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Foreword

The purpose of *Christian Studies* is to promote responsible reflection among Christians. This issue presents a collection of articles addressing a variety of topics. Although these articles are not closely connected in content, they are related in intent. Ranging in subject matter from Restoration hermeneutics to the contemporary "culture wars," these articles offer the reader much cause for reflection.

Christian Studies is honored to present the lecture by Abraham J. Malherbe, Emeritus Professor of New Testament at Yale Divinity School. Professor Malherbe is a former teacher of many of the faculty and longtime friend of the Institute for Christian Studies.

Appreciation is due Mrs. Denise James for her work in preparing the manuscript for publication.

Michael R. Weed, Editor

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Creeds and Their Uses: The New Testament*

Abraham J. Malherbe

A glance at the titles of the conference presentations impresses one with the usefulness of the theme "Through the Eyes of Faith" to address a vast multiplicity of issues that have engaged Christians and continue to do so. My effort is quite limited in scope and differs from most of the other presentations in being an explicitly biblical study. I hope that this will make it not merely quaint or evocative of the sort of thing that was done in a bygone era.

The New Testament views faith under different aspects, such as the subjective response to the proclaimed message of Christ, the doctrinal stipulation and elaboration of that response, and the life that is lived in commitment to Christ. I shall focus on the way in which faith was formulated in the New Testament, and on how those formulations were used in the life of the church. What we shall discover is that there was considerable diversity in both formulation and function. I shall also make some comments on the challenge that this offers for a program of Restoration. I hope that these ruminations of a professional student of the New Testament may be of interest to persons more experienced in the discussion of Restorationism than I am.

* This lecture was presented at the Christian Scholars Conference, July 26, 1994, on the campus of Pepperdine University, on the occasion of Professor Malherbe's reception of the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year Award of the College of Biblical and Family Studies of Abilene Christian University. —*Editor.*

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Confessional Formulation and the Restoration Movement

I should like to begin with a bit of autobiography. As a teenager in South Africa, I attended a confirmation class in the local Dutch Reformed Church in which we studied the catechism in great detail. The catechism provided structured instruction in the faith; in effect, it was a kind of commentary on the statement of belief as expressed in the Apostles' Creed. The church's view was that mastery of the catechism, at least on some level, should be prerequisite to the next stage of the faith development of the young person, admission to a new level of membership in the church.

Then I came in contact with missionaries of the Church of Christ who were, in their words, extending the borders of the kingdom of God through gospel preaching. The goal of this preaching was the baptism of those who heard the missionaries' preaching, and baptism was presented as the means by which God had founded the church on Pentecost and continued to add the newly converted to the church. What struck me, however, was the focus on the individual who was being preached to and the responsibility laid on that individual. This responsibility was implicit in the language that was constantly used, for example, the New Testament practice of speaking of obedience to the preaching of the gospel, and, what seemed to be a locution traditional to the missionaries' church, "the age of accountability." There was also the expectation that the accountable, obedient person would respond in the manner detailed at the end of each sermon, by hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, and submitting to baptism.

What struck me was the stress on the human side of the transaction and, of greater moment for our present interest, the immediacy of the response required. There was no room allowed for catechesis, and certainly no creed to which one was expected to assent. Upon registering these reflections to the missionaries, I was pointed to examples in the Book of Acts of people who responded to missionary preaching on the spot and were not required to adopt an elaborate "man made" creed. It was pointed out to

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me that "creed" comes from the Latin *credo*, which means "I believe," and is simply a statement of faith, such as the Ethiopian eunuch, according the KJV, made as the only prerequisite to baptism, after he had been taught from the Scriptures. The only required creed which we find in the New Testament, then, I was informed, was such a one as that of the eunuch, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." In short, I was told, Christ is our only creed.

I realize that in beginning this way I run all sorts of risks, not least of which is that I may appear to be a sort of contemporary ancestor. Nevertheless, my story contains several elements that have been characteristic of that branch of the so-called Restoration Movement I have known and been a part of for more than forty years. Among these are the power of simplicity and indeed the recognition of human responsibility, something to which I, as a disaffected South African Calvinist, particularly resonated. But I was not then, nor am I now, persuaded that the matter of confessional formulation can be dispensed with so easily. To reduce the creedal formula to that of the eunuch and to restrict it to the setting of baptism is a bit too facile.

Confessional Formulations in the New Testament

The New Testament presents a situation that is considerably more complex, and I invite you to consider a number of texts which I shall attempt to place in their historical settings. You will have noted that my missionary friend answered my questions by leading me to the Book of Acts and pointing to what he considered normative historical data. That seems to me characteristically Restorationist in approach, and I shall approach my texts in the same manner, although it will be the epistles and gospels to which I will primarily, but not exclusively, turn. I hope that you will resonate positively to so old fashioned an approach to the biblical text and that you will work with me.

