it is provided by a companion who listens and prays and holds you accountable. I hope you have someone like that in your life.

But it is clear from these letters of Jesus that churches also need spiritual direction. Congregations can lose touch with their Lord. In fact, if these seven churches are at all typical, then most churches will stray and will need to be disciplined by Jesus. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. We would be fools to think that everything is just fine with our churches after reading these seven letters. Today let us ponder what the Spirit is saying to our churches through these letters.

There's an echo of the Old Testament prophets calling the people to repentance in the letters of Jesus to the seven churches. The prophet Joel declares:

Blow the trumpet in Zion,
declare a holy fast,
call a sacred assembly.

Gather the people,
consecrate the assembly;
bring together the elders,
gather the children,
those nursing at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her chamber.

Let the priests, who minister before the LORD,
weep between the temple porch and the altar.
Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD.
Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn,
a byword among the nations.
Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where is their God?' " (Joel 2:15-17)

It is God's people who must repent of their disobedience and their idolatry and their failure to love and honor the Lord their God. The

world needs God's people to bear witness and reflect the glory of His name and not bring shame and scorn upon it. Our disobedience to the Lord of the church only reinforces the world's rebellion against God and its hardness of heart toward the Gospel.

Jesus has us in the world for a purpose. We disobey Him when we retreat from the world. We also disobey Him when we compromise with the world. Our growth as a mission-focused and mission-driven denomination will have to begin with confession of our failure to live up to what Jesus expects and wants of our churches.

This morning I invite you to pray prayers of confession to God on behalf of your congregation, on behalf of our denomination and on behalf of the church of Jesus Christ that is found in every city and town in this nation.

Part 2: Listening Intently to an African Preacher¹

Paul Heidebrecht

One of the toughest spiritual disciplines is *listening* – to God, to another believer, to a seeker or a skeptic. It’s also hard for Western Christians to *listen* to believers from the non-Western world. By *listen*, I mean take them seriously with the intention of learning and even being guided and counseled by a non-Western believer. Recently I attended an immigrant African church in a Chicago suburb, and I decided to try listening intently to the preacher. The preacher was a Nigerian church planter who recently graduated from Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology in Kenya. He and his wife, also a graduate, were visiting Chicago-area churches planted here by their African denomination. I was one of the only non-Africans in the service. He preached in a style the congregation understood and enjoyed. I’m sure I missed many of the finer points in his sermon.

I was impressed with the intimacy he had with the Bible. He referred to stories, historical events and sayings of Jesus and the apostles as if he was speaking of his own past. Indeed, the characters of the Bible were people with whom he felt great kinship. Their experiences were directly relevant to his own. How God related to Abraham – his main text was Genesis 15:7-18 – was how God related to him.

Many Westerners have noticed how comfortable and enthusiastic African Christians are towards the Old Testament. They feel at home in that part of the Bible. It’s no wonder, because in both cases we have an agricultural society with strong tribal and family-based cultures. While parts of the Old Testament can feel strange to Westerners, Africans know exactly what’s going on and embrace the text with great joy.

The preacher told the congregation that when he was preparing the sermon, he asked God for a revelation from the text. What he received was a challenging word for the congregation. In the text, Abram waits for God to reveal himself through an animal sacrifice. God eventually

¹ First published in “Christian Leaders for Africa Update”, December, 2007.

manifests his glory in the night; but while Abram waits, his challenge is to be alert and to persevere in obedience. Keep doing the right things. God will show up when the time is right. Don't slack off was the message.

Lest anyone think he was encouraging the idea of "salvation by works", the preacher quickly reviewed Abram's faith in God's promise that was counted as righteousness. God was not waiting for Abram to achieve some level of righteousness before he could be blessed. There is a connection between persevering and blessing, but it's not about our standing before God or our identity as followers of Jesus.

Receiving God's promise of blessing was a major point of the sermon, and it raised the issue of the "health and wealth" gospel often associated with the African church. (Actually, it was and continues to be exported to Africa by Western Pentecostal preachers.) After the service, I spoke to the preacher about this issue. He agreed there is a problem in Africa with a false doctrine of expecting financial wealth as a result of personal faith that false teachers exploit for their own gain. His message was to counter that bad teaching by emphasizing the importance of perseverance and consistent obedience even when life is hard.

I had to admit my own hypocrisy as one who already lives with great financial and educational blessings and then criticizes, even gently, the yearning of African believers for similar blessings. The fact is that God does intend to bless His people and to bless abundantly. The Bible is full of such promises. This particular African church, mostly made up of African immigrants, is only too aware of their great blessings, which is why their praise services go on for hours and why they keep emphasizing to each other what God expects them to do with those blessings.

The pastor of the church told me their goal is not to be an African church but to be an American church with African immigrants racing out to un-churched Americans of all backgrounds. They have a long way to go to attract non-Africans, but I appreciate the goal. I hope and pray the Gospel they import into the United States will show us how to manage the wealth God has given us better than we have. Consumerism has devastated our faith and our corporate life as churches, and we probably need African preachers among others to guide us back on to the right path.

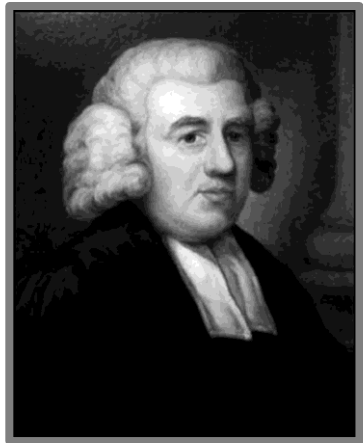
I pray that I am willing to listen and to obey.

Sermon: Brethren, Pray for Us (revised)

(I Thess. 5:25)

John Newton*

** For some time Linda Leggett has been transcribing a collection of previously unpublished Newton notebooks, now housed in the Buckinghamshire County Archives in the Aylesbury Record Office in England. At the time she and her husband, Dr. Donald Leggett, encountered these, they were part of a collection at the Cowper-Newton Museum, in Olney, Bucks, where Newton had a curacy from 1764 to 1780. This transcription has only minor editing and is included for three reasons. First, interest in Newton appears strong at the moment in relation to the interest in William Wilberforce. Next, it is good to work through manuscripts of Newton not found in his published works, as more insights about him and his ministry are thus gained. Finally, the text is a great reminder to be praying people for those who are pastors. Let us be a people who respond to this exercise of Christian piety.*



Many thanks to Linda Leggett for sharing this transcription with our readers.

The apostle, though eminent in grace and experience, often entreats the prayer of the Lord's people. His dependence was upon the Lord Himself, but he knew that He who has promised to do great things has said and will be enquired of to do them. And therefore success should be expected in proportion as prayer is engaged. Succeeding ministers then have good reason to make the same request. If you pray for us you will strengthen our hands and thereby draw down blessing on yourselves.

This entreaty can only be effectually complied with by those whose hearts are in some measure alive and earnest for the Gospel cause.

To pray for ministers, the people must be able:

- 1) *To love them*, principally and chiefly as His ministers. If they have a just sense of the importance of the gospel message, they will love and pray for the messengers. This kindness they owe to them all.

Stated ministers, if they really value their peoples' prayers, will endeavour to deserve a personal and peculiar affection. Next to the support and comfort they receive immediately from the Lord, they find their chief consolation in the love of their people, and the most interesting proof they can give of this is their prayers.

There are those who will sometimes plead, dispute and almost fight for their minister, and labour to set him above others; but they who strive most earnestly in prayer for them are the best friends.

- 2) *To pity them*. Here there is a difference between us. We know most of your exercises, because we share them in common with you. However, you are not the proper judges of ours. You do not stand in our place. We must tell you what we feel to engage your pity, but we can never tell you all. I need your prayers, and to engage them I am desirous at this time to open my mind a little to you, upon the subject of our trials.

As for myself, if I had only to get through an hour in the pulpit, though I should prize your love and your prayers, I should have no very strong claim to your compassion. My outward trials are neither many nor heavy, considering the usual lot of human life. But preaching is not all, and even in preaching, if the Lord has given us a love to our work and our hearers, we often have very painful feelings, even when we seem to speak with liberty.

Had we this desirable liberty always and nothing painful mixed with it, we should soon forget ourselves. This the Lord knows, and finds ways, which though necessary and often sharp, to make us remember what we are. And though we are supported for public service and some persons may be ready to think we had happy lives, we could (at least I could) often address you in the words of Job: Have pity upon me, O my friends, for the hand of God has touched me. Thus,

- a. *We are tried in private*. I should be happy indeed if I always felt the comfort of those truths which I trust comfort many of you at times when I set them before you here. But if any of you

know what it is to groan under the power of unbelief and indwelling sin, deadness in prayer (and even unwillingness to pray at all!), coldness and confusion in reading the Scripture and the like, be assured that speaking with some earnestness and apparent pleasure in public does by no means secure us from such groanings. One of my greatest trials has been the difference between what I may seem to be in public and what I often feel myself to be when alone, which has made me often ready to compare myself to a player on a stage, who derives much of his spirit and exertion from a view of the audience and is quite a different person behind the scenes.

- b. *We are tried in the pulpit.* By a consciousness of the weakness and unskillfulness of our best attempts, by the evils that beset us in our solemn services, by a conviction of how far we fall short ourselves of what we propose to you and sometimes by a straitness and dryness of spirit when we must speak, though we know not what we can say. If private Christians are not disposed to speak, they may keep silence; but ministers are like the post: when the hour arrives they must set out, whatever disadvantages attend the journey.
- c. *We are, we must be, painfully tried by the cases of our hearers,*
 - i. With respect to the congregation at large. I must have a heart like a stone, if I could look seriously round this congregation without being affected; to see so many who are stumbling in the broad daylight, still living under the power of sin after long enjoying the singular advantages with which the Lord has favoured this town; to see them from week to week, from year to year, still careless and hardening under the means of grace. If I were sure I were clear of responsibility for you, still I should mourn over you. But often I shrink at the thought, lest I should be unfaithful. I feel conscious of not being earnest, importunate and pressing enough, though I seem not to know how to be more so.
 - ii. But though I am a debtor to all and bear a love to every person that hears me, there are a number among you who not only hear but profess the truth; to these I stand in a more immediate relation, and as I am more acquainted with these, I feel more for them. I may say without boasting, the Lord has given me in some measure the heart of a shepherd towards them. I feel,

1. For the distresses of many. As I am much conversant among the people, I know a good deal of their personal and family troubles. My heart sinks at the trials of some who are now before me, and of others whose afflictions detain them at home. Perhaps no one in the parish knows so much of these things as I do, and I could relate cases which I am persuaded would draw tears from many eyes. I know likewise something of the spiritual distresses of those whom I endeavour to comfort, but cannot. I must feel some distress as long as I love the people and as long as I live in Olney, even if I were always happy in my own concerns.
2. For the declensions of many. I will lay no stress upon my own personal concern. It is doubtless trying to flesh and blood to see any who once professed a warm regard look shy and cold; and when one loves them and studies to show it, to be misapprehended or misrepresented. I bless God, that if I have anything of this kind to complain of, the instances are not many. And were it not for the cause, I hope the effect would not discompose me. But surely there are some of you, who have carried it unkindly to the Lord, if not to me. O where is now their zeal, where is their first love? Where is the value they once put upon the ordinances? Where is that gospel conversation they once aimed at? Once they loved to assemble with the Lord's people; now I fear they may be often seen with the ungodly and the profane.
3. For their heart-burnings and grudgings one towards another. Alas, when a little word, inadvertently spoken, shall be a sufficient foundation for a quarrel. When there is a readiness to give and to take offence and a backwardness to reconciliation. These things throw two discouragements in a minister's way: he cannot but consider them as a sign that grace is low and that this is a sure means of keeping it so; that to such persons he is little useful at present and that unless the Lord interposes he has but a poor hope of being more useful to them in the future.

Some or other of these trials are always present to my mind, and of late they have brought another painful thought upon me. I had not been a month in Olney before the Lord gave me such a regard for the people, that it has ever since been the place of my choice. I have ever laboured to decline and avoid what the world calls “advantageous offers” as you have been uniformly on my heart, to live and die with you, if the Lord pleases. But I am not my own master. And if the gospel should come to be greatly neglected and slighted, and a form of godliness take the place of that power which once was known here, will there not be reason to fear lest the Lord should show His displeasure by removing it?

Brethren, pray for us. Pray for me and for yourselves; that the Lord may take away our iniquities and pour a fresh anointing upon ministers and people; that I may be strengthened and owned in the work and you may know and prize and improve the privileges you enjoy.

Self-Evaluation in Preaching

Stuart Olyott*

**Stuart Olyott, born in Pakistan in 1942, was brought up in Asia; Chester, England; and West Wales. He has held pastorates in London, Liverpool and Lausanne and is currently Pastoral Director of the Evangelical Movement of Wales. Dr. Olyott conducted two homiletic seminars at Haddington House, Charlottetown, on October 28, 2006. The first of these, "Boring Sermons – and How Not to Preach Them!", we presented in last year's Haddington House Journal, which proved a great benefit to many. Here we offer the second of those seminars. Despite some editing of the transcription, we have in the main retained the informal, spoken English and interactive style. In addition to the normal use of italics, vocal contributions by the participants are also italicized.*



The subject of our session this afternoon is self-evaluation in preaching. I am going to start by reading, so please follow if you can, from 2 Timothy 4:1-5. Here the older minister speaks to the younger minister.

¹ I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from

the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (NKJV)

It is impossible, as I said this morning, to overstate the importance of preaching. Preaching in its simplest definition is explaining God's word and explaining what it means to you. There are sixty words used for preaching in the New Testament with four great words which I may refer to as we go along. It is an amazing vocabulary that is used all the time to stress the importance of preaching. The world thinks it is foolishness, but God calls it wise. And that is what we are talking about – preaching and self-evaluation in preaching.

The problem is there is a lot of bad preaching around. If you disagree, please tell me. There is a lot of bad preaching around. How can you improve? Well, some men try to improve by asking their wives, "How did I do today?" That is not always good practice. Some wives are excellent at evaluating preaching; but, frankly, with due respect to all ladies present, some wives are completely hopeless at evaluating preaching. I heard a sermon recently that was preached at a church with which I am very familiar. It was electrifying, it was winsome and it was nonsense. But because it was so interesting, so compelling and so kindly preached, almost everybody afterwards said, "Stuart, what did you think of that? Wasn't that great?" Now, tell me this, how do you say to people that it was nonsense when they are clearly enthused by something? Obviously the average church member is not good at evaluating preaching. The average wife isn't. So what are we going to do?

Some men come out of seminary and they preach quite well. The first few years they preach a bit better, and then they begin to hover. And as the years go by, their preaching begins to deteriorate, little by little, but they do not notice until eventually their preaching is quite bad. It is like gray hairs, isn't it? Did you notice your first gray hair? Did you? Well, there is a verse in the Bible about people having gray hairs and not noticing. And for some people, their preaching begins to deteriorate, begins to get worse and worse, and they just do not notice.

So, how are we going to help ourselves? Often our wives cannot help us; our members cannot help us; frequently our elders cannot help us. We have got to learn to self-evaluate. If I can get outside my own skin and hear myself preach and evaluate myself in the light of definite criteria, I can improve as a preacher as long as I live. If I cannot do that, I am a dead duck. So I am going to talk to you about self-evaluation in preaching.

As you can see from the little outline I gave out (see page 41), I have ten points which I use myself after I preach. Some of these I use as I prepare to preach, but as you will see quickly, some of them can only be used after the act of preaching.

Number 1: Exegetical Accuracy

I want to talk to you, first of all, about exegetical accuracy, and I want to tell you that several things I will say here will overlap with some of the things that were said in “Boring Sermons – and How *Not* to Preach Them!” I often ask students the following question, “Explain the difference and the connection between exegesis, exposition and hermeneutics.” Ladies and gentlemen, exegesis is what we do on our own in the study, in prayer, in the presence of God. Working hard, we discover the intended meaning of the passage. What did the author mean – small “a” author – and what did the Author mean – big “A” Author – when this passage was first spoken or written? What is the intended meaning of the passage? That is what exegesis is. Exposition is what we do in public. We discover the intended meaning of the passage, and we explain it to others. Hermeneutics are the principles of interpretation we use to interpret the Word of God. We all use principles of interpretation. I am talking about exegetical accuracy, and there is not a lot of it around.

I would like you to come with me to Psalm 104, please. Psalm 104, verse 26. Has anyone got the King James Version? Tell me what it is in the NIV version. “There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.” New King James Version? “There the ships sail about.” Any other versions? “There go the ships.” One of the most famous sermons preached in Christian history was preached by C. H. Spurgeon on Psalm 104:26. “There go the ships.” It starts like this: “One day,” he says, “I went down to the seaside, and as I stood on the shore, I saw a ship going by.” What sort of ship was he talking about? Sailing ships. “And I thought to myself,” he said, “isn’t the Christian life like the voyage of a ship.” So he preaches this very fine sermon on the beginning of the Christian life and the continuing of the Christian life and the buffetings and the storms and the calm points and the safe arrival of the ship at its haven. It is really worth reading. But, of course, you have to have a text to preach from, don’t you? Especially if you are preaching in Victorian England. So, his text is, “There go the ships.”

Now, tell me, look at Psalm 104. Is there anything there at all which gives you the slightest hint that verse 26 is about the Christian life

beginning, continuing and concluding? The psalm is about the wonderful works of God and how He appoints heaven above and the grass below and moon and sun and how wonderful and varied are His works. There are living things everywhere and even in the creativity of man, ships sailing on the ocean as well as the great creatures on the ocean, all speak of the greatness of God. That is what the psalm is about. Spurgeon should never, ever have used that text for his sermon, should he? No, he should not. He should have stood in front of his people as he often did, and he should have said, "Brothers and sisters, boys and girls, ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to just tell you a simple parable today about the Christian life. It's like the journey of a ship." But he should not have come to the sermon from that text when the intended meaning of that text is something completely different. That was a very bad example, Mr. Spurgeon. I just thought I had better point out that nobody is perfect.

I would like you to come to Romans chapter 11. This might shock you a little bit, so that is fine. I am not going to explain the chapter because most of you will be wrong in how you understand it, and then we will have a fight. But it does say in Romans chapter 11, verse 29, in the ESV: "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." Any other translations? What does irrevocable mean? Cannot be called back. So Paul is telling us in the context that when God gives something, He does not take it back. When God gives a calling, He does not "uncall". What He is saying has an intended meaning. I went to a very, very big meeting in the north of England, where a famous preacher preached on that text from the King James Version. The King James Version says, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Now in 1611, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" meant to them "the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable". But he explained that God gives salvation even to people who do not repent. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." God calls people to salvation – even those who do not repent. What do you think of that? Well, you can tell me what you think. Answer: "*He killed it.*" Yes, and he may, of course, have killed some of the people spiritually as well, telling them that they could actually avail themselves of salvation freely in Jesus Christ without repenting of their sins. It was a disgrace, wasn't it? He only had to consult one or two other versions to see that his interpretation was questionable. But, although it was 1980 something, he did not even take the trouble, it seems, to consult another version of Scripture as he prepared his sermon. It was exegetically inaccurate, distorted, spiritually misleading and spiritually damaging

and perhaps in the lives of some people, spiritually fatal. And so we could go on.

Let us try one more example – Mark chapter 13. This is the discourse of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Mount of Olives. Have you ever heard a sermon on verse seven?

⁷ “But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet.

⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These *are* the beginnings of sorrows.” (NKJV)

Have you ever heard a sermon on those verses? There are a few nods. What was your sermon about? So what is the passage about? Every sermon I have heard on that, except about three which I have preached myself, have been on the Second Coming. Every one of them. But the passage is not about that. The Second Coming is certainly not what it is about. It is talking about something else. There is reference to the Second Coming in Mark 13, but it is not there at that point. And so, someone is standing up as an ambassador of Jesus Christ, with an infallible Book and talking to men and women in all their sin and in all their need and in all their hope, and saying, “God says” what it does not say.

The very first rule of preaching is exegetical accuracy. As I prepare, I have to ask myself, “What is the intended meaning of the author – small ‘a’? What is the intended meaning of the Author – capital ‘A’?” I may come up with two responses to those two questions, and therefore that will affect a great deal of how I preach. But I dare not preach without asking that question.

So how am I going to learn to be a good exegete? *Read the passage in light of all of the Bible.* Yes, soak yourself in the whole of Scripture, because the Bible is a self-interpreting book. In fact, we are told in 2 Timothy 3:16 and 17 that by Scripture alone we can become men and women of God. Soak yourself in the whole book. Never interpret a part without looking at the whole; never look at the whole without looking at the individual parts. Excellent advice. That is where I would start.

Also, soak yourself in exegesis and hermeneutics. What are good principles of interpretation? Which are the ones that have been tried and tested and proved and approved through the long history of the Church of Jesus Christ?

Anything else I can do to make myself a good exegete? Maybe it's simple things. *Read commentaries*. Yes, the Holy Spirit for the last two thousand years has raised up great teachers of the Christian faith, and I cannot live in 2006 and pretend that the Holy Spirit has not raised up great teachers of the Christian faith in all the preceding centuries. I do not just belong to the Christian Church in space; I belong to the Christian Church in time. I am part of that Church, too. So I must look and see what the great teachers whom the Lord has raised up have had to say and be humble enough to maybe be corrected by them.

Anything else I can do? *Pay attention to the genre of the passage*. So when it says that all the trees of the field clap their hands, we are not going to stand up in front of our people and say, "You haven't seen it yet, but you go around your local forest and look very carefully and you'll see that the trees have hands." We are not going to talk such nonsense, are we, because we are dealing with poetry? When the Lord says, "Beware of the wolves that come in sheep's clothing," He is not talking about preachers that wear sweaters, is He? So we have got to be sensitive to the genre. All of this requires time. And I would say to every preacher, take time. If necessary, if possible, preach less so that you preach better. Spend time with the text, prayerfully, working the text, because I dare not stand up in God's name and say that God has said something that God has not said.

Sometimes, however, the commentaries do not help us. We get no light on the subject. We have got to preach on this passage, maybe, because we are preaching consecutively through a book. What do I do now? *Look at the original languages*. Some people have them and some do not have them, but those that do not have them can learn to use all the different helps that we have got today, some of which are on the internet, some of which can be got on CD Rom and some can be got in books.

But here I am still. I have got no light. I am half way through the week. I have still got no light. It is Saturday morning. Now what am I going to do? I have come to the end of Daniel chapter 12 and had to tell my congregation, "I have no idea what this is all about." I think that is often the correct thing to say. I think sometimes we should just go off and find a few Christian friends who are students of the Word of God, and tell them our problem and pray with them and discuss with them and maybe that will help us. But we must be exegetically accurate.

I know we have got ten points down this afternoon, and they are not all going to be as long as this one, but frankly, ladies and gentlemen, if this is only as far as we get, I would be a pretty happy man. Self-evaluation in preaching means I can always go to bed with a clear

conscience on Sunday evening or whenever else I preach and say, “Lord, what I have preached I have preached with a clear conscience, after hard work, genuinely believing that this is what You have said in Your Word. I have not skimmed over it. I have not hurried through it. I have not ignored seeking Your face. I have not ignored the wider Church of Jesus Christ. I have not ignored, as far as I know them, the original languages. I have done my very best to make the meaning of the text plain to the people.” That is the first point in self-evaluation.

Number two: Doctrinal Substance

Recently I met a young man who had been out of seminary about four years and was very conscious of the fact that he had now been out of seminary four years. He had been out of seminary as long as he had been in seminary. It had done something to him. Do you know what he said to me? “Mr. Olyott,” he said, (I am caricaturing him a little bit, but not too much) “I’m a biblical theologian,” he said. “I’m not a systematic theologian.” And, do you know, he sounded very learned. Well, I told him that he was deformed. A theologian has five fingers on his hands. He is an exegetical theologian – he works with the text. He is a biblical theologian – he knows the great story-line of the Bible and where everything and everybody fits. He is a systematic theologian – he knows that the Bible teaches a system of truth. He is a historical theologian – he knows how doctrine has developed through the centuries. And he is a practical theologian – he knows how it works out in the flesh of daily life. “But I’m a biblical theologian,” he says. “I’m not a systematic theologian.” And my answer to him is this, “When you have read the Bible, when you have got the great story-line clear in your mind, when you know exactly who fits where and what fits where on the story-line, and when you preach from a given book and you know all that has been revealed so far and what has not been revealed, when you know all that, when you know all the biblical theology there is to know, you are still dealing with a book that teaches something. And you can say, ‘This book teaches this about God, this about sin, this about the Church, this about salvation, this about judgment.’ When you’ve read the whole book with all your biblical theology, you can still say what the Bible teaches on given subjects. That is what systematic theology is. So to say you are a biblical theologian and not a systematic theologian frankly is nonsense.”

There is a lot of doctrinal illiteracy around. What I mean is that a lot of people just do not understand that system of truth which the Bible contains. When my wife and I had been in Switzerland about six

months, the only officer we had in our church, an older man, an elder, came to me. "Pastor," he said, "you're teaching things we've never heard before." Now, when your church officer tells you that, it is a bit dangerous. Of course, the Swiss are very evasive, you know. If you have met the Swiss, you will know what they are like. He says, "Well, you're teaching us things that we've never heard before."

"Well, yes, you've told me that. Tell me what it is."

He says, "Well, it's like this. In the pulpit you say things that we've never heard before."

This is how it went on for quite a while. The story eventually came out. "I've known all my life," he said, "ever since I came to the Lord, that all my sins were put to the Lord Jesus Christ's account at the cross and that the whole punishment of my sins fell on the Lamb of God, the Divine Substitute. I've known that since the day of my conversion, and all my hopes are based on that."

It was good news, wasn't it?

"But you're telling us that Christ's perfect righteousness has been put to our account, so that God considers us legally to be as holy as His Son. In other words, you're telling us that because of Christ's righteousness imputed to us, God considers us to be as holy as He is. We've never heard that before," he said.

That is doctrinal illiteracy. For when Paul says, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," he goes on to say, "because in this gospel the righteousness of God is revealed." The righteousness of God that comes from God and is received by us by faith, from faith to faith, as it is written, "The just (the justified) shall live by faith." That is Paul's gospel, isn't it, imputed righteousness? Doctrinal illiteracy is not understanding this great system of truth which is taught in Scripture. But on Sunday, tomorrow, I am going to preach a passage of Scripture – part of this book I am going to preach. I am going to teach part of the book which teaches the system. So how are the people ever going to understand the system if I do not preach it from the part of Scripture which I am actually preaching from at the moment? Every time I open God's book, I must not only be exegetically accurate; I must be doctrinally substantial, so that their understanding of this great system of truth advances slowly but surely as the pieces fit together and so from God's book itself they understand the system.

Another lady, a very old lady, came up to us when we had been in Switzerland a few months. She had been converted when she was young. By the time she asked her question she had been a Christian almost eighty years. Now she was an unusual lady. She fell asleep in church, but I think that is permitted when you are ninety something.

But that was fine; she was a real woman of God. She said, “You’ve told us that the Lord Jesus Christ today is still a man. Of course He became a man when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Of course He lived as a man and died as a man and rose as a man. But nobody has ever, ever told me,” she said, “that He’s still a man today.” But she was a woman who read the Bible. Do you know what 1 Timothy 2 verse 5 says? “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” She had read it thousands of times. It had never crossed her mind that the whole mediation of Jesus Christ depends upon the fact that He is still God and man, one person, two distinct natures, and all our hopes lie in that fact. She was doctrinally illiterate.

How could you become more doctrinally literate yourself as a preacher? *Read the great catechisms of the Church.* Yes, of which there are many. Would you like to go a little bit further with that? He says read the confessions and catechisms of the church, but I would go a little bit further than that. *Teach them.* Yes, teach them. I think that is very good advice. I have spent a lot of my ministry teaching the catechisms. *Study the doctrines that are taught in the catechisms.* Yes, I just want someone to say something more. *Obey the truth.* Yes, you have got to obey all the truth you know. You have got to obey it, otherwise your mind is blocked to understanding further truth.

I want to recommend to all of you to learn the Westminster Shorter Catechism. As I said to my friend the other day, it is 107 really good questions and 106½ really good answers! It is actually a very easy catechism to learn. It was written for “those of weaker capacity”. There you have Christian doctrine in capsule, Christian ethics or behaviour in capsule, and Christian piety or your walk with God in capsule – in 107 questions and answers. I read the Shorter Catechism constantly as part of my personal devotions on all normal days and recite between fifteen and twenty questions and answers. I find that keeps that great system of doctrine in front of my mind the whole time. I do not want to ever stray outside the great, big parameters which have been laid down by the Lord Jesus Christ in His Word and discovered and taught by His Church through the centuries. If I found myself believing something that was not in one of the great catechisms, I would suspect my own, sinful heart. For I just cannot believe that I, Stuart Olyott in 2006, am going to come up with something that nobody has ever seen before in the illustrious history of the Christian Church.

Number 3: Clear Structure

Now there are two sorts of structure. Sermons need structure. Let me illustrate. Switzerland, November, third week, a strange thing happens. The third week of November every year, if you live in the lowlands, alongside all the roads appear these wooden sticks about two meters high with a red top. Do you know what they are? If you live in the highlands or the mountains, alongside all the roads appear these wooden sticks four or five meters high with red tops. They are snow poles, because when the snow comes down in Switzerland, sometimes you get a meter in a night. It is very strange – you can drive on it. It is like driving on talcum powder, but you can actually drive your car on it. All our snow in Britain is wet, but their snow is like talcum powder. It just compresses. But you cannot see the edge of the road, so you need snow poles. If you can see the poles, you can keep on the road easily.

That is like a sermon. Just think of it. Mrs. Smith in your church has an unconverted husband. She goes home from church, and he says to her, quite out of the blue, “What was the sermon about today?” And she says, “I don’t know if I can tell you.” That is a disgrace, isn’t it? But if she says, “Well, first of all, he said this, and then he said this, and then he said this, and his conclusion was ...”, then he gets the sermon as well because of the clear structure. “I can’t see where he’s going,” people sometimes say in their hearts, and the reason is that the structure is not clear, straight, there in their faces, easy to see.

We need clear, clear structure. But not only macro-structure, also micro-structure. My sermon is made up of sentences. The sentences are made up of phrases. The phrases are made up of words. And we are back to oral style again. I want to talk to you at this point about subordinate clauses. If I say, “I have a cousin, who lives in London, who’s married to a butcher, who lives on the Old Kent Road, where he’s making a very nice living,” I have told you a whole string of facts. I have a cousin, who lives in London (one subordinate clause), where she is married to a butcher, who lives on the Old Kent Road, where he is making a very nice living – there are quite a few subordinate clauses there, aren’t there? Each one depends on the next one. Do not talk like that in the pulpit, please! Please pay attention to your micro structure. “I have a cousin. Do you know where she lives? London. Guess who she’s married to – a butcher. He lives on the Old Kent Road of all places, but he’s making a very nice living.” Isn’t that better? Children, you see, listen to our sermons. Children do not get on very well with lots of subordinate clauses. They get on very well if there is just one.

So we have got to give attention to our micro-structure as well as our macro-structure, but please think about structure every time you preach. You should ask yourself, “Was the structure clear – so clear that it was unforgettable?” I heard a sermon years ago – forty years ago – on the Prodigal Son. It had three points – sick of home, home-sick, home. What do you think of that? I can’t forget it – so simple, so clear, so true to the text. It is there forever. It is part of me. That is what clear structure does. I can remember sermons I heard all those years ago, quite a few of them. And there they are. They live on still because of the clear structure.

Number 4: Vivid Illustration

Now most sermon makers that I know do the exegesis, they work in the doctrine, they think about the structure and then they get some sense of completion. I have got a sermon. But a sermon is not a sermon until it is preached. Over the years I have learned what I call the green pencil technique, if I use notes. Where there are illustrations, my normal practice is to put a green asterisk on the paper. So I put a green star whenever there is an illustration. If I look down the page and there are not lots of green stars, I re-work the page. There have got to be illustrations. I want to encourage you to use lots and lots of illustrations.

In 2005, I preached to a large conference in Britain in August. In 2006, I was at the same conference but not as the preacher. Several people came over to me to talk to me about what I had said, and do you know what they remembered twelve months later? You know what they remembered – they remembered the illustrations. Amazing, isn’t it?

But people say, “I’m not a good illustrator.” How can you become a good illustrator? Keep your eyes open because illustrations are all around you. Our Lord used things that surrounded Him all the time, events and objects, all the time. And He used them in His teaching. “Well, I’m not a natural illustrator,” says somebody. In fact, most preachers I speak to tell me, “This is where I fall down again and again and again. This is the hardest thing of all for me.”

I will give you two little pieces of advice which have helped me. In your church, do most of the people sit in more or less the same seat every week? That is what they do all over the world, I think. It makes life easy for the preacher. It means that, first of all, we notice if somebody is missing. But, secondly, it means that when everybody has gone home, or in the week when there is nobody there, we can sit down

in the seat; and we can say to ourselves, “That’s where Mr. Jones normally sits.” And we sit down on the seat, and we pretend to be Mr. Jones. What sort of life does he live? Where does he live? Who does he live with. What does he do for a living? What is his normal day like? When does he get up? When does he go to bed? Who does he meet? What are his temptations? What are his joys? How could he get distracted most easily from his walk with the Lord? And we think about Mr. Jones. And we go over there and there sits Mrs. Smith. And we ask all the same questions. We do not do that with every single person each week, but we do it quite regularly to put ourselves in other people’s seats, because we are going to preach to living people, right into their lives. What sort of illustrations, therefore, would help them? That is one thing that has helped me enormously, just that one simple exercise.

Another thing which has helped me is Jay Adam’s advice. When you get to your desk, before you do anything else, he says, invent an illustration and write it down. Once you get used to inventing them, you find you can invent them on the spot, and you need to as a preacher. What do you do when you are preaching, as I once was at a funeral, and one of the people drops dead during the funeral? What do you do? Well, you cannot preach to dead people very easily. There is an interruption, isn’t there? Somehow after the interruption, you are going to have to capture those people again with something appropriate, aren’t you? You must win their sympathy, of course, with everything else that is required. We have all sorts of interruptions – crying babies. God designed the baby’s voice so that no one could possibly concentrate on anything else. There are all sorts of interruptions. Suddenly a chair leg breaks – has that ever happened in your church? Don’t these things happen to you? A light bulb falls out and hits one of the elders. I have had that happen. The flowers fall over. You step backwards and fall off the platform. Unless you learn to illustrate or benefit from these events, unless you can illustrate on the spot, you will never capture your people. So we have got to become illustrators. We have just got to do it. If we invent one every single day, we learn.

Now let us consider the two types of illustrations. I think all story telling is illustration; I do not think all illustration is story telling. So, for example, when our Lord says, “Don’t put your light under a bushel,” in other words a measure, now that is not a story; but immediately it is saying something that can be visualized. Or He says, “You are the light of the world....You are the salt of the earth.” It means something immediately, but it is not a story. When you are explaining a text of Scripture, the illustration serves the text. If it does

not serve the text, it has no purpose whatever. I heard an extraordinary illustration of a man who came home, and his wife had on a gas mask. It was a very amusing story indeed, but I have no idea what was being illustrated. I think it was a waste of time. The man wasted five minutes. I also heard an illustration based on the Great Pyramid, told to a congregation that had never heard of the Great Pyramid. So basically the man had to explain what the Great Pyramid was. That took him ten minutes. Then after that he had to explain his illustration. Why bother? It has got to serve the text simply and easily and shed light upon it. I was told that if you build a chandelier, the chandelier should shed light; but it should not be so beautiful that it draws attention to itself. We put windows in our houses, but we do not live in houses made entirely of glass. That wasn't a story; that was an illustration.

Let us consider briefly the matter of published books of sermon illustrations. Well, I have used some of those books, I have to confess; but I have not found most of the illustrations helpful, although some I have. Spurgeon has also produced three volumes of sermon notes, and there are illustrations for each of the suggested sermons. You can go on the internet, and how many millions of illustrations would you find there? There are whole sites of sermon illustrations. I would be very cautious about using those, personally. I want illustrations that the people will understand immediately. But they must be there, and they must serve the Word. Everything must serve the Word. I do not mind using a machine to sow seed, as long as it sows seed.

Let me conclude with one of the most important ways to learn the art of being a good illustrator. We have got to visit our people, play on the floor with the kids and get out in the yard or the garden with the family. We have got to know our people. Otherwise we will never illustrate properly or speak into their lives – which is why all preachers must visit.

Number 5: Pointed Application

Can I tell you a bit more about Wales? John Jones was a famous Welsh preacher. He was a very nervous man, and first of all he would go up to the top of the hill and preach his sermons in the mists where no one could see him. To this day in his village, there is a rumour that if you go up into the mists, you will hear voices speaking. And that's two hundred years later! When he felt his sermons were reasonably good, he would come down a bit and preach to the sheep. There are twelve million sheep in Wales and only three million people. And then when the sermon was really up to scratch, he would preach it to people.

His philosophy of preaching he put like this: “When I go into the pulpit, I carry on my person several bombs. When I’ve been speaking a few minutes, I throw out one bomb and it kills a number of people. I preach for a few more minutes, and I throw out another bomb. It kills a few more people. And this is my procedure until they’re all dead.” What did he mean? He wanted to speak right into everybody’s life until every single person there in one way or another was impacted by the Word of God and knew what they had to do in the light of the truth which was being preached! That is what we mean when we talk about pointed application.



So, we do not just expound the passage and leave it, because the human heart is very unselfish on one point. It always thinks that anything in the Word of God is for somebody else. It likes to pass it on to somebody else. There are certain truths that apply obviously in a certain way to school children and then in a different way to ladies at home, in a different way to people who go to work and a different way to students and a different way to elderly people. It is the same truth, but it speaks in different ways to different people. And they all have got to know how this truth fleshes out in their particular daily life. That is what we mean by pointed application. There are unconverted people, but some are seekers and some are not. Some are ignorant and some are well informed. Some have been seeking a long time and some have only just begun. Some understand very well the way of salvation, but there is some obstacle; and some do not yet understand very well the way of salvation. So even when we speak to unconverted people, there are different forms of application that have to be given, because not all unconverted people are in the same bracket. There are boys and girls,

and there are all sorts of boys and girls. There are some from Christian homes and some from non-Christian homes. Some of those from Christian homes are converted and some are unconverted. And the same is true of those from non-Christian homes – some are converted and some are unconverted. You cannot just say, “Boys and girls.” There are different sorts of boys and girls. So you have to speak to all the different people in the congregation – not every sermon, but nonetheless, there must be constant application so that everybody knows that the Word of God applies to them and demands something of them, and that they have to make a verdict about what they have heard before that sermon ends. That is what we mean by pointed application.