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This is what we shall discover as we examine this clutch of texts which contain confessional statements. Confession took different forms, which were determined by the settings in which the confessions were formulated. Furthermore, the confessions were put to different functions in the first-century church. Finally, I shall then raise the question about the significance of this diversity of form and function for a Restorationist view of the normativity of the New Testament.

Preaching and Confession

The earliest confessions have to do with the identity of Jesus, and are placed by the Gospels in the life of Jesus. There are statements which acknowledge who Jesus was by persons who were not his followers, for example, those possessed by demons (Mark 1:24; 5:7), but we are concerned with confession by those who have attached themselves to Jesus. The earliest confession of this sort is the one Jesus elicits from Peter at Caesarea Philippi. Peter's simple confession, according to Mark, is made in straightforward terms: "You are the Christ" (Mark 8:29). In a Jewish context, there is no evident need to elaborate on the relationship between the Anointed and God, although, as the verses on the suffering of the Son of Man that follow show, it was necessary to say something about the peculiar identity of the Christ as one who suffers in accord with God's scheme of things. The claim that Jesus was the Christ was the focus of preaching to Jews, as appears from Paul's sermon in the synagogue in Thessalonica (Acts 17:3):

> He argued with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ."

It is this Jewish form of the preaching which must have elicited the Jewish form of the confession of Peter. The formulation is congruent with its cultural setting, and this particular setting is one in which God and his will

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are known through the saving history reflected primarily in the Psalms and the Prophets.

Now look at the Matthean parallel to the confession at Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:16): "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Matthew goes further than Mark by saying something about the Christ's relation to God (he is God's Son) and describes God as the Living God. The significance of these differences becomes more obvious when we realize that we again have to do with preaching, but this time the kind of preaching that was directed to Gentiles who had no background in the Scriptures. In 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 Paul has such people in mind when he summarizes what is generally thought to be an outline of preaching to Gentiles: "how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come."

Here Jesus is not the Anointed of God whose dealings are revealed in the Scriptures, but the Son of the Living God. Luke tells us what the latter means in Acts 14:15, when he has Paul say to the Lycaonian pagans: "We bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God *who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.*" Jesus is thus described as the Son of the Creator to those who had no knowledge of the God of the Scriptures, and that description was derived from the practice of Jews, who before the Christians, had developed such descriptions in their proclamations to pagans. Matthew's form of the confession, I suggest, is an accommodation to such a Gentile setting.

Something analogous is seen elsewhere, in Paul, when he reflects on his preaching to Gentiles and their reception of his message. There Jesus is not preached and confessed as Christ or Son, but as Lord, and in that capacity is related to God as the Creator who raised him from the dead. A section of 2 Corinthians which begins with a reference to Paul's preaching to the Corinthians as being inspired by "the Spirit of the Living God" (3:3), ends with the claim,

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> What we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus sake. For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (4:5-6).

So the preaching of Christ as Lord takes place at the behest of the Creator.

The response Paul strove for with such preaching is described in Romans 10. Paul had preached "a word of faith" (10:8), which I understand as preaching designed to evoke faith in those who heard the preaching. That word is, ideally, appropriated existentially so that, Paul says,

> If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his mouth, and so is saved (10:9-10).

On what occasion is such confession made? Certainly, in response to preaching, but the quotation from Joel 2:23 in v. 13, "Every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved," suggests that all this was associated with baptism, for Luke says that Ananias directed Paul to "rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

It is quite possible that, in addition to being a response to preaching, confession also found a place in another setting. According to Colossians 2:6-7, the reality of what was confessed was to form the basis of the Christian life. "As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." Such thanksgiving is at times associated with worship, especially with singing (Col. 3:16-17). We happen to possess a hymn which culminates in the precise confession we have just discovered in Romans 10. Note the similarities of the last strophe of the hymn embedded in Philippians 2 to Romans 10:

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> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (2:9-11).

The confession in view here seems to be part of the worship of the church.

Confession and Doctrinal Controversy

So far, we have concentrated on the ways the confession of Jesus took different forms in different cultural contexts, but we have confined ourselves to a particular function of the confession, the response to or the appropriation of the preaching of Christ, and have discovered intimations that confession of the Lordship of Jesus was part of the church's hymnody. We now turn to another setting in which confession functioned, namely disputes about conduct and belief. In 1 Corinthians 8 Paul begins a long discussion about eating meat that had been offered to idols. Some Christians justified their practice of eating idol meat by insisting that idols had no real existence and, using the traditional Jewish confession, "There is no God but one" (8:4).