The Puritans got it wrong. The Puritans had exposition, doctrine and uses. Exposition told you what the passage meant, doctrine told you what truths were taught in the passage and uses explained how the passage applied to you. Sometimes in their uses they went “sixty-firstly, sixty-secondly, sixty-thirdly....” That’s not the way to do it! The Lord did not do it that way, nor should we.

When I was fourteen years old, I was in one of those schools where boxing was compulsory. Have any of you ever boxed? I wore glasses and had to take them off to box. That’s a very great disadvantage. Not only that, but I was very small. So I learnt a trick, which is why I have a reasonably proportioned face today. The trick is this: always talk to your opponent and hit him in the middle of the sentence. Honestly, they expect you to hit them at the end. They do! And I believe the same is true in preaching. They are expecting the application to come at the end, but give it to them when they are not expecting it. Then suddenly it goes home in a way it would not go home otherwise. We are talking about pointed application. When the application begins, preaching begins, said our forefathers.

Number 6: Spiritual Urgency

There is a building of apartments on fire, but the people in the top apartment do not know. Do you know what happens when there is an emergency and you want to use your cell phone? It does not work. You cannot phone them. The phone lines have been burned out. You have got to go up there somehow and tell them that this building is on fire and they are in immediate danger. Right, let’s go up then. Knock, knock. “Excuse me. This block of apartments is on fire. If you stay here, you’ll perish. Good morning.” Is that exegetically accurate? Doctrinally substantial? Was the presentation reasonably clear and logical? Yes, but it would not have any effect, would it?

We have a school of preaching or school of thought in Britain now which absolutely discourages emotional engagement in preaching and just says get the truth clear and leave it like that. I do not believe that. I believe really that if the block of flats is on fire, first of all you go up the flights of stairs pretty quickly. You bang on the door with all you are worth, and you yell, "The flat's on fire! If you stay here, you're going to burn to death. You literally only have thirty seconds to get out, so come now with everybody who's in there. Leave everything else behind and get down!" I think in that case you probably would shout, because the emotion would require it.

There has got to be emotional engagement in preaching. The Christian life is an emotional thing anyway, isn't it? If you do not believe that, then you hardly believe anything, because the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace – and they are pretty emotional things. There is a spiritual urgency about preaching; and if that urgency is not there, it is not preaching. How do you get a man to go up a ladder, over the sandbags and run towards the enemy knowing that he has got a one in ten chance of coming back alive? Of course, that happened for four years in Europe in 1914-1918, didn't it? How do you get men to do that? Do you say, "Now, gentlemen, in a moment I'm going to blow a whistle; and would you be kind enough to go up the ladder and run across towards the machine guns and statistically, one in ten of you will come back?" No, you have got to say, "Listen boys, this is the way it is. If they win, your wives will be raped, your children will have their throats cut and everything that you've ever lived for will be ruined. I know that lots of you won't come back, maybe most of you, but if we can win this war, then we can save these people." And so the sergeant will talk to them like that, won't he? And do you know what will happen? He will blow his whistle, and they will actually run up those ladders and over the top and toward the front, and ninety percent of them will perish. But the war will be won. It will not otherwise.

Number 7: Christo-centricity

"Oh, how I love the Saviour's name. Oh, how I love the Saviour's name. Oh, how I love the Saviour's name, the sweetest name on earth." Yet I sometimes listen to preaching where He is not even mentioned.

I went to a church one Sunday morning. It was full. The music was fantastic, and I like music. If people had been looking at me, they would have seen me levitating. The music was just extraordinary. And the preaching – he was preaching from a minor prophet, and the people were leaning forward and leaning forward as he preached. It was

terrific. So were the refreshments afterwards. Then I went the same Sunday evening to another church a little distance away, where the pianist I think took the Sermon on the Mount a little too literally, because the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing. It was dumb and glum. Everything was awful. But then I went home and thought about it. And I thought, but where was Christ in the morning? He was not in one song, one prayer, one reading or one part of the sermon. He was absent! And throughout the evening, with all its faults, and it was terrible, He was in every hymn, He was in the reading, He was in the praying and He was in the preaching. It was a disgrace that it was all like that, but I did come to the conclusion that I had only been to one Christian service that day, and it was the evening service.

We glory in the cross. We have nothing else to glory in, have we? We revel in the cross. Spurgeon lived in the nineteenth century. We know that because he said, "If you go to a political meeting, within ten minutes you'll know what they stand for." That is the proof that he lived in the nineteenth century. He said, "But you can go to a Christian church sometimes for months on end and not know what the gospel is." That would be a disaster, wouldn't it? I once met a French student in the streets of Liverpool. I was pleased to meet a French student. So I said, "Have you ever been to a Protestant church?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Where did you go?"

He said, "I went to St. Michael's Childwall."

I said, "Great! That's J. C. Ryle's church. Who was the preacher?"

He told me, and it was an evangelical! I said, "What did he tell you?"

He said, "He talked about industrial relationships in Britain today."

It was the only time that man had ever been in a Christian church. It probably was the only time he ever would be. I have never met him since. Is it possible that we would open the Bible and preach to people and not preach Jesus Christ and His cross and His glory and try to do that from every passage? After all, is not all Scripture about Him? Doesn't He say so Himself in Luke chapter 24? So at the end of every sermon, when we self-evaluate, we have to ask, "Was it Christocentric? Did it *focus* on Jesus Christ?"

Number 8: Helpful Delivery

I want to come back to the voice. The voice is God's chosen instrument for preaching – not the trumpet, not the ram's horn, the voice. It is a wonderful instrument. It can be loud, and it can be soft.

Same voice. It can be high, and it can be low. Same voice. You can speak very fast indeed so that almost no one can understand you, but at least you can convey your emotion. And it can be slow. It can be harsh, but it can be so tender. Ask anyone in love. It is a wonderful thing, isn't it? God's chosen instrument for preaching, with all that versatility. So we have got to learn to use it. Did I use the voice properly? Did I go loud when I needed to be loud? Now some young preachers write, "Argument weak. Shout here." Don't bother with that. Did I go loud and soft appropriately? Did I speed up and slow down? Did I change the pitch? Did I change the intonation? Was it natural?

I promised you this morning I would tell you about a man, and I will tell you. When he got into the pulpit, the only way he knew how to speak in church was in a sing-song tone. After several years, his congregation got rather tired of his voice, so they decided that it was about time that he move to a different church. He was very reluctant to go, but they were very anxious that he should disappear as quickly as possible, and they made it perfectly plain. He was a lovely fellow – John. He said to me, "Can you help me?" I said, "Yes, John, I can. What I want you to do every day is to go into the church building when there is nobody there and stand in the pulpit and talk about your cats, talk about your dog, talk about your wife, talk about your children, talk about your garden, talk about your car, talk about Tony Blair, talk about anything you like. Just talk about anything at all except the things of God." And he did that, to give him credit. And, do you know what? When he talked about his dog or his cat or his wife – and there is no significance in this order, by the way – do you know what? He talked normally. It was only when he came to spiritual things that he put on his sing-song voice. Then Sunday came when he went into the pulpit, where he had been speaking all week about ordinary things and had an ordinary voice, and he actually started talking about spiritual things in an ordinary voice. Wonderful that, isn't it? He then resigned from the church and has gone elsewhere and is very happy. True story.

Delivery can be helpful, you know. It can help the message, or it can get in the way.

Number 9: Dramatic Power

Is preaching acting? Is preaching drama? Not the same question. Is preaching acting? Answer – no. The actor, when he comes off the stage, can just put on his ordinary clothes and walk home, can't he? The preacher, when he comes off the stage, has to be ready to die for what he just said. There is no acting there. Is preaching drama? Yes.

There is a man on the platform projecting his voice to an audience, and they are listening to him and watching him.

So there is a dramatic element to preaching, and that dramatic element is important. If you say softly and weakly, "Come unto me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," with no feeling and inappropriate gesture, then you are undervaluing, in fact, deforming the message simply by what they see and hear. It is not helpful. So, what people see and the way the message is delivered is also important. If the preacher says in harsh tones, "The gospel is for everyone who wants to come," he doesn't actually give a very good impression, does he? The same words said in a different tone don't give the same impression at all.

I would recommend that twice a year you get yourself videotaped. Not more than twice a year, because you would probably go into a depression. You will be amazed. There is a man who came to our church in Liverpool who said to one of our deacons, "I've never seen a pastor like yours who can interpret into deaf and dumb language at the same time as he's preaching." I have learned to speak on my fingers to deaf people but did not realize my gestures were that bad. But they were. Some of us need to be a bit more restrained. On the other hand, you know, you cannot really speak about glorious things with no motion or expression and convince people of the wonder and glory of it all. Just think if I were speaking to you about the Second Coming of the Lord bursting into the blue on the clouds and us all being caught up to meet Him, and I was standing there like a sentry outside of Buckingham Palace. Something would be missing, wouldn't it? It is not normal.

I am not asking you to be something that you are not. Did you ever hear of Billy Sunday? Ever read his life story? He was a great evangelist, and some believe that as many as a million people came to Christ under his preaching. I think that is probably over-exaggerated, but certainly thousands and thousands of people did. Now he was an ex-baseball player, and he literally used to run across the platform and slide like a baseball player. I am not recommending that. He had thirty sermons and thirty suits, and the same suit always for the same sermon. Now I am not recommending that, but preaching is drama. There is still something to be seen, and we have to get it right.

And, yes, it even affects the way we dress. I once heard a man preaching. He was wearing a red pullover. On the front of the pullover, his wife had knitted a man skiing; and as this preacher preached, he mimicked the actions of skiing. It was quite entertaining. I have no idea

what the sermon was about, but I can remember the skier vividly. Even the way we dress can devalue the message that we preach.

Number 10: Supernatural Authority

“Come home,” my mother said when I was at seminary. She rang me up; she telephoned me. Very unusual. “Come home. Can’t you come home?”

I said, “I can’t come home. I’ve got exams.”

“Come on. You’ve got to come home.”

I said, “Why have I got to come home?”

“There’s a man in the village,” she said.

I said, “What do you mean there’s a man in the village?”

“I can’t explain it on the phone,” she said. “But, he’s different. He’s preaching here all week, and he’s different. Please come home.”

I said, “I can’t.”

And I didn’t. But a year later I heard that man. He was a Welsh man. He was a Welsh-speaking Welshman, which meant that he could either walk or talk, but he could not do both at once. But when he preached, there was just something about the preaching, and you knew in your soul that heaven was speaking to earth. I have never, ever heard a preacher like that before. He was actually quite untidy in the way he dressed, but he was very poor, so maybe that was the reason. When he preached, you knew in your innermost being that not to believe would be the most foolish thing, unthinkable. When he preached, sometimes the congregation sat a full quarter of an hour in silence after he finished. And sometimes after that there was spontaneous prayer – one after another stood to their feet and worshipped God for the glory of the truth that they had just heard. It was always like this. He preached an hour and a quarter virtually always.

And then I went back to the old book which I had read many times as a young man, *Power Through Prayer* by E. M. Bounds, where he talks about under the dew of heaven. He quotes the old Scotsman who said, “Sometimes there’s something in preaching which cannot be defined. You cannot say what it is or where it comes from; but with a sweet violence, it pierces the affections and the conscience and breaks the heart.” Our forefathers called that unction. I don’t think that’s a good word for it, but I don’t know of a better. There is such a thing as unction. There is such a thing as a supernatural authority. There is such a thing as a touch of God upon a preacher. When I self-evaluate, I often need to ask the question, beside all the other nine things, “Was there anything of that at all in the sermon?” And I set my face again to seek

the Lord, confessing my sins, weeping over my sins, and asking the Lord for His glory's sake and for the good of His people and the benefit of the unconverted, if He would give such a blessing as that.

Thank you for listening to me today.

Sermon Self-Evaluation Questions

- #1. *Exegetical accuracy***
- #2. *Doctrinal substance***
- #3. *Clear structure***
- #4. *Vivid illustration***
- #5. *Pointed application***
- #6. *Spiritual urgency***
- #7. *Christo-centricity***
- #8. *Helpful delivery***
- #9. *Dramatic power***
- #10. *Supernatural authority***

Seminar Questions

Q. *Dr. Olyott, would you please comment on the preacher and his use of imagination in speech and the modern use of PowerPoint?*

A. I believe the imagination has been given by God. I believe that the best pictures are the ones you carry away in your mind. They are yours, and they remain with you permanently. I believe that people who use PowerPoint generally make their structure too complicated, not memorable, not like that Prodigal Son structure that I told you about earlier on. I believe too many use and rely too heavily on what the people can see there rather than what people can actually see in the actual act of preaching. It nearly always causes lots of eye contact. Very often things go wrong, don't they? I frankly just do not think it is the best way of doing it. I don't think I have ever heard a good sermon preached where there was PowerPoint, not a good sermon.

We used to have a programme on British TV where a woman, or sometimes a man, would come in and sit on a stool and tell a story – on the TV. That is all! Nothing else. No subtitles, no background changing. Just a woman on a stool telling a story. It was one of the most popular children's programmes for probably thirty years. There is still something about oral communication which cannot be captured any other way.

I think probably for most people PowerPoint is a step backwards, not a step forwards. I personally do not even use illustrations and pictures or diagrams with children, unless it is something they cannot imagine. They might not be able to imagine a house in Palestine in the first century. They might not be able to imagine a sailing ship like Paul sailed on in his travels. They might not be able to imagine a Roman centurion. In such cases I would be willing to show them pictures, but anything which they can imagine, I would never personally put up in any visual aid. I just do not think that is the best way of doing it. And you are perfectly free to disagree on that. I am well aware that some of the prophets did use visual aids – sticks and bricks and tiles – but as a general rule I think a man preaching, aware of the dramatic effect, but nonetheless using the Word, is the means that God has been most pleased to bless.

Q. *Would you please comment on what preachers should wear when they preach?*

A. I think it is cultural. I think you have to be very sensitive to the culture that you live in. I live in the UK in 2006. In my culture, any man who has something important to say wears a jacket, a collar and a tie. If you look at the British House of Commons, for example, every single person will be dressed like that, except the women, obviously. That is the way that people who have something important to say dress. I worked in inner-city Liverpool, I mean in the crime-ridden portion of Liverpool, for twenty-three years and dressed reasonably formally the whole of that time. I never found it a barrier on any occasion whatsoever. So that is the culture in which I work, but I am equally aware that that would not be appropriate in some other cultures. I ministered in Switzerland for nine years. The temperature in Switzerland in our city was thirty-seven degrees (Celsius) for five months of the year. It would have been foolish to wear a jacket to preach in. I was called to preach the Word, not die in a Turkish bath. But there I still wore a tie. The reason I wore a tie is because early in my ministry a man came in and said, "I'm glad you wore a tie today. I'm a visitor. If you hadn't have worn a tie, I would have thought you were a sect." That is the way the Swiss mind thinks. Interesting, isn't it? So, you have to work that out in your own culture. The point is, does it serve the Word or detract from it? That to me is the big thing. If a man comes in dressed in a mohair suit which has obviously cost him four thousand dollars, (I'm exaggerating a bit) I think that would detract from the message. He would be so smart, wouldn't he? I do not dress like Prince Charles, personally.

You have got to know your culture, don't you? Have you ever heard of Wallace and Gromit? They are a type of puppets made of clay that were animated into a very famous British film series. I went to a communion season at a church where the minister stood at the front with a tee shirt with Wallace and Gromit on it. It seems so out of place when I am remembering the crucifixion, the Son of God. It was out of place, wasn't it? That is the point I think that we need to make. Does it serve the Word or does it hinder it? It must serve the message.

Q. *Would you comment on “series” preaching and the need for variety?*

A. I am convinced of the importance of the systematic, sequential, consecutive teaching of the Word of God. I am convinced of the importance of that. But I think that, within that framework, you do need some variety. Traditionally in Britain, you preach three times a week – twice on the Lord’s Day and once during the week. Throughout my ministry I would have preached twice a week through Bible books and the third time would have been a different form of preaching – biographical or topical or thematic or something like that. I think you do need variety within the total preaching programme. I think the human soul thrives on variety but sameness as well. God gives us different seasons, but only four, and always in the same order. So there is variation, but there is similarity. There is sameness, but there is variety. I think that is the way the Lord works.

(Note: many hundreds of Dr Olyott's sermons can be accessed in MP3 format by going to www.knowyourbible recordings.org.)

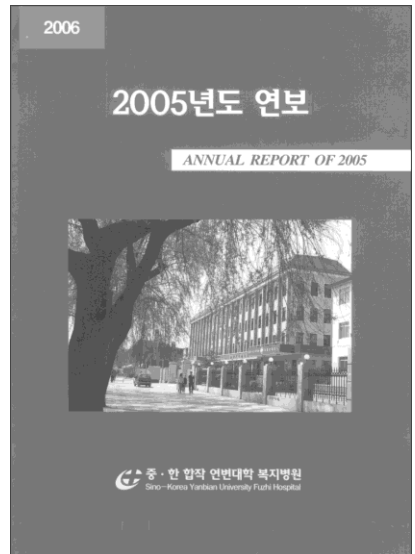
An Interview with Dr. Paul (Joong Kee) No

** The following is an interview with Dr. Paul (Joong Kee) No of Yanji, China, conducted while he was visiting a church in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, February 3, 2008. This is the first time we have had an interview in the Haddington House Journal. Interviews such as this help to give us insight into the work of fellow-believers around the world and what Christians can do for the Lord by using their gifts and vocation for the Kingdom of God.*

To provide some context for this interview, I must first mention that Dr. No's daughter, Jean, is a student at Haddington House, Charlottetown, and teaches Sunday School at the local Korean Church in Charlottetown. The No family is from Korea but has been serving in North China for many years.

China has many more complexities than we often recognize. There are fifty-six ethnic groups of Chinese peoples living in over twenty provinces. In the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in the north-eastern Jilin province, there are many Chinese Koreans who form a distinct ethnic group, one of China's fifty-six. These Chinese Koreans are related to the Korean peoples of North Korea, and until quite recently the Korean language of Yanbian was closer to the language of North than of South Korea. However, with modern television and movies, this Korean is starting to move more towards that of South Korea. Some of the Chinese Koreans of Jilin province have been there for several generations (some dating back to the seventeenth century), whereas others have been there only since the period of the Japanese occupation of Korea (1910-1945).

Editor



Yanbian Hospital, where
Dr. No serves.

Q. Describe the area in China where your hospital is located.

A. Yanbian University Fuzi hospital is located in north-east China. Jilin province is home to the Korean Autonomous Prefecture of Yanbian, a Chinese-Korean, self-governing area. It is only a one hour driving distance from North Korea. The population of the province is about two million. The population of Yanji city (the capital of the prefecture) is four hundred thousand. Forty percent of the whole population is Chinese-Korean.

Q. Please give the details of your duties as a doctor at the hospital.

A. Our hospital is a Chinese and Korean joint hospital, so almost all the workers are Chinese-Koreans, and about twenty workers are Korean missionaries. I am the vice-president for the hospital and the president for Korean workers. The size of our hospital is about 100 beds, and we have 180 workers. I am also a cardiac surgeon and in charge of the cardiac center. Since 1999, I have done seven hundred heart surgeries. I also train other doctors.

**Q. How many years have you been working in China?**

A. I have lived in China for fourteen years. Our hospital was built in 1994, and I contributed to building the hospital.

Q. How is evangelism done at the hospital?

A. The Chinese government forbids religious activities in the hospital; but as we examine patients, we evangelize them indirectly. For example, we have a social services department. We help the poor patients, do counseling and give free medications to epileptic patients. Through this department, we can evangelize patients secretly, and also we evangelize when we visit recovered patients' homes. For example, when I finish a heart surgery, I visit the recovered patient within two months. When I visit them, I evangelize them. In fact, forty percent of my patients believe in Jesus Christ. Korean missionaries in our hospital

visit the recovered cardiac patients twice a year, and once a year we have a sports day for all recovered cardiac patients. Half of the cardiac patients are children, so we give scholarships to the children.

Q. Please comment on the persecution of Christians in China.

A. The Chinese say that they have religious freedom, which means that they have freedom to keep their religion and they have freedom not to have a religion. In other words, believers cannot force unbelievers to believe in Christianity. Thus, by the law, foreign missionaries cannot do missions. The Chinese government represses establishing churches, seminaries or Bible colleges. Although the Chinese say that they have religious freedom, many Christians have disadvantages in the society because of their faith. However, many of the Chinese have started to believe in Jesus Christ. The number of Chinese Christians is about a hundred million. There is a church in Yanji city where five thousand Christians go. Also, services are only allowed to be performed in areas permitted by the law.

Q. Please tell us about the underground church in China

A. The Chinese underground churches vary in different locations. For example, the underground churches in southern China are flourishing. The underground churches are called house-churches, and usually less than fifty people are gathered at once. They don't want to be recognized by the Chinese government. And these house-churches are hostile to the churches that are recognized by the government. However, the underground churches in northern China are very different. They want to be recognized by the government. They remain as underground churches because they cannot be recognized by the government. This is because the government limits the number of churches in each city. Therefore the situation in the south and north is very different. As a missionary, I think the underground churches and the churches that are recognized by the government are equally representing the living gospel. However, the underground churches are often in a place of persecution and danger. They can be closed by the government at any time.

Q. What are the main prayer concerns for the hospital?

A. (1) Pray that the cardiac center becomes well established and glorifies God in China and contributes to the development of our hospital.

- (2) Pray that those doctors that I am training become excellent doctors.
- (3) Pray that all the workers of our hospital come to believe in Jesus Christ.
- (4) Also pray for Korean missionaries and their families in our hospital.
- (5) Pray that more world missionaries can come to our hospital.
- (6) Pray that our hospital becomes a base camp for North Korean medical missions. When North Korea opens, I hope that our hospital can build a hospital in North Korea.
- (7) We have built another hospital in the southwestern part of China. Pray that the hospital can be opened this year.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about what God is doing in China and/or in your work specifically?

A. The video clip I showed was taken when I visited patients last December (2007). I visited two different cities. The two cities are located in the very north part of China near the border of Russia and are called Siangyasan and Jiamus. It takes two days by train to get there from our hospital. In Siangyasan, one cardiac patient and her husband planted three churches. The patient tells people wherever she goes that she has been healed by God. About twenty people came to our hospital and had heart surgery because of her, and about eighty percent of these patients believe in Jesus Christ. As you saw in this video clip, they had a Sunday service, and I examined the patients after the service. About fifty people were gathered. This is an underground church. The patient's husband is also preaching passionately.

Another city that I visited is Jiamus. In Jiamus, there is a church that is recognized by the government. The ministering servant of this church is the patient of mine that had heart surgery. When I visited the church, they welcomed me with singing and lots of food. I thanked them and I preached. After the service, I also examined many patients. Eight people came to our hospital for heart surgery from this city. They all became Christians. As you see, one person can lead many people to salvation. I have experienced God using my gift to lead many people to Christ and to build churches. God uses an ordinary person like me to do His work. I praise God for all of His work.

I meditate on Mark 8:34 all the time. It says, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." I try to deny myself and look at the cross. I am walking with the Lord as I am striving to fulfill my calling. I also give thanks to God for meeting

Pastor Jack and you (the congregation). Please pray for Anna, my children and me. I hope and pray for my children to grow and become God's workers. Thank you.



*Jilin
Province*



Dr. & Mrs. No and Jean



The No family



Dr. & Mrs. No teaching in China

“Hidden Art”

The Christian Worldview Expressed Through Cake

Dinah Lynn Stam*

** Dinah Stam was a student with Haddington House and completed the Certificate of Christian Studies (C.C.S. Academic) in early 2008. She currently lives in Notre Dame, New Brunswick. The following is a paper she wrote for a worldview course at Haddington House. It is an examination of Edith Schaeffer’s The Hidden Art of Homemaking: Creative Ideas for Enriching Everyday Life. In the 2008 Haddington House Journal, readers will also find a full-length review on Truth with Love: The Apologetics of Francis Schaeffer. The Schaeffers and their ministry and writing are being discovered by a new generation, and this is encouraging to see. This paper by Dinah is evidence of the Schaeffers’ abiding relevance. Readers may want to access free courses on Francis Schaeffer by Jerram Barrs, offered on the internet at “Covenant Worldwide”.¹*

Editor

Foundations

“A biblical worldview assumes one basic presupposition: ‘the living and personal God intelligibly known in his revelation.’”² This revelation is found in the universe He has created and in the Word He has given to mankind. Psalm 19:1-3 tells of how God’s creation is a revelation of Him:

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. (NIV)

¹ See <http://www.covenantseminary.edu/worldwide/> .

² Gary W. Phillips and William E. Brown, *Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview* (Salem, Wisconsin: Sheffield, 1996), 81.

The second medium by which God reveals Himself is the Bible. The authors of *Making Sense of Your World* discuss this form of revelation: “The Bible tells me that God exists, that the world is His creation, and that I am accountable to my Creator. God’s Word tells me...in short, my view of and for the world” (Phillips and Brown, 102).

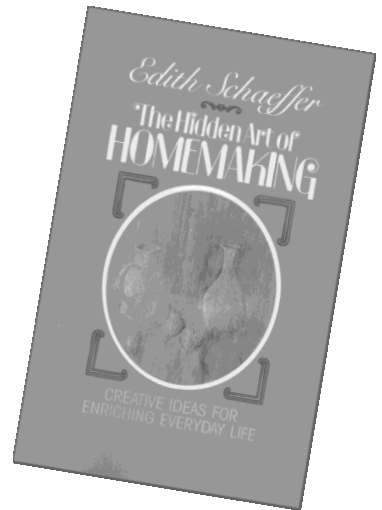
Consequently, the worldview that should be held to by those who claim to be followers of Christ should be one that is based on God’s revelation. What God has said in the Bible should be the foundation and guide for what Christians do and think. This applies in every area of life, including the arts. With God’s Holy Spirit, by Whom “revelation is made alive... to those who embrace it,”³ Christians can understand what God wants art to be and conform to God’s standards in their attitude towards art.

Schaeffer’s Worldview and the Bible

Edith Schaeffer’s book, *The Hidden Art of Homemaking*, adheres to the standard for the Christian worldview as it goes to the Bible to show the Source of all art, God. “God, the Artist!” Schaeffer writes:

We read in... Colossians: “For by him were *all* things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible.” *All* things! Visible! The things my eyes can see – the poinsettia plants in Bermuda lanes and the blue gentians on Alpine paths, ...and the breathtaking beauty of a full moon lighting up snow-covered peaks and valleys. *All* things! Invisible! Things I know are there, but cannot see – wind and gravity, atoms and electrons, oxygen and sound waves.⁴

God’s creative ability brought all this into being; He truly is the Source of art.



³ See 1 Corinthians 2; Phillips and Brown, 83.

⁴ Edith Schaeffer, *The Hidden Art of Homemaking: Creative Ideas for Enriching Everyday Life*, illust. Deirdre Ducker (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1971), 15.

In addition to this, God's art speaks to its viewers. As mentioned in Psalm 19, above, "The heavens declare the glory of God." Schaeffer writes of this:

In these words we learn that the whole of creation *communicates* something... The stars and the planets, the sun and the moon...are not only there for other useful reasons, but also as an art form, a communication of the glory and the greatness of the Artist. (Schaeffer, 16)

Like God's art, all art communicates some philosophy or other. The Christian worldview, when applied to art, appreciates and produces art that communicates in some way the truth about God.

In addition to being communicative, God's artistry, as seen in creation, is often outstandingly beautiful. This can be seen in His design of the Garden of Eden. Schaeffer points out that "God was the first landscape architect." Genesis 2:8-9 says, "Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the East, in Eden... and the Lord God made all kinds of trees to grow out of the ground – trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food." Schaeffer continues:

He designed it so that it might contain things that were good to eat, but they were also to be *pleasant* to look at. It mattered enough to God that it should be pleasant to look at... [He] deemed it important to make a beautiful garden, artistic to the highest degree, taking what had already been made and arranging it as an artist would take his paintings and pieces of sculpture and group them for an exhibition, or as a musician would arrange the sequence of selections for an evening. (Schaeffer, 23)

Not only was there great beauty in God's creation of the whole universe, but He took the time to arrange this particular part of His creation attractively.

Schaeffer then moves on to speak of "the most important aspect of God's art... one that concerns us personally", His creation of man in His own image (Schaeffer, 23). As one considers God's creative ability, it becomes clear that man has creative ability as well. Schaeffer writes,

Man was created that he might create. It is not a waste of man's time to be creative. It is not a waste to pursue artistic

or scientific pursuits in creativity, because this is what man was *made* to do. (Schaeffer, 24)

She qualifies this with the fact that man is not quite like God; man creates “on a finite level... needing to use the materials already created – but,” Schaeffer concludes, “he is still the creature of a Creator” (Schaeffer, 24).

And yet, despite all this potential to create, Schaeffer faces up to the reality that man cannot create as God creates. She admits,

We cannot do everything that comes into our minds, nor can we create everything that comes into our imaginations, whether it be in a very great and complicated area of science or art, or in a very mundane area, such as whether we should make a chocolate, vanilla or spice cake for the evening meal... We are limited by time and by areas of talent and ability. So our creativity is not on God’s level at all. His creativity is unlimited and infinite. (Schaeffer, 25)

Even the greatest of artists cannot come close to the perfection of God’s artwork.

Nonetheless, Christians are called to create. Schaeffer suggests that it is not an option for Christians to be creative. Because man has been given the gift of being able to create, in greater or lesser degree, he *must* create. Schaeffer writes,

Man has a capacity both for responding and producing, for communicating as well as being inspired. It is important to respond to the art of others, as well as to produce art oneself. It is important to inspire others to be creative as well as to communicate by one’s own creative acts. (Schaeffer, 25)

Application

The Christian worldview is a practical worldview. Jesus indicated that those who love Him will use their strength and abilities in His service (Mark 12:28-31). Principles learned must be applied to daily life; in decisions, in actions, and in thoughts. *Making Sense of Your World* states, “A biblical worldview cannot be developed in a vacuum but must be active in changing the individual and society.” (Phillips and Brown, 96)

Schaeffer reflects this Christian mindset in the rest of her book, as she practically applies these principles regarding art to the daily lives of ordinary Christians:

If we have been created in the image of an Artist, then we should look for expressions of artistry, and be sensitive to beauty, responsive to what has been created for our appreciation. Does this mean that we should all drop everything to concentrate on trying to develop into great artists? No, of course not. But it does mean that we should consciously do *something* about it. (Schaeffer, 32)

With directness, Schaeffer writes, “The fact that you are a Christian should show in some practical area of a growing creativity and sensitivity to beauty, rather than in a gradual drying up of creativity, and a blindness to ugliness” (Schaeffer, 33).

Christians, more than anyone else, understand and appreciate God’s artistry. Schaeffer writes, “It seems to me that the marks of personality – love, communication, and moral sensitivity – which are meant to sharpen as we are returning to communication with God, should lead to an *increased* rather than a decreased creativity.” (Schaeffer, 28) This worldview, encased as it is in the context of God being the source and example for art, reflects the biblical understanding that Christians are gradually being transformed into the glorious image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18).

Hidden Art

With this foundation, Schaeffer introduces the concept of what she calls “Hidden Art”. By this she means “art which is found in the ‘minor’ areas of life... the ‘everyday’ of anyone’s life, rather than his career or profession”. She suggests that everyone “has some talent which is unfulfilled in some ‘hidden area’ of his being, and which could be expressed or developed” (Schaeffer, 31).

This talent, rather than remaining unused, should be brought out, she suggests.

Art... gives outward expression to what otherwise would remain locked in the mind, unshared. One individual personality has definite or special talent for expressing, in *some* medium, what other personalities can hear, see, smell, feel, taste, understand, enjoy, be stimulated by, be involved in, find refreshment in, find satisfaction in, find fulfillment in,

experience reality in, be agonized by, be pleased by, enter into, but which they could *not* produce themselves. (Schaeffer, 14)

For this reason, she encourages everyone to consider what sort of art they could produce. It does not have to be great or perfect or complex; indeed, no one can produce perfect art but God. Complexity and greatness may not be possible for many ordinary everyday artists. “But,” Schaeffer writes,

...it may be helpful to consider some of the possibilities all of us have of really *living* artistically... People so often look with longing into a daydream future... without ever considering the very practical use of that talent *today* in a way that will enrich other people’s lives, develop the talent, and express the fact of being a creative creature. (Schaeffer, 33)

With this as a basic framework of ideas, Schaeffer pinpoints several specific areas of life in which she believes there is potential for nearly everyone to use the creativity God has given them. These areas include music; painting, sketching, and sculpturing; interior decoration; gardens and gardening; and flower arrangements. She also explores creativity in food, writing, drama, creative recreation, and clothing. Her last two chapters deal with creativity as it relates to integration and environment.

Music

The first thing Schaeffer considers is music. “Think of sound,” she writes. “God created not only the sound, but He created ears to hear the sound” (Schaeffer, 19). Music and song are obviously important to God. He calls for praise of Himself on all kinds of musical instruments and promises that, when He takes His people to be with Him in glory, they will be singing: “Some from every single tribe and people will be there, singing together with true joy.”⁵

Schaeffer then presents a few practical suggestions for exercising creativity in music. She encourages musicians to play together, to develop and strengthen bonds of friendship and unity through the shared experience of playing and creating music. And “in the process... the freedom to express yourself in a medium that is your own will develop, and so will your personality” (Schaeffer, 38-39). Schaeffer

⁵ See, Schaeffer, 21; Ps. 150, Job 1.

concludes her chapter on music with these words: “For Christians... the reality of the Holy Spirit should free us to joyful expression in the form of melody and song. This is what is meant to be *now*, and what will continue in eternity” (Schaeffer, 44).

Sculpture, Painting, and Sketching

Secondly, Schaeffer takes a look at sculpture, painting, and sketching. “God,” she points out, “was the first Sculptor,” the Maker of everything from the intricate human body to the vast mountains (Schaeffer, 19). Many people have a gift for these art forms, and Schaeffer urges them to use and develop their gifts. In daily life, Schaeffer suggests sketching on the edges of grocery lists, drawing pictures for oneself or others instead of writing notes, or painting murals on the bedroom walls. She writes,

Be satisfied with the fact that although your area of talent may never be accepted by the world as anything “great”, and may never be your career, it can be used to enrich your day by day life; enrich it for you, and for the people with whom you live. (Schaeffer, 48)

She also suggests using painting, sketching, or drawing to communicate with God. “If you are a Christian in communication with the living God,” she writes, “and you find you communicate better in drawing than in writing or speaking (and some people are like that), then sketching can have a place in your communication with God” (Schaeffer, 61). She concludes: “Remember that your communication with God is to be not *less* vivid than with men, but *more* vivid and real” (Schaeffer, 63).

Interior Decoration and Gardening

Schaeffer next focuses on using our talent to improve the places we live in. Everyone has “*some* kind of spot in the world... the place we call ‘*home*’, no matter how temporary that place may be” (Schaeffer, 66). Rather than putting off decoration until the dream house has been built, Schaeffer urges people to work with what they have.

Trying out all the ideas that come to you, within the limits of your present place, money, talents, materials and so forth, will not use up everything you want to save for the future, but will rather generate and develop more ideas. (Schaeffer, 66)

She suggests restoring old furniture, sewing projects for the home, making various home accents, or even making a child's playhouse in the backyard or attic. Schaeffer reminds her readers,

If you are “decorating” with clothes draped on every chair, with scratched or broken furniture – it is still your interior decoration! Your home expresses *you* to other people, and they cannot see or feel your daydreams of what you expect to make in that misty future, when all the circumstances are what you think they must be before you will find it worthwhile to start. (Schaeffer, 76)

Stressing the shortness of this life, Schaeffer deplors “always to dream of a cottage by a brook, while never doing anything original to the stuffy boarding-house room in a city...” (Schaeffer, 66).

When travelling, bringing a few small homelike decorations such as a tablecloth and candle can provide a sense of continuity. Whether travelling or not, Schaeffer writes, “To have familiar things around us is to feel ‘at home’” (Schaeffer, 79).

While it is true that Christians are always looking forward to their ultimate home with Jesus in Heaven,

...this does not erase the fact that as human beings made in the image of God we have all the marks of personality.... In the midst of carrying out the purpose God has for us... we can still have the fulfillments which help us to be balanced and whole creatures, rather than torn, lonely, unbalanced, splintered people. As human beings we do respond in certain ways to certain *things* as well as to other personalities, and God. (Schaeffer, 79-80)

God has created things like the stars and the cycles of the seasons that give humans this sense of continuity. He provides this for His people as they wait for “the wonder of all that is ahead for all eternity” (Schaeffer, 80).

Throughout these chapters, Schaeffer urges parents to exercise creativity with and for their children. ““A child won't notice,”” she states, “is a very bad and untrue phrase to admit into your mind.” Instead, “a child *will* be affected by originality, beauty, and creativity. And a child in a Christian home should connect being in communication with the Creator God with having been made creative, in His image” (Schaeffer, 74).

Gardens and Gardening

The chapter on interior decorating closes with these words:

And for the Christian who is consciously in communication with the Creator, surely his home should reflect something of the artistry, the beauty and order of the One whom he is representing, and in whose image he has been made! (Schaeffer, 82)

But this does not only apply to the insides of Christian's homes, but the outside as well. No matter where you live, Schaeffer advises at least a small amount of gardening. Knowing his mandate to "be creative on a finite level, [a Christian] should certainly have *more* understanding of his responsibility to treat God's creation with sensitivity, and should develop his talents to beautify his little spot on the world's surface" (Schaeffer, 88). To destroy the natural world God has given us, on the other hand, is "creativity and artistic production in reverse. Man the artist, upside down!" (Schaeffer, 87)

Spiritual lessons can be learned from gardening; Jesus used examples from nature to teach his disciples. These include the parable of the sower, the vine analogy, and the kernel of wheat analogy (Matt. 13, John 12 and 15). Schaeffer quotes from the Gospel of John 12:24-25:

Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Like Jesus, Christians can use their gardens to communicate with people; by drawing others into conversation through the beauty of the garden, by showcasing the amazing productions of the Creator, by the way growing things illustrate biblical truths, or simply by the disciplined effort that gardening requires (Schaeffer, 94).

Flower Arrangements and Food

"This," Schaeffer writes, "is the day of the 'TV frozen dinner'... The art of living together, of being a family, is being lost" (Schaeffer, 100-101). Though the healthy relationships that make a home and a family successful are based on good communication, Schaeffer argues that small things like flower arrangements or extra touches to ordinary meals have a lot to do with that communication. Both at home alone

with one's family and while showing biblical hospitality to guests, an atmosphere of "welcome and understanding" can be created (Schaeffer, 99):

Great moments of trust and confidence do not spring out of concrete.... An atmosphere of love and consideration, in which one is trying to anticipate the mood of others, requires something tangible, something that can be seen, as well as a feeling inside oneself. Expression which is felt and understood is not just conveyed in words, but in words accompanied by actions. (Schaeffer, 107)

This idea that meals are not just about food is reflected in the book of Revelation. In chapter 19, John writes about the day when all God's people will sit down to "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Schaeffer, 126). This meal together will be a grand expression of unity in Christ.

Schaeffer suggests making floral centerpieces for the table or bringing a flower to an elderly friend. She suggests variety in menu planning and experimentation with recipes. "God could have created all food as a bland mixture of proper nutrients," she writes, but instead He gave many diverse kinds of food and gave man the ability to enjoy the differences (Schaeffer, 114). She urges taking "this form of 'Hidden Art' seriously, with at least some degree of sensitivity for producing and enjoying the beauty which will increase and enhance communication" (Schaeffer, 132).

A major theme of *The Hidden Art of Homemaking* is that "beauty is important to God". In this chapter on flower arrangements, Schaeffer points out that God *invented* beauty. For example, He planned a tabernacle of great beauty and called his people to make His beautiful plans reality. He gave beauty "to Adam and Eve as a background for their walks in the cool of the evening". And so,

...if you have been afraid that your love of beautiful flowers and the flickering flame of the candle is somehow less spiritual than living in starkness and ugliness, remember that He who created you to be creative gave you the things with which to make beauty and gave you the sensitivity to appreciate and respond to His creation. (Schaeffer, 109)

Writing

Writing, in prose or poetry, is another way in which we can communicate and enrich our own and other's lives.

If you feel you have an unrecognized talent for writing, or if you simply love to write and want to do it, my advice is *write*. But write without ambitious pride, which makes you feel it is a 'waste' to write what will never be published. (Schaeffer, 136)

Schaeffer urges writing letters and notes both to family members away from home and those at home. A benefit to this would be that "it is also possible to write of spiritual things, establishing a relationship which can continue in conversation when the homecoming takes place" (Schaeffer, 139).

For those who have trouble expressing their ideas when attention is focused on them, she suggests that "writing and outlining his ideas enables him to explain what he wants to say so much more easily, and enables the other people to know him, the real person who has disappeared behind the wall of incoherence" (Schaeffer, 144). Additionally, writing out the things one has to say to God can be an aid to focused, worthwhile prayers, especially for the one whose "mind wanders off to a dozen different thoughts in a dozen different directions while praying" (Schaeffer, 144). "After all," Schaeffer concludes, "God has communicated with us in writing. His word, the Bible, is just this... God has spoken" (Schaeffer, 145).

Drama

Closely connected with Schaeffer's ideas on writing are her ideas for people with dramatic ability. She urges the use and practice of dramatic skills at home, domestically, for one's friends and family, especially children. Reading aloud, besides being an excellent way to "exercise the use of one's voice and expression", has the potential to lead to helpful, enriching discussions of the ideas the book presents. "Attitudes and ideas come out which might never be brought out in ordinary conversation. It gives the family a background for thinking and growing in their concepts and understanding, *together*, rather than always separately" (Schaeffer, 149).

Creative Recreation

Creative recreation is Schaeffer's next topic. This is the practice of some of the ideas already presented in previous chapters, as well as an inspiration for more creative ideas. She defines:

Firstly, it is recreation which produces creative results, stimulates creativity, refreshes one's ideas and stirs one to

“produce”. Secondly, it is recreation which is the *result* of original ideas, creative because someone has creatively *planned* an evening, a day, an occupation which in itself is fresh and different. (Schaeffer, 165)

She suggests planning special entertainments for one’s family or going hiking or picnicking far away from daily routine. She points out that getting tired out this way is very different from “mental and nervous tiredness”, but leads to more refreshing sleep and clearer thought (Schaeffer, 169).

Creative ideas are apt to flow in the midst of the creativity expressed in God’s creation, as one is temporarily separated from the confusion of conflicting voices which would separate us from the simple basic realities of what “is” – and this is especially true today, when so much of what man builds, paints, and writes, not only has not place for God but has no place for nature or man either. (Schaeffer, 170)

Clothing

Within Christianity, there are many different ideas about what sort of clothing is proper. But Schaeffer does not make these sorts of distinctions, but rather urges modesty, good stewardship, beauty and charity in not being extravagant and dressing fittingly for the situation. Her main focus is “creativity, beauty, and aesthetic taste” in clothing, citing the example of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 (Schaeffer, 191). She quotes Matthew 6:28-30, where Jesus says,

Why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you?

Schaeffer explains,

He is claiming much more than simple “utility”, since He says that He who designed the clothing seen on the flowers is the same One who will provide for us... We are told here that He not only created the flowers but that we can think of this in relationship to our clothing... Yes, we can see the kind of

clothing God designs when we look at the flowers.
(Schaeffer, 185, 184)

Integration and Environment

Just as our clothing should not, by ugliness or oddness, “erect petty but damaging barriers to communication”, neither should our environment. As Christians who have an important message to communicate, every possible creative aid to communication should be used to aid integration (Schaeffer, 189). Because of the differences between people of different age, color, social status, and more, integration is a very important issue for Christians. Schaeffer explains how this relates to creative living:

True integration is a matter of people really feeling a oneness with others and attempting to understand them – in personal communication of the sort that takes place around fireplaces, washing dishes together, and discovering things in common together.... (Schaeffer, 200)

Artistically creating environments which encourage communication is one way in which Christians can begin to practice on earth the glorious unity that will be found in Heaven, as people “from every nation, tribe, people and language” together praise the Lamb (Rev. 7:9-11).

Conclusion

Throughout her writing, Schaeffer frequently places emphasis on beauty – beauty that reflects the beauty of the universe in which God has placed mankind; beauty in the art mankind has been given the ability to create; and, most of all, “the... beauty in human relationships” (Schaeffer, 205). Considering the fact that Jesus came to earth and died so that we could have a beautiful relationship with God, Schaeffer’s focus on ideas that help relationships reflects a biblical mindset.

While there is much more to art than the ordinary, everyday kind that Edith Schaeffer discusses, her book is very helpful to those who are trying to develop a biblical worldview regarding the arts. Her emphasis on using the talents God has given, in the place God has put you, agrees with the Bible’s teaching. For example, Paul says, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men... It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Col. 3:23). Schaeffer lays down the necessary biblical foundations for the practical aspects of practicing a Christian worldview in each of the areas she

discusses. She urges Christians to use their God-given capabilities and to take their responsibilities seriously.



The chapel fireplace

Illustration from Edith Schaeffer's L'Abri

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⁶ Edith Schaeffer, *L'Abri* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1992), 101.

Rethinking the Promise of Proverbs 22:6

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Of the numerous passages in the Scriptures which admonish the parent concerning the rearing of children, the Book of Proverbs contains some of the most pithy and memorable. Who cannot finish the citation, "Spare the rod and..."? Numerous proverbs have endured in the collective consciousness of our society due to their candid and brilliantly formulated verities, which distill the complexity of our human condition into delightful simplicity. Others, however, give us pause when considering the weighty responsibilities and ethical implications of the text. Perhaps the most provocative exhortation to parents can be found in Proverbs 22:6:

**Train the child for the path of his life, and when he is old,
he will not depart from it.**

Here we have an extraordinary verse. Human life is divided into the spheres of familial development and later, mature deportment. It appears to be a promise, if not a formula, by which the parental training and the child's later lifestyle will enjoy unequivocal continuity. Although the two phases of life are recognized, they are, indeed, inextricably joined via the imparted path. It is not surprising, then, when encountering this proverb in the local church, that the element of continuity has become a formula of success, extrapolated with mathematical precision. Which one of us has not met parents who have

adopted this proverb as their pedagogical credo, taken comfort in its promise and known unruffled success? And are there not equally many in our churches who adopt, *bona fide*, the same responsibilities of consistent, genuine and loving training, only to be shattered by the dissolute lifestyles of their adult children? The former insist, correctly, that the Lord's promises have proven faithful. The latter compound their pain with the inevitable conclusion of parental failure. Why does this proverb appear only sometimes to hold true?

The answer is not readily apparent and lacks formulaic precision. While most assume that the proverb does not demand perfection,¹ we are yet disturbed by the uneven experience among believers; we ponder: What of the training? Has the parents' "faith" been genuine and free of hypocrisy? Have there been unfortunate circumstances which have left some families exposed to damaging influences, hence nullifying otherwise good training? These questions, typically asked, resist any clear answer, for who can know or measure these things? If we attempt to do so, we quickly find ourselves in the place of Job's comforters, searching for the elusive root of guilt. Add to our inquiry the remarkable counter-examples of God's grace (such as nominally Christian or pagan households producing glowing disciples of Christ), and the outcome of our deliberations becomes more uncertain still. One thing does seem sure: there is not always an observable correspondence between parental training and the child's adult behaviour.

Perhaps we should inquire whether the common understanding of Proverbs 22:6 as a "formula for success" is, in some aspect, fundamentally flawed. Does Proverbs 22:6 make any promise at all? If so, are there conditions? Who actually carries responsibility? Is there any encouragement here for those who have trained children who have "left the way"? The following analysis is an attempt to answer this question by examining the constituent elements of the verse.

To train

The Hebrew verb **הִנְחִיל** means, when applied to persons, to train or initiate. As such, it is rare in its OT usage.² We find its only other

¹ The notion of the "way" and "departing from it" tend to be vague categories for most, so that the determination of what constitutes failure is inevitably lenient. The observable tendency is to overlook missteps as part of the learning, failure being adjudged only in extreme cases.

² Although the use of the verb here is singular, the Proverbs are not silent in the matter of training children. Instruction, **מָסַר**, is cited 24 times, most of which indicate parental training, as 1:8-9: "Listen, my son, to your father's

biblical incidence in Genesis 14:14, where Abraham calls forth his “trained” men to help recover his nephew, Lot.³ The verb has an element of “starting off” in its meaning, as the translators of the New English Bible, for instance, have elected to show in their rendering of this verse, “Start a boy on the right path...” The sense, then, is a training which inaugurates, or more graphically, launches the child into adulthood (and, ultimately, unto the safe haven of old age). Here we find, typical of the proverbial form, the drawing together of extremes. In this case the initiation and completion of life, as seen in the child and the old man, illustrate the ultimate value and wisdom of the author’s command to train. The effort expended is valuable, because, simply put, instruction does not lose its vitality. The training which is imparted belongs to those things which, like wisdom, are timeless and suffer no depreciation. The proverb captures this truth, and is intended to strengthen the parents in their sacred charge. The emphasis is, then, not actually the child (as many read the verse), but rather the parents, and their crucial didactic role in the child’s life. Our proverb’s decidedly positive outcome depends, not upon the child, but upon the initial discipline of training. As the voice of wisdom calls out elsewhere in Proverbs for children to heed parental instruction (with stern warnings!),⁴ our verse calls the parents to the responsibility of providing this instruction. The tenor here is encouraging; for those who undertake this considerable endeavour (in obedience), the results are

instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.” An interesting aspect of instruction is that it is treated as an object which can be received (the wise) or despised (the fool). The responsibility here is placed upon the young, and the resultant path is determined by this choice. In terms of understanding our passage, it is unfortunate that the LXX cannot be consulted, as this verse was not transmitted in the Greek OT text.

³ The verb is elsewhere used to convey the sense of beginning or dedication, for example of a house (Deut. 20:5) or the Temple (1 Kgs. 8:63). The nominal form, הַנְּכִיחַ is translated “dedication, consecration”. Examples can be found in 2 Chr. 7:9 (the altar), Neh.12:27 (the wall of Jerusalem), or most famously, 1 Macc. 4:52, in the (re)dedication of the (desecrated) Temple under Judas Maccabeus on the 25th of Chislev, faithfully remembered today as *Hanukkah*.

⁴ It should be noted that the book of Proverbs assumes *shared* responsibility for the child’s eventual choice of lifestyle, being replete with commands to children, as well. The instruction stands between parent and child as objective truth, which the child may indeed reject (depicted as being hardened to instruction). There appears to be no assumption that the parents are solely responsible for the outcome.

sure (promise).⁵ A parent might well wish for more details, considering the pivotal role of their training in the child's life. The brevity of the proverbial form precludes, however, the inclusion of any methodological tips or didactic goals. It appears that the author assumes a certain level of consensus in the matter of training, or perhaps simply allows for a degree of latitude in terms of its implementation.⁶

The path

As our proverb does not include the particulars of training, its objective, "his way", is similarly lacking in descriptive detail. Here we find the common noun, דרך, which means way or path in both the literal and figurative senses. 22:6, of course, is speaking of a figurative path, a way of living. It should be noted that the noun is modified as "his path", i.e., the path of the child to be trained. This may be a reference to instruction appropriate for a child (basic skills), but it seems more likely that the common translation "in the way he should go" catches the sense of training which is fitting for the challenges of adult life, as well. This would be in concord with the broader use of the word in the Hebrew Bible, which indicates an observable manner of living. Not surprisingly, the "path" is usually characterized as either good or evil. In Genesis 6:12, we read that the people of earth had adopted corrupt ways, resulting in the judgment of the deluge. Prominent OT figures, including the kings of Israel and Judah, were assessed in terms of their "way". The "way of the Lord", in turn, serves as the universal rubric for covenant fidelity and as a contrast to the lifestyle of the unbeliever or apostate. The Book of Proverbs contains the most instances of the word, and follows the broader biblical pattern of identifying the path of life in either positive or negative terms. Those who are on the wrong "path of death" are the fool (refusing wisdom and instruction), the sluggard, seducers, liars, the wicked, etc. In contrast, the righteous and wise walk in the way of wisdom and life, the "way of the Lord." Although the Proverbs do not explicate the term, it is most certainly a

⁵ As children receive both command and promise in the fifth commandment, it may be that our verse provides a similar command-promise pattern for parents. If so, the expectations of faithfulness in the life of the instructed child should be extrapolated in similar terms to our understanding of the considerable blessings promised to obedient children.

⁶ A brief scanning of the Book of Proverbs shows that there was much being said about training children, including matters and methods of correction, instruction, discipline, and establishing/avoiding habits, all seasoned with vivid illustrations.

reference to God's will as revealed in the narratives of the Patriarchs, as well as the instruction of the Law and the Prophets. For the faithful follower of Yahweh, "the way of the Lord" always played the central role of ethical (re)orientation. We can assume that the intended "child's way" was, in terms of instruction, cast by the faithful recounting of the ancient traditions (portraying both good and evil), with particular attention given to the gracious and sovereign works of God.

The way, then, can be characterized as being a manner of living which is learned through the process of instruction and carefully held in contrast to the way of evil. Not merely a single principle from which life is interpreted, it is a full-bodied *Weltanschauung* that integrates the complexities of life with the character and will of God. The command assumes that the parents themselves, as engaged believers, are intimately familiar with the "curriculum". The child is a different story, however. In the initial stages of instruction, this "way of the Lord" must be seen as independent of the child, since it is being mediated (and therefore presented) via the parent. It cannot properly be considered to be the "child's way" until the child has, for lack of a better word, internalized it. The Proverbs speak of "receiving" instruction; this is, it would seem, a process of continual reception and internalization until the point when the "way" truly becomes the child's. The biblical accounts indicate that children at times "walked in the way of their fathers" (for better or worse!), or as with the sons of Eli, chose to reject the lifestyle and instruction of the parents.⁷ Ultimately, then, what is adopted and internalized by the child, good or evil, determines the path of life.

To depart

This word, rendered סר in Hebrew, means, both literally and figuratively, to leave, turn aside, depart. It is haunting in its tone, for it indicates the movement from good to evil, from truth towards darkness. As a matter of life, this infidelity to the truth touches us all: "All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one." (Ps. 14:3; Pauline citation, Rom. 3:10-12). Beyond the universal turning away that is part of fallen humanity, the

⁷ 1 Sam. 2. The sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, had disregarded their father's instruction and dishonoured both him and the Lord. For this the Lord planned to cut them off from long life and blessing (the promises contained in the fifth commandment). Here we see the responsibility for the failure of instruction placed upon the child. Note the positive counter-example of Samuel, who also grew up in Eli's household.

Scripture draws our attention to individuals (and of course, the nation of Israel) who are in danger of departing from the path. This can be seen in the Lord's instruction to Joshua in Joshua 1:7. Note the element of promise here: "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go."⁸ And, as we have seen, the biblical record informs us that it is indeed possible for a child, like the people of Israel and her kings, to reject the instruction of parents (and the Lord). How can it be, then, that our verse claims that the child will not depart from the path?⁹ The simplest answer, of course, is that the child never truly received/adopted the parental instruction, a possibility noted above. Here we could end our deliberations and accept that the discrete responsibilities of instruction and reception operate in total isolation, and that our verse only appears to indicate an intimate bond between the two. The "promise", then, is actually only an observation of the potential of good training, nothing more. This, however, is not the case. There is a clear promissory element attached to obedience to the Lord's command, which we may not dismiss. But how can we make sense of the promise in light of the possibility of the child rejecting instruction, as is manifestly evident in both the Scripture and our own experience?

The answer may be found in a closer analysis of the biblical use of the verb סָר. As noted above, it has a literal sense, such as to turn away from a path, turn into a house, etc. This is quite common in the OT narrative. Its most infrequent usage, in contrast, is of that mentioned above, when a person (or the people of God) figuratively leave the way by turning from God's instruction. This has been the meaning associated with our verse: the child, being instructed in the way, consequently remains in it. Here the emphasis is the child, and his/her conformity to the instruction. The emphasis of our verse, however, is not foremost upon the child, but upon the parents' obedience to the command to instruct. Instruction, then, is the condition and guarantor of the promise, not the child (who, without instruction would be as the undisciplined fool spoken of in the Proverbs). The impartation and integration of the training in the child's life is what acts as leaven;

⁸ See also Exod. 32:8; Deut. 9:12, 11:16; Judg. 2:17; the people of Israel; Deut. 17:17, instructions to the king.

⁹ If instruction always carries positive results, then the case law found in Deut. 21:18-21 cannot be logically explained. The parental instruction is assumed to be adequate, and the responsibility for disobedience and rebellion is laid solely at the feet of the child.

without it, there is no expectation of ultimate success. This brings us to another, more frequent usage of the verb סָרָה. Here we do not find a person remaining or leaving an essential object such as the way (where the person is central and actively effects a change through departing), but rather the essential object departs from the person(s). A few examples illustrate this particular usage, with the verb to depart in boldface:

- Genesis 49:10: Jacob pronounces blessings upon his sons, including this prophecy: “The scepter will not **depart** from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.”
- Deuteronomy 4:9: Here Moses commands regarding the lessons which the Israelites had learned in the wilderness: “Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or **let them slip** [depart] from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.”
- Judges 16:19, 20: This citation recounts how both his supernatural strength and the Lord Himself depart from Samson: “...Having put him to sleep on her lap, she called a man to shave off the seven braids of hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength **left** him. Then she called, ‘Samson, the Philistines are upon you!’ He awoke from his sleep and thought, ‘I’ll go out as before and shake myself free.’ But he did not know that the Lord had left him.”

What should we make of these examples?¹⁰ They serve to open the possibility of understanding our verse in another manner. If we allow that essential objects such as instruction, the Spirit of God or blessings can of themselves depart from an individual, the command of Proverbs 22:6 takes on a new meaning, with the emphasis placed appropriately upon the instruction itself. Our verse could then be rendered as follows:

¹⁰ See also: Exod. 8:11, 20; Lev. 13:58; Num. 14:9; 1 Sam. 6:3,16:23, where we see the hand of God operating in a negative manner; the rest are positive, sustaining workings of God, cf. Num. 12:10; 1 Sam. 16:14; 18:12; 28:15, 16; 2 Kgs. 17:18. It is interesting that these examples represent a departing, in some manner, of the presence or activity of God.

**Train the child for the path of his life, and when he is old,
it will not depart from him.**

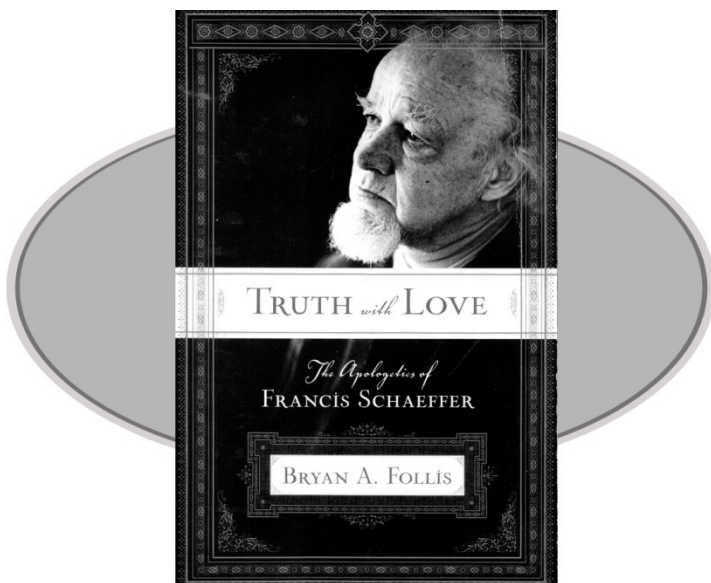
This reading, of course, goes against a long tradition of understanding the child as the main agent, with the assumption that leaving the path is the most natural reading. For this reason, any new configuration of the elements will sound awkward. But apart from the matter of familiarity, can this verse legitimately be translated in this manner? Are there not grammatical considerations which would prevent us from conveniently “swapping” the subject and object of the second clause? The answer, in this instance, depends upon one grammatical variable: do both the words for “child” and “path” share the same gender, so as to be interchangeable and hence indistinguishable in their pronominal forms? These words do indeed share the same gender (masculine), so that the second clause actually reads: “...and when he is old, he/it will not depart from it/him.” Our rendering (in boldface), then, is certainly grammatically possible.

Observations

We have noted that the traditional understanding of Proverbs 22:6 is attended with several difficulties regarding the role and effectiveness of instruction, the responsibility of both parent and child, and ultimately, whether this verse can be understood as promise. When understood as promise and read in the traditional manner, there is a need to account for failure. This is normally laid at the feet of the parents, or perhaps, if the reader diminishes the connection between training and promise, the child may be held responsible. Others may, in a candid moment, wonder if the promise has failed. We have attempted to show that the first clause of our verse is directed to the parents, with primary emphasis upon the efficacy of instruction. The promise of the second clause, then, does not depend upon the child, but is related, following the first clause, to the objective value of the instruction. If the obedience to instruction is indeed central to the proverb’s reasoning, a new rendering of the verse is not only possible, but preferable. The promise, then, is that the imparted way, like wisdom itself, remains as a living voice, calling to the child unto old age. If our analysis holds true, parents may be encouraged by the enduring nature of instruction, which remains to guide even a wayward child.

Book Reviews

Truth with Love: The Apologetics of Francis Schaeffer.
Bryan A. Follis. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006,
206 pp., paper. ISBN: 1-58134-774-X



Criticism of Francis Schaeffer's apologetics often seems unreal. I recall being assigned two books which gave a Van Tilian critique of Schaeffer. After reading them, I asked my professors why they assigned books which did not deal honestly with Schaeffer. Both books ignored days at L'Abri spent in prayer for conversions and claimed that Schaeffer depended on reason rather than God to win the lost. Bryan Follis' study is a refreshing change. The difference? Follis recognizes that you cannot understand Schaeffer until you look at his practice.

The title of his book says it all: “truth with love.” Schaeffer was deeply concerned for truth. He devoted time to answering questions and challenging people to see that only the triune, personal God of the Bible makes sense of the world in which we live. But time after time people testified that they were won by the love he and Edith expressed, love in deeds even more than in words. Follis quotes Os Guinness: “At the heart of everything he did and behind the genius of his life, were three very simple things you don’t often see in one person. A passionate love for God, a passionate love for people and a passionate love for truth.”¹

Follis’ book has its flaws. In comparing Schaeffer and Gordon Clark (Follis, 76-77), he appears to me to be less than fair to Clark. Clark would say that coherence is a necessary test for truth, but not necessarily sufficient, and while Clark stresses God’s Word over experience, he also looks for an experiential relationship to Christ. The reader may also note a kind of shotgun approach. Follis mentions several different “keys” to Schaeffer’s thinking. But these are minor flaws in a book that is well worth reading.

Follis begins with a very brief look at Schaeffer’s background. He discusses the apologetic views of Calvin and the Reformed tradition to which Schaeffer belonged. Then he considers some of the most prominent criticisms of Schaeffer’s work. He argues that those who considered Schaeffer a rationalist were mistaken; above all, they failed to take into account *True Spirituality*, which Schaeffer considered the basis of L’Abri and a counterbalance to the three books on apologetics (Follis, 88).

Many of the darts thrown at Schaeffer missed the mark because they assumed he was something he was not. Was Schaeffer a presuppositionalist or an evidentialist? The answer is “Neither.” He referred to presuppositions and used evidences, but not in the way those are used by their proponents. In fact, Follis argues effectively that Schaeffer was not even an apologist. Nor was he an academic. Rather, he was an evangelist (Follis, 122 ff). Everything he said, everything he did, was aimed at one target: bringing people to consider Jesus Christ and the salvation He won.

To that end he urged people to look at their presuppositions and see that they failed to explain the world in which we live. He asked them to consider our triune God and see that He does give a sufficient ground for the things we experience. He presented the gospel of Christ and

¹ Os Guinness, interviewed on “The Watching World,” Part III of “The Story of Francis and Edith Schaeffer,” produced by RBC Ministries for *Day of Discovery*, USA, 2003. As cited in Follis, 170.

called people to follow Him. He prayed that God would move them to accept Christ.

Follis argues that the defining method for Schaeffer was love. "...Even during the late 1960s, which was the heyday of intense philosophical discussion at L'Abri, it was Schaeffer's love and compassion that often won over many individuals." (Follis, 136) "... For Schaeffer how apologetics was conducted was as important as what was being said. . . . Without doubt, his approach was as much a part of his apologetics as was his argumentation." (Follis, 46) Love meant confronting the lost about their sin and need for repentance. Love demanded that you give honest answers to questions. Love also meant feeding people, providing shelter, caring for their bodily needs as well as their spiritual problems. Love was not just a tool for evangelism. Schaeffer did not practice love in order to save people; he sought their salvation because he loved them.

Truth with Love does not stop with an answer to criticisms of Schaeffer and a summary of his approach to the lost. It also challenges us to follow his example. The questions we face today may be different (though Follis shows that thirty years ago Schaeffer already saw what was coming and was addressing it), but the need is still biblical truth, presented with love. The need is still for loving, honest answers to questions, even if at times we need to raise the questions ourselves.

Despite our society's rejection of any idea of a final truth, God's people need to uphold and proclaim His truth as absolute.

We should continue to talk about objective truth (that is, truth that is true whether one believes it or not), and we should be unashamedly willing to promote Christianity as the truth that all people need to hear and respond to. We need to regain our confidence in the gospel as "true truth," and we need to regain our courage and so be willing to share this gospel with all people. (Follis, 153)

At the same time, we need to love those around us. The church should be so filled with love that it is visibly a community (Follis, 164). That such love is costly is seen in the sacrifices Francis and Edith Schaeffer offered in their ministry to the lost at L'Abri. But they show us the way.

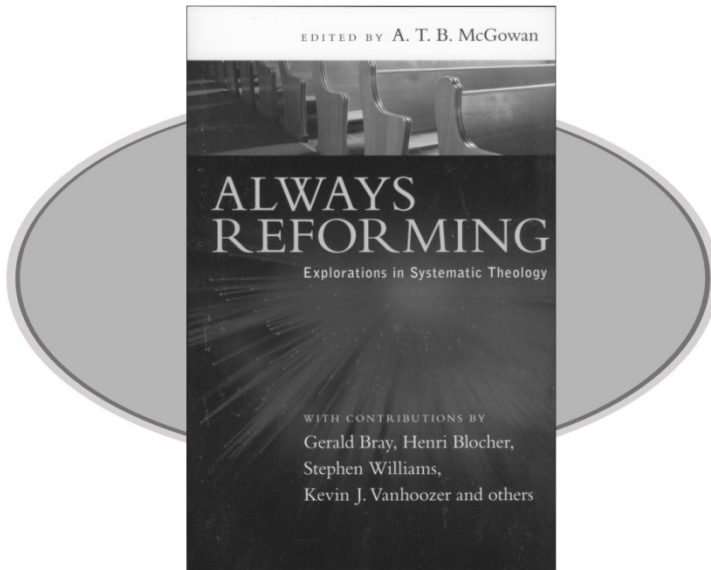
If we are to make a difference and if we are to practice community, then as we said before, we will need to review our existing time commitments. We must be willing to cut out

meaningless church activities imposed on us by tradition or social expectation, and we must individually be willing to sacrifice some of the leisure time presently reserved and restricted to ourselves (Follis, 164).

Truth with love. This was Schaeffer's "method". As Follis uncovers it, he challenges us to follow that example.

Reviewed by Donald A. Codling. Rev. Codling serves as the minister at Bedford Presbyterian Church, Bedford, Nova Scotia. He is also the Stated Clerk of the Eastern Canada Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America and the author of Sola Scriptura and the Revelatory Gifts: How Should Christians Deal with Present Day Prophecy? The book here under review, like all books reviewed in the Journal, is catalogued in the Haddington House Reading Library.

Always Reforming: Explorations in Systematic Theology.
Ed. A. T. B. McGowan. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006, 365 pp., paper. ISBN: 978-0-8308-2829-6



The introductory essay by A. T. B. McGowan, simply entitled “Introduction” and running from page 13 to page 18, is very critical to reading this collection of essays in *Always Reforming: Explorations in Systematic Theology*. McGowan’s thesis is that, “Although the Reformation took place in the sixteenth century, it is important to understand that this was the beginning of something and not the end” (p. 13). The tone and vision here come close to something we see emerging within The Commission on Theology in the World Reformed Fellowship, a commission of which A. T. B. McGowan is the chair. Thus, he was a logical choice as editor to this volume or as chair to such a commission. (I am unsure as to the chronological connection between these two, which is not of the essence here.) This collection, at its heart, steers the road between two extremes – the abandonment of confessional orthodox Christianity on the one hand and a rigid confessionalism on the other. Rather, the thesis is the balanced road of faithfulness to Scripture in the context of restating the truth to be faithful in fulfilling the mission of the people of the Lord today. So,

with that said, some readers will immediately decide to continue to “read on” or, alternatively, to go to another book.

This is an amazing collection of “explorations”, not definitive theological formulations. They are offered for further discussion and to help in our generation to lead to greater clarification both on some very important *loci* and also on the state of the theological system in evangelical and Reformed circles today. For example, Bray’s opening essay on “The Trinity: Where Do We Go from Here?” (pp. 19-40) is surely vintage Bray – the caliber of writing we have come to expect from this theologian.

The two longest essays are Robert Reymond’s “Classical Christology’s Future in Systematic Theology” (pp. 67-124) and Kevin J. Vanhoozer’s “On the Very Idea of a Theological System: An Essay in Aid of Triangulating Scripture, Church and World” (pp. 125-182). At fifty-seven pages each, they are significant essays in volume alone! Reymond’s begins on a very contemporary note by referencing Dan Brown, etc. He then takes us to the New Testament evidence for Jesus’ deity before examining some “problems” in the doctrine of the Son’s real incarnation. This leads logically to his discussion on the methods of systematic theology and biblical theology as applied to Christology and several other “problem” areas. In each instance, Reymond opens up the “problem” and then offers his solution. Here readers will find Reymond tells exactly with whom he agrees at certain points (Kaiser, Warfield, etc.) and with whom he disagrees (Helm and Erickson). His conclusions end with the Definition of Chalcedon. His essay is not light reading, nor are some of the other essays. I am not convinced this book will be standard fare for most laity; it will more likely be a book consulted by systematic theologians and graduate students.

You will notice the reference in Reymond’s essay to biblical theology and systematic theology. This I found to be an undercurrent in several of the essays in this collection. There are two essays which specifically highlight the theme – Richard Gamble’s “The Relationship between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology” (pp. 211-239) and Richard Gaffin’s “Union with Christ: Some Biblical and Theological Reflections” (pp. 271-288). Personally, I found Gamble’s article one of the most helpful essays in the book. Why? This is a current issue for many, and his essay really helps to clarify the history of the whole matter. This, for me, captured the book’s goal: to explore doctrines or themes of recent debate in evangelical theology.

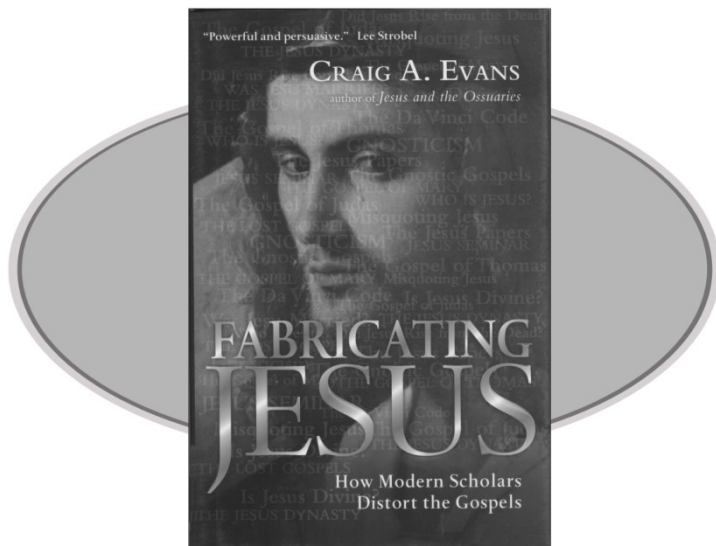
The other essays are deserving of attention – McGowan on the atonement, Henri Blocher on the Old and New Covenant, Cornelius

Venema on justification and Derek Thomas on the doctrine of the Church in the twenty-first century.

The editor has chosen to integrate the essays and not separate out the methodological from the doctrinal. I personally would have opted for another approach, but this is not a critical issue. There was one unfortunate typographical error (p. 344) for the *Directory for the Public Worship of God* (1545), rather than 1645. Reviewers inevitably say with any collection that they find a certain unevenness. This is often in part due to one's particular interests. The same will be said of this collection. It is a helpful work, and no doubt it will prove useful to furthering clarity in theological discussions today.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

***Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels.* Craig A. Evans. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006, 290 pp., h.c. ISBN: 978-0830833184**



Dr. Evans has done a formidable service to evangelical Christianity. He has contended with current expressions of liberal academia from an academically conservative standpoint in a vein similar to such past notable German conservative scholars as Adolf Schlatter, Hermann Cremer and Martin Kähler. Evans has ably championed the integrity of the original New Testament documents as reliable evidence of the traditional Historical Jesus. Distilling from a carefully gained wealth of information on Historical Jesus research, Evans critically examines the questionable research methods of certain scholars and popular writers and judicially evaluates extracanonical material which has been used in recent times to fabricate novel pictures of Jesus, which Evans terms “pseudo-Jesuses” (p. 16).

He divides his work into nine issues addressing them consecutively. These are, “...(1) misplaced faith and misguided suspicions, (2) cramped starting points and overly strict critical methods, (3) questionable texts from later centuries, (4) appeals to contexts alien to Jesus’ actual environment, (5) skeletal sayings devoid of context altogether, (6) failure to take into account Jesus’ mighty deeds, (7)

dubious use of Josephus and other resources of late antiquity, (8) anachronisms and exaggerated claims, and (9) hokum history and bogus findings” (p. 16). In addition, to these is included appendices treating the *agrapha* and the Gospel of Judas.

Having had significant interaction with liberal higher criticism and being only too aware of its particular philosophical enticements, I appreciate the candour with which Evans briefly traces the development of his own academic maturation as a sound Historical Jesus scholar and believing Christian. This introduction serves to draw into focus the question of chapter one, “why some scholars and clergy experience a crisis of faith and make radical shifts” (p. 20) in evaluating Jesus? The factors which produce a spiritual and psychological crisis are misplaced faith, of a naïve fundamental type clinging to institutionalized doctrines, and misguided suspicions which arise from a higher criticism more skeptical, and radically so, than scientific (p. 21). Evans renders four representative examples in the work of Robert Funk, James Robinson, Robert Price and Bart Ehrman.

Appropriately, chapter two deals with the flawed critical methods of some scholars, particularly those of the Jesus Seminar. They severely bias their results by starting with their own conclusions (p. 34). According to Evans, their presumptions concern the illiteracy of Jesus, his lack of interest in Scripture, his non-eschatology and the absence of his Messianic self-understanding. What is more appalling is the excessively skeptical, faulty and selective method of authentication used by these scholars, for, “this way of thinking is a major contributor to distorted portraits of Jesus and the Gospels in much of today’s radical scholarship” (p. 46).

Chapters three and four are held together by an introduction to and deserved “critical scrutiny” (p. 52) of five extracanonical Gospels. Chapter three deals exclusively with the Gospel of Thomas; while chapter four analyzes the Gospel of Peter, the Egerton Gospel, the Gospel of Mary and the Secret Gospel of Mark (a hoax). These chapters are highly informative and are a must-read for anyone wishing to gain a true critical bearing in Historical Jesus Studies. The problem concerning popular versions of the non-New Testament Jesus is, according to Evans, reducible to the untenable early dating of the composition of the extracanonical Gospels to the early second and even to the first centuries (p. 54). It is argued that such a dating privileges them to the same historical value as the canonical Gospels (p. 54). Some scholars “do this by attempting to extract early, hypothetical forms of the text from the actual texts that we have. But they do this without any evidence” (p. 56). Evans largely sees that John Dominic Crossan

must bear much of the responsibility for propagating flawed dates for extracanonical documents.

The sheer impossibility of Jesus as a Mediterranean Cynic is made perspicuous by Evans in chapter five. Reliable archaeological information indicates no Cynic presence in Galilee at the time of Christ (p. 113-119). Jesus' life and understanding was defined by the synagogue (p. 122). Those who see Jesus as a Cynic are misled by their own expectations in mistaking the semblance of certain similarities as real.

Another problem created primarily by members of the Jesus Seminar is to de-contextualize the sayings of Jesus, to "cut the sayings of Jesus out of their Gospel contexts" (p. 126), believing the disciples were incapable of faithfully transmitting Jesus' teachings. In chapter six, Evans demonstrates this as a baseless methodology in light of Scriptural example (p. 126-138). Chapter seven shows that the New Testament picture of Jesus is also distorted by the scholarly neglect and under appreciation of his "works of power" (p. 139) and by the undue concern for him as a philosopher, laconic sage (p. 139).

Evans in chapter eight deals with a familiar problem, that is the, "questionable use of Josephus and related sources from late antiquity" (p. 158) in order to discredit the historical reliability of the Gospels. Evans states that, "when allowance is made for what Josephus wished to withhold and what the New Testament Evangelists wished to emphasize, the accounts found in Josephus and in the New Testament Gospels complement one another" (p. 163).

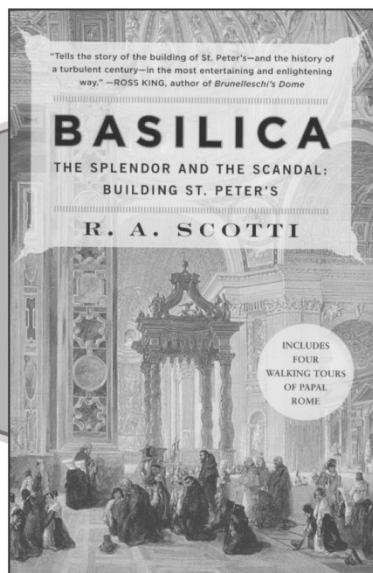
Chapters nine and ten show the consequence of the attempt by some scholars to "smuggle quirky Jesuses of the second- and third-century Gospels into the first century as rivals to the more familiar first-century Jesus of the New Testament" (p. 204). The result is a "preposterous" and "ludicrous" brood comprised of *The Da Vinci Code's* multiple Christianities, Bart Erhman's "lost Christianities", Jesus' faked death in Michael Baigent's *The Jesus Papers*, the bogus life of Jesus in Barbara Thiering's books, Dolores Cannon's psychic ravings, and the blasphemous, alternate non-ancestry of Jesus in Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln's *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, and the list goes on. As Dr. Evans makes clear, what is important to realize is that the popularity of such nonsense all points to the incredulous irrationality and stupefying subjectivity of our society (p. 204). Evans concludes with a chapter reaffirming the sane and glorious picture of the New Testament Jesus.

Fabricating Jesus is a book well worth reading. Given the breadth of the subject matter, Evans has tailored his work relatively well,

making the subject matter approachable; still he gives ample endnotes for further reading. The book is useful primarily for pastors, preachers and developing scholars but is also a good resource for interested laity. It may be a slight stretch for popular readership; however, it is undoubtedly a necessary illuminating instrument for the cause of Christ in this spiritually bankrupt society. Craig Evans is the Payzant Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Director of MA Program at Acadia Divinity College, Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

Reviewed by Frank Z. Kovács, the tutor for the Bible Distance Courses at Haddington House and pastor of the Reformed Hungarian Church in Toronto, Ontario. He has recently completed his M.Th. with North-West University in Potchefstroom, South Africa, and is a Ph.D. candidate there in Lukan studies.

***Basilica – The Splendor and the Scandal: Building St. Peter’s.* Rita A. Scotti. New York/London: Penguin/Plume, 2006, 315 pp., paper. ISBN: 978-0-452-28860-7**



Yes, I am fascinated by church architecture, and I must admit that is why I first decided to read this book. My second reason was because, quite frankly, I was looking for something light to read while flying from Montreal to Nairobi. But I was wrong – it turned out to be far more than I bargained for. This book is not only about one of the greatest architectural marvels of the world; it is also a profoundly insightful look at the Renaissance and the Reformation! A reviewer is to save their punch until the end, but I will tell it now – what a surprise I have had and what a fascinating way to study Reformation Church history!

The author, Rita Scotti, knows about the world of St. Peter’s Basilica, Rome. Her father was a friend of the future Pope Paul VI, who visited her family in America. She also understands well the Italian world and culture, yet she writes as one who sees the profound implications of the building of this present basilica. Read her in the majestic prose with which she writes:

Both a brilliant failure and an extraordinary feat of architecture and engineering, the Basilica of St. Peter was the most monumental undertaking of the High Renaissance, and the story of its construction is as convoluted and controversial as the Church it serves. It is a grand adventure. A clash of titans in cassocks and artists' smocks. A sprawling saga of glorious imagination, petty jealousy, magnanimous collaborations, and immaculate cost. Begun as a symbol of Christian unity, the Basilica would fracture the Church and ignite the Protestant Reformation. (p. xviii)

There are at minimum four layers throughout this book. There is clearly the architectural story, and this is ably told. There is the world of the architects and artists; they are properly one and the same. There is the world of the Roman Catholic leaders and the ecclesiastical climate of the time period, also contextually well portrayed. And there is the world of personality, culture and analysis. The last is sometimes the most difficult, yet in many ways the most rewarding.

Scotti transports us back in time to the first St. Peter's Basilica, built by Emperor Constantine. She then takes us twelve hundred years forward, to 1506, when this Basilica started to be torn down to make way for the laying of the first stone for the new St. Peter's. She then leads the reader to the great men of the Renaissance who worked on this, from Bramante down to Bernini, and to the world of the Baroque and the consecration in 1626. For a Protestant, what a period of history, 1506-1626 – Renaissance, Reformation, Counter-Reformation and Inquisition; in many ways, this very building was profoundly at the centre of each. This city and church were for the unity of Christendom – “a centre”. What men these church leaders were and what lives they lived. But should we be surprised? What parties and ethnic European tensions there were. What corruptions in overspending. And then we have it in the author's own words in chapter sixteen: “Salvation For Sale” – interestingly enough, the shortest chapter in the book.

Finally, there stood the zenith of the Catholic or Counter-Reformation, a completed St. Peter's, to make the “most audacious statement of its [the Roman Catholic Church's] supremacy” (p. 228). There is the analysis layer; I had never seen St. Peter's in this light before. I think the author is true on this point; in other places I am not always convinced (p. 269).

I sincerely hope many will read *Basilica*, because it will help you to think more clearly about who you are and what you believe. It will give a vast education on art, architecture and Church history. And it will

force you to ask some serious questions: Where is real unity found in the Church? How different are the “lordship” practices which even some of today’s Protestant leaders practise from the stories we find in this book? How does nationalism play itself out today in churches?

The book is well illustrated with a visual glossary, black and white illustrations and a few sketches in the text. The thirty chapters generally read very well and are appropriately divided into four parts: The Christian Caesar 1503-1513, The Deplorable Medici Popes 1513-1534, The Michelangelo Imperative 1546-1626 and Bernini’s Grand Illusions 1623-1667. On occasion, one finds a few paragraphs somewhat tedious because the vocabulary or the names are not always familiar, but nonetheless a good challenge to the reader.

Who should read this? – evangelical Christians who want to view the setting of the Renaissance and Reformation on a different canvas. And it will now be on the reading list for when I teach the Renaissance and Reformation.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

Book Notices

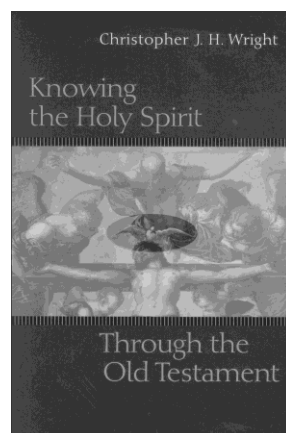
In *Book Notices* we inform readers about works which have been recently added to the Haddington House Library. Most entrants are currently in print, but on occasion we include rare and valuable books we have acquired which students and patrons may want to come and consult. *Book Notices* are made in 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

***Knowing the Holy Spirit Through the Old Testament.* Christopher J. H. Wright. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006, 159 pp., paper. ISBN: 978-0-8303-2591-2**

This book is in a series by Christopher Wright looking at all three persons of the Trinity in the Old Testament. In this work, Wright looks at the work of the Spirit through His works in creation and redemption in five sections: 1.) The Creating Spirit, 2.) The Empowering Spirit, 3.) The Prophetic Spirit, 4.) The Anointing Spirit and 5.) The Coming Spirit. In each section, Wright taps into the great wealth of Old Testament history and personalities to give us a more all-encompassing picture of the Spirit's work while complementing it with the witness of the New Testament writers.

Wright correctly diagnoses the problem of not recognizing the work of the Spirit in our world by showing an unhealthy dualism between the



spiritual and physical worlds. He asks, "If we long for a deeper experience of the Spirit, what exactly are we looking for?" (p. 23) We can either see the world as the "wound-up clock" which God left to wind down or, on a daily basis, see the wonderful wisdom and care of the Spirit in the world around us. In all this, he says, we realize in a more profound way that "... the whole earth is full of his glory!" (Isa. 6:3) I found this aspect to be the most helpful part of the book.

Wright shows how the Spirit equipped ordinary people with creative and skillful gifts. He directs us to recognize another area where we can, on a daily basis, see the wisdom and work of the Spirit as we benefit from the skilful giftedness of people around us, even though we may not identify those gifts as typically spiritual in the New Testament sense of the word.

Through surveying the life of Moses, Wright shows how the Spirit equipped and empowered Moses with the wisdom, but more importantly, the holiness and strength of character he needed to be an effective leader. Again, we find here much in the way of personal application for all God's servants.

Other important areas deal with the promise of the Spirit's work in the inauguration and expansion of the Kingdom in the New Testament. Here special reference is given to the work of the Servant through whom would be displayed all the glorious operations of the Spirit of God.

However, one of the most regularly asked questions about the Spirit's work in the Old Testament is the relationship between the believer and the Holy Spirit in the pre-Pentecost church. I was disappointed to find little upon this topic in Wright's work. Nonetheless, Wright successfully draws us back into a truly biblical view of the person and work of the Spirit and isolates it from the modern imbalances we have come to associate with His work. Wright helpfully interacts with the reader throughout with questions and applications.

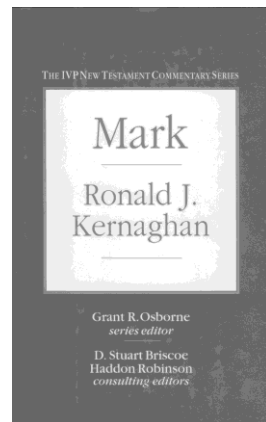
Knowing the Holy Spirit Through the Old Testament is a very popular treatment for the non-academic, while still packed with much help for the Old Testament expositor. This little volume does a great service in making the Third Person of the Trinity more known and glorious to our hearts and minds.

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.

Mark. Ronald J. Kernaghan. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007, 351 pp., hc. ISBN: 978-0-8308-1802-0

Readers will perhaps have their “commentary series” which they have come to appreciate and find valuable. On occasion, I have found some in “The IVP New Testament Commentary Series” becoming my friends as I have been studying a book of the Bible. I have read all of William Larkin Jr.’s *Acts* in this series and have noted its very strong missiological focus and application. The goal of the series is to combine scholarship with a pastoral heart. Details covering background and introductory issues are only given a cursory analysis in this particular volume. The commentary focus is exegesis and exposition.



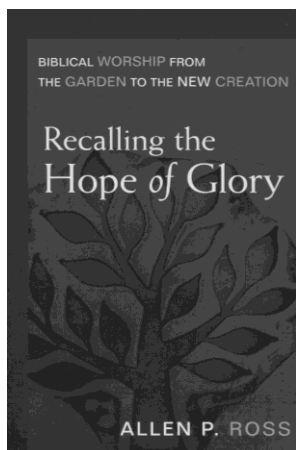
The author provides a brief introduction to each section of the text, which often includes an illustration. He then launches into the exposition. There are virtually no notes at the bottom of the page for more technical matters, which is fine to a point. Larkin certainly employed them on almost every page, but Kernaghan opted not to use them extensively. This makes me wonder about the overall editorial directives given to each author. I find it unusual that there is this much stylistic variation between Kernaghan’s *Mark* commentary and Larkin’s on *Acts*. I think that Kernaghan needed to employ more notes at the bottom of the page. For example, on Mark 8:27-30 we have reference to The Jesus Seminar. I am not sure there was sufficient explanation in the main body of the text to inform the readers as to what all this means. This lack of explanation assumes a certain background understanding of the readers.

Several years ago I did a review of R. Kent Hughes’ two volumes on Mark in the “Preaching the Word” series by Crossway Books. As I was reading Kernaghan, I found myself continually making comparisons to Kent Hughes’ work, which I liked better. I think it is more clearly focused as expository. Kernaghan’s work, though it tries

to bridge the gap between the scholarly and the expository, does not always satisfy me. Another work I preferred over it is Donald English's *The Message of Mark* in IVP's "The Bible Speaks Today" series. Kernaghan's *Mark* is not theologically disturbing and on occasion it is illuminating. Clearer editorial guidelines would have been helpful.

J. C. Whytock

***Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation.* Allen P. Ross. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2006, 591 pp., hc. ISBN: 0-8254-3578-1**



At last a full-orbed, biblical theology survey on worship from Genesis to Revelation, which is very accurately reflected in the title, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation*. This is a book primarily about corporate worship and is written by a senior biblical scholar who will be known by many readers through his other works on Genesis, Leviticus, Proverbs, and biblical Hebrew or on the New King James Version. As a teacher, Dr. Ross has moved from his German Baptist tradition to an evangelical Anglican tradition and has taught more recently at Trinity Episcopal School of Ministry and now at Beeson Divinity School. If you are wanting a book that is denominationally tight and centres upon the "modern worship wars", this is not the book. This volume has a much bigger canvas from which it works.

Ross' agenda is straightforward and yet detailed. Good biblical theology studies all the biblical testimony on a subject. Readers will now be indebted to Ross for a modern work that brings this together in one volume, even if they do not share all the author's conclusions. It will make our work much more manageable, not just because of his ten parts, but because anyone who takes a few minutes to scan his bibliography cannot help but see this is a major resource. You have the sense as you read this book that it will be a defining work for the future of discussions on worship.

Here are the ten parts of the book:

- Part 1: Worshipping the God **of** Glory
- Part 2: The Memory of Paradise
- Part 3: Worship with Proclamation: The Development of True Worship in a Religious World
- Part 4: Worship with Sacrifice: The Establishment of Sanctity in Worship
- Part 5: Worship as Praise: The Provision for Celebration in Worship
- Part 6: Worship Reformed: Prophetic Rebukes and Reforms
- Part 7: Worship Transformed: The New Setting of Worship and the New Covenant
- Part 8: Worship in Christ: Patterns of Worship in the Early Church
- Part 9: The Perfection of Worship in Glory
- Part 10: Basic Principles for More Glorious Worship

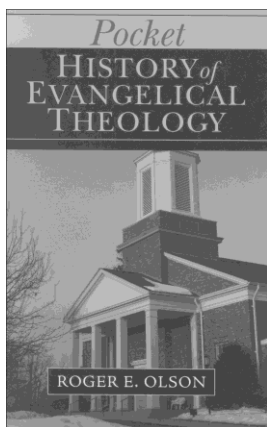
The author is able to offer conclusions in each part, and these are meant to lead us into our worship of the Lord. Thus, it moves here to practical theology.

Readers should not be “put-off” by the size of this book. It reads very well and will be accessible for students, laity and pastors. I believe *Recalling the Hope of Glory* will be very informative to all who read it.

J. C. Whytock

Systematic Theology

***Pocket History of Evangelical Theology*. Roger E. Olson. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007, 151 pp., paper. ISBN: 978-0-8308-2706-0**



What an amazing little volume! I only wish I had this when I was a beginning university student.

This slim volume is actually taken from a much larger work, *The Westminster Handbook to Evangelical Theology*, © 2004. Thus, *Pocket History of Evangelical Theology* is basically an abridgement of the main contours of *The Westminster Handbook*. The chief sections which have been omitted are “Movements and Organizations Related to Evangelical Theology” and “Traditional Doctrines in Evangelical Theology”.

What remains in this pocket book are four parts. Part one is the “Introduction”, and it nuances the definitions of “evangelicalism”. Part two looks at “The Roots of Evangelical Theology”. Unfortunately, it is here that I believe one section is missing in that Olson does not properly deal with the roots in the Reformation. He does this to a degree in part one; but by failing to do it in part two, it can skew the reader’s interpretation. Part three is “Postfundamentalist Evangelical Theology”. It is helpful but strikes me as incredibly American in its orientation. It fails to see evangelicalism in its global setting, and I am not just meaning British here. I am thinking also of the global south. Finally, part four, “Conclusion”, deals with “tensions”, or might we say “controversies”, within the evangelical fold; for example, the Donald Dayton/George Marsden divide. I am not sure all will be easily understood here, but it does introduce readers to the reality that there are diverse strands within the evangelical community.

Overall, this is a helpful pocket book. InterVarsity has produced several of these handbooks now; one that has received high praise is *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*.

J. C. Whytock

***Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity.* Eds. Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006, 382 pp., paper. ISBN: 978-0-8010-3112-0**

This is a difficult book to classify. Does it belong to the field of missiological studies or to the department of systematic theology? The answer, I am convinced, will increasingly be both. Missiology is helping us to see that there has often been a weakness in systematic theology in that it has failed to address the issue of a “missional theology”. This collection of papers on the subject will certainly help both missiologists and systematic theologians to exchange rather than to remain aloof from one another.

The book is divided into three parts: part one, “World Christianity and Theological Reflection”; part two, “Methodological Issues for Globalizing Theology”; and part three, “Implications of Globalizing Theology”. As Wilbert Shenk states in the “Foreword”: “To engage in ‘globalizing theology’ today means that we must guard the commitment to the particular and the local while taking account of the fact that we live with an intensified awareness of the global. If theology is to serve the church throughout the world, it must reflect this bifocal way of seeing...” (p. 11).

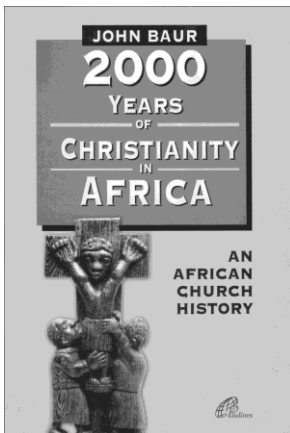
This summarizes well the book, which emerged out of a meeting of 180 missiologists and theologians who gathered at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in June, 2004, to honour Paul G. Heibert. The occasion resulted in the basis of *Globalizing Theology*, to which fifteen authors have contributed.

Students of systematic theology must read this work and related works. These issues are not going to go away. Instructors could easily use a particular paper for a class discussion or reading assignment. All involved in theological education will want to read Lois McKinney Douglas’ article, “Globalizing Theology and Theological Education” (pp. 267-287).

J. C. Whytock

Historical Theology

***2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History*, second revised edition. John Baur. Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1998, 576 pp., paper. ISBN: 9966-21-110-1**



Although there are numerous books on regional histories of the African Church, one does not find a lot on continental African history. In fact, I know of only two, the chief of which is John Hildebrandt's small paperback that has for many years dominated that landscape.¹ Baur's book is therefore a definite milestone toward a presentation of continental African Church history. (John Baur is a Fidei Donum priest from Switzerland. Since 1956 he has taught Church history in seminaries in both Tanzania and Kenya, East Africa. He has

made Africa his home and the African people his family. He is the author of *The Catholic Church in Kenya: A Centenary History*².)

The title is classic and definitely influenced Dr. Nick R. Needham and his series *2000 Years of Christ's Power*. Baur's book is encyclopedic in scope – 576 pages of fine print, covering the presence of Christianity in Africa since AD 62. The book is divided into four parts comprised of twenty chapters. Each part covers a specific time block. The divisions are:

Part I: Christian Antiquity in the Northern Half of Africa – AD 62-1500

¹ Jonathan Hildebrandt, *History of the Church in Africa: A Survey* (Ghana: Africa Christian Press, 1996).

² John Baur, *The Catholic Church in Kenya: A Centenary History* (Nairobi: St. Paul Publications, 1990).

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- Part II: Christianity in the Ancient African Kingdoms – 1400-1800
Part III: Foundation of Modern Christianity – 1792-1918
Part IV: Twentieth Century Christianity

Part I, comprised of only two chapters, is strategically placed. It is like an appetizer to a sumptuous four-course meal that Baur serves on African Church history. It opens by sharing how Christianity spread to the Northern African hinterland from the Mediterranean coast, Egypt and North Africa, which is considered to be the cradle of the African Church.

Part IV is the longest as Dr. Baur takes an historical bird's eye view of twentieth century Christianity in every African country south of the Sahara. One would not have read Baur in his element without having read this section.

Part II is the most exciting as it shows that the gospel had reached as far as Zaire (DRC today) and the Mwene Mutapa Empire (Zimbabwe and Mozambique) as early as AD 1500 – that is even before the Reformation started in Europe. Yet even more exciting is when one notes that those early missionaries had a deliberate mission strategy; namely, first targeting organized African ancient kingdoms with the gospel. It reminds one of Paul's method of targeting cities first. These early missionaries must have known that winning African family heads or kings of African ancient kingdoms with the gospel meant winning the entire family or kingdom.

One would do himself an injustice if he did not read the third part of the book. Baur calls it the Foundation of Modern Christianity in Africa. I liken it to the throes of moving from adolescence to adulthood in human growth. This period covers the time between 1792 and 1918. It was the time of incarnating Christianity to the African Church or self-theologizing /discipleship, as some will call it today.

Baur's book is well-researched, with eighteen fine-print pages of bibliography and very helpful sketch maps to aid the reader in identifying the areas he talks about. Those are necessary since many country names and boundaries have changed since independence, beginning in the early 1960s.

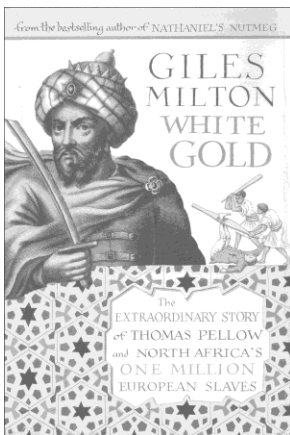
I must reluctantly suggest that the type-setting of the book could have been better. The left margins on the right hand pages are almost non-existent, thus giving the book a cluttered effect. I am also disappointed that the publisher decided in some cases to put the main titles in lower case and the sub-titles in upper case. Such a phenomenon gives the book a lop-sided look. Though openly stated, the book beams more on the Roman Catholic missionary trails and work than it does the

Protestants' (p. 16). Finally, I am inclined to think that the binding is unfit for a book of such magnitude.

All in all, Dr. Baur's work is timely and is a definite landmark on the landscape of African Church history. Written in simple English and yet abounding in food for thought, it is a book for both scholars and laity interested in this area. It is worth noting that Baur's pastoral concern is not lost in his intellectual engagement. As one reads the book, the devotional throbbings keep on touching the heart – a truly rare combination. His dedication reminds one of Thomas à Kempis' style, spirituality and piety. Baur's book throws a challenge to African Protestant church historians: who is going to light the Protestant missionary highways that Dr. Baur passed over with his doctrine of historical election? Only time will tell. Think about it.

Rev. Ronald Munyithya is the Principal of Common-Ground Theological Institute, Nairobi, Kenya, a former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Africa Evangelical Presbyterian Church and a graduate of Westminster Seminary and Geneva College.

White Gold: The Extraordinary Story of Thomas Pellow and North Africa's One Million European Slaves. Giles Milton, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2004, 316 pp., hc. ISBN: 0-340-79469-0



A little piece of history the “revisionists” would love to see disappear. This well researched and documented book by Giles Milton, a noted British journalist and writer and author of the bestseller *Nathaniel's Nutmeg*, tells the fascinating story of Thomas Pellow's twenty-three years of slavery in Sultan Moulay Ismail's Morocco. Milton's *Reader's Digest* style of writing captivates one's imagination as he recounts Thomas Pellow's life as a slave and his eventual escape and return to his native England in 1738. Intertwined with

Pellow's own experiences as a slave in Moulay Ismail's court are excerpts from letters of some of the other one million Europeans who

entered slavery in North Africa spanning from the early seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries. Most of these slaves were captured at sea or kidnapped from coastal European villages by the corsairs of Barbary. They were then sold into slavery to assist in the building of the imperial city of Meknes. Milton provides an overview of this slave trade from its inception to its ultimate destruction by the British fleet in August, 1816. In one of history's little ironies (understanding Providence in all of this), while some European shippers were sailing to West Africa in order to secure slaves for the American markets, others ended up in North Africa as slaves themselves. Few returned to their native land.

At this juncture in history, I find this book significant for two reasons. First, to no one's surprise, the anti-Christian and anti-American sentiments pervasive in the modern university's Department of History have disallowed the fuller story to come out. America is to feel perpetually sorry for the estimated four hundred thousand slaves imported within her borders from the early sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, and Christians are to grovel because some from our circles defended this practice. All the while nothing is mentioned of Europe's own losses at this time. In other words, all we know about is the black slave trade, but very little is known of the white slave trade. This is in no way meant to defend the American slave trade. The Church should have stood in unequivocal opposition to this travesty of justice. However, there is more to this story than most of us are aware.

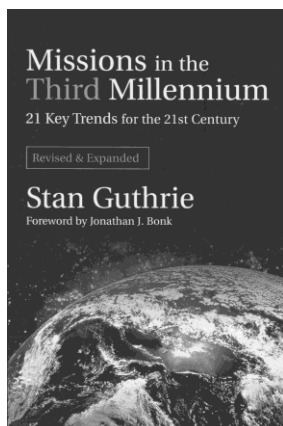
The second significance has to do with the twenty-first century's multicultural infatuation with Islam, at the same time refusing to acknowledge the active practice of slavery still going on in Muslim majority countries such as the Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, to mention a few. This modern slavery, an uncomfotability that remains by and large unmentioned in Western media outlets, is well documented and attested to by several Christian sources. Slavery continues to be a part of the modern Muslim faith, and only recently have such international organizations as the United Nations acknowledged it. Nonetheless, very little is being done to curb it.

Therefore, Giles Milton's book *White Gold* is a must read for any lover of history who wants to know the fuller story in order to formulate opinions of both past and present events.

Douglas L. Bylsma is a student with Haddington House and lives in Beamsville, Ontario.

Applied Theology

***Missions in the Third Millennium: 21 Key Trends for the 21st Century.* Revised and expanded edition. Stan Guthrie. Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2004, 253 pp., paper. ISBN: 1-84227-042-7**



It is very difficult to find a book which is both concise and accurate concerning mission trends at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Stan Guthrie's book, *Missions in the Third Millennium*, is just that. There are many books which will highlight one of these trends but few examine several. Some readers will say that certain sections are shallow (i.e., their particular interest did not receive all of the book's attention), yet the author is balanced and does not allow himself to have one trend dominate the text.

The charge of shallowness is easily met by the "Further Reading" list on each particular trend addressed at the chapter's conclusion. It is a skill to write with simplicity and economy, and that is this book's strength.

Guthrie has served as the editor of two noteworthy missions periodicals, and his reading lists reflect well his knowledge of current missiological material. This book will be invaluable for all professors teaching modern missiology courses and will provide direction to articles for student research. The discussion questions at the end of every chapter will allow for ease of assignment in the classroom or study group. This is a user-friendly textbook.

The book accepts the reality that there have been significant changes in the Church globally which have resulted in significant changes in the practice of missions. Guthrie helps us to see what these changes have been in an overview fashion. At times he gives very definite opinions

on a particular change or trend, while on other occasions he is more informational. I did not find this frustrating, as I view this as a seminar resource text and find that the author generally writes with balance.

I will resist telling you what he names as the twenty-one trends! Highly recommended for modern missions courses.

J. C. Whytock

***Confronting Kingdom Challenges: A Call to Global Christians to Carry the Burden Together.* Gen. ed. Samuel T. Logan, Jr. Wheaton: Crossway, 2007, 251 pp., paper. ISBN: 978-1-58134-863-7**

This book is a collection of fourteen addresses given at the General Assembly of the World Reformed Fellowship held in Johannesburg, South Africa, March, 2006. Having heard these, I eagerly awaited seeing them in edited print-form. I commend the editor and Crossway Books for producing a fine volume in such a timely fashion and at a price which will make it accessible as a paperback.

The collection centres around the theme “*Masibambisane*”, Zulu for “Let us carry the burden together.” It is organized into four parts: Part One, Theological Foundations; Part Two, Practical Applications–Sharing Challenges; Part Three, Practical Applications–Sharing Opportunities; and Part Four, A Final Challenge. With fourteen separate papers, it is very easy to miss the order of the four parts of the book and not see the full context of how the papers relate to and build upon each other.

Bishop Peter Jensen’s opening paper, “The Evangelistic Context of Burden Sharing”, is an exposition of Acts 13:48. He sets well the tone for the book when he says, “We are here because we are committed to the gospel going to all the world” (p. 28). Other addresses I found of particular value were those by Yusufu Turaki, “Sharing the Burden of Defending the Gospel”, and Victor Cole, “Sharing the Opportunity of Ministerial Spiritual Formation”. In my estimation, the latter is worth the entire price of the book.



Readers, there is some very difficult material here. Diane Langberg's article, "Sharing the Burden of Global Sex Trafficking", is not the normal fare for conferences of this nature. Symbolically, it brings an incredible reality check to our theological discussions.

Other writers include Ric Cannada, In Wham Kim, Charles Clayton, Peter Jones, David Haburchak, John Nicholls, Manuel Ortiz, Wilson Chow, Jimmy Lin and Ron Scates. I was encouraged to see a diverse geographic representation of contributors in this book, which reflects the changing realities of the global Christian community today. Some may argue that they want to see even more geographic diversity; but in my estimation, this collection represents a real step forward within the evangelical and Reformed community.

The book is indexed, includes a brief introduction by Samuel T. Logan, Jr., the Executive Secretary of the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF), and concludes with the WRF membership list as of 21 May, 2007.

J. C. Whytock

***When Charity Destroys Dignity: Overcoming Unhealthy Dependency in the Christian Movement.* Glenn J. Schwartz. Lancaster, PA: World Mission Associates, 2007, 373 pp., paper. ISBN: 978-0-9669735-4-9**

This book is destined to stir people up who are missiologists or Christians concerned with missions. Why? Amongst its central topics is money – that in itself will draw people to take sides. And this will not be the only issue which will generate lively discussion. I immediately read with interest Schwartz's material on medical mission institutions and his evaluation of the phenomena of the modern rise of short-term missions, not to mention just the book's basic point – "unhealthy dependency".

The volume comes highly recommended by some outstanding missiologists. Read what Ralph D. Winter wrote:

One of the most powerful factors in the growth of Christianity is the use and misuse of financial resources both local and foreign. Here is a book loaded with both down-to-earth practicalities and monumental implications, written by an experienced and knowledgeable missiologist. Open it to

any page and you will be drawn into gripping, real-life anecdotes and situations. No one serious about the most pervasive unsolved problems in missions today can possibly do without it. It is very urgent!

Equally powerful endorsements come from Arthur Glasser, David Howard and Dan Fountain.

The book is organized into twenty-four chapters plus a prologue, three appendices, a general bibliography and an index. Readers will find Appendix B, “Glossary of Terms Used in these Lessons”, very helpful, allowing for a reader-friendly text. This is one of the few places I have seen excellent definitions for E-1, E-2 and E-3 evangelism (p. 341).

However, Schwartz does not only “describe”; he also offers some thought-provoking discussion pointers to overcoming dependency in its many modern forms. I highly recommend this book. It will cause great discussion and deep meditation of soul. If you have not seriously considered the dependency syndrome in missions, then read this book.

Two related books are Jonathan Bonk’s *Missions and Money: Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem* (c. 1991) and John Rowell’s new book, *To Give or Not to Give* (c. 2007), which takes the opposite position from Schwartz.

J. C. Whytock

***Missions: The Biblical Motive and Aim.* John M. L. Young. Original 1962. Pittsburgh, PA: Crown and Covenant Publications, 2007, 156 pp., paper. ISBN: 978-1-884527-2-7**

John Young was born in Hamheung, Korea, of Canadian Presbyterian parents. He eventually returned to Canada and graduated from Acadia. Young went on to graduate from Westminster and Faith Seminaries in Philadelphia before serving as a missionary in Manchuria, China and Japan. He later returned to teach at Covenant College. This book, *Missions: The Biblical Motive and Aim*, is the summation of his “class notes” or the ten pamphlets which he used while teaching courses on missions.

The book is divided into three parts – the foundations, the confrontation and the destination. Each chapter concludes with “Study

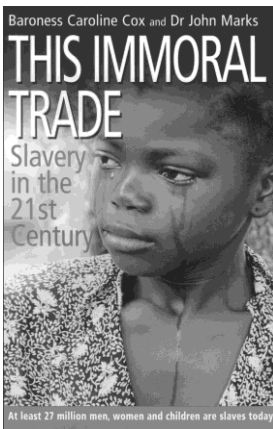
Questions”, generally about ten in number. This would be helpful either in a class at Sunday School or for the academic classroom. The foundation section presents a very solid, evangelical understanding for the basis of missions. The chapter here on “The Presuppositions of Missions” is well developed.

Chapter five, entitled “Elenitics and Missions”, under the section “The Confrontation”, betrays the language more of the 1950s and 1960s than of today. It is perhaps one of the weakest chapters in the book and quite limited in its presentation. Here, as elsewhere, the majority of illustrations tend to focus upon Japan or China, the places of the author’s first-hand experience. However, many of these illustrations remain highly instructive in various chapters of the book.

It is always healthy to not only read new books on a missiological subject but to also look back to older works such as this one. There is the added benefit of learning what the burning issues were for former generations and where these are parallel to or differ from our contemporary situation.

J. C. Whytock

***This Immoral Trade: Slavery in the 21st Century.* Baroness Caroline Cox and Dr. John Marks. Oxford, UK/ Grand Rapids: Monarch Books, 2006, 175 pp., paper. ISBN: 978-0-8254-6131-6**



Baroness Caroline Cox has devoted much of her life, frequently at great personal peril, to aid and advocacy for the most isolated and deprived on earth. Many of these are Christians who are under intense persecution, ones who think that the world has forgotten them. So it is not surprising to find her co-authoring this small volume in an attempt to shine an intense light on the unspeakable plight of literally millions (twenty-seven million is one conservative estimate) of men, women and children who have been reduced to slavery throughout the world in the twenty-first century.

Cox begins with a short introduction, where she recounts the life and vision of William Wilberforce, a vision Cox longs to see truly fulfilled in the elimination of all slavery. She then proceeds with three chapters providing extensive documentation of the blight of slavery in three specific areas: Sudan, northern Uganda and Burma (Myanmar). “Because pictures and personal accounts often speak louder than statistics, in this book we will focus on three notorious examples of countries where we can witness the horrors of modern slavery in poignant detail...Many [of the accounts] are based on personal encounters with those who have been enslaved as victims of the brutal policies of oppressive regimes” (p. 12). In all three areas, enslavement of men, women and children is undertaken as part of an ongoing, purposeful agenda to wipe out opposition, specifically Christian opposition. If you want to gain an “inside” understanding (not the media hype) concerning the recent events in Sudan and Myanmar, you need look no further. Carefully documented stories paint a repeating picture of unspeakable atrocities; ruined lives, economies and cultures; and seemingly hopeless situations.

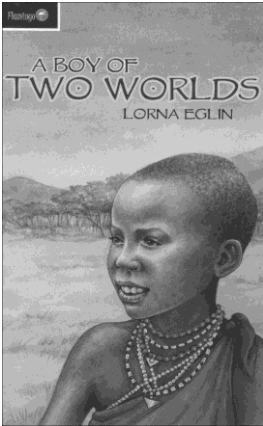
These chapters are followed by an historical look at slavery as an institution, followed by the causes and “justifications” of modern slavery. For those of you who, like me, may think of slavery primarily in terms of enslavement of black Africans by Europeans for use in the Americas, be prepared for many surprises. One notable surprise for me was to learn that slavery as an institution is bound within the tenets of Islam, is protected by the Koran and has thrived historically under Islam/Arab influence. Another surprise was that for centuries there was a flourishing slave trade whose source for slaves was white Europeans. Interesting that one doesn’t read such facts of history in today’s textbooks!

In the final, short chapter, Cox gives concrete suggestions for action and lists several organizations currently fighting modern slavery. A bibliography for further reading is also supplied.

Although *This Immoral Trade* would not be suggested bedtime or family reading, it most certainly presents clear documentation about issues that we as Christians and the Christian West need to know and address in a most uncompromising manner. In Caroline Cox’s words, “...we must be challenged by the continuing existence of this dehumanizing practice and we need to mark this year of commemoration with a determination to eradicate slavery from the face of the earth” (p. 11).

***A Boy of Two Worlds.* Lorna Eglin. Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2006, 199 pp., paper. ISBN: 1-84550-126-8**

***A Girl of Two Worlds.* Lorna Eglin. Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2003, 168 pp., paper. ISBN: 1-85792-839-3**



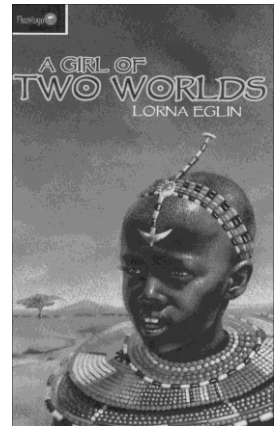
These two books are delightful reading. They not only introduce young readers to the main characters, Nosim and Lemayan, but they provide wonderful descriptions of the culture of the Maasai tribe.

The author, Lorna Eglin, was born in Cape Town, South Africa and served with AIM International in Kenya for forty-five years. She is now retired and has returned to South Africa. Her understanding of and love for the Maasai is evident throughout her writing.

The Maasai are a “proud cattle people” who live on the plains of southern Kenya and Tanzania. There are Maasai Christians, some who live in urban areas, such as Nairobi, and others who are still part of the cattle-village life.

Nosim is a young Maasai girl who is sent away to a boarding school run by Christian missionaries. Lemayan is a young Maasai boy who, because of polio, is sent to a mission hospital for medical help. Though these characters are fictional, they represent many young people from the Maasai tribe. The author explains that every situation that Nosim and Lemayan encounter comes from the collective experience of Maasai boys and girls that she has known over the years.

Both Nosim and Lemayan encounter a very different culture from the one they left at home. Within the context of this new culture, these young people learn about Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Saviour of sinners. At first they identify the truth as belonging to that new culture, and they wonder if it



is possible to be Maasai and Christian? Both Nosim and Lemayan try to deal with this conflict in different ways. Their struggle is particularly intensified whenever they return home as they do not want to challenge “the old ways” or appear disrespectful toward their parents and tribal leaders.

The stories of Nosim and Lamayan expose a challenge that is faced by Christians around the world; that is, making cultural identity subservient to identity in Christ. Coupled with this challenge is the call for Christian brothers and sisters to acknowledge diversity of culture within the body of Christ such that no culture is elevated in and of itself as being superior to another. Eglin’s stories reveal her awareness and sensitivity toward both of these challenges.

Lorna Eglin has produced two very interesting, insightful stories for young people, yet readers of all ages could enjoy and discuss them. Perhaps with Kenya having been in the news so much recently, there will be a heightened interest in seeking to gain an understanding of one of the great tribal groups of East Africa and in learning lessons from the Maasai that can be applied to Christians in every culture.

Nancy J. Whytock

Academic Articles

A Didactic Review on Current Systematic Theology Issues

D. Douglas Gebbie

Occasionally in the Haddington House Journal we include a didactic review. The following is such a review, which may serve as a discussion article for graduate class seminars. The reviewer, Rev. D. D. Gebbie, helps guide us perceptively through two books relating to current theological discussions which bisect around justification, federal theology and Paul. He points us to other literature which needs to be considered in this theological discussion.

Editor

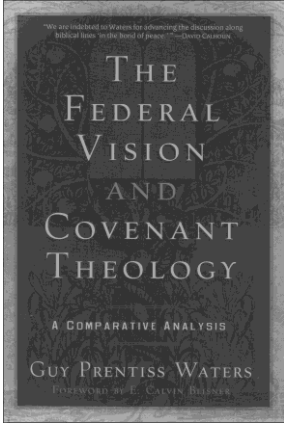
***The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology: A Comparative Analysis.* Guy Prentiss Waters. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006, 397 pp., paper, ISBN: 1-59638-033-0**

***By Faith Alone: Answering the Challenges to the Doctrine of Justification.* Eds. Gary L. W. Johnson & Guy P. Waters. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007, 219 pp., paper. ISBN: 1-58134-840-1**

Along with an overlap in subject matter, these books have in common the work of Guy Prentiss Waters, who was assistant professor of biblical studies at Belhaven College, Jackson, Mississippi, and is now on the faculty of Reformed Theological Seminary in the same city. He is the author of the first, co-editor of and a contributor to the second, and also the writer of *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul: A Review and Response*.¹

¹ Guy Prentiss Walters, *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul: A Review and Response* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004).

In *The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology*, Waters sets out the Federal Vision (FV) positions using the proponents' own works and then critiques them in the light of the Westminster Standards. Following an introduction to the FV, the subjects covered are: covenant and biblical history; covenant and justification; covenant and election; covenant and assurance, perseverance and apostasy; and covenant and the sacraments. The book is brought to a conclusion by a chapter on the sources of the FV.



The task of defining the FV is not easy. While there is a core group of men who are the proponents of the FV, firstly, they are not all agreed on all issues; and, secondly, their views are subject to almost continuous development as they interact with one another and their critics, using websites and blogs rather than the printed page to propagate their views. Waters has gone to a great deal of effort to bring together and to present accurately and fairly those views. He allows the various FV

proponents to speak for themselves, noting where they speak in unison and where they differ. Doing so, however, takes up much of this book, leaving little room for the comparison mentioned in the title. Yet, at the same time, it also leaves little room for complaint from those whose views are being critiqued. The great strength of this book is its summary of FV views on the subjects treated.

The covenant theology which is used in the comparative analysis is that of the Westminster Standards. The views of the FV proponents are compared to the Standards and are found to be at variance with the doctrines taught in them. Unfortunately, there is little exposition or development of the Westminster doctrines, either as particular wordings relate to FV views or as the Westminster system of doctrine stands in opposition to FV views. Waters shows that the FV is contrary to the Standards, but he does not present a Westminster alternative. The effort and space given to a detailed presentation of the FV is not reciprocated when it comes to presenting the covenant theology to which their views are to be compared.

To be fair, Waters says in his preface that it was not his intention to give an exhaustive restatement of the Standard's doctrine on each point in question. However, given that, as he points out, the FV exalts the external and minimizes the internal, it would have been especially helpful to see a discussion of the Westminster doctrine of regeneration.

Waters criticizes the proponents of the FV for defining regeneration in a variety of ways (which they do), but does not give a clear definition of the word himself; nor does he explicitly set regeneration in its Westminster context of effectual calling. This is unfortunate as on almost every point of difference between the FV and the Westminster Standards, the subject of effectual calling is not only relevant but crucial. For example:

- 1) *Effectual Calling*: All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace. (WCF 10:1)
- 2) *Election and Assurance*: The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. (WCF 3:8)
- 3) *Covenant of Grace*: Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe. (WCF 7:3)
- 4) *Union with Christ*: The union which the elect have with Christ is the work of God's grace, whereby they are spiritually and mystically, yet really and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband; which is done in their effectual calling. (LC 66)
- 5) *Justification*: Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous, not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them,

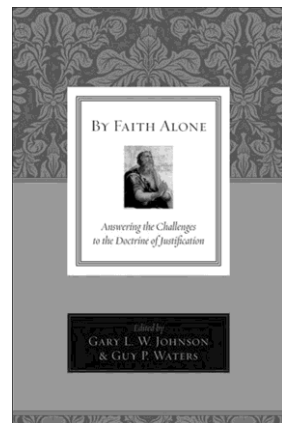
as their righteousness, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God. (WCF 11:1)

- 6) *Apostasy*: They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally, nor finally, fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved. (WCF 17:1) All the elect, and they only, are effectually called; although others may be, and often are, outwardly called by the ministry of the Word, and have some common operations of the Spirit; who, for their wilful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in their unbelief, do never truly come to Jesus Christ. (LC 68)

The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology: A Comparative Analysis makes an excellent supplement to the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) Study Committee Report on Federal Vision.² It is, perhaps, because of the context in the PCA that Waters does not drive home his conclusions with the force that his arguments warrant; for to do so would have turned the book into a series of charges against those Federal Visionaries whose ordination vows bound them to the Westminster Standards. However, at some point, when this debate has become less personalized, it would be helpful to have a more exhaustive restatement of the Westminster doctrines.

By Faith Alone: Answering the Challenges to the Doctrine of Justification is a collection of essays by Cornelis P. Venema, T. David Gordon, Richard D. Philips, C. FitzSimons Allison, David VanDrunen, R. Fowler White, E. Calvin Beisner, John Bolt, and the editors: Gary L. W. Johnson and Guy P. Waters. There is a foreword and an afterword by David F. Wells and R. Albert Mohler, Jr., respectively.

Waters' and Venema's overviews of the "New Perspective" and Federal Vision movements are very accessible and helpful. An interesting comment by Venema is that Saunders is not adequately familiar with the old perspectives. The Reformation concern



² <http://www.pcahistory.org/pca/07-fvreport.pdf>

was not faith or works, but faith alone or faith plus works. While Saunder's findings show that Second Temple Judaism was not a religion of works alone, the "covenantal nomism" which he describes supports the view that Paul's opponents taught a doctrine of faith plus works.

Other essays treat more specific points regarding the Doctrine of Justification. Philips and FitzSimons write on the subject of imputation. The former deals with imputed righteousness as it relates to Arminianism and the New Perspective. The latter, being an Anglican, covers imputation in the context of the emergence of Anglican Protestantism in the sixteenth century, the Council of Trent, and the ecumenical amnesia which seems to forget the points of difference between them. VanDrunen writes on the Active Obedience of Christ. On a related note, Bolt looks at the arguments against the doctrine of the Covenant of Works and responds to them.

In every collection of this kind, there are unevennesses. Attention might be drawn to the ninth essay of the collection which asks, "What is an evangelical?" Johnson points out the vagueness of the term today when Keith Fournier (a Roman Catholic) and Robert L. Millet (a Mormon) are considered by some to be evangelicals. This is an interesting article, and it may make a valid point; however, it seems a little out of place in this collection. Rather than focusing on some aspect of Justification by Faith Alone, it deals with wider gospel issues. It fits better with the concerns of those who are heading up The Gospel Coalition³ than with those whose attention is taken up primarily with the New Perspective and Federal Vision. (This might also be said of Wells' excellent, but again not quite germane, foreword).

The essays by Gordon and the collaborative effort by White and Beisner focus on biblical theology. Gordon states:

I am staggered by the lack of discussion of John Murray's biblical theology. Many families have a dark secret that they prefer not to talk about: the uncle who gets drunk every Thanksgiving and makes passes at the womenfolk, the eccentric nephew who can't hold a job, etc. Such family secrets are well known but rarely discussed. The Reformed version of this is John Murray's biblical theology. ... And the Auburnites, whose entire paradigm comes from Murray, appear hesitant to state the matter publicly, with the exception of Pastor Trouwburst....

³ <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org>.

But why don't we consider it fair to talk about this? Why do we all know that Murray desired to recast the historic covenant theology, but we never publicly acknowledge that he did so? Further, since it is so patently obvious (to me, anyway) that the real distinctive of Auburn theology is not some alleged difference between biblical theology and systematic theology, but the distinction between historic covenant theology and Murray's recasting thereof, why didn't the essays address this matter?⁴

One possible answer to Gordon's questions is that it is not the content of Murray's recasting of classical covenant theology which is important. Indeed, it would seem that the content of Murray's 1953 monograph was eclipsed by the appearance of George E. Mendenhall's *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* in 1955 and the work done by Meredith Kline in his *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Study and Commentary* and *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism*.⁵ To the contrary, the important thing is that he applied Vosian biblical theology to the subject; and whether or not today's biblical theologians agree with Murray's conclusions, they are following in his footsteps. Rather than being the debauched uncle, Murray is the founder of the family firm. Not all the sons are in agreement with the way in which the old fellow ran the business, but they cannot criticize too loudly without undermining the market for their own product. So, when White and Beisner say that their contribution to this collection provides "a fresh exposition of God's covenantal dealings with man [which] conserves the classic features of historic covenant theology"⁶ and use biblical theology to do it, they do not stand outside of the two streams of covenant redefinition which they identify: one coming from those who promote the New Perspectives on Paul and the Mosaic Law and the other stream coming from "those who support the effort initiated by the late John Murray to

⁴ *By Faith Alone*, 118 and 121.

⁵ George E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: Biblical Colloquium, 1955); Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Study and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968).

⁶ *By Faith Alone*, 148.

recast (reconstruct) classic covenant theology”.⁷ They are in a branch of the stream flowing from Murray’s initiative.

For Gordon’s assertion that the real distinctive of the Auburn theology is “the distinction between historic covenant theology and Murray’s recasting thereof” to be given due consideration, some discussion of historical theology, of the doctrine of covenant in the reformed theological tradition, might have been expected. But there is no such discussion. There is no mention of the Antinomian and Neonomian controversies. There is no discussion of the development of covenant theology in the writings of Robert Rollock, David Dickson, Samuel Rutherford, Patrick Gillespie, and Thomas Boston in Scotland, of John Ball and Richard Baxter in England, and of Francis Turretin and Herman Witsius on the Continent. More specifically, there is no mention of works of John Owen,⁸ John Brown of Wamphray,⁹ Robert Traill,¹⁰ and Herman Witsius¹¹ in which the very issues of the condition of the covenant of grace, the instrument of justification, and imputation are discussed at length in their responses to the Neonomianism of Richard Baxter. An examination of their writings would clearly demonstrate the truth of White’s and Beisner’s observation that “redefinition of God’s covenants inevitably brings reformulation of the doctrine of justification”;¹² but there is no such examination. Nor is

⁷ *By Faith Alone*, 148.

⁸ John Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification By Faith*, in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 5 (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967).

⁹ John Brown of Wamphray, *The Life of Justification Opened. Or, A Treatise grounded in Gal. 2:11. Wherein the Orthodox Doctrine of Justification by Faith, & Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness, is clearly expounded, solidly confirmed, & learnedly vindicated from the various Objections of its Adversaries. Whereunto are subjoined some arguments against Universal Redemption* (1695).

¹⁰ Robert Traill, *Vindication of the Protestant Doctrine concerning Justification, and of its Preachers and Professors, from the unjust charge of Antinomianism*, in *Select Practical Writings of Robert Traill* (Edinburgh: Free Church of Scotland, 1845).

¹¹ Herman Witsius, *Conciliatory, or Irenical Animadversions: on the Controversies Agitated in Britain under the unhappy names of Antinomians and Neonomians* (Glasgow: Printed by W. Lang for M. Ogle, 1807).

¹² *By Faith Alone*, 148. The application of biblical theology to the disputed questions of classic or historic covenant theology has of itself brought redefinition. For example, when biblical theologians imposed the form of Hittite Suzerain-Vassal treaties upon the divine covenants and defined stipulation as covenant faithfulness, given the connection between the

there anything to give any credence to the contention that the real distinctive of the Auburn theology is “an alleged difference between biblical theology and systematic theology”. The discussions here imply that the real distinctive of the Auburn theology is a dispute between different schools of biblical theology all of which are redefining historic covenant theology.

More soberingly, not only is this a dispute between differing schools of biblical theology, as two appeal cases before the 2003 General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church illustrate; the subjects at issue are the moral law, the condition of the covenant of grace, and the instrument of justification. In short, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, covenant theology is no further forward from where it was in the last decade of the seventeenth century.

Whoever coined the subtitle of this book set the mark rather high. Given the finished product, that was somewhat unfortunate. On the whole, *By Faith Alone* contains some useful contributions to the current debate. But it is flawed by having another agenda within its stated agenda.

Of the two books reviewed here, *The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology* is more strongly recommended. Although, that being said, Waters’ and Venema’s essays in *By Faith Alone* are very helpful for bringing inquirers “up to speed” on the key issues of the New Perspective and the Federal Vision.

David 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.

condition of the covenant of grace and the instrument of justification, it was only a matter of time before someone replaced faith alone with faithfulness.

Integrating Knowledge with Faith: Understanding and Applying Paul’s Philosophy of Christian Education

Lee S. Bond*

** Dr. Lee S. Bond is currently an adjunct professor of Bible at Erskine College in Due West, South Carolina. Lee spent several years as an associate pastor in a Church of Scotland parish. His Ph.D. was awarded from the University of Aberdeen in 2005. His doctoral thesis, which is soon to be published, is entitled “Renewing the Mind: The Role of Cognition Language in Pauline Theology and Ethics”.*

Introduction

The following article explores the theme of theological education from both the theoretical and the practical point of view. Most would agree that Christian education is a complex topic. This is because the diversity within the Christian tradition makes it difficult to lay claim to any one particular “Christian” philosophy of education.¹ Generally speaking, a philosophy of education describes the underlying presuppositions and pedagogical approaches that a person or institution will take in accomplishing their specific role as an educator. It is a set of values that will give focus to what the instructor, institution or even church regards as non-negotiable, philosophical, theo-ethical, and didactic principles by which that entity functions in their respective teaching institution. The instructor’s philosophy of education develops out of one’s personal worldview that is usually held below the level of consciousness and rises to the surface during one’s teaching and mentoring times.²

¹ Cf. M. Peterson, *With all Your Mind: A Christian Philosophy of Education* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2002), 10.

² Cf. Albert E. Green, *Reclaiming the Future of Christian Education* (Colorado Springs: Association of Christian Schools International, 1998), 30.

Most agree that the instructor's philosophy of education should be congruent with the overall mission and vision of the college if the educational objectives of the school are to be maintained. Of course, as just mentioned, each Christian college or university has its own distinct mission and philosophy of education. Presently, a number of Christian colleges are experiencing a crisis of religious and moral identity. In a recent article, Robert Benne notes that Christian colleges and universities are experiencing a clash over faith and learning.³ He writes, "Though Protestant traditions founded many of the great research universities in this country (that is, the United States), they have since lost any meaningful connection to them."⁴ Benne notes that in seeking to become "topflight" research institutions, some Christian colleges hire faculty that are primarily research and publication driven. This model of Christian education tends to emphasize academic scholarship and epistemology. The research driven school selects faculty who are making significant advances in biblical scholarship and are on the cutting edge of technology. Nevertheless, there are drawbacks to this model of education. The large class sizes tend to make learning impersonal and detached. The undergraduate's access to the "topflight" scholar is usually limited, and in some instances personal relationships and spiritual development take a back seat to the rigors of academic study. Moreover, an overemphasis on research and publication tends to bring about a competitiveness that challenges the cooperative culture of an undergraduate teaching faculty.⁵

Since the time of Christ, there have been thousands of Christian educators who have passed on the oral traditions of our faith. Though many carried our traditions down through the centuries, I would argue that the apostle Paul stands out as the greatest Christian educator, missionary, scholar, pastor, and philosopher. For example, by sending his epistles to various churches, Paul became the very first Christian "distance educator." In those letters, one can discern the Apostle's well defined worldview and philosophy of Christian education. Moreover, the main objective of all of these letters is theological teaching and practical ethical instruction. However, what was Paul's philosophy of Christian education, and how did the Apostle blend knowledge with faith? Here it will be argued that Paul did not see a conflict between epistemology or knowledge and biblical faith. In fact, Paul's view on

³ Robert Benne, "Crisis of Identity," *Christian Century* 121, no. 2 (2007): 22-26.

⁴ Benne, "Crisis of Identity," 26.

⁵ Benne, "Crisis of Identity," 23.

Christian higher education is one that uniquely integrated the pursuit of knowledge, biblical faith, spirituality, and personal relationships.

The pedagogical principles employed by the apostle throughout his ministry are worthy of imitation today. Paul himself lived in an ever-changing, technologically advanced society. Thus, Paul's teaching style and methods had to take into account the changing world in which he lived. Even today, students of art, architecture, literature, government, law, medicine, and religion look back on first century Graeco-Roman society and culture with a sense of awe and respect for what was accomplished.

Taking our cue from Paul's view of Christian education, it will be argued that the overall objective of the teacher or institution is to help students formulate a well-balanced and integrated worldview which endeavors to perceive theology, technology, art, music, politics, industry, literature, culture, and the sciences from a theistic and Christological point of view with the ultimate goal of personal and spiritual transformation.⁶ This overall objective is achieved when professors and lay teachers integrate theory with practice and develop – within the framework of the student's God-given personality, potential, and abilities – individuals who are articulate, knowledgeable, and reflect the image and glory of Christ.⁷ Moreover, through their interaction with the faculty, administration, and staff, students should be challenged to take up the important and difficult task of engaging the world through cultural transformation.⁸

I will defend and support the above position by looking at two main elements related to Christian education. We will begin our discussion by exploring worldviews and philosophical presuppositions. Christian colleges and universities encourage their students to learn and seek the truth. However, what is knowledge and how is knowledge acquired?

⁶ Cf. Abraham Kuyper, who suggested in his work *Sacred Theology* that "all of these areas of culture need to be captured for Christ as Lord." For Kuyper, Calvinism and Christianity was a worldview or life perspective in which God must be credited for all the knowledge known by humanity. Kuyper argued that Calvinism was a world-transforming faith that impacted politics, religion, philosophy, art, and the sciences. See Peter Heslam, *Creating a Christian Worldview: Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

⁷ In short, Christian educators should show college students how to live a life which is worthy of God in whatever vocation they find themselves. Cf. 1 Thess. 2:12.

⁸ These same educational goals should be present in the local church setting as well.

More importantly, how important is a worldview and how is human knowledge related to the Christian notions of truth, belief, and justification? The study of epistemology may provide us with some guidance on this issue.⁹ In this first section, I will also explore specific scriptural foundations that support my epistemological presuppositions on Christian education. Specifically, I argue that the apostle Paul provides us with an excellent model for constructing a philosophy of Christian education, one that integrates knowledge with biblical faith. I build my argument upon the apostle's words in Philippians 4:8-9. In many ways, the first portion of this paper is foundational and theoretical.

The second portion of this paper deals with the practical application of the scripturally based theory of Christian education. I have titled this section *Pedagogical Practices*. If the goal of Christian education is the integration of knowledge with faith, the end result *must* be personal and spiritual transformation (μεταμοφώω). Nevertheless, how should educators integrate principles from the ancient biblical text with modern teaching practices to produce change? Moreover, how should professors help students develop a biblical worldview in the face of post-modernity where truth, knowledge, and ethics are relative and meaningless?

Many would agree that students come to college for a variety of reasons. Visionary students come with passion and drive with a view to gaining skills for a future vocation. Relationally minded students come because they long to be accepted by their peers and to be a part of a larger community. Others come to escape a bad home environment and search for answers to life's important questions. Many, however, come because they want to grow in their knowledge of the truth, learn skills for a future job, mature, and *change*.

Ideally, as students move through their college years, they should be working through the process of transformation, progressively taking on the perfection of Jesus Christ through the Spirit's operation and personal volition. But transformation is not an automatic process and sadly, some never do change. Students should want to become servants of Christ who will engage the world. But again, you cannot make a person love, serve and obey Christ. Service must flow from personal volition.

The reason that personal transformation in education is so difficult is because the culture of the world in which the student lives (and their

⁹ Epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, is a branch of philosophy that studies the correlation between knowledge and belief.

personal nature) desires to mold and shape them after the pattern of “this age” (Rom 12:2). Moreover, in Christian colleges, students approach learning and knowledge acquisition through a variety of religious, theological, ethical, and philosophical worldviews that can cause some confusion over which worldview is the biblical or Scriptural one. Thus, a battle rages on the college campus for both the hearts and minds of young people. In this final section, I describe my program for academic instruction on the college campus that makes every attempt to be both theoretical and practical. Specifically, it endeavours to be a model of education that is personal, pastoral, relational, academically rigorous, scholarly, and most importantly, transformative. Let us now look at some underlying philosophical presuppositions related to education.

1.0 Philosophical Presuppositions

1.1 What Is A Worldview?

A worldview is an all encompassing framework or basic set of convictions about life that determines a person’s actions. When a person’s worldview is organized into a systematic and logical fashion and conveyed through stated values, ideas, theoretical concepts, ideals, and conduct; the result is a “philosophy.”¹⁰ James Sire similarly suggests that a worldview is:

A commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and having our being.¹¹

It is important that we briefly discuss various philosophical views which have influenced those teaching in today’s colleges and universities. Currently, many professors hold either to the worldview of modernism or postmodernism. Let’s quickly trace the contours of both.

¹⁰ The wider the discrepancy between a personal philosophy and worldview, the more lacking someone will be in personal integrity. Cf. Toews, “Distinctives of a Christian school: why a Christian school?” *Didaskalia* 14, no. 1 (2002): 55.

¹¹ James Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 17.

1.2 The Worldview of Modernism

This epistemology or view of knowledge was founded on empirical data and self-acclaimed as scientific rationalism. According to this philosophy, science, research, and empirical, quantifiable data provide the criteria for truth. Modernism opposes the authority of biblical revelation because the scriptures are not rationally and empirically quantifiable. Instead, modernism asserts that man is the center of the cosmos. Thus, there are no absolute and external criteria for determining aesthetics, truth, ethics, and morality. In short, the worldview of modernism is based upon the philosophical presupposition that materialism is that which counts. Only matter exists and human ethical behavior is based on relativism with no quantifiable value system. Persons must determine their own criteria for what is good. Modernism is characterized by the cultural values of materialism, atheism, and relativism.

1.3 Discerning the Worldviews of Pragmatism and Existentialism

The worldviews of pragmatism and existentialism developed out of modernism in the late twentieth century. Gangel and Benson note that pragmatism suggests a view of life which is “non-epistemological, irrationalistic, (*sic*) a humanistic philosophy of crisis, in which uprooted modern man seeks to find certainty in his own existence, which he has elevated to an idol.”¹² According to the pragmatic worldview, a person can find truth via experience and existential choice. Autonomy and authority are based on individual preference. According to this worldview, truth is not absolute and the person is left to their own individual perceptions. Though pragmatism’s aim was to set persons free, the individual who holds this worldview is entangled by his or her personal experience. In this worldview, tolerance (a relativistic epistemology) is given great value. Thus, nothing is absolutely right or wrong. Empirical data is neutral and culture should embrace the value of pluralism. All philosophies, religions, and ethical models are appropriate. Existentialism is a form of pragmatism and is the philosophical foundation for postmodernism. Because any criteria for absolute truth has been swept away, personal experience rises to become the guide for cognitive, ethical, moral and aesthetic choices. Taken to the extreme, postmodernism rejects all worldviews which claim exclusive truth. For many who hold this worldview, the Christian

¹² Kenneth O. Gangel & Warren S. Benson, *Christian Education: It’s History and Philosophy* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 315.

religion should be questioned because it claims exclusive truth. Nevertheless, the worldview of existentialism and post-modernity can be a source of dialogue for Christian and non-Christian scholars. Due to its emphasis on spiritual encounter and personal experience, Christian scholars should reflect on how existentialism approaches the topic of truth revealed through sense perception and revelation.

The Intricacies of Epistemology

1.4.1 Defining Epistemology

Epistemology or the theory of knowledge is a division of philosophy that examines the nature and scope of knowledge and belief. Scholars in this field examine the nature of knowledge and discern how it relates to similar notions such as truth, belief, and justification. It also deals with how knowledge is acquired. In short, epistemology primarily addresses the following questions: How is knowledge defined, what do people really know and believe, what is truth, how is knowledge related to justification and how is knowledge learned or acquired? Let us briefly touch on some of these points.

1.4.2 Understanding the Two Kinds of Knowledge

Epistemologists make a distinction between two kinds of knowledge: propositional and practical. Epistemologists (and many systematic theologians) are usually concerned with the former that focuses on knowing factual information. The ethicist (and practical theologian) on the other hand is concerned with the practical application of knowledge. This debate over theoretical and practical knowledge extends all the way back to the Classical Greek period. Plato generally differentiates between *φρόνησις* (the more practical wisdom) and *σοφία* (purely intellectual knowledge).¹³ Plato argues that *phronesis* is the “right state of the intellect from which all moral qualities derive.”¹⁴ In his *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle similarly remarks that *phronesis* is supreme moral virtue.¹⁵ Aristotle also asserts that right ethical behavior requires *phronesis* or practical wisdom. This practical

¹³ Cf. Bertram, “φρόνην,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. ed. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 9:220.

¹⁴ Plato, *Legat.* 1.631-32, Loeb Classical Library (LCL), trans. F. H. Colson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929-1962).

¹⁵ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics.* 1218b.34 (LCL), trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

wisdom is defined as, “a reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human good.”¹⁶ These examples show that *phronesis*, along with other cardinal virtues, was integral to moral philosophy.¹⁷ It is important to recognize that scripture (and Paul in particular) integrates these two kinds of knowledge.¹⁸ Doctrine or propositional theology is the foundation for ethical directives. Most importantly, the inspired Word provides us with a rational understanding of the world which can lead us to an all-encompassing theory of knowledge.

1.4.3 The Important Correlation Between Knowledge and Faith

When a young believer says that they “have faith” or “believe” in Christ, what they often mean is that their belief is based on some pragmatic outcome. In other words, what they mean is that they predict that this belief will someday prove useful to them because it will save them from the “fiery abyss on the day of the Lord.” Many young Christians cannot really articulate why having faith in Christ is true because they have never been provided with criteria for discerning truth claims from erroneous ones. In contrast, the writers of scripture continually urge believers to base their knowledge and belief in the divinity of Christ on many criteria (factual and historical data, prophetic fulfillment, revelation, eye witness accounts, etc). As we will see in a moment, Paul provides us with an excellent model of integrating epistemology with faith in Philippians 4:8-9.

Taking a cue from Calvin and the other reformers, an educator might explain to their students that personal faith is not a heroic act of the will to believe but an obedient willing made possible by the working of the Spirit of God within us. Faith concerns the submission as well as the illumination of reason and knowledge. Faith is taking up the cross and following Christ, not embarking on a pilgrimage without a destination. Faith is not a mindless search for God but a firm

¹⁶ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140b 20. LCL.

¹⁷ In summary, one could argue that the Greek term φρόνη and its cognates in the earliest phases and down through the Classical period meant broadly “mind,” “thinking,” “understanding.” However, in Plato and Aristotle, both *phronesis* and *phroneo* frequently have the fuller sense of “discernment,” “judicious insight” or “practical wisdom.” For a fuller discussion of this issue, cf. Lee S. Bond, “Renewing the Mind: The Role of Cognition Language in Pauline Theology and Ethics” (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland, 2005), 36-38.

¹⁸ The text of scripture likewise asserts that knowledge comes through spiritual revelation as well.

commitment to the will of God informed by a knowledge and understanding of the Word of God. The theologian Donald Bloesch notes that faith is certain because it takes us out of ourselves, out of our despair and anguish, into a relationship to the living Christ that cannot be severed by the powers of sin, death and the devil. Faith is advancing toward a future that is assured to us by the promises of Jesus Christ in Holy Scripture.¹⁹

There are significant implications for adopting this position on knowledge and faith in the college classroom. For example, my own position gives priority to faith over understanding and human reasoning. But this does not mean that faith is viewed as an irrational leap. Rather it is a commitment involving reason as well as will. Secondly, faith is an awakening to the significance of what God in Christ has done for us, an awakening that eventuates in a commitment of the whole person to the living Christ. Therefore, this commitment entails reason and the seeking of knowledge. It also involves the will and personal emotions, but it is basically an act of the will. Christian educators should believe against the presumption of the student's ability to reason without the aid of the Spirit, but not against the structure of that student's reason. As believers, we commit ourselves to that which is beyond the limits of human reason but not beyond the compass of reason itself (which I consider to be the divine *logos*). Hence, once we have faith, we seek deeper insight and knowledge into what we believe.

To sum up, Christian educators should affirm both faith seeking understanding or knowledge (*fides quaerens intellectum*) and an intellect seeking direction from faith (*intellectus quaerens fidem*).²⁰ Faith is not mere opinion but a "steady and certain knowledge" (as Calvin says). However, this knowledge concerns realities beyond the compass of human reason.

1.4.4 Understanding Epistemology and Truth

According to the ancient Greeks, for something to count as knowledge, it must actually be true. This idea has serious implications

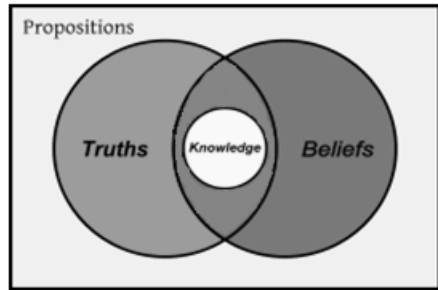
¹⁹Donald G Bloesch, *A Theology of Word & Spirit: Authority & Method in Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 58.

²⁰ Cf. Peter Stuhlmacher, who speaks of a "listening intellect ... open to the Christian tradition and the possibility of address through the biblical *kerygma*." In *Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Toward a Hermeneutics of Consent*, trans. Roy A. Harrisville (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 89-90.

for the study of religion. An individual may believe his or her religion to be true with all their heart. However, they may be misguided in their belief. Within this world, there are hundreds of religions and worldviews, some claiming exclusive truth. Which one is right, and what is the criteria for determining the truthfulness of each worldview? The Christian tradition has received its fair share of criticism because the writers of scripture claim to have insider knowledge on the topic of exclusive truth. The apostle Paul urges his students to seek and meditate upon the truths of scripture. As we will see in a moment, equipping students with the ability to discern truth from error is a key element in the transformative process.

1.4.5 Knowledge as Justified True Belief

Since the time of Plato, philosophers have debated over the theory of what knowledge is. According to tradition, Socrates believed that knowledge was true belief that had been justified (*dikaios*) or accounted for. In other words, knowledge had been given meaning or defined in some way. Accordingly, in order to know that a given proposition is true, one must not only believe the relevant position, but one must also have justifiable reasons for doing so.



The diagram above shows the Classical view of epistemology. According to Plato, knowledge is a subset of that which is both true and believed. Let us now see how epistemology relates to Christian education.

1.5 Integrating Knowledge with Biblical Faith: Towards a Pauline Model of Christian Education

Thus far, we have been discussing philosophical propositions and in particular the philosophy of epistemology. Epistemology asks the questions what is knowledge and what is truth? Moreover, how can knowledge be justified and how is it related to personal faith? These questions are very important for Christian educators, and I believe that Paul addresses these specific issues in Philippians 4:8-9. In the following section, I will attempt to draw out Paul's understanding of Christian education from what he says in this particular passage.

1.5.1 Introduction

The apostle Paul had a formative influence in shaping the early church's educational philosophy. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul provides us with an excellent model for constructing a well-balanced philosophy of Christian education; one that integrates knowledge with biblical faith. The particular passage in question is Philippians 4:8-9. We will begin by looking at the importance of civic conduct as a key theme within the letter and then move to a brief discussion of how Paul integrates epistemology and biblical faith in Phil 4:8-9.

1.5.2 Civic Conduct and Philippians 1:27

Philippians 4:8-9 has been the source of debate for quite some time, because in it Paul employs terms of Hellenistic moral philosophy. Scholars have argued over how these terms relate to Paul's Christian theology and ethics. Space does not permit me to go into the various positions. I will say, however, that the terms need to be understood in light of the broader scope and overall purposes of the letter. Paul wants the believers in Philippi to live as responsible and upright Roman citizens in relationships of mutual love, respect and service with one another in their respective families, church community, and society. Aesthetics, devotion to the Roman Commonwealth, and the pursuit of the common good and virtue were all part of being an upright citizen in a Roman colony.

Despite their present circumstances, the Philippians are urged by Paul to conduct (*politeúomai*) their lives in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (1:27).²¹ In this passage, theology (gospel of Christ) and Hellenistic ethics (*politeúesthe*) are brought together. The ethical behavior of the community is to be in accordance with the theological truths contained within the gospel.²² In this exhortation, we see the influence of Roman culture and values on Paul's ethics. The cognate noun *políteuma* appears as well in 3:20. In short, Paul's exhortation in

²¹ Πολιτεύομαι carries with it three main senses: (1) to be a citizen, or to have one's citizenship/home (2) to administrate a corporate body, rule as of a head of state, or as a head of church officials. (3) to conduct one's life, live, lead one's life. Cf. W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 846.

²² Peter Oakes, in *Philippians: From People to Letter*, SNTSMS 110 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 85, is certainly correct when he notes, "The primary issue in 1:27-30 seems not to be the definition of the nature of the Gospel but a call to live in accordance with the Gospel."

4.8 must be understood in light of the apostle's Christian theology and the ideals of Roman citizenship. Paul's primary purpose in writing the letter to the Philippians was to encourage the community to engage in the practice of theological and ethical reflection.²³ By thinking in a renewed, Christ-like way about a variety of subjects, the community would act as responsible Roman citizens in accordance with the standards of the gospel, overcome their differences, and endure suffering. Let us now move to see how Paul integrates knowledge with biblical faith in Philippians 4:8-9.

1.5.3 Examining the Criteria for Ethical and Aesthetic Discernment

As the apostle brings his letter to a close, he urges the Philippians to let their minds continually dwell on those qualities which are themselves true, noble, right, beautiful and beneficial to others. The passage is connected to Paul's view of knowledge and education by way of his use of cognition terminology. In this single sentence, Paul employs terms that were known in popular Stoic philosophy. The apostle enumerates six positive ethical qualities and then summarizes them, describing comprehensively the characteristics that they are to reflect carefully upon in order to shape their knowledge and conduct.²⁴ Philippians 4:8 reads:

In addition, my brothers, all that is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and admirable—yes, whatever is morally excellent, whatever is praiseworthy—let your thoughts continually dwell on these things.

Paul describes each virtue separately and thus gives each one special attention. This can be seen by the six-fold use of the Greek word *hōsa*. Moreover, this introductory relative pronoun (of quality), imparts as Michael says “a stately impressiveness”²⁵ to the verse and shows that when it comes to the pursuit of knowledge and theo-ethical reflection,

²³ The verb of cognition *φρονεῖν* (to think, to have an attitude) has been linked with all of the various themes of the letter. For example, *φρονεῖν* is tied to the theme of partnership and finances in 1:5-8 and 4:2-10. It is connected to the theme of suffering in 2:5-11 and 3:15. Furthermore, it is also connected to the central rhetorical point of 1.27-30 and it is clearly tied to the theme of unity (2:1-4; 4:2, 10).

²⁴ Cf. Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 503.

²⁵ J. H. Michael, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians* MNTC (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), 202.

nothing is to be left out from what is “true, noble, just, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy”.

Nevertheless, Philippians 4:8 continues to be a source of debate among scholars because of the specific words that Paul employs. For example, two of the eight characteristics are found only here in the New Testament (προσφιλή and εὐφημα). The first deals with aesthetics. Προσφιλής, in a passive sense, can mean what is pleasing, acceptable, and lovely of persons.²⁶ However, the term can also refer to the thing or object which causes pleasure.²⁷ One important Greek virtue appears nowhere else in the Pauline letters (ἀρετή) and relates to moral or civic virtue.²⁸ In Classical Greek, it was a comprehensive term for excellence of any kind, with reference to things, animals, people, and gods. However, in Hellenistic moral philosophy, and especially among the Stoics, virtue was important and denoted the supreme good of man. Note as well the term for respect (σεμνά) which is only found in the pastorals. Moreover, the term for right (*dikaios*) has a very different meaning elsewhere in Paul’s letters. This is all to suggest that Paul was not employing common Christian vocabulary.

*This passage has serious implications for our view of Christian education. Paul is saying that the Philippians are to let their minds continually dwell on whatever knowledge is true, noble, just, beautiful or worthy of praise, that is, on all that is positive and wholesome within the surrounding culture and that which does not conflict with their Christian faith from a theistic point of view. This interpretation has to some extent has been held by several commentators.*²⁹

Of course, space does not permit us to explore each of the moral virtues in detail. At a later date, it would be important to see how

²⁶Cf. Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 336.

²⁷Cf. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of 2d ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1:299.

²⁸From Homer onwards, virtue (*aretē*) denotes consummate “excellence” or “merit” within a social context. It’s frequently found with the term *dikaiosune*. Virtue is a popular subject in Stoic thought relating to morality and ethics within the commonwealth.

²⁹ Cf. J. B. Lightfoot, in *Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan, 1900), 162, who suggests that Paul was anxious not to omit any good ground for his ethical appeal to the Philippians. “Whatever value may reside in your old heathen conception of virtue, whatever consideration is due to the praise of men”, ponder on these things. See also, Michael, *Philippians*, 202; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 501.

Hellenistic culture defined that which was beautiful, true, right, noble, morally excellent and so forth. In so doing, we would be able to see how the earliest Christians integrated their theistic faith with the positive and wholesome ideals of Roman culture. *The purpose of this short discussion, however, was to show that epistemology or an appreciation for knowledge was something that Paul highly valued.* In the span of one verse, Paul's has touched on key epistemological issues such as reason,³⁰ truth, rightness, belief, aesthetics and axiology. Let us now move on to see how the apostle integrates his passion for knowledge with his faith.

1.5.4 Developing Faith through Personal Example and Experience

In 4:9, Paul encourages the Philippians to learn from what he has taught them and to live in a manner that is consistent with his Christ-like example. The apostle describes four key characteristics that had been central to his method of teaching and instruction. Of course, Paul knows that the Philippians had already adopted these qualities for themselves. Nevertheless, he urges them once again to put all that he has taught them into practice continually. The Philippians are gaining knowledge about the faith through Paul's personal example. If they model their lives after his, they can be confident that the God of peace will be with them. Let us briefly reflect on this passage.

In a somewhat rhetorical fashion, Paul employs four figures of speech to show how these Christians should think and act when approaching faith and learning. Verse 9 is clearly connected to the preceding through the definite relative pronoun ἃ, which picks up the ταῦτα of verse 8.³¹ The passage may be translated,

Continue to put into practice these things which you learned and received from me, the things that you heard about me and saw in me. As a result the God of peace will be with you.

In this passage, Paul appeals to his own teaching and example by means of a fourfold *kai*, joined with four verbs in the aorist indicative. He finishes with the imperatival expression “do these things”! This final imperative correlates well with the preceding exhortation “think

³⁰ The word λογίζομαι which I have translated “think about,” carries with it the idea of thinking about something in a detailed and logical manner – “to reason about, to ponder, reasoning.”

³¹ The ἃ καί should not be interpreted in an adversative sense. So, O'Brien, *Philippians*, 508-9.

about these things” in verse 8. In the span of two verses, Paul has integrated knowledge with his living faith. He is urging the readers to think and to live in a manner consistent with his example (cf. Phil 3:17). The precise relation between the four verbs in verse 9 is debatable. Following O’Brien, I think that the verbs should be grouped in pairs. The first pair refer to the overall content and manner of Paul’s teaching, while the second concern his example.³² With respect to the first two verbs (ἐμάθετε... παρέλάβετε), it is important to note that Paul is not referring simply to an intellectual process of learning and receiving knowledge. Together, the terms imply an internal and personal acceptance of Christ as Lord. Müller notes that the terms convey the idea of a rejection of the old way of thinking and conduct and the beginning of a new life of discipleship in him. The point I am trying to make is that in the early church, learning occurred on many cognitive levels and in many different social contexts.

The verb παρέλάβετε, which is translated “you received”, was often used in a semi-technical sense. It carries with it the meaning of receiving something delivered by tradition. Throughout his letters, Paul regularly reminded believers of the traditions that he handed down to them. The content of these traditions (παραλαμβάνω) appear to have been comprised of three main elements: (a) the gospel story, which includes the death and resurrection of Christ and the expressed confession of faith (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1–5; 1 Thess. 2:13); (b) the Jesus tradition (1 Cor. 11:23–26; 7:10, 11; 9:14); and (c) ethical directives (Rom 12:1; 1 Cor. 11:2; 1 Thess. 4:1; 2 Thess. 3:6). It is probable then that Paul has all three categories in view here. I believe that the term has important implications for Christian educators today. No matter the academic discipline, if someone is a Christian educator, they need to be passing on the traditions of the faith. As J. C. Beker suggests, *paralambano* is multi-dimensional and refers to “the believing acceptance of the gospel tradition.”³³ It is more than simply receiving a body of information and has to do with both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the spiritual life.

Paul then moves on to discuss his own example.³⁴ Given the overall rhetorical nature of the passage and the symmetry of the Greek verbs, it

³² Cf. O’Brien, *Philippians*, 508.

³³ J. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 123.

³⁴ Some have suggested that ἠκούσατε is a reference to Paul’s preaching. Cf. J.B. Caird, *Paul’s Letters From Prison: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, in the Revised Standard Version* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

seems best to take the Greek terms “hearing” and “seeing” together.³⁵ The two verbs speak about Paul’s character as a teacher and pastor. (The two verbs appear together as well in Philippians 1:30.)

Throughout the letter, Paul talks about his Christ-like character. The Philippians had heard about these same things through the many informal conversations that Paul had with them while he visited the church in Philippi. They also heard about his present circumstances through Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-29) and the attitude Paul took in the face of severe trials and adversity. The point being that as their teacher, Paul shared and experienced life with his students. He let them into his world. He informed them about his ministry and about his trials. He was also keenly interested in their lives, and he wanted them to follow his example. This view is supported by the phrase “what you have seen in me”. In addition to all the things that they had heard about Paul, the readers also saw in him a Christ-like example to follow. As a Christian educator and scholar, there was no contradiction between the words Paul preached and wrote and the life he lived. Sadly, this is not always true for Christian scholars and pastors today. Paul was not simply interested in theology for theology’s sake. He was not simply interested in scholarship. He not only taught the Philippians and passed on to them the authoritative and apostolic traditions, but he also demonstrated to them the right sort of model to imitate both in attitude and deed (cf. Phil 3:17 and 1 Cor. 11:1). As Paul taught them and related to them, he was demonstrating before their very eyes what it meant to live life through the paradigm of a Christian worldview. It should also be pointed out that the placing of ἐν ἐμοί towards the end of the clause adds rhetorical effect and indicates in an emphatic way that all the things that the Philippians have learned, received, heard, and seen were also embodied in the apostle.³⁶ Finally, as their teacher and mentor, Paul continued to urge his students to put into practice all that they had learned from him. The present imperative *prassete* indicates that a continuous action is in view. The Philippians “must keep putting into practice” the things Paul had shown them by teaching and example. Paul’s words are a fitting conclusion to one of the most important passages in the NT, because a fair number of students in today’s Christian colleges complete their degrees and leave their faith

1976), 152 and J. Gnilka, *Der Philipperbrief*, HTKNT 10.3 (Freiburg: Herder, 1968), 222.

³⁵ This view is supported by many. Cf. O’Brien, *Philippians*, 509; Michael, *Philippians*, 206-207; Michaelis, *Der Philipperbrief*, 69.

³⁶ Cf. J. Gnilka, *Philipperbrief*, 223; O’Brien, *Philippians*, 509.

in the classroom. Part of the blame for this result rests on the shoulders of the teachers and the other part with the students.

1.5.5 Summary

In the above section, I have explored a few philosophical presuppositions related to education. I noted that the philosophies of modernism, pragmatism, and postmodernism all fall short of what I would consider to be congruent with the biblical worldview. On the other hand, epistemology, with its emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge and truth, is promising. In the right context, this age old Greek philosophical framework can provide us with the basic structure for a biblical model of Christian education that integrates the exploration of knowledge with personal, biblically-based faith. I have also attempted to demonstrate that in Philippians 4:8-9, Paul has integrated the two spheres of knowledge and faith and urges believers to do likewise. As a teacher, Paul wanted to help his students formulate a well-balanced and integrated worldview which endeavored to perceive theology, technology, art, music, politics, industry, literature, culture, and the sciences from a theistic and Christological point of view with the ultimate goal of personal and spiritual transformation. In essence, Paul is saying that the Philippians are to let their minds continually dwell on whatever is true, noble, just, beautiful or worthy of praise, that is, on all that is positive and wholesome within the surrounding culture and that which does not conflict with their Christian faith from a theistic point of view.

Nevertheless, how should Christian educators integrate principles from the ancient biblical text with modern teaching practices to produce change? Moreover, how should professors help students develop a biblical worldview in the face of modernism, pragmatism, and postmodernity where truth, knowledge, and ethics are relative and meaningless? I think it is significant that Paul concludes his discussion of how knowledge and faith relate with the present imperative “do these things”! Therefore, the next section is an explanation of how I have attempted integrate knowledge with faith in the college classroom. I will limit my discussion to specific *pedagogical practices* that I found helpful in producing change.

Part 2: Pedagogical Practices

2.1 Introduction

I have already stated that at the end of the day, the final result of all Christian education should be the development of a biblical perspective

and personal transformation. Most students go to a Christian college because they want to grow in their knowledge and spirituality. They also want to learn a vocation and develop lifelong friendships. Though they might never verbalize it, they also want to change. But change can be difficult. Moreover, if change does occur, it may not stick after college. Why is this so? Recent studies suggest that both the divorce rate and promiscuous sexual activity among young evangelical Christians is no different than the general population in the United States.³⁷ One could suggest that one of the main reasons why Christian graduates fall back into old, familiar patterns of thinking and behaving is because they failed to learn how to integrate their knowledge with their faith. Professors and scholars tend to emphasize the academic pursuit of Philippians 4:8 and leave the practicalities of implementing 4:9 to someone else like the pastor or the parent. But the goal of all Christian educators should be the integration of knowledge with personal faith.³⁸ Let me explain how I practically endeavour to integrate a theistic worldview into the classroom. I have condensed this section to six key pedagogical elements.

2.2 Adherence to the School's Mission and Purpose

It is vitally important that professors be in agreement with the overall mission, vision, objectives, and educational outcomes of the college that will employ them. Likewise, the professor should also give assent to the theological position of the school. I appreciate and embrace the overall mission and vision of the school that I teach at. Erskine (which is a Christian liberal arts college) is connected with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. It is a school committed to the virtues of integrity, moral excellence and the pursuit of faith. These are three of the core values found in Philippians 4:8-9, the passage upon which my philosophy of Christian education is built.

³⁷ Cf. M. Johnson, "Divorce Rate no Lower Among Born-Again Christians," *Christian Century* 121, no. 20 (2004): 17-20; "Premarital Sex and the Risk of Divorce," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 53 (1991): 845-855; R. M. Christenson, "How to Put Premarital Sex on Hold: A Primer For Parents," *Christianity Today* 26 (1982):16-19. See also the older studies: J. R. Kahn, "Premarital Sex Relations: The Problem and Its Implications," *Pastoral Theology* 7 (1956): 46-53; "The New Morality and Premarital Sex," *Christianity Today* 9 (1965): 21-23.

³⁸ For example, in the work of science and the arts, integrating faith and learning means openly interpreting ones efforts to find the answer to the problem or design to a project as a Christian calling and faith building event.

The college administrators firmly believe that the integration of a well-balanced Christian perspective should be at the core of all curriculums (cf. 2 Cor. 10:5).

2. 3 A Balanced Approach to Academic Instruction, Faith, and Learning

During class time, I try to implement a balanced approach to academic instruction, faith development, and learning.³⁹ When it comes to theological education, there are a number of models to choose from.⁴⁰ Studies have shown that students have varying cognitive styles of learning depending on whether or not they are left-brain or right-brain dominant.⁴¹ In other words, students learn and process information in different ways. Some students have a keen ability to think in complex, abstract, or theoretical terms, while others are more concrete and experiential in their approach to learning. The point being teachers must be attentive to student learning styles. If professors want to truly communicate the truth, they must teach more creatively and effectively. I take these varied learning styles into account when structuring class time.⁴² My style is balanced in that there are times when I am both student and material focused. Let me briefly illustrate this point. Depending on the nature and time-frame of the class, I will usually begin with a short lecture period where I briefly review material from the previous class, then introduce new concepts and ideas in a logical, sequential fashion. In order to gauge how much the student has understood the various points, I move to a question and answer time where I ask the students to rephrase and encapsulate what I have been talking about. After I am confident that most have understood what we have been exploring, I will move on to another section. If the class period is several hours long, I will divide the students into smaller

³⁹ In view of what Paul teaches in Phil 4:8, I think that Christians should examine the teaching and educational models of secular theorists for elements of truth may be found among their writings. See for example, J.D. Foster and G.T. Moran "Piaget and Parables: The Convergence of Secular and Scriptural Views of Learning," *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 13 (1985): 97-103.

⁴⁰ Cf. G.W. Boyce, "Towards the Integration of Information Processing and Experiential Learning: Teaching-Learning Styles in Theological Education," *Education in Ministry* (1978): 24-27; J. St. Clair Hull, "An Evaluation of the 'Learning Styles' Approach to Christian Education," *Christian Education Journal* 5, no. 2 (2001): 61-67.

⁴¹ H.W. Stone, "Left Brain, Right Brain," *Theology Today* 40 (1983): 292-301.

⁴² Cf. A. Kolodny, "Colleges must recognize students' cognitive styles and cultural backgrounds," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 37 (1991):44-45.

groups. Each is required to read, explore, and analyze different dimensions of the next section of material. After a sufficient amount of time has passed, I will ask a representative from each group to report their findings. I also ask them how the material might impact their personal faith and relationship with God. While many think that the traditional lecture format of information dissemination is best, I have found that students learn and retain more when the class period is structured around their specific learning styles.

Personal transformation in the academic setting occurs when professors show students how to integrate their Christian faith with what they are learning in a creative and innovative way. Christian faith complements and informs all academic learning and knowledge. As a teacher, my goal is to prepare students to become creative, critical thinkers and learners and excellent communicators in a variety of contexts, and for this reason I employ a multitude of learning formats during class.

Teachers must keep in mind that learning greatly influences a person's philosophical worldview. Moreover, learning impacts a person's perception of themselves. Thus, teachers must strive towards faith based teaching and learning which will enhance the student's personal development and transformation. The integration of faith and learning should occur on many levels and in many different contexts. During class, students must be shown how faith influences their perception and knowledge of "the facts." This interplay between faith, reason, and learning can and should occur outside of class as well. The chapel platform and extracurricular activities are a vital part of the Christian training and learning program. Classroom instruction supports and reinforces this training. I see myself as the catalyst for the students' learning and acquisition of knowledge. To sum up, as students learn how to integrate faith with learning, their Christian mindset is developed and enhanced.

2.4 Learning That Blends Technology with Theology

Though many college professors may want to deny it, the digital revolution has literally transformed the face of the college campus and the way students learn. The internet has likewise changed the way students view learning and knowledge. There are now "smart" classrooms which are wired to the school's computer network. Advising often occurs via e-mail, while digital libraries worth thousands of dollars in print form cost only a few hundred dollars. A person is no longer limited to the traditional class schedule or to the

school's location, because information is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year wherever students might find themselves. There are many implications of technology for theological education, the most important one being the impact which technology has on students. Presently there is a large age gap between students and professors, and this age gap influences the way the two groups see and use technology. W. J. Hook notes that most current faculty, librarians, and administrators were educated and socialized into research, leadership, and teaching prior to the digital age.⁴³ Students on the other hand have grown up with LimeWire, iTunes, and Google. E. Foley similarly notes that the technological contexts of students and faculty are often very different.⁴⁴ Thus, "there are enduring consequences for theological education of the digital age, some of which are positive, though not all."⁴⁵ For example, it is true that sometimes a classroom presentation using PowerPoint turns out to be nothing more than a dull, high-tech slide show. Thus, the technology is not being used to its greatest advantage. Moreover, while the internet is a great source for information, students can struggle with discerning between good and bad sources. When they are asked to do research on a topic, students may pick the first few books which appear on the Google search engine. Students must be trained how to critically evaluate the internet and other electronic sources.

I use technology to enhance the effectiveness of the student's learning and my instruction. So for example, during class I will use PowerPoint and audio/video clips which have been integrated into QuickTime Media Productions.⁴⁶ I usually begin class with a short two to three minute video or piece of music that is directly related to the lecture material and one which the students can relate to. For example, when I was teaching my Introduction to the New Testament class on the Love Commandment in Paul, I played the students the song "Where is the Love" from the R&B group Black Eyed Peas. Of course, this is not a Christian group. Nevertheless, the song speaks about the lack of

⁴³ W.J. Hook "Implications of a Digital Age for Theological Education," *Theological Education* 41, no. 1 (2005): 61.

⁴⁴ E. Foley "Theological Reflection, Theology and Technology: When Baby Boomer Theologians Teach Generations X & Y," *Theological Education* 41 no. 1 (2005): 46.

⁴⁵ Hook, "Implications," 59.

⁴⁶ For further ideas, see T.S. Raymond's review of, "Higher Education in the Digital Age: Technology Issues and Strategies for American Colleges and Universities," *Journal of College Student Development* 47, no. 3 (2006): 361-63.

love in our culture, and it falls under the general guidelines of Philippians 4:8. Playing the song produced immediate dialogue about our cultural values and the obsession with materialism. The students were able to see that even non-believers are looking for truth but never finding it.

As a way of broadening the cultural horizons of my students, I will often integrate material from other disciplines into my lectures. So for example, when I am teaching on Genesis 1, I make sure to talk about science, evolutionary theories, and physics and show them slides from the Hubble Space Telescope. I am also passionate about art, history, and archaeology, so I will often include slides depicting a biblical scene or military battle. When it comes to exploring scripture, I will often employ Logos Bible Software into my discussions. So for example, when I was teaching Acts, a student asked me about the meaning and structure of a chapter 1. I was able to open up the Bible program and show them the structure in both Greek and English. The students have no knowledge of Greek, but I was able to translate and explain the intricacies of the language to them. When another student asked me about John Calvin's perspective on Romans 8, I was able to go directly to his commentary, and we studied it as a class. The point being that as I teach, I am showing the students how to discern and critically evaluate the digital sources.⁴⁷

2.5 Academically Rigorous and Engaging

Professors must require much of their students. Yet, they must also show that they care for their students and want them to succeed. As a teacher, I want to impart to my students practical research, writing, oral, and critical thinking skills which they will be able to use after graduation. I encourage them to strive for excellence in their work and personal moral lives. During class, I want them to engage with me and their fellow peers. Lectures, class assignments, and presentations should incorporate the most up-to-date scholarship. While there is a place for testing, it must be both challenging, yet fair.

2.6. Community-Centred Learning

Personal development and transformation occur in the academic setting when both the students and the professor see classroom time as a *community* building event. I see the classroom as a place of mutual

⁴⁷ For an expanding discussion of this issue, see C. J. Viktora, "Not just one more good idea: A reflection on the integration of digital technology in theological education," *Theological Education* 41, no. 1 (2005): 33-34.

learning. It is an environment that facilitates relationship building and communication. Both the teacher and student contribute to the establishment of community. The teacher helps to build community by being a role model who is Christ-like, friendly, transparent, approachable, and kind (cf. Phil. 4:9). The professor must use his knowledge and learning appropriately. He or she must use it to engage the students, build rapport, and draw them into the learning experience. I endeavor to create a friendly atmosphere in which each student is known personally and has a voice. This type of environment engages students to take an active role in the course and encourages activities that focus on learning and dialogue. I believe that it is crucial to link the content of class material with practical application. Moreover, students should be able to pursue their own interests to a certain extent so that they can put forth their own voice in their writing. My pedagogical framework is one that promotes student responsibility and engagement in intellectual and analytical tasks; it also shows respect for the ideas and interests of students. In short, as community builds, students feel free to share their thoughts and opinions openly. Class time should be divided into teacher instruction, questioning, discussion, and debate periods. Finally, teachers should strive to know the names and basic biographical data of all their students. Using someone's name in class helps to build rapport and is music to one's ears! Of course, this educational model works best in small classroom type settings.

2.7 Teachers Must Be Focused on Discipleship and Mentoring

Transformation occurs within the academic setting when professors take an active part in mentoring and developing their students. The instructor is in a position to deal with the social, spiritual, and academic dimensions of their students. As such, they must be willing to spend time advising and mentoring them. I have found that engaging and dialoguing with young people before and after class often enhances the classroom instruction time.

Conclusion

This paper explores the relationship between knowledge and faith within the academic setting. It was suggested that Paul's philosophy of education was one that integrated the pursuit of knowledge with faith. In support of this view, we examined the apostle's statement in Philippians 4:8-9. In the first section of this paper, we looked at various theories of knowledge as well as the biblical text. This theoretical section was followed by a practical pedagogical section. This

scripturally based pedagogical model does produce excellent results; student evaluations reflect the success of this philosophy of education. Students felt that such classes were academically rigorous and challenging and met their expectations. More importantly, because the teaching style was altered to fit the learner, the students felt someone cared about them as individuals and sought to build community within the classroom.

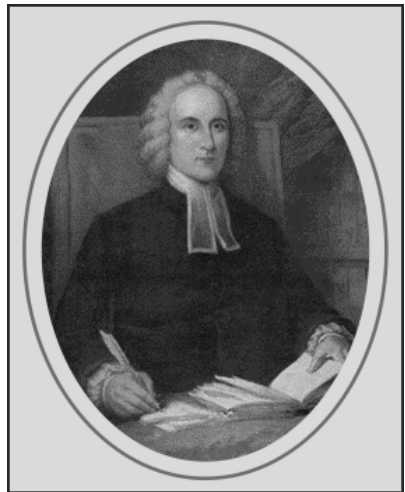
To sum up, the philosophy of education discussed above is thoroughly grounded in the Scriptures. Through the educational process in which information is understood, relationships formed, and community built, students acquire new ideas and skills and a renewed perspective about themselves, God's word, and how it relates to their life, faith, and learning. Through this learning process, the student becomes an approved servant of God, properly handling the word of truth (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15). As educators, Christian professors should strive to be catalysts for the student's spiritual, moral, and intellectual transformation. Additionally, through their instruction and personal example, they should endeavor to impart to each student Christian character development, communicative skills, and subject matter in harmony with God's truth.

Jonathan Edwards' *Religious Affections* as a Paradigm for Evangelical Spirituality¹

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If justification is needed for the appearance of an article on an American theologian in a non-American journal, then the fact that 5 October 2003 marks the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of Jonathan Edwards is probably sufficient. Lloyd-Jones' assessment that Edwards "stands out ... quite on his own among men"² is itself an indicator of his stature and significance. Indeed, for Lloyd-Jones, "no man is more relevant to



¹ I am grateful to Dr Samuel T. Logan, President of Westminster Theological Seminary and acknowledged expert on Edwards, for comments and suggestions on this paper.

² D.M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (London: Banner of Truth, 1987), 355.

the present condition of Christianity than Jonathan Edwards”.³

Paralleled with this is the fact that America’s premier theologian was not American at all but, as George Marsden is at pains to point out, “an elite male colonial British citizen”.⁴ Living in pre-revolutionary New England, Edwards’ interest in British affairs was the interest of a member-citizen in his own country. Indeed, it is arguable that he regarded Scotland with particular affection. When his supporters in Scotland discussed with him the possibility of a Scottish pastorate in 1750, there is every indication to suppose that he found the prospect inviting.⁵

But the Scottish connection goes deeper. Both during and after the Great Awakening of 1740-44, contact between Edwards and Scottish ministers – not least over the contents of the *Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections* – was frequent. Among his correspondents was Rev William McCulloch of Cambuslang. In a letter from 1743, Edwards was urging continued dialogue across the Atlantic:

I should be glad, dear Sir, of a remembrance in your prayers, and also of your help, by information and instructions, by what you find in your experience in Scotland. I believe it to be the duty of one part of the church of God thus to help another.⁶

There was good reason for such dialogue, not least the fact that “during the 1740s both New England and Scotland underwent religious awakenings with all the attendant excesses, controversies and eschatological interpretations”.⁷ The spiritual experiences which attended such awakenings were similar in both countries. Edwards shares the following observation with Rev James Robe of Kilsyth regarding such experiences:

Many among us have been ready to think that all high raptures are divine; but experience plainly shows that it is not

³ Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans*, 367.

⁴ George Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 259.

⁵ Marsden, *Edwards*, 362.

⁶ JE to William McCulloch, 12 May 1743, printed in S.E. Dwight’s “Memoir of Jonathan Edwards”, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, A.M.*, vol. 1 (Banner of Truth Edition), cxv.

⁷ H.P. Simonson, “Jonathan Edwards and his Scottish Connections”, *Journal of American Studies* 21 (1987): 355.

the degree of rapture and ecstasy (though it should be to the third heavens), but the nature and kind that must determine us in their favor.⁸

Common to both Edwards and his Scottish colleagues was a conviction that genuine piety must be distinguished from its counterfeit. If it was true that "Edwards and his Scottish company ... presupposed the primacy of the heart" in religion,⁹ then such a distinction was necessary. The observation that the heart of man is deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9) is frequently noted by Edwards, both in his personal diary¹⁰ and in his sermons.¹¹ Not least does the *Religious Affections* warn about the deceitfulness of the heart:

So it is with Christian virtues and graces; the subtlety of Satan, and men's deceitful hearts, are wont chiefly to be exercised in counterfeiting those that are in highest repute.¹²

For this reason, the theme of authentic spirituality occupied both Edwards and his Scottish contemporaries, the latter of whom frequently expressed gratitude for Edwards' contribution. But the Scottish debt was acknowledged long after Edwards' own time. Professor G.D. Henderson, writing on "Jonathan Edwards and Scotland" cites Thomas Chalmers who, some eighty years after Edwards' death, assessed the *Religious Affections* as "one of the most correct and instructive works in the Therapeutica Sacra which has ever been published".¹³

But if the tercentenary and the Scottish connections are not sufficient to establish a reason for re-visiting Edwards, perhaps another consideration might be suggested. At a remove of three centuries from the context in which Edwards and his Scottish ministerial colleagues lived and worked, the issues facing preachers today are very different to theirs. Contemporary postmodernism means that we have reached a

⁸ JE to James Robe, 12 May 1743.

⁹ Simonson, "Scottish Connections", 364.

¹⁰ Cf. Diary entry for 9 January 1723: "How deceitful is my heart! I take up a strong resolution, but how soon doth it weaken."

¹¹ Cf. the sermon on Acts 17:31, entitled *The Final Judgement*: "Let us pray that he would search us, and discover our hearts to us now. We have need of divine help in this matter; for the heart is deceitful above all things" (Banner of Truth edition), 2: 200.

¹² *Religious Affections*, Part 2 Section VI (Banner of Truth edition), 1: 250.

¹³ G.D. Henderson, *The Burning Bush: Studies in Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1957), 159.

metaphysical point quite unknown to Edwards. To use David Wells' metaphor, the Enlightenment experiment has 'miscarried'¹⁴. Prior to what Wells calls 'Our Time' was a time of the intellect:

This was a time in which ideas counted. In Our Time they do not. What shapes the modern world is not powerful minds but powerful forces, not philosophy but urbanization, capitalism and technology. As the older quest for truth has collapsed, intellectual life has increasingly become little more than a gloss on the processes of modernization. Intellectuals merely serve as mirrors, reflecting what is taking place in society.¹⁵

Wells might well be describing the difference between Edwards' world and ours. The Great Awakening was a spiritual movement driven by the impulse of great ideas. But our contemporary context devalues great ideas and universal truth; having done so, 'Our Time' is searching for a suitable replacement.

As Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, Wells is writing from the same geographical locus in which Edwards lived and worked three hundred years ago. On both sides of the Atlantic, Reformed evangelicalism once again finds that it is waging a war on a common front, and it is still the duty of the church in one part to help the church in another.

The literature on evangelical responses to postmodernism is growing rapidly. Edwards' 'great ideas' may well be inimical to postmodernity, but in at least one area he may provide us with a door of opportunity for witnessing to our contemporary world: the area of spirituality.

The reason for this is not hard to find. In an age when absolute truth means nothing, personal experience means everything. And in its efforts to evangelise the world, the evangelical church is increasingly noting that the spiritual element of biblical religion may well prove to be an avenue for approaching contemporary postmoderns. For example, in a recent edition of *Christianity Today*, Professor Alister McGrath answers a question about witnessing to postmodern culture by drawing attention to "two emphases that postmodernity finds particularly

¹⁴ David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth, or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1993), 61.

¹⁵ Wells, *No Place for Truth*, 61.

attractive – personal experience and telling stories”¹⁶. Similarly, theologian Douglas Groothuis speaks of postmodernity’s interest in ‘spiritualities’ as providing a point of contact for evangelism, although he warns that “a Christian apologetic should emphasize spirituality as set within a framework of objective truth”.¹⁷ D.A. Carson makes the same caveat:

If spirituality becomes an end in itself, detached from the core, and largely without biblical or theological norms to define it and anchor it in the objective gospel, then pursuit of spirituality, however nebulously defined, will degenerate into nothing more than the pursuit of certain kinds of experience ... Spirituality must be thought about and sought after out of the matrix of core biblical theology.¹⁸

Bearing this in mind, it is possible that for today’s Scotland, as well as for today’s America, a *radical* spirituality – that is, one whose *radix* is grounded in Scripture – may well be a means for the evangelism of our contemporary (postmodern) world.

All of which brings us to a convenient place in which to bring Edwards into play. His *Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections* was nothing if not an attempt to have authentic spirituality rooted in biblical theology. We will look, first, at the context in which this work was written, the content of the treatise, and finally the paradigmatic element – what the *Treatise* can teach the contemporary evangelical church about *true* spirituality, in a world which is content with any kind of ‘spiritual experience’.

Context

The context of the *Treatise* was the Great Awakening of the early 1740s; the text arose out of a series of sermons preached by Edwards between 1742 and 1743, with the work appearing in its first edition in 1746. As Iain Murray comments,

¹⁶ A.E. McGrath, “The Real Gospel”, *Christianity Today* (December 9, 2002): 59.

¹⁷ D. Groothuis, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity against the Challenge of Postmodernism* (IVP, 2000), 165.

¹⁸ D.A. Carson, “When is Spirituality Spiritual?”, Appendix to *The Gaggling of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 567.

While the concerns which gave rise to the book are patently rooted in the Awakening the standpoint in time has changed; it is no longer ‘the present revival’ but ‘the late extraordinary season’ or ‘the late great revival’.¹⁹

And by any measure the recent ‘season’ had been extraordinary. Edwards’ account of the revival in Northampton to a minister in Boston still makes thrilling reading:

The months of August and September were the most remarkable of any this year for appearances of the conviction and conversion of sinners, and great revivings, quickenings, and comforts of professors, and for extraordinary external effects of these things. It was a very frequent thing to see a house full of outcries, faintings, convulsions, and such like, both with distress, and also with admiration and joy.²⁰

The whole movement was, according to Edwards, “a glorious work of God”, and was attended by phenomena which Edwards knew to be of God’s Holy Spirit.

But in many ways that was the problem. On the one hand, Edwards knew that the opponents of the revival – such as Rev Charles Chauncy of First Church, Boston – were putting such experiences down to “excesses and extravagancies”, and claiming that much in the Awakening was “a dishonour to God”²¹. On the other, he knew that friends of the revival could be deluded into thinking that the presence of these phenomena was sufficient to count as a genuine work of God, and that all that was required to maintain and promote the revival was to encourage the experiences. As a sensitive pastor, as well as a penetrative theologian, he sought to steer his people through these extremes. He had no wish to downplay the significance of spiritual emotions; but at the same time he did not wish anyone to assume that all experiences in times of spiritual awakening were spiritual experiences, nor that it was enough that they were there at all. So the preface to the *Treatise* sets his agenda:

¹⁹ Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), 251.

²⁰ *An Account of the Revival of Religion in Northampton in 1740-42 as communicated in a letter to a minister of Boston*, published in J. Edwards, *A Narrative of Surprising Conversions* (Sovereign Grace Publishers, 2001), 101.

²¹ Marsden, *Edwards*, 269-71.

What are the distinguishing qualifications of those that are in favour with God, and entitled to his eternal rewards? OR, which comes to the same thing, What is the nature of true religion? And wherein do lie the distinguishing notes of that virtue and holiness that is acceptable in the sight of God?²²

Realising that “it is by the mixture of counterfeit religion with true, not discerned and distinguished, that the devil has had his greatest advantage against the cause and kingdom of Christ all along hitherto,”²³ Edwards is at pains to explore the parameters of authentic spiritual life. Neither the revival nor the effects of the revival could ever be normative for Christian experience; the Bible needed to measure both. For that reason, the whole *Treatise* is an extended treatment of 1 Peter 1:8 – “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

As Stephen Nichols writes, one of the reasons why the *Treatise* is a classic is because “it addresses numerous problems that, generation after generation, plague Christians and the church”.²⁴ Where is the locus for the emotions in biblical religion? What are the tell-tale signs of genuine religious experience? How can we test whether our religion is true? I suspect that Edwards' main concern in the *Treatise* was not the opponents of the revival, but those who defended it precisely on the grounds that there was evidence of extraordinary spiritual experience. For this reason it is important to note the change evident in Edwards' analyses of the Awakening. The *Narrative of Surprising Conversions* (1737) was a very enthusiastic and uncritical summary of the effects of the revival. His work *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England* (1742) offers responses to the critics of the revival, calls on men to promote it (not least on the grounds that the latter-day glory, in Edwards' view, would break forth in the American colonies first of all²⁵), and shows that it is possible for supporters of the revival to be misguided in their promotion of it.

²² *The Select Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Volume III: Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1961), 15. Subsequent quotations from the *Treatise* will be taken from this volume.

²³ *Treatise*, 17.

²⁴ Stephen J. Nichols, *Jonathan Edwards: A guided tour of his life and thought* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2001), 107.

²⁵ *Works*, 1: 383.

By the time the *Treatise* appears, Edwards has been giving careful consideration to the potential for harm which lies with the supporters of the Awakening. The *Treatise* was not just another round in the debate with Charles Chauncy, but it did provide a refutation of the primacy which Chauncy gave to the intellect. Professor Marsden is correct to say that

Even though the whole treatise was a refutation of Chauncy's premise of the priority of reason over the affections, Edwards was nearly as critical of the turn the awakening had taken as was the Boston pastor and often in nearly the same ways.²⁶

The cumulative effect of Edwards' analyses is to highlight for us that neither description of heightened spiritual experience, nor promotion of spiritual revival, is sufficient to authenticate religious experience. These things are good, Edwards wishes to tell the church, but they are not enough. And for our postmodern culture, they are not enough either. That is why we need to hear Edwards' mature concerns about the 'nature of religious affections'.

Content

The framework of the *Treatise* is simple: Part 1 explores the meaning of the affections and their importance in religion; Part 2 looks at elements which cannot be taken as a sure sign that affections are genuine or not; and Part 3 looks at elements which demonstrate the genuineness of spiritual experiences.

On the basis of 1 Peter 1:8, Edwards reasoned that "true religion largely consists in holy affections".²⁷ This was in part a declared opposition to rationalism²⁸ as much as an exegesis of the New Testament, but his point is clear nonetheless: "religion is not primarily an affair of the intellect, but an affair of the heart".²⁹ It was a point which later scholars within the American evangelical tradition would

²⁶ Marsden, *Edwards*, 290.

²⁷ *Treatise*, 23.

²⁸ Cf. the comment by Helen Westra that Edwards "was using every available opportunity to restrain rationalist and Arminian views that he feared detrimental to the orthodox Protestant position that humans cannot attain salvation through their own capabilities". Helen Petter Westra, "Jonathan Edwards and 'What Reason Teaches'", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34, no. 4 (December 1991): 496.

²⁹ Ola Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards 1703-1758: A Biography* (New York, 1940), 232.

question; according to Professor Brooks Holifield, Charles Hodge, for example, “felt wary of the assertion – characteristic of Edwards – that religion consisted in holy affections”.³⁰ But Edwards realised (as, indeed, Hodge did also), that it is possible both to have an intellectual grasp of the truth of the Gospel, accompanied by experiences and stirrings of a ‘spiritual’ kind, and at the same time have a heart which has not been genuinely changed and renewed. From that perspective it was true of Edwards that “only in the heart and will could he locate a kind of religious experience involving both a supernatural transformation and holy action”.³¹ For Edwards, the heart of the matter was the matter of the heart.

Yet it is too simplistic to say that Edwards is dealing here with ‘heart religion’ versus ‘head religion’. In exploring the nature of religious affections, Edwards does distinguish between the intellect (the faculty by which the soul “is capable of perception and speculation”³²) and the will (by which the soul “is in some way inclined with respect to the things it views and considers; either is inclined *to* them, or is disinclined and averse *from* them”³³). Edwards acknowledges that he is struggling with language, but wants to identify the whole man with the heart, which is characterised both by the ability to consider certain things and to be either drawn to them or repelled from them. As John Smith puts it in his introduction to the Yale Edition of the *Treatise*,

The essential point is that the affections manifest the center and unity of the self: they express the whole man and give insight into the basic orientation of his life.³⁴

³⁰ E. Brooks Holifield, “Hodge, the Seminary, and the American Theological Context”, in J.W. Stewart and J. H. Moorhead, eds., *Charles Hodge Revisited: A Critical Appraisal of His Life and Work* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 108. Although cf. Hodge’s assertion that “the faith which is connected with salvation is not merely an intellectual exercise, but an exercise of the affections as well”. E.N. Gross, *Charles Hodge: Systematic Theology, Abridged Edition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 448.

³¹ W. Breitenbach, “Piety and Moralism: Edwards and the New Divinity” in N.O. Hatch and H.S. Stout, eds., *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 184.

³² *Treatise*, 24.

³³ *Treatise*, 24.

³⁴ J.E. Smith, ed., Editor’s Introduction to *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale, 1959), 14.

Edwards recognises a fundamental continuity between the role of the affections in the matters of everyday life and their role in the supreme matters of religion. They become “very much the spring of men’s actions”;³⁵ we apprehend certain things, and we are either drawn to them or away from them. We cannot remain indifferent. Religion is the same; and with a myriad Scripture quotations, Edwards demonstrates that

they who would deny that much of true religion lies in the affections, and maintain the contrary, must throw away what we have been wont to own for our Bible, and get some other rule, by which to judge of the nature of religion”.³⁶

And on this basis he makes three fundamental inferences: that to discard all religious affections as insubstantial is a great error, that our desire ought to be for the things that will move our affections, and that we should be ashamed at how few true religious affections we so often have.

The second part of the *Treatise* is a development of the first. In demonstrating that religion consists largely of spiritual affections and inclinations, Edwards was aware of the temptation to conclude that all such experiences were positive signs. But he insists that

as we ought not to reject and condemn all affections as though true religion did not at all consist in affection; so, on the other hand, we ought not to approve of all, as though every one that was religiously affected had true grace.³⁷

So Edwards adduces twelve points which may well be true in human experience, but which of themselves demonstrate neither that these affections are gracious, nor that they are not. This is a ground-clearing exercise, an attempt to pave the way for a discussion of the characteristics of genuine religious experience in Part 3. To summarise, Edwards is saying that it is possible for all the following to be true of us, without any of them being a sure guarantor that our heart is right with God:

³⁵ *Treatise*, 29.

³⁶ *Treatise*, 35.

³⁷ *Treatise*, 54.

- 1) Our experiences may be very great and our affections very 'high';
- 2) They may have physical manifestations;
- 3) They may cause us to speak much about religion;
- 4) They may have a cause external to ourselves;
- 5) They may be accompanied with texts of Scripture;
- 6) They may lead to feelings and expressions of love;
- 7) They may be very varied;
- 8) They may follow a particular order;³⁸
- 9) They may lead to much zeal in the performance of our duties;
- 10) They may lead to praise and worship;
- 11) They may produce great assurance;
- 12) They may lead to many interesting and moving testimonies.

Edwards is not saying that the presence of any of these phenomena demonstrates the invalidity of our experience. His point is that they may be present as a result of genuine spiritual experience (and often are); but they may also be present as a result of other factors. So, for example, regarding the third of the points above, Edwards says:

that persons are disposed to be abundant in talking of things of religion may be from a good cause, and it may be from a bad one.³⁹

The abundance of the talk of spiritual things is in itself neither a positive nor a negative sign. The genuineness of the true religion requires to be tested by some other standard. So Edwards wishes to press the point that there is all the difference in the world between the confidence of the 'evangelical hypocrite' and the assurance born out of

³⁸ Edwards concedes that true conversion experiences usually do follow a particular order of conviction followed by conversion followed by assurance, but his point is that "as a seeming to have this distinctiveness as to steps and method is no certain sign that a person is converted, so a being without is no evidence that a person is not converted" (*Treatise*, 88). It is going too far to say with Smith in the Yale edition that "Edwards is denying the validity of many Puritan descriptions of salvation as involving a sequential process" (Smith, *Edwards*, Yale edition, 2: 20). On the contrary, his discussion of Part 2 assumes the validity of this position and raises the possibility that it may be counterfeited in human life. The sequentiality of the process may or may not be a sign of the genuineness of the affections (as with all the other signs in this section).

³⁹ *Treatise*, 63.

true grace. And, interestingly, he argues that the former may be more immovable than the latter; Christians may lose their assurance from time to time, but hypocrites rarely lose their misplaced confidence. This, as Stephen Nichols puts it, is not a call for “an attitude of suspicion”, but simply a reminder “of the difference between *professing* Christ and *possessing* Christ”.⁴⁰

The third, and most extended part of the *Treatise*, concerns the positive signs of genuine gracious affections. As in Part 2, so here, he lists twelve different elements. John Smith is correct to point out that Edwards does not make it clear whether every gracious affection exhibits all twelve of these signs, or what the relationship between them is; the common ground which they all occupy is simply the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the heart: “all signs as positive indications of gracious affections point back to the saving operation; if this indwelling fails to take place, no genuine signs can appear at all.”⁴¹ What Edwards does is to caution the reader against imagining that he – or anyone else – is qualified to make a definitive judgement on the true state of those who profess the faith. Nor is it possible for backslidden Christians to discern their true condition from the signs he gives (since they are genuinely regenerated although fallen into sin). And nor will his list of signs shake certain kinds of hypocrites out of their false confidence. Permeating the list of signs which distinguish genuine spiritual affections are the caveats of earlier Parts of the *Treatise*.

The twelve signs are worth pondering in turn.

1.) Gracious affections are from divine influence

That is to say, they are ‘spiritual’, simply because they are the product of the saving activity of the Holy Spirit. Edwards places this in apposition to what is ‘natural’ and to what is ‘carnal’. The principle on which Edwards operates is that the Holy Spirit both *resides* in the heart of the true believer, and *influences* the heart of the believer:

From hence it follows, that in those gracious exercises and affections which are wrought in the minds of the saints, through the saving influences of the Spirit of God, there is a new inward perception or sensation of their minds, entirely

⁴⁰ Nichols, *Edwards*, 118. My italics.

⁴¹ Smith, *Edwards*, Yale edition, 2: 24.

different in nature and kind from anything that ever their minds were the subjects of before they were sanctified.⁴²

Closely related to this is Edwards' insistence on the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures. Again Edwards has to proceed cautiously, since many can claim to have heard Scripture words speaking to them who have never been truly born again. But, according to Edwards, "God's manner is not to bring comfortable texts of Scripture to give men assurance of his love and of future happiness, before they have had a faith of dependence".⁴³ When the Spirit works through the truth, the words of Scripture become the foundation of the hope. The genuineness of spiritual experience can be tested, in Edwards' view, by whether or not it is oriented to one's dependence on the Word of God. 'Spirituality' is not enough.

2.) *Their object is the excellence of divine things*

For Edwards, neither love of self, nor love of the benefits of Christ's salvation, are sufficient in themselves to validate our spiritual experience. The hallmark of genuine spirituality is its discovery of how excellent God is in himself: "the first foundation of a true love to God is that whereby He is in Himself lovely, or worthy to be loved, or the supreme loveliness of His nature".⁴⁴ Whatever advantages the Gospel may yield are secondary in consideration: it is God's intrinsic perfections that are the object of genuine religious affections. The hypocrite's source of love and joy is self-love, while the true believer finds in God himself reason enough to love him.

This has important consequences for any spiritual experience. The authenticity of such experience is grounded for Edwards not in its ecstatic nature or even in its therapeutic qualities. It is grounded in what is *objective*, rather than in what is *subjective*; in what it *seeks* rather than in what it *gains*.

3.) *They are founded on the moral excellency of divine things*

At first glance this seems to be simply a restating of the previous sign, except that an aesthetic element is introduced. A positive response to the things of God comes from an appreciation of their innate beauty and loveliness. Further, Edwards is widening his circle: it is not simply God in himself and his own innate perfections that is regarded as

⁴² *Treatise*, 132-133.

⁴³ *Treatise*, 150.

⁴⁴ *Treatise*, 168.

attractive, but the holiness that attaches to all that is his – his angels, his saints, his Word, his law, his Gospel.

The reason for this attraction is a change of appetite on the part of the renewed man – “there is given to those that are regenerated a new supernatural sense, that is as it were a certain divine spiritual taste”.⁴⁵ If the Bible is true in stating that natural man sees no beauty in God to desire him (Isaiah 53:2), then the regenerated man, having been changed from within, has a holy love which focuses on holy objects. Edwards thus makes it clear that it is possible for the majesty of God to impress itself in various ways on those who are not born again; but once again he insists that such effects are no sign that hearts have been changed. Changed hearts are characterised by a love for the things of God, in the absence of which the spiritual experience is demonstrably deceptive.

4.) They arise from divine illumination

Or, in Edwards’ words, they are not “heat without light”.⁴⁶ The illumination and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit are necessary if we are truly to experience the excellence of God for ourselves. Ignorance is no barrier to strong affections; but the affections of which Edwards is speaking do not arise from ignorance, but from a supernatural knowledge supernaturally given. This is not to be equated merely with the imparting of new information or doctrine, nor with a new explanation of Scripture passages, nor with a new insight into Bible types and allegories. “It is possible”, after all, “that a man might know how to interpret all the types, parables, enigmas and allegories in the Bible, and not have one beam of spiritual light in his mind”.⁴⁷ The evidence of a true spirituality is a new manner by which the Scripture comes to the mind:

Spiritually to *understand* the Scripture, is to have the eyes of the mind opened, to behold the wonderful spiritual excellency of the glorious things contained in the true meaning of it, and that always were contained in it, ever since it was written; to behold the amiable and bright manifestations of the divine perfections, and of the excellency and sufficiency of Christ, and the excellency and suitableness of the way of salvation by Christ, and the spiritual glory of the precepts and promises

⁴⁵ *Treatise*, 185.

⁴⁶ *Treatise*, 192.

⁴⁷ *Treatise*, 204.

of the Scripture, etc., which things are, and always were in the Bible, and would have been seen before, if it had not been for blindness, without having any new sense added, by the words being sent by God to a particular person, and spoken anew to him, with a new meaning.⁴⁸

For all of Edwards' anti-rationalism, he never decries the use and place of the mind in spiritual life and experience. He disclaims rationalism precisely because it is the philosophy of a dead and darkened mind; what he urges is the need for a renewed and enlightened mind. His perspective is anti-rationalistic, but not non-rational; his purpose was "to retain understanding in religion as furnishing a rational criterion ... a *sensible* light involving direct sensible perception and the inclination of the heart".⁴⁹

5.) *They are attended with a conviction of certainty*

Edwards adduces certain Scriptures to demonstrate that authentic spirituality is characterised by "a conviction and persuasion of the truth of the things of the gospel".⁵⁰ In analysing this proposition, Edwards argues that it is possible for someone to be convinced that the Scripture is true, but only because he accepts those passages which seem to confirm his own security. The kind of affections Edwards is speaking about are willing to embrace the veracity of the whole Scripture.

But the conviction of which Edwards writes is not merely an assent to the truthfulness of the Bible; it is also the persuasion of its historical outworking, and, indeed, of the historicity of God's work in the church, through the gospel, in successive ages. Such a perspective is necessary if we are to "venture our all" on the persuasion that the Bible is true. Thus it is not simply a new view of things; it is a persuasion that the truth of the Christian faith deserves the response of whole-person commitment.

6.) *They are attended with evangelical humility*

Here Edwards wishes to contrast 'legal humiliation' – which he says has in it "no spiritual good"⁵¹ – with 'evangelical humiliation', whose essence is "such humility as becomes a creature in itself exceeding

⁴⁸ *Treatise*, 206.

⁴⁹ Smith, *Edwards*, Yale edition, 2:33.

⁵⁰ *Treatise*, 219.

⁵¹ *Treatise*, 238.

sinful, under a disposition of grace”.⁵² God’s gracious provision is, says Edwards, *calculated* to produce such humility. It cannot sit easily with pride or self-satisfaction. The practical point is that genuine spiritual experience is intimately related to the “Christian duty of self-denial”, which for Edwards consists of two principal elements: “first, in a man’s denying his worldly inclinations, and in forsaking and renouncing all worldly objects and enjoyments; and, secondly, in denying his natural self-exaltation and renouncing his own dignity and glory”.⁵³

It is impossible, therefore, to speak of genuine experiences of God’s grace which are not in some way related to the awareness of sin and corruption in the heart. Indeed, Edwards says, the increase of grace tends “to cause the saints to think their deformity vastly more than their goodness”.⁵⁴ Any religious experience which leaves a person content that his sin is gone is, for Edwards, highly spurious.

7.) *They are attended with a change of nature*

“All spiritual discoveries are transforming”,⁵⁵ Edwards says. This point is obvious both from what he has already said about changed hearts, perceptions and inclinations, and also from what he will say at last, that the great mark of genuine spirituality is habit, practice and tendency of life. But this seventh sign is a treatise on conversion, which is defined as “a great and universal change of the man, turning him from sin to God”.⁵⁶ Edwards, with the insight of a pastor, concedes that man’s pre-conversion inclinations may trap him subsequently; but having become a new man in Christ, the natural temper of his soul comes under the modifying and correcting influence of grace.

8.) *They beget and promote the temper of Jesus*

Following from this is the fact that conversion leads to Christ-likeness. Edwards picks up on the Bible’s teaching that the Spirit transforms us into the image and likeness of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18), and demonstrates that whatever else genuine spirituality does, it leaves us walking in the footsteps of “our great Leader and Example”.⁵⁷ Throughout there is the insistence that genuine religious affections are

⁵² *Treatise*, 238.

⁵³ *Treatise*, 241.

⁵⁴ *Treatise*, 252.

⁵⁵ *Treatise*, 267.

⁵⁶ *Treatise*, 267.

⁵⁷ *Treatise*, 278.

characterised not by feelings of wellbeing or self-assurance, but by a particular lifestyle which mirrors that of Jesus.

9.) *Gracious affections soften the heart*

This, again, is a development of points 7 and 8, and arises out of the Bible's distinction between hearts of stone and hearts of flesh. Hard hearts are characterised by spiritual sloth and self-assurance; flesh hearts are characterised by quietness and tender consciences. The greater our 'holy boldness', the less we will have of self-confidence, and the greater will be our modesty.⁵⁸

10.) *They have beautiful symmetry and proportion*

While hypocrites are like meteors which flash across the sky, momentarily dazzling in their brilliance, true believers are like the stars which are firmly fixed in the firmament, and radiate their beauty.⁵⁹ Just as Edwards raises the aesthetic excellence of divine things in point 3, so now he argues that the experiences and affections of the true believer are proportioned and ordered. How can they not be when there is always "symmetry and beauty in God's workmanship"⁶⁰? While hypocrites may have a confident hope, they are lacking the reverence and caution that characterise genuine spiritual experience. That is, there is a disproportion to their attitudes and experiences.

There is an implicit reference to the Great Awakening in this discussion, not least in the charge that some who have made great noises about the way the Gospel has influenced them, have at the same time failed to be strict concerning their duties towards their neighbours. Related to this is the symmetry which Edwards observes must be present between public and private religion:

If persons appear greatly engaged in social religion, and but little in the religion of the closet, and are often highly affected when with others, and but little moved when they have none but God and Christ to converse with, it looks very darkly upon their religion.⁶¹

⁵⁸ *Treatise*, 292.

⁵⁹ *Treatise*, 300.

⁶⁰ *Treatise*, 292.

⁶¹ *Treatise*, 302.

11.) False affections rest satisfied in themselves

The more spiritual experience a person has, the more he longs after God. Edwards' language is very careful here; he does not say that increased spiritual sense and experience leads to a longing for more such experience, but for more of God. It is characteristic of the false emotionalism that he is distinguishing from the true that it is content with itself and content with the enjoyment of the experience. Edwards concludes: "this is the nature of spiritual affections, that the greater they be, the greater the appetite and longing is after grace and holiness".⁶² Undergirding this is a suspicion that those who felt that continued heightened experiences were a sign that the revival was ongoing may well have been deceiving themselves. Such experiences are good, but if our desire is simply for 'spirituality', of whatever form, then it is insubstantial. Genuine spirituality produces a thirst for God.

12.) Religious affections have their fruit in Christian practice

Edwards reserves the largest space for this final sign. The chief characteristic of genuine spirituality is continued Christian practice and a habitual Christian lifestyle. The spirituality of which Edwards has been speaking is born out of a new relationship with Christ, whose presence in human life is motivating, energising and encouraging. "Christ is not in the heart of a saint as in a sepulchre, or as a dead Saviour that does nothing; but as in His temple, and as One that is alive from the dead."⁶³ On the other hand, "false discoveries and affections do not go deep enough to reach and govern the spring of man's actions and practice".⁶⁴ This leads to an extended discussion on the saints' perseverance and their life of fruit-bearing.

Equally important is his reference to backsliding. Although Edwards consistently applies the principle that grace is never inactive, he knows that sin is not inactive either. And while consistent Christian practice remains a sign both to ourselves and others that we have the life of God in our soul, it is still possible for Christians to slip into ways of sin and worldliness. This, however, has to be contrasted with the hypocrite who may follow the things of religion for a little while, then fall away permanently. Where genuine spirituality exists, it co-exists with sin. There may be times when 'universal obedience' to God is lacking, but

⁶² *Treatise*, 305.

⁶³ *Treatise*, 315.

⁶⁴ *Treatise*, 315.

the falling away can never be so permanent as to lead to a habitual neglect and dislike of true religion.

For the true child of God, therefore, it is not enough that religious life be couched in negatives. Christians are to be exemplary in the positives of Christian service as well. Such practice, says Edwards, "is the greatest sign of grace".⁶⁵ In John E. Smith's words, Edwards "was taking a long look at Protestantism's sacred domain – the inner life – and demanding that it be subjected to a public test".⁶⁶

Paradigm

Is there a paradigm here for evangelical spirituality? I think there is, and I think that Edwards' discussion directs us in this whole area. That is to say, Edwards' discussion is as relevant for our contemporary church in its contemporary cultural context.

First, we might note Edwards' insistence throughout the *Treatise* on the use and place of the mind. It is true, as the *Treatise* makes plain, that Edwards rejects both a rationalistic basis for religion and an intellectualism that does not move the heart. His insistence is on a whole-person transformation by grace and a whole-person consecration to Christ. For that reason, he also remains suspicious of a spirituality which does not engage the mind. As Dr Samuel Logan puts it,

Edwards sought more than anything to make Christ a totally engaging Person for his people. But this is not to say that Edwards repudiated logic or that he ignored the importance of propositional understanding. Again the *Religious Affections* serves as a model. Carefully reasoned and rigorously logical, Edwards therein presents a full-blown analysis of an essential part of the Christian life, a part which must be thoroughly and propositionally known if the individual's spiritual life is to be full, complete, and true.⁶⁷

The role of the mind is twofold. First, it receives the propositional truth of the Gospel, and second, it measures experience against that truth. In neither case is experience sufficient. If there are religious affections at all, then they are inextricably linked to the truth of the

⁶⁵ *Treatise*, 327.

⁶⁶ Smith, *Edwards*, Yale edition, 2:43.

⁶⁷ S.T. Logan, Jr, "The Hermeneutics of Jonathan Edwards", *Westminster Theological Journal* 43, no. 1 (Fall 1980): 91.

Gospel, and they are subject to scrutiny and testing by the Scriptures themselves. They are never self-validating.

Any 'spirituality' which fails to engage the mind fails to engage the whole person, and anti-intellectual spirituality is as inimical to the evangelical church as to the postmodern world. David Wells is right: "meaning is what religion is about".⁶⁸ For that reason, his call to ministers is to place theology, and not spirituality, at the core of the Church's life and work. Wells contrasts an older model of ministry, rooted in Reformed and Puritan ideology (which saw the whole of Church life as a theological practice) with a newer model in which theology and practice have been disengaged. If we are to avoid the trap of merely using evangelicalism as a guise with which to pander to the requirements of religious consumers,⁶⁹ then we need to bring an evangelical mind to bear on all our spiritual experiences. Perhaps the greatest service we can do our postmodern society is to remind it that all spirituality is vacated of meaning the moment it is divorced from the life of the mind.

Second, we ought to note Edwards' insistence that it is possible to have heightened, prolonged and enjoyable spiritual experiences that are not genuine. Postmodernism operates on the assumption that all experience is equally valid (which is the very kind of absolute statement that is anathema to postmodernism!). But even granting the validity of making the assumption, is it true? Does it matter what kind of experience I have, as long as I have experiences of some kind? And if, within the evangelical church, I have unusual experiences, is this not a sign that the Holy Spirit is at work? The Reformed church has for long faced the issue raised by the charismatic movement: do not the presence of signs and wonders evidence the presence of the Holy Spirit, and at the same time evidence the deadness of the older Reformed orthodoxy?

Edwards' point is that no religious affection is genuine simply because it is a religious affection. No experience, or gift, or miracle, or wonder is genuine simply because that is what it is. It is, after all, possible to go to Christ on the day of judgement with a list of accomplishments which may be true and yet may also accompany a complete ignorance of Christ as Saviour (Matthew 7:21-23). Such phenomena may well accompany the work of God in human life, but must never be necessarily equated with it.

⁶⁸ Wells, *No Place for Truth*, 253.

⁶⁹ See Wells, *No Place for Truth*, 256.

To summarise: "Edwards insists that being part of the elect can be determined by ascertaining that our religious emotions, producing Christian graces and good works, have their origin in God".⁷⁰ If God's grace in our heart is our point of departure, and the development of Christian graces in our life our goal and purpose, then we can measure the genuineness of our spirituality. But no spiritual experience can ever be regarded as genuine unless we have been drawn to God and motivated to live for Him. The beauty of Christ must remain the anchor of all our experiences and the practice of our life their test. Otherwise spiritual experience will drift in the cross-currents of self and subjectivism. We are to test the affections as we are to test the spirits.

Third, we ought to note Edwards' insistence that genuine religious affections are accompanied by a profound lack of self-trust. The irony of contemporary postmodernism lies in its insistence on spirituality as a basis for self-confidence and self-trust. Yet the *Treatise* might also legitimately be regarded as an expansion of Paul's rhetorical question: 'Where is boasting then? It is excluded' (Romans 3:27).

For Jonathan Edwards, our religious affections not only require to be tested by the standards of Scripture, but they also require to turn us away from ourselves to the objective reality of what has been done for us in Christ. For today's evangelical church, which has lost its moorings in a sea of contemporary philosophies, as well as for today's postmodern world, roots are desperately needed. The church cannot pride herself in her spirituality any more than the world can. The moment we lose confidence in ourselves, our methods, our programmes, our management, our professionalism, is the moment we begin to engage with what is genuinely 'spiritual', that is, of the Holy Spirit of God. And the moment the postmodernist turns away from imagining that spirituality is enough, is the moment he or she can anchor confidence in something lasting.

Conclusion

Some have read the *Treatise on the Religious Affections* as a tacit admission that the Great Awakening had been one gigantic failure. Edward H. Davidson, for example, described the *Treatise* as "a narrative of Edwards's mind seeking to discover why God had not fulfilled his purposes, at least as those purposes had loomed so brightly

⁷⁰ R.E. Diprose, "Grace: What it is, and How it has been understood by the Church", *Emmaus Journal* 10, no. 2 (Winter 2001): 266.

a mere four or five years before".⁷¹ On this reading, the *Treatise* was reduced to being "a mournful epilogue to the Awakening".⁷² This is a classic *modernist* approach to the *Treatise*, which fails to appreciate Edwards' spiritual concern for his people.

To be sure, the *Treatise* was an analysis of the Awakening; but Richard Lovelace is correct to state that Edwards, rather than mournfully wondering why the movement had failed,

spent the 1740s basically responding to the awakening in two ways: defending its genuine center against the attempts to discredit it through guilt-by-association with aberrant forms, and co-opting, improving and intensifying Chauncy's critique of its weaknesses in order to purify the movement".⁷³

God's glorious work had not miscarried just because there were aberrations in the movement, any more than religious affections are to be judged spurious just because of the presence of sin in the life. The *Treatise* was an attempt to weigh up the truth of biblical Christianity, both by answering those who said that the phenomena discredited the revival and those who said that they necessarily validated it.

For the evangelical church of our own day, again labouring in similar circumstances in modern Scotland and contemporary New England, Edwards' response is worth careful consideration. In a world chock-full of spiritual experiences, there is always the danger of assuming too much and assessing too little. Edwards is simply engaging us with, and calling us to, the truth of Scripture. Postmodernism neglects that truth at its peril, as does the evangelical church. While we do not want a dead orthodoxy (there *are* genuine religious affections after all), nor do we wish to dress our orthodoxy in the garments of spurious experiences. Some experiences may give the impression that all is well; but if they are self-centred and self-focussed they are a sign of illness, not of health. Both our culture and our churches need Edwards' penetrating insights into what it is that constitutes a valid spiritual experience, as we need to follow his example of putting biblical theology at the heart of all our practice.

⁷¹ E.H. Davidson, *Jonathan Edwards: The Narrative of a Puritan Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 133.

⁷² Davidson, *Edwards*, 133.

⁷³ R.F. Lovelace, "Evangelical Revivals and the Presbyterian tradition", *Westminster Theological Journal* 42, no. 1 (Fall 1979): 140.

Reformation and Revival

P. J. Buys*

** The following article is offered with the hope that it will stimulate discussion on a matter which Christians should seriously consider – reformation and revival. It is not meant to read like an academic thesis but rather is meant to engage and help the reader to become familiar with certain key contours and writers who touch on various viewpoints relating to the theme of revival. We hope to continue this theme in 2009 with an article on Andrew Murray.*

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Editor

Introduction: Calvinists around the world differ about revival and reformation

Amongst committed Calvinists there are strongly opposed viewpoints concerning revival. Many Calvinists from Dutch Calvinistic backgrounds reject any idea of revival as un-Calvinistic and contradictory to reformation.

A typical exponent of this viewpoint was L. Praamsma of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. He writes about the phenomenon that in times when the church degenerates into formalism and institutionalism, when there is a lack of love, zeal and discipline and the church loses its biblical character, many concerned Christians call for prayer for revival and renewal. Praamsma clearly rejects this approach and concludes, “To my mind not revival but reformation is needed in such a case” (Praamsma 1973:15, my translation, P.J.B).

In the same way, P.W. Buys of Potchefstroom in a publication on Methodism clearly pronounces a categorical rejection of a concern for revival. He states, “The way of awakenings and revivals is not the way of Reformed Christians, it is the way of methodism” (PU for CHE n.d. 48, my translation, P.J.B.).

Contradictory to this, some very loyal Calvinists hold the opinion that it is impossible for a Calvinist not to have a call for revival. The well-known Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, “Then in turn, as I have been trying to say, true Calvinism is bound to emphasize the element of revival.... The true Calvinist is concerned about revival. Why? Because he is concerned about the glory of God” (Lloyd-Jones 2005:123, 124).

Lloyd-Jones even said, “If you are really burdened by the times in which we live, if you are really grieving in your heart as you see the godlessness of the world, if you have a compassion in your hearts for men and women in the bondage of sin and of Satan, your first duty is to pray for revival” (Lloyd-Jones 1982:81).

Another Calvinist known throughout the world, Dr. Francis Schaeffer, put it this way:

The church in our generation needs reformation, revival and constructive revolution.

At times men think of the two words reformation and revival as standing in contrast one to the other, but this is a mistake. Both words are related to the word restore.

Reformation refers to a restoration to pure doctrine; revival refers to a restoration in the Christian’s life. Reformation speaks of a return to the teachings of Scripture; revival speaks of a life brought into its proper relationship to the Holy Spirit.

The great moment of church history will have come when these two restorations have simultaneously come into action, so that the church has returned to pure doctrine and the lives of the Christians in the church have known the power of the Holy Spirit. **There cannot be true revival unless there has been reformation; and reformation is not complete without revival.** (emphasis mine)

Such a combination of reformation and revival would be revolutionary in our day – revolutionary in our individual lives as Christians, revolutionary not only in reference to the liberal church but constructively revolutionary in the evangelical, orthodox church as well.

May we be those who know the reality of both reformation and revival, so that this poor dark world may have an

exhibition of a portion of the church returned to both pure doctrine and Spirit-filled life” (Schaeffer 1970:9).

Abraham Kuyper published a book in 1883 with the title *Van de Refomatie der kerken* (*On the Reformation of the church*). In this book there is also a chapter on “Reformation through revival”. Although he was concerned about the dangers of pseudo-revival and pointed out the bad fruit of some revivals, he was clearly convinced that sometimes there is a need for awakenings and revivals of religion in the church.

Revival, according to Kuyper, is “... the wonderful times that God visits his people; with revelations, influences and workings of his Holy Spirit, going out with more power to the souls of his people than they have been used to for quite a while in the past” (Kuyper 1883:123) (my translation from his Dutch).

W. Stanford Reid (1913-1996), a very committed Calvinist and history professor in Canada, was of the opinion that the Reformation of the sixteenth century was the greatest revival since Pentecost. At the heart of the Reformation, according to him, was a dynamic spiritual force without which it could have accomplished nothing, so that the essence of the movement was a true Christian revival. The church was revived, and this happened not only in one or two places but over half of Europe was affected. Between 1517 and 1564, it had gained hundreds of thousands of adherents, practically turning the whole of Christendom upside down (Reid 1965:15-16).

In this regard, Dr. John R. de Witt (1982) former professor of Systematic Theology at the Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi, also said:

It is not so easy to analyze the Reformation of the sixteenth century with respect to its peculiar identity: Was the Reformation a reformation or was it a revival or was it both? Surely the answer to that question, on reflection, must be that the Reformation of the sixteenth century was both!

It was a reformation, in the sense that the church was brought back to the Scriptures. The church, the theology was brought back to the Scriptures. It was a bringing back of the church and of the faith of the church to the wellsprings. As Zwingli used to cry out, “*Ad fontes!*” Back to the fountains, back to the wellsprings of Holy Scriptures.

But the Reformation was also a revival; in that the church was spiritually quickened and in that great numbers of people were brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The

gospel spread like wildfire across the face of Europe and tremendous impact upon the church was perceptible as the word of God empowered by the Holy Spirit brought through preaching wrought those great transformations.

Another well-known Reformed theologian, Prof. Klaas Runia (1926-2006), once the moderator of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, thought along the same lines. In 1968 he wrote an excellent booklet entitled *Reformation Today*, in which he made the following statement, "I know groups in Australia that have been praying for revival for many years. We can only be grateful for this. Revival is indeed necessary" (Runia 1968:45).

He was also of the opinion that reformation and revival belong together. "They are the two sides of one reality. Just as there are two aspects in the church, the organizational-visible and the spiritual-visible, so there are also two aspects in the renewal of the church, revival and reformation. There is no contradiction between the two, they constitute an inseparable unity" (p. 45). Therefore Runia concludes:

This is what we need today. Yes, we need revival. We all should pray; "*Veni, Creator Spiritus!* Come, Creator Spirit". But this revival also needs ecclesiological form and structure; otherwise it will soon come to a dead end... The church also needs a reforming that will not only give new enthusiasm and understanding to the church, but also, through the church's witness and testimony in every sphere of life, bring about a revolutionary reforming of individual social life. This will come only when the church returns to its Reformation foundation and builds once again on the doctrines set forth and applied by the Reformers.

Many other well known Reformed theologians of the past and the present around the world have acknowledged the reality of the phenomenon of revivals and have urged Christians to long and pray for them.

The Puritans and the Reformed theologians of Scotland and Wales especially have published quite a lot about revival and the history of it. Iain Murray (b. 1931), has published a book, *The Puritan Hope: A Study in Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy*, in which he has given clear evidence of the concern many professing Calvinists of

England, Scotland and Wales of the past have had about revival (Murray 1975).

In this paper I do not intend to give an account of all the viewpoints of the many Reformed theologians around the world who are in favour of or strongly opposed to revival. Rather, I am going to go to the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments to examine the whole issue of revival and to try to draw a few theological principles concerning revival and reformation. I will then draw some practical implications for the life of the church and the individual Christian in society.

Biblical guidelines concerning revival in the Old Testament

The word “revive” comes from the Hebrew verb “*gajah*” (to live). In the intensive form it has the meaning of “making alive” or “to revive”. When this word is used in a physical sense, it is not only used when someone actually dies and is resurrected from the dead but also when someone has become very weak because of several different causes and is then revived. When someone has become so weak that he almost dies and his strength is restored so that he can function optimally again, it is said that he has been revived. In this way the word “*gajah*” is used in a physical sense in Genesis 45:27 to describe the restoration of Jacob from a depressed, psychosomatic condition after he almost died of his grief over his son Joseph, whom he thought had died. One of the well-known Dutch Old Testament commentaries puts it this way, “His heart had become cold as ice, until his sons informed him about Joseph and showed the wagons Joseph had sent to take them to Egypt. Then he was revived...” (Aalders 1963:157, my translation from the Dutch). In the King James Version this verse reads, “... and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived”.

The use of the word “*gajah*” in Judges 15:19 is also a striking example of how this word can be used to describe the restoration of someone who has almost died. We read how Samson almost died of thirst after he had killed a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass and then prayed to God for water. God then cleaved a hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water from it. Then we read that, after Samson had drunk, “his spirit came again, and he revived...”. In this way the word “*gajah*” is quite often used in the Old Testament to describe a process of healing (1 Kgs 17:22; 2 Kgs 8:8-10; Isa.38:1, 9). These few references make it quite clear that the word “*gajah*” is often used in the physical sense of a restoration of life, a revival out of a

sunken physical condition. When this word is applied to the relationship between God and His people, it describes a process by which God in His sovereign grace works in the heart of His people to bring a renewal in their relationship to Him so that they love and serve Him with a willing heart and spirit.

One of the most striking examples of how this word is used can be seen in Isaiah 57:15, “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy: I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” In this verse the sovereignty of God is very clear.

One of the German Old Testament scholars, Claus Westermann (b. 1909) (1966:261) rightly comments, “... *der jetzt zu Israel spricht, ist der Gott, der sich aus seiner Hohe zu den Gebeugten und Geschlagenen herabneigt.*” (He who is now speaking to Israel is God who is bending down from his highness to the meek and lowly.) Those of “a contrite and humble spirit” are they who are in great need, under the punishing hand of God and under conviction of their sins before the great and holy God. They receive the promise that the living God will revive them.

Ridderbos (1953:203) comments on this verse that the humble and contrite are those that are bruised and faint especially in their inner being because the promise is that their hearts will be revived. The relevance of this verse for a restoration of the relationship between God and His people (His church) has become clear to me when I have read the title that Werner Kessler (1967:34) gave this portion of Scripture in his commentary, “Der Weg zu einer neuen Gemeinde” (The way to a new church).

Out of the exposition of this portion of this passage, four important principles concerning revival may be derived:

- 1) Revival is not the fruit of human effort and maneuvers, but a sovereign act of power of a holy and merciful God, Who revives His people in the depths of their inner being because He has forgiven their sins (cf. verse 16) and restores peace with them (cf. verse 19).
- 2) Revival goes together with true humbling and repentance.
- 3) Revival is an inner healing and renewal of God’s people. It is like a collective conversion.
- 4) Revival also goes together with joy and praises to God (cf. verse 19).

Life and death in the history of God's people

If we look at the history of God's people in the Old Testament, it becomes very clear that the following happens time and again: God's people sin against Him and evoke His anger and punishment; but after a while and in His own due time, God restores the relationship with them through a general conversion. This general conversion is described many times as a resurrection from death or as a revival.

One of the clearest examples of this use of the illustration of a resurrection to describe a general conversion and restoration of God's people can be found in Ezekiel 37:1-14, the valley of the dry bones. Here again God's people in their sins in exile are looked upon as though they were dead. And then God in His power and mercy raises them from death to life and fills them with His Spirit. They become an exceeding great army who, according to verse 13, acknowledge that Yahweh is Lord.

The history of God's people reveals that God continues with His people and establishes His Kingdom, although they time and again turn their backs on Him and sin to perdition so that they almost die in their sins. The way that God establishes His Kingdom is to bring His people to life from this condition of deadness in their sins.

John Calvin once said, "The main thing is that we must not despair, although the church sometimes does not differ from a dying or at least a mutilated man, because time and again God resurrects those that belong to Him in the same way He resurrects a dead man from his grave. We must see this, very clearly, because when the church doesn't shine as a light we oftentimes think that it has been quenched completely and has perished. But in this way (by successive resurrections) God preserves His church from the world. That is why the preservation of the church goes together with many wonders. We shall hold to this; the church does not live without resurrection, yes not even without many resurrections, so to speak." (Quotation from Van't Spijker, *Eenheid in verscheidenheid*, my translation from the Dutch).

The fact that God's people during the course of Old Testament history firmly believed in this kind of revival may be seen in the many prayers for revival, when they came to realize that they were dying in their sins. Look at the prayer of Psalm 85:4-6, "Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease. Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

Look at many of the prayers of the prophets. See Habakkuk 3:2, "O Lord, I have heard thy speech, *and* was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work

in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember thy mercy.” Look at the faith of the prophet Hosea in God’s mercy to revive His returning people.

And see Hosea 6:1 2 “Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.”

God’s people in the Old Testament believed in revival. They often prayed very sincerely for revival. They knew that they could do nothing to revive themselves. They could only pray fervently and cast themselves on the mercy of a holy and omnipotent God. They claimed the promises of His eternal covenant, confessed their sins and humbly implored His forgiveness and healing power in their lives.

Biblical principles concerning revival according to the New Testament

In the New Testament the word “revival” or “revive” is not used very often. In Luke 15:24, the parable of the lost son, his conversion is described in this way: he was dead and has been revived. The NEB translates this, “He... has come back to life again.”

The principle, though, that the whole church as the people of God can sin and then to a certain extent lose the blessings of God is found clearly in the New Testament. This condition of the church is called “deadness”, although the church still exists and possesses the Holy Spirit.

The church at Sardis, according to Revelation 3:1, had to hear the clear message from Jesus Christ Himself, “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” They are then called upon to wake up and to put some strength into what is left. From the whole message to Sardis it is clear that this was a respectable, middle-of-the-road, peaceful church. But its peace was like that of a cemetery. The members of this church were merely going through the motions of religion. They were no doubt regular in their attendance at worship. According to man’s perspective everything was fine, but when God looked into the hearts of these people, He saw that they were nearly dead. They were the ones of whom Paul spoke, that they are “holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power” (2 Tim. 3:5). Their religion was empty, hollow formalism, because it is said that their works had not been found “full” (Greek: *πεπληρωμενα*) before God.

It is remarkable that this church was reminded that Jesus Christ holds the seven Spirits of God. They needed to be filled with the holy power of the Holy Spirit. They needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit again.

In the message to the church of Laodicea it becomes clear that a church of Jesus Christ can also become lukewarm. Because they were not really hot, they saw no need to go out of their way to serve Christ; and because they were not really cold, they felt no need for conversion. That is why Jesus wanted to spit (literally “vomit”) them out of his mouth!

In this message it is remarkable that they had an attitude of self-sufficiency. “How rich we are! And how well have we done! We have everything we want in the world” was their creed. They were exactly the opposite of those who are of a contrite and humble spirit (of Isa. 57:15) and who received the promise that they would be revived. They did not know that they were poor and blind and naked. They were suffering from spiritual insensitivity. They were ignorant of their condition before God because they were swollen with pride. They had no zeal for Christ and his Kingdom. Therefore they are called on to repent and become zealous again.

In his chapter on revival, Kuyper (1883:121) rightly also referred to Revelation 3 to emphasize the fact that the church of Jesus Christ can become fruitless, formalistic, with an empty pretence, although they do hold to pure doctrine in a formal way.

How does this happen? How is it possible that this can happen in a church that holds to pure doctrine? Has the Holy Spirit departed from them?

Ebb and flow in the work of the Holy Spirit

It is clear from the whole New Testament that the Holy Spirit never leaves the true church of Jesus Christ completely. Jesus Himself promises His church that He, through His Spirit, will be with them to the end of time (John 14:16, Matt. 28:19, 1 Pet. 4:14).

Many theologians hold the opinion that a revival is a repetition of Pentecost. On Pentecost the church was baptized with the Holy Spirit; the Spirit was poured out on the church on that day. These theologians believe that we must pray for the same outpouring of the Holy Spirit again. This seems wrong to me. The Greek word “ἐκχέω” used concerning the Holy Spirit is used only with reference to the great day of Pentecost. John R. W. Stott, in his excellent study *Baptism and Fullness: the Work of the Holy Spirit Today*, rightly states:

In the first place, it (Pentecost) was the last event of the saving career of Jesus, the long-promised outpouring of the Spirit consequent upon his death, resurrection and ascension. As such it completed the inauguration of the new or Messianic age, the age of the Spirit. In itself it is unrepeatable, as unrepeatable as the Saviour's death, resurrection and ascension which preceded it (Stott, 1983:29; see also Floor 1979:63).

However, we do read that the church was **filled with the Holy Spirit more than once**. The same people who were gathered together on the day of Pentecost and were filled with the Holy Spirit were filled again, according to Acts 4:31 and 13:52. Stott (1983:48) puts it this way:

The fullness of the Spirit in Acts 2:4 was the consequence of the baptism of the Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit is not repeatable and cannot be lost, but the filling can be repeated and in any case needs to be maintained. If it is not maintained, it is lost. If it is lost, it can be recovered. The Holy Spirit is "grieved" by sin (Eph. 4:30) and ceases to fill the sinner. Repentance is then the only road to recovery. Even in cases where there is no suggestion that the fullness has been forfeited through sin, we still read of people being filled again, as a fresh crisis or challenge demands a fresh empowering by the Spirit.

A condition of ebb in the working of the Holy Spirit in the church may come as a result of the sin of God's people that has grieved and quenched the Spirit. It may also come as a revelation of the sovereignty of God, Who according to His will for a period of time does not produce all the fruit and blessings of growth and prosperity of the Holy Spirit in the church.

Grieving and quenching the Spirit

We read of grieving the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 4:30, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Out of a semantic discourse analysis of the whole passage (vs. 25-32), it becomes quite clear that grieving the Spirit refers to all the sins mentioned from verses 25 to 32; namely lying, fighting, stealing, swearing, bitterness and wrath, and not forgiving one's fellow

believers. The whole chapter refers to the unity amongst God's people and how it should be maintained. Disunity, and anything that causes it, grieve the Holy Spirit. Looking at verse 24, it becomes clear that our failure to pursue righteousness and holiness is the main cause for these sins mentioned here that are grieving the Spirit.

When we fail to realize that Paul had Isaiah 63:10 in mind when he spoke about grieving the Holy Spirit, we shall not understand what the relevance of this teaching is for revival. Isaiah 63 makes it clear that grieving the Holy Spirit also has corporate or collective implications. When individuals grieve the Spirit by their sins, then God turns his face from His whole church and they will miss His spiritual blessings. A condition of ebb in the working of the Holy Spirit then comes into being in the church. His people who are concerned about such a condition then cry out, "Where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?" (Isa. 63:15)

It is not that God leaves His church completely and departs from it, because that can never happen. But it is a matter of experiencing the rod of God in the impotence of God's people against their enemies. J. I. Packer (1984:256), in his book *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, says, "The cry for revival springs from the sense of judgment (see Ps. 79:4-9; 80:12-14; 85:4-7; Hab. 3:2) and the coming of revival is God comforting his people after judgment." That is why revival always implies a quickening of consciences, a realizing of sins, and a plea for mercy – all in all, an unusual awareness of God in His holiness and love.

The change in this condition of ebb in the work of the Holy Spirit to a situation of flow again is therefore entirely a work of grace, for it comes to people that merit only judgment. God brings it about in such a way as to show that His grace is decisive in it. Packer (1984:257) says in this regard, "Repentance on the part of Christians is regularly a harbinger of revival from one standpoint, and a real start of it from another."

In 1 Thessalonians 5:19 we read, "Quench not the Spirit." This exhortation is flanked on the one side by exhortations to follow the good and to rejoice, pray and give thanks at all times, and on the other hand by warnings against disregard for "prophesying" (meaning God's word), against failure to discriminate and against evil involvements (Packer 1984:252). Heedlessness of these exhortations and warnings is likely to quench the Spirit both in personal and in corporate life.

Quenching the Spirit means to smother the fire of the Holy Spirit in our lives by the ashes of our own sinful ideas and structures. It implies

a suppression of the operations of the Spirit in the congregation (Lang, in Kittel 1971:168).

Packer (1984:253) makes an important statement in this regard about the sovereignty of God in the restoration of this condition. He calls our attention to the fact that a dead fire cannot be made to burn again simply by stopping to quench it. It has to be lighted afresh. Similarly, it is beyond our power to undo the damnation that we have done when we have quenched the Holy Spirit. We can only cry to God in penitence, asking that He will revive His work.

The sovereignty of God in periods of ebb and flow in the working of His Spirit

There are indications in the Bible that a condition of ebb in the work of the Holy Spirit is not always a revelation of God's judgment on His church, but sometimes a revelation of God's judgment on the unbelieving world. It is as if God sometimes takes away the salt that preserves society from complete corruption and gives up the unbelieving world to their uncleanness and vile affections and gives them over to their reprobate minds.

Something of this is described in Revelation 11. The two lamp stands and the two olive trees that symbolize the true church are taken away after they have finished their testimony. It is said that they died. The church is sometimes like these dead bodies lying in the streets of the godless world, which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, for a period of time that God had ordained. The world then rejoices and makes merry and unusual and unlimited outgrowth of evil and corruption and unrighteousness can be seen (Hendriksen 1952:131). It is important to note that in this case these things do not happen as a result of the sin of the church, but as God's condemnation and judgment of the unbelieving, sinful world.

And then, after this God-ordained period of time, God revives His church from the dead. In the words of Ezekiel 37:9-10, we read in Revelation 11:11, "And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them."

This is a description of the last great revival that is sure to come in God's true church around the world. It will be of such an extent that a great fear will fall upon the people outside the church because of the things that happen in the church. The glory of God and the power of His Holy Spirit will be seen; and, as happened many times in the days

of the book of Acts, great fear will come upon many who hear these things (Acts 5:11).

In concluding this section on the ebb and flow in the working of the Holy Spirit in the church, I want to use an illustration: the work of the Holy Spirit in recreating the world can be compared with the incoming tide of the sea. If you stand on the beach, observing the incoming tide, you will notice some waves that wash out very far on the sand, but then pull far back again, so that it might look as if on the whole the tide is not progressing at all. If you stay for a few hours though, you will observe that every now and then there are huge breakers that wash out further than the previous large breakers, so that on the whole there is progress. In this way the various genuine revivals during the course of history between Pentecost and the Second Advent of Christ are the various large waves in the coming of the Kingdom.

Characteristic marks of a time of ebb in the work of the Holy Spirit

When we study church history in the light of the biblical teaching about the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, we can discern clearly some characteristic marks of a time of ebb in the working of the Holy Spirit in the church.

In this paper it is impossible to deal with one specific period of church history in one specific place. I can only refer to some historical facts to illustrate the reality of the different characteristic marks of ebb in the Holy Spirit's work in the church as I deal with the different marks.

A lack of assurance of salvation

According to Romans 8:16, the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is, amongst others things, to give us a joyful assurance of salvation. He joins with our spirit in testifying that we are God's children; and if children, then heirs. When we find a lot of Christians in the church with a lack of a scripturally based full assurance of salvation, it is a sure sign of ebb in the working of the Holy Spirit in the church.

The clearest example of the detrimental influence of a lack of assurance of salvation among church people in the life of the church can be seen in the church of the Middle Ages before the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Many of the leaders of the Reformation, especially Luther, actually started to realize the need for reformation in the church only after they had received a joyful, personal assurance of salvation. Luther's discovery that he was justified through faith by grace alone and that he was a possessor of eternal salvation not only

triggered many of his other insights concerning the practice of a biblical church but also continued to be one of the central themes of his whole theology.

J. Burns, in his thorough study *Revivals: Their Laws and Leaders* (1960:66), also notes this sign of ebb when he says, “Men in the pew even though they do not consciously realize it, are yet unconsciously affected by the absence of the note of certainty....”

Superficial sense of guilt before God

When church-going people do not have a profound and deep sense of the ugliness of their own sins before God, when there is no reverence before the justice and holiness of God, it is another sure sign of a time of ebb.

In such times people tend to think about God in the same way they think about Father Christmas. He is a kind of sweet old grandfather who smiles when his little grandchildren sin and keeps on bestowing gifts on them.

Though men may sing in times of ebb, “Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!”, there is no sense of trembling before the awesome holiness of God (Martin, 1980). The fruit of this superficial sense of guilt is always an increase in the moral decay of a society, even amongst church-going people. It is as if the work of the Holy Spirit, Who according to John 16:8 convicts us of wrong, cannot be seen.

Many times during the course of history the extent of immorality was severe and heinous just before a revival. For instance, it can be clearly shown in the state of moral decay in England just before the revival of the 1730s took place. Historians say of that period, “England was corrupt to the core!”

Presumptiveness

In addition to my first point, namely a lack of a scriptural-based assurance of salvation, many people that do have a kind of “assurance of salvation” in times of ebb have a false assurance, based on all kinds of unbiblical presumptions.

In this regard we can think of sacramentalism, the idea that some kind of religious ritual *ipso facto* places a person in a right relationship with God. Whether it is the water or the wafer, whenever men have begun to assume that because they have had the water of baptism placed on them or have been plunged beneath the waters, or because they have had the wafer, they are saved, this surely leads to spiritual deadness in the church (Martin, 1980).

We can also refer to the doctrine of presumptive regeneration in this regard. John Owen, the well-known Puritan, once said, "One of the great undoing and damning religious errors that has destroyed more souls of more people in more churches than any others is for men to think that they are prepared for heaven while they are strangers to the new birth." This is flatly to contradict our Lord's teaching in the third chapter of John, "Except a man be born again, he cannot perceive the kingdom of God" (quoted by Martin, 1980).

One of the best examples of this "prophecy" of Owen can be seen in the terrible state of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (G.K.N.), which officially accepted the doctrine of presumptive regeneration in the 1940s. Not only is this denomination declining rapidly, but they have decided to accept marriages between homosexuals, have some practicing homosexuals as pastors and elders, and have taken official decisions concerning the authority of Scriptures that in fact deny the reality that the Bible is God's revelation to us.

From this it can also be seen how one error leads to another and one characteristic mark of ebb can produce others. It is remarkable and ironic that Berkouwer, a former dogmatician of this same denomination, in an excellent study on the sacraments, has shown that the true meaning of the sacraments can only be appropriated in faith through the work of the Holy Spirit (Berkouwer 1954; 66-110).

Formalism

In close connection with sacramentalism, we can also mention formalism as a characteristic mark of ebb in the work of the Holy Spirit. Pastor Albert Martin defines formalism as the idea that some people have that, "If I am only in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing, in the right way, in the presence of the right man, then I must be right with God."

I can also fully agree with J. Burns (1960; 48) when he says that it is a sure sign of spiritual decay in history when worship becomes formal, when the priesthood exalts the ritual until the spirit is crushed, and when religion is represented, not as a response of the soul to God, but as a rigid performance of outward observances and ceremonies.

According to John 4:23, we should worship the Father in spirit and in truth. When this does not happen, it is a sign of ebb in the work of the Holy Spirit in the church.

Formalism can also be observed when acts and decisions of a church rest solely on synodical decisions of the past, on traditions, on church policy and church order without prayerful searching of the

Scriptures and humbly confessing time and again, “In thy light we see light.” This kind of formalism is the most severe quenching of the Holy Spirit because God’s prophecy is despised (1 Thess. 5:18).

Denominationalism

Denominationalism is the idea that everything of my denomination is correct and everything of other denominations is wrong. When someone’s orthodoxy is judged solely by his denominational ties without testing his teachings in the light of the Bible, the same attitude of the unconverted Samaritan woman at the well is displayed. She responded to the presentation of the gospel by our Lord and Saviour by comparing the worshipping manners of her Samaritan fathers to that of the Jews. She tried to start a discussion on “which is the right denomination?”

The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of unity. Whenever Christians are not humbly praying for and working towards uniting true Christians, it is not only a mark of ebb, but also a continuation of grieving of the Spirit.

I find it very sad that the devil can mislead people to grieve the Spirit and then make them think that they are actually pleasing the Spirit. To my mind, the only justifiable reason to leave a denomination is when it has become completely impossible to believe and live according to the clear teachings of God’s Word within it. Until this happens, one should stay in one’s denomination and pray for revival and work for reformation, even though one might experience difficult times where God has called one to work.

A lack of evangelistic zeal and missionary power

Of all the many writers about revival whom I have consulted, each and every one of them believes that a lack of evangelistic zeal and missionary power in a church is a certain, characteristic mark of a time of ebb in the working of the Holy Spirit in the church. With a reference to John 7:39, J. H. Bavinck (1949:445) says that the Holy Spirit can never be imprisoned in the life of an individual but makes a channel of the individual Christians and the church as a body to reach out to others and bring them under the reign of Christ. When this is not seen amongst Christians, it is a sure sign of ebb in the work of the Holy Spirit. That is why, during every revival of the past, an unusual harvest of newly converted Christians was gathered by churches.

Abraham Kuyper (1883:123) emphasizes this phenomenon of revivals by stating, “In the same way, the Lord still empowers every church that he awakes from a sleep of death to win people for his

Kingdom; not only through missions amongst Kaffirs or Eskimos, but still more glorious – by winning those who are near” (my translation from the Dutch). For example, it is said that the Presbyterian Churches of Ireland, during the revival of the last century, grew by 100,000 new members in one year (*The Banner of Truth*, 225, June 1982:1).

J. H. Bavinck, a well-known Reformed missiologist, has pointed out in this regard that the tendency to accept as normal the lack of missionary power and evangelistic zeal in many Reformed churches when whole districts in their vicinity are eaten up by unbelief, secularism and materialism is the most severe sign of ebb in the working of the Holy Spirit in such churches (Bavinck 1949:446; my translation from the Dutch).

A lack of joyful trust in the power of the Holy Spirit

When churches become self-satisfied and accept their voids easily as something that cannot be changed, it is another mark of a time of ebb in the work of the Holy Spirit. In contrast, Christians who are filled with the Holy Spirit live and work in the faith of what God can do. The limits of the word “possible” are stretched much further when Spirit-filled Christians live in faith. They are people who have hope and who live by this hope.

I can only say “*selah*” when Packer (1984:259) reasons along the same lines and says, “Romantic complacency and resourcefulness in acting the injured innocent are among the most Spirit quenching traits imaginable, since both become excuses for doing nothing in situations where realism requires that we do something and do it as a matter of urgency.” Packer then asks this searching question, “If you were accused of honoring the Holy Spirit would there be enough evidence to convict you?” A mark of a time of ebb is to be found in this lack of evidence that we trust and honor the Spirit.

An increase in doctrinal error

The Holy Spirit guides the church into all truth, for He is the Spirit of truth (John 16:13). When there is a time of ebb in the working of the Holy Spirit in the church, an increase in doctrinal error will be seen. It is a well-known fact that there was a large increase in Arminianism before the Great Awakening of 1739 in the American colonies. Also, a denying of the authority of Scriptures as the Word of God occurred (Evans 1960:11). James Burns says, “In every case also in which the life of the church has become feeble, and its witness ineffective, and its

worldliness pronounced, it will be found that the message of the Cross has fallen into decay; it is either denied or lost sight of.”

Here again I want to call your attention to the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. In the beginning of the 1970s, the Free University of Amsterdam accepted the doctoral dissertation of Wiersenga, who defended the teaching that Jesus did not die on the cross to pay the debts of our sins and so turn away God’s wrath from us, but He only died to provide us with an example of self-sacrifice and to shock us in the depths of our inner beings when we see the result of our sins. This, of course, is part and parcel of all the marks of a time of ebb in the work of the Holy Spirit in that church.

In some orthodox Reformed churches, the centrality of Jesus Christ and His crucifixion and the responsibility to offer Christ to unbelievers can be pushed aside by a faulty theology of predestination and election. They reason thus: Christ died for the elect only; therefore, we must first find out in some or other way whether someone belongs to the elect before we may freely offer Christ clothed in the gospel to that someone. In this way, they are so preoccupied with the doctrine of limited atonement that they do not realize the importance of presenting Christ in evangelism to a dying world. A wrong and unbalanced theology of election has always been detrimental to evangelism and assurance of salvation in the church and is yet another mark of ebb in the work of the Spirit.

Lack of discipline in the church

When there is a lack of discipline in the church, it also signifies a very low spiritual tide in the church. Sprague (1978:75) makes an important statement when he points out that the fact that the church in times of ebb can tolerate gross offences in its members proves that its character for spirituality is already low; but the act of tolerating them must necessarily depress it still more.

To my mind, a lack of discipline actually signifies a lack of love. When the Holy Spirit fills us in the church, God’s love floods our inmost hearts through the Holy Spirit, and the fruit of love will be seen (Rom. 5:5). We who are endowed with the Spirit will have zeal to correct our fellow Christians who have fallen into sin. Our zeal for the glory and holiness of God will impel us to cut off dying members of the body who keep on with unbelief and unrighteousness.

Ineffectual preaching

A very important mark of times of ebb is the ineffectual preaching during such times. The message from the pulpit largely loses its power to convince. The preachers display a certain conscious insincerity as men who are not quite sure of their ground (Burns 1960:66).

Characteristics of such ineffective sermons are their tendency to be speculative, philosophical and dry. In some Reformed churches, preachers love to expose the error and sin of other groups and denominations but fail to lead the flock under their care to meet God in Christ in the reality of His holiness and the unsearchable riches of His mercy and grace to sinners. That is why Martin (1980) can say, "In every age of Christianity, since John the Baptist drew crowds into the deserts, there has been no great religious movement of genuine piety, without new power in preaching, both as cause and effect."

During revivals, people have always felt themselves being brought face to face with God in the preaching from the pulpit, because the words of preachers have come to them in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (1 Cor. 2:4).

Means that the Holy Spirit has used to revive his church*A growing sense of discontent with lukewarmness*

Many writers on the history of revivals emphasize that revival has started quite often in the past with a sense of discontent with the lukewarmness, deadness and fruitlessness of the church (Evans 1960:7; Bonar n.d.). Burns (1960:52) puts it this way, "There comes a growing discontent in men's hearts at prevailing corruption or backsliding: an intense craving in many for better things and a growing spirit of expectation in many that such changes are at hand."

Therefore, revival means for the church humiliation, a bitter knowledge of unworthiness, and an open humiliating confession of sin on the part of her ministers and people (Burns 1960:70).

Kuyper (1883:22) says, "When it pleases God to impress the sunken condition of the church in the hearts of some of his children or even one of his elect, in such an overwhelming way that he cannot keep silent but cry out, because – as Amos puts it – he has heard the roar of the lion, powerful preaching, leading to revival has often started."

When we study the Bible and extra-biblical history, it is overwhelmingly clear that revival has always come when and where the Holy Spirit of God has laid upon the people of God the spirit of prayer and supplication. The Holy Spirit works in answer to the prayers of the people of God. In the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 45, we

confess that God grants His grace and His Holy Spirit to those only who with sincere desires continually ask them of Him and are thankful of them. Burns (1960:127, 178 and 276) shows that Savonarola, Luther, Calvin, John Knox and many other leaders in times of flow in the work of the Holy Spirit were men of fervent prayers.

In the Korean Christian churches (that are growing faster than the birth rate of that country at the moment), Christians gather every day at five in the morning for prayer. It is not unusual for them to pray right through the night. The spirit of prayer in which a revival begins usually originates in the closet. There the sincere and concerned Christian may wrestle on behalf of Zion with as much earnestness as he wants to; there he may pour out his whole soul in tears and sighs and broken petitions, and the ear on which his importunity falls, will never be offended by it (Sprague 1978:236). Before and during revivals there is always an increase in united prayer and confession of sins. Kuyper (1883:124) says, "In the history of our own country there were also many gatherings of classes where the ministers united in confessing their own guilt and unfaithfulness before God and before his countenance promised together to improve their ministry and their lives."

Sharpening the arrows of preaching

The Holy Spirit usually works through the proclamation of the Word. Each and every revival of the past has had new power in preaching. In such times, the contents of sermons included:

- 1) The holiness of God and the totally depraved state of man without Christ, when he is measured by the spiritual standards of the law;
- 2) The unconditional grace of a holy God to lost sinners;
- 3) The absolute necessity of regeneration, conversion and repentance for everyone who wants to enter the kingdom of God; and
- 4) The necessity of a holy walk before God in every aspect of the Christian's life.

Deepening of fellowship by meeting in small groups

Many times in the past the gatherings of small groups have been used to bring revival about. I can remind you of the reunions and conventicles in the times of Whitefield and Wesley and the Reveille in the Netherlands.

Although such small groups have sometimes gone seriously astray, it cannot be denied that it has pleased the Holy Spirit many times in the past to use such gatherings of small groups as a channel of His grace to bring spiritual awakening.

Stimulating every member ministry

Where clericalism and hierarchy in the church are a sign of ebb in the work of the Holy Spirit, a stimulating of the priesthood of all believers many times in the past was not only used as a means to revival but has always also been a mark of revival. James Burns illustrates this from the history of the revival in Scotland in the time of John Knox. He quotes the poem of Robert Burns, “The Cotter’s Saturday Night”, describing the family worship being conducted by a simple farmer and then concludes, “Here as nowhere else, we are made to realize how religion became bound up with the common life of people, as we see this family kneel together in worship.”

Evangelistic efforts

A time of flow in the work of the Holy Spirit does not only see increased evangelistic zeal and missionary power in the church, but sometimes evangelistic efforts in a time of ebb have been used by God as a catalyst to bring about a time of flow in the work of his Spirit.

When Christians in a time of ebb start with organized evangelism, they very soon realize many other problems in the church. They find a lack of prayer, a lack of knowledge of the gospel and a lack of love in the congregation to receive new members warmheartedly. This realization in turn drives them back to prayer and more intensive study of the Bible and the humiliating realization that only a living church that is filled with the Holy Spirit will succeed with evangelism.

Wesley Smedes, a former minister of evangelism of the Christian Reformed Church in the United States once wrote in a letter to me, “Equipping our lay people for evangelism has been a real catalyst for total revival in many local churches.”

Lindeboom, a well-known theologian of the Netherlands at the beginning of the previous century, probably had something of this in his mind when he wrote, “Evangelism is not only a sign of a healthy church, but also heals the church, and keeps it healthy. For every church it is an issue of life, a condition for nothing less than life and prosperity. Evangelism has got to do with the well-being of the church itself” (Brillenburg Wurth and Wiersenga, 1953:44; my translation from the Dutch).

A spiritual quickening of one or a few leaders

Church history shows us many illustrations of one or only a few Christians that had been filled with the Spirit to such an extent that they could not keep silent but became men out of whom rivers of living water flowed. The one or the few had an influence on others, and they in their part on others, until the revival touched whole countries.

Abraham Kuyper (1883:122) says that revivals that have begun in one or a few hearts many times are like a fire – it has started with one spark and then grows with exceeding speed as the spark from one soul jumps to another soul, from one church to another, always under the breath of the wind of the Holy Spirit.

Horatius Bonar made a study of the characteristics of men that had been used during the course of church history as instruments of revival, like Luther, John Calvin, Knox, Whitefield and others and envisaged the following:

- 1) They were men who had hope and an expectation of success because they relied on the power of God.
- 2) They were men with a profound realization of their calling by God.
- 3) Although they many times sowed in tears, they still had an expectation to reap in joy some day in the future.
- 4) They were very hardworking men.
- 5) They had patience.
- 6) They had courage and persistence.
- 7) They were men of fervent prayer.
- 8) They held a pure Biblical doctrine, especially concerning the relationship of law and gospel.
- 9) They had a holy walk before God.
- 10) They were humble.

The dangers of revival and some bad fruit

Church history reveals that revivals of the past also sometimes produced bad fruit. When God builds His temple, Satan always tries to turn it into his synagogue and he definitely succeeded in doing this many times during revivals. It is important that we should also make a realistic study of this dark side of revivals of the past. In this way we are warned to be on the lookout for the cunning plans of the devil.

Schism, discord and indifference to the church

Church history reveals the sad fact that revivals many times broke out outside the institutional church. Many times it had started in the

institutional church but was then forced outside and became a movement alongside the church or even in competition with the church. An example in the Netherlands was the “Reveille”, which became a movement alongside the church and in many cases almost indifferent to the church (Du Toit 1977:227). The case could be argued that the Free Church of Scotland, likewise, emerged out of revival.

C. C. Goen wrote a book, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800*, in which he gives a documented historical review of all the theological issues and church policies that were at stake during the revivals in America and that led to separatism.

Burns (1960:69) concludes in this regard, “... Nearly every revival has originated outside the church and has awakened her active and embittered hostility.... It shows that in times of degeneracy the Spirit of Christ is often found in larger degree outside the church than within.”

Subjectivism

Almost every revival is accompanied by outbursts of excitement and by startling physical phenomena. Outbreaks of physical anguish are followed by outbursts of uncontrollable joy, and the effect of these extreme emotions on ill-balanced natures is often disastrous (Burns 1960:44).

Many church historians of our day believe that the subjectivism of John Wesley and the Methodism that grew from the revival of which he was a part led to Pentecostalism and the subjectivism of the charismatic movement (Brinsmead 1974).

Pursuit of the extraordinary

When Christians are misled to pursue the emotional phenomena of revivals, they are soon misled to continually run after the extreme and the extraordinary; and they do not hesitate to use all kinds of gimmicks and artificial methods to produce revivals. Finneyism is a good example of this.

Kuyper (1883:124) had a sincere concern for revival, yet rightly warned, “All artificially produced revivals are to be rejected. It brings forth wind only. We should remember to polish the ordinary furniture of our churches.”

Terminological confusion

The greatest problem concerning revival today is the wrong ideas that many Christians have about revival. These wrong ideas have come into being especially since 1850.

During revivals, many people who become converted usually experience a deep sense of their utter vileness before a holy and sovereign God and a deep and profound joy in the Lord because of His wonderful and unconditional forgiveness and grace. It has happened many times during revivals of the past that people whose consciences were quickened came under such an intolerable conviction of their sin that during public worship services they started to weep and cry out loudly in their desperate need for salvation. Because spiritual things become overwhelmingly real to many who have been lukewarm for quite a while, outward signs of emotional experience can be seen quite often in public meetings during revivals. Christians also usually become fearless in witness and tireless in their Savior's service during times of revival, so that the church reaps an unusual harvest of converts.

Because of these characteristic phenomena that can be seen during revivals, some Christians and church leaders, in their desire to see revival, have made the serious mistake of thinking that, if they could in any way produce these phenomena, they would produce revivals.

Charles Finney (1792-1875) was perhaps the first leader in this regard. His followers started what they called "the new measure". Finney was outspokenly anti-Calvinist. In every town and city, he made it his aim to destroy Calvinism and the doctrines of grace as believed by Reformed people. All this opened the way for the thought that man can produce revivals by using all kinds of gimmicks that produce emotional revival and the confessing of decisions for Christ. As Clive Tyler (1975:65) says, "... a battle resulted between the preacher and the will of the hearer to make a turn. To that end he used every possible means – coarse and violent language, the anxious seat, suitable music, the protracted appeal and many other means...."

The fruit of this approach is that many evangelical Christians still confuse a revival and an evangelistic campaign. Some advertise their evangelistic campaigns by saying, "There will be a revival at such and such a place and at such and such time." Tyler points out that the followers of Finney today even provide correspondence courses to study methods to induce revival by which someone becomes qualified to have a revival. Expressions like these are still seen on advertisements, "Don't have your revival until you have seen samples of our color posters" or "Revivals arranged, results guaranteed, terms moderate".

Such theology and such practices have proved to be detrimental to genuine revival. Reformed Christians who feared the Lord and believed in the sovereignty of God and the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in the

coming of the kingdom were repelled by the superficiality and bad fruit of these “revivals”. Many converts of these “revivals” did not only lose all appearance of religion very soon after the “revival”, but they became conceited, secure and gospel proof; so that, while living in the open and habitual neglect of their duty, they talked very freely of the time when they had experienced religion.

Because of a lack of discernment and in reaction to this type of so-called revival, many Reformed people are opposed to the whole concept of revival. Many times you will hear Reformed people saying, “Revival is a superficial whipping up of emotions without permanent results. We do not need revival; we need reformation. Reformation produces lasting results.” Finneyism, Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement to a large extent lie on the same line of development. Therefore many also have a wrong idea about revival.

Packer (1984:247) is correct in pointing out that the problem with some charismatics is that they have too superficial an idea of revival. What they have produced is renewal without the notes of humility and awe in the presence of the Holy God and of the need to realize the sinfulness of sin, the evil of egoism and the radical nature of repentance.

As a result, some charismatics may embrace and cultivate a “child-to-Daddy”, “buddy-to-Jesus” informality as a corrective of the cold and distant formalism of pro-renewal religion. This easily becomes more childish than child-like and actually stunts growth. It has been suggested that this confusion about the character of true Holy Spirit revival may be diminished by finding new terminology. The word “revival” may have a kind of charismatic, emotionalistic, and even Arminian flavour to the mind of some Reformed Christians.

Abraham Kuyper was of the opinion that the word “revival” had taken the place of the word “covenant renewal” that was used by older Reformed theologians. About this issue of terminology and the use of the word revival, I have the attitude of Romans 14:13 “... that no obstacle or stumbling block be placed in a brother’s way”.

If we can find a more acceptable word that brings out the idea **that the church can only have true reformation if there is a restoration in the relationship to the Holy Spirit, I shall be quite happy.**

Reformation, to my mind, refers to a restoration of doctrine to be more in line with true Biblical teaching, a renewal of our church structures and our structures of social life to live according to true Biblical doctrine, and the pursuit of love and righteousness in our daily lives with our neighbors regardless of their language and culture.

Revival refers to a renewed, Spirit-filled life and therefore renewed, constant awareness of God; it is a deepening in our understanding of the “*Coram Deo*” that the leaders of the sixteenth century Reformation confessed. It is impossible to say which of these came first. History has shown that in God’s sovereign will either can come first. What we must realize is that we need both.

Reformation and revival

Reformation without revival may result in superficial organizational changes and the production of all kinds of so-called Christian structures without men and women with renewed hearts working in these structures. It is even possible to have people who formally adhere to a Calvinist philosophy but who have a sad, mournful, scholastic type of Calvinism because they reason a lot about the truth that we hold but do not to the same extent worship and praise God for His truth that holds us.

Revival without reformation may produce a lot of emotion and noise but will not result in a constant, holy walk before God in every sphere of life.

A revival without reformation is not a true revival.

A reformation without revival is not a true reformation.

Our obligation

We have seen that revival is a God-given blessing that God in His sovereign execution of His redemptive plan bestows on His church in His own due time. Therefore true revival can never be produced by any human methods. This belief raises the question: If God is sovereign in revival and we cannot extort it from Him by any endeavor or technique, what should those who long for revival do? Twiddle their thumbs? Or something more?

I believe we should preach and teach God’s truth in such a way that we cannot be accused of being insincere, lazy, superficial, unbiblical or speculative. Bible truth, gospel truth, truth taken into the mind and heart is the most important means that the Holy Spirit uses to regenerate and convert sinners and to bring real spiritual life and growth in God’s kingdom. In addition to preaching and teaching, we should be willing to have a good look at our lifestyles and structures. Boulders in the way of the Holy Spirit, such as habitual sins, neglect of prayer and fellowship, and worldly-mindedness exhibited in materialism, love of money, indulgence of pride, jealousy, bitterness and hatred, should be taken away by way of true repentance. Radical

reformation of our personal lives, our churches and our structures of social life is required as we seek to come in line with God's revealed will in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

In addition to all this, we must learn to pray again. We should even pray to be taught by God's Spirit how to pray. Jonathan Edwards, the classical Calvinist theologian of revival said:

When God has something very great to accomplish for his church, it is his will that there should precede it, the extraordinary prayers of his people; as is manifest by Ezekiel 36:37....And it is revealed that, when God is about to accomplish great things for his church, he will begin by remarkably pouring out the spirit of grace and supplication (Zechariah 12:10). (Packer 1984:258)

Dirk Postma, the founder of the Reformed Churches in South Africa, wrote in a sermon in December, 1859:

... It was prayer that brought down the Holy Spirit from heaven to earth in the first Christian Churches, converted thousands on one day, and opened prison doors for God's persecuted servants.

If the church would have, and practiced the same spirit of prayer in our day it would, like a mighty wind blow all the stumbling blocks in the way of truth away, whether it had been laid down by men or devils. Prayer moves God, and when He works the work is already done. (Floor 1964:8; my translation from the Dutch)

Let us pray that God in His love and mercy bestow on us the fullness of His Holy Spirit again and unite all true Christians in fervent prayer to pray with Albert Midlane:

Revive Thy work, O Lord,
Exalt Thy precious name!
And may Thy love in every heart,
Be kindled to a flame.

Then we will have the zeal and courage and power, wrought by God the Holy Spirit, to live and work according to our confession of "*semper reformanda*", while we sing with Totius:

“... Laat die wat hul tot God
begeef,
herleef, met frisse krag bedou....”

(Afrikaans, Ps. 69:13)

But I pray to you, O LORD,
in the time of your favor;
in your great love, O God,
answer me with your sure
salvation.

(Ps. 69:13, NIV)

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Journal 2004

	HADDINGTON HOUSE JOURNAL
Volume 6	2004
CONTENTS	
God's People Under Pressure – Psalm 123.....	5
Reflections and Impressions from Turkey.....	21
William Tyndale – Reformer and Translating Supremacy.....	31
The Significance of the Return of Jesus in 1 Thessalonians.....	55
The Eschatological Religion of the Westminster Standards.....	83
Evangelical Biblical Interpretation: Puritans, Germans and Scots (Part II).....	93
A Dialectic Review of Lineman's, <i>Is There a Synoptic Problem?</i>	123
Book Reviews	
Phillips, Richard D., <i>Turning Your World Upside Down</i>	131
Yonema, Cornelius P., <i>The Promise of the Future</i>	134
A Review Article on Puritan Studies.....	137
Hart, D. O., <i>Defending the Faith: A Graham Macken</i>	144
MacDonald, Alex J., <i>The Complete Works of Hans R. Roobmaaker</i>	149
Book Notices	
Department of Biblical Theology.....	153
Department of Systematic Theology.....	157
Department of Historical Theology.....	159
Department of Applied Theology.....	162
CONTRIBUTORS	
William Campbell, D. Douglas Gibson, Jeff J. Kingwood, Frank Z. Kovacs, Alex J. MacDonald, Leslie McDonald, Charles H. Roberts, Jack C. Whitlock, Alvin Wilson	

Journal 2005

	HADDINGTON HOUSE JOURNAL
Volume 7	2005
CONTENTS	
Articles	
The Self-Denial of Jesus.....	7
The Call to Personal Biblical Meditation.....	13
An Historical Example of Kingdom Extension – The Life of William Carey.....	35
To the Pulpit and Back.....	53
Isabel Leavelle, Missionary to Palestine.....	67
Christ-centred Preaching: some reflections on an important issue.....	87
Peter Martyr Vernigh on Union with Christ.....	101
Book Reviews	
Carson, Alan, <i>Dictionary of Theological Terms</i>	123
Duncan, Ligon, ed., <i>The Westminster Confession into the 21st Century</i>	131
Packer, J. I. ed., <i>Puritan Papers: Volume Four, 1965-1967</i>	136
MacLeod, A. D., <i>W. Scouper Reid, An Evangelical Calvinist in the Academy</i>	149
Huggan, Cornelius, <i>Mission in the People and Church Relationships</i>	147
Bingham, Derek, <i>The Wild, Wild Child: A Life of Amy Carmichael</i>	152
Book Notices	
Department of Biblical Theology.....	155
Department of Systematic Theology.....	160
Department of Historical Theology.....	164
Department of Applied Theology.....	166
CONTRIBUTORS	
William Campbell, D. Douglas Gibson, Helen H. Holcomb, Frank John, E. Edward MacDougall, Sarah Patten, W. Dawson Rankin, Derek Thomas, William R. Udelsohn, Jack C. Whitlock	

Journal 2006

	HADDINGTON HOUSE JOURNAL
Volume 8	2006
CONTENTS	
General Articles	
What We Should Want for Each Other.....	5
The Kingdom and Africa.....	17
The Six Attributes of the "Bloss" of Preaching.....	27
Book Reviews	
Robertson, David, <i>Awakening: The Life of Robert Murray McChesney</i>	43
Packer, J. I. ed., <i>Puritan Papers Volume Five, 1968-1969</i>	46
McGowan, A. T. Jr., <i>The Federal Theology of Thomas Boston</i>	50
Nicole, Roger, <i>Standing Forth: Collected Writings of Roger Nicole</i>	54
Schuck, L. B., <i>The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant</i>	57
Roberts, Philip Graham, <i>Galatians: Reformed Expository Commentary</i>	64
Langenhüter, J. E. & S. G., <i>Teaching Cross-Culturally</i>	67
Johnson, Geoffrey, <i>Missionaries for the Record</i>	70
Millic, Wm. M., <i>Tales of Persecution: Missionary Stories from ISLAMIC (IRAN)</i>	73
Book Notices	
Department of Biblical Theology.....	77
Department of Systematic Theology.....	80
Department of Historical Theology.....	81
Department of Applied Theology.....	86
Academic Articles	
Paul's Missionary Strategy and Prayer.....	95
The Reduction of Colossians in Ephesians: Still a Credible Theory?.....	139
CONTRIBUTORS	
Kevin D. Carter, John Chang, Donald K. Collins, Karl J. Compton, D. Douglas Gibson, James P. Hertz, Jr., George W. Knight III, Christina Lehman, Stuart Opat, Nancy J. Whitlock, Jack C. Whitlock	

Journal 2007

	HADDINGTON HOUSE JOURNAL
Volume 9	2007
CONTENTS	
General Articles	
Radio Message: Word of Hope, Psalm 23.....	7
Strong Sermons – and How Not to Preach Them!.....	13
From 'One of Africa' – A Global Christian Perspective.....	37
John Giddie and the South Pacific: Timeless Mission Principles.....	53
A Dialectic Review of Danaher's <i>Making Kingdom Disciples</i>	77
Book Reviews	
Dowley, Tim, <i>The Krugel Bible Atlas</i>	85
Fairbairn, Patrick, <i>Opening Scripture: A Hermeneutical Manual</i>	88
Cabins, John, <i>Heart Affair: Daily Reading from Calvin on the Psalms</i>	92
Ferguson, Everett, <i>Church History Volume One: From Christ to Pre-Reformation</i>	95
Neudham, N. R., <i>2,000 Years of Christ's Power, Part Three: Renaissance and Reformation</i>	100
Lambert, Tony, <i>China's Christian Millions</i>	103
Elmer, Dante, <i>Cross-Cultural Servanthood</i>	107
Book Notices	
Department of Biblical Theology.....	111
Department of Systematic Theology.....	115
Department of Historical Theology.....	117
Department of Applied Theology.....	121
Academic Articles	
Sing a New Song: Towards a Biblical Theology of Song.....	133
Radical Transformation in Preparation for the Ministry.....	155
Appendix: The Lausanne Covenant (1974).....	171
CONTRIBUTORS	
Donald Fairbairn, David B. Fisher, David Gillies, D. Douglas Gibson, Marshall W. Kohl, Christina Lehman, E. Edward MacDougall, Stuart Opat, Gabriel Stanton, Carl R. Trueman, Jack C. Whitlock, Alvin J. Wilson	

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Haddington House is a unique centre in North America for the advancement of evangelical Presbyterian theological training in Canada and abroad. We pursue the fulfillment of this objective in several ways, including: 1.) providing a study house with a growing library; 2.) offering seminary level courses in Canada and also in partnership with institutions overseas through the role of visiting professor; and 3.) publishing an annual *Journal*, the purpose of which is to provide students, laity and ministers with an annual publication to develop their minds and souls through in-depth articles and reviews reflective of the theological basis and ethos of Haddington House Trust.

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