In response, Paul modifies their absolutism by referring to the existence of demonic beings, the "so-called gods," but then quotes a confessional statement that he and the Corinthians both accepted:

> For us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist (1Cor. 8:6).

As to the *form* of this confession, we note a number of things. There are two members to the confession, the first dealing with God, the second with Jesus Christ. God is called the Father, not in a relational sense, that is, as our Father, or Jesus' Father, but as progenitor, the Creator, as is also done, for example, by Philo, the first-century Jewish philosopher. Furthermore, a device developed by Stoic philosophers, a succinct use of

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prepositions ("from whom," "for whom") to describe causation, is used, and the cosmic dimension is further captured by "all things." The same devices are used to describe Jesus, who is not the Son of the Father here, as one might expect, but Lord and the agent of creation.

As to the *function* of this creed, Paul introduces it for argumentative purposes. Something as basic as what is contained in this confession can be expected to be held by all Christians. Elsewhere in 1 Corinthians Paul also begins with what can be assumed to be shared by all involved, only to proceed to draw out its consequences or to modify what is believed (e.g., 12:1–3; 15:1ff.) He does the same thing here, when he says, "However, not all have this knowledge" (8:7), and then sharpens his dispute in the verses that follow. Paul does engage in theological disputation here, but he is still primarily interested in modifying behavior, that is, he wants the meat eaters to forgo their right to indulge themselves in this matter.

Related to the use of a creed in theological dispute is a far-reaching polemical use which does not seek so much to influence behavior as to codify doctrine to be defended by the church militant. In 1 Timothy 3, qualifications for bishops and deacons are given so that, during the apostolic absence, one may "know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). The truth in view is then specified in a creed:

> Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, and taken up in glory (1 Tim. 3:16).

This systematic, structured creed is an early stage in the development that would lead to the Old Roman Symbol and then to the Apostles' Creed. What is especially noteworthy is that this well structured creed defining the truth is the possession of a well structured church that is to defend it, evidently against heretics, some of whose doctrines are mentioned immediately after the creed.

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In the creed in 1 Tim 3:16, Christ's incarnation is included for the first time. This is also a matter of great importance in the Johannine letters. These letters have in view heretics who were upsetting the scattered house churches in Asia Minor. Claiming to speak by the Spirit, the heretics offered new insights into the nature of Christ. In this setting, the confession of the incarnation functions in two ways.

First, it is used as a means for the *testing of orthodoxy.*

> Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God (1 John 4:1-3).

The second function of the creed is that it becomes a means of *community control.* Second John has in mind those who do not confess the incarnation (2 John 7) and gives directions on how to treat them. "If any one comes and does not bring this doctrine [i. e., of the incarnation], do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting" (2 John 10). The application of the creed thus determines the social boundaries of the church.

Confession and Persecution

Up to this point, we have taken note of confessions in a number of different forms, functioning in a number of different ways. All the functions we have indicated are, however, intracommunal. The last function we now look at is that of testifying in the face of persecution, thus a confession addressed to those outside the church. In the mission charge in Matthew 10, Jesus anticipates that his disciples would be hauled before the authorities and there bear testimony. They were not to be anxious about what they were to say, Jesus tells them, for the Holy Spirit would speak through them (Matt. 10:17-20). Jesus himself was the great exemplar, confessing during his trial that he was the Christ (Mark 14:61-62; 15:2).

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When the high priest asked, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" he replied, "I am," thus making what 1 Tim 6:13 has in mind when referring to the "good confession," but having it made before Pontius Pilate.

It was not only before the Roman authorities that the content of the confession was at issue. Luke has Paul saying that as a persecutor of Christians he sought them out in the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme (Acts 26:11). At issue was probably the Christian claim that the crucified Jesus was the Messiah, something inconceivable to Jews, who knew that according to Deuteronomy 21:23 anyone who hangs on the tree is accursed. Paul as well as other Christians knew this passage from Deuteronomy and applied it to the cross (Gal. 3:12; 1 Pet. 2:24; Acts 5:30; 20:39; 13:29). It is this situation that may explain Paul's strange statement in 1 Corinthians 12:3, "I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says, 'Jesus is cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit." What has puzzled commentators about this verse is the setting in which curse and confession could be found as options. It is difficult to conceive of such a setting within the church's life. The options belong naturally, however, to a confrontational setting. Opponents of the Christians, especially but not exclusively Jews, would curse Jesus, to which Christians, moved by the Spirit Christ promised in such circumstances, would confess him. Such fearless confession has the assurance of the Lord,

> So every one who confesses me before men, I also will confess before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven (Matt. 10:32-33).

Form and Function of New Testament Creeds

To summarize the New Testament evidence we have rehearsed: We have seen that there are many types and forms of creed in the New Testament. Some of them speak only of Christ and do so in different ways,

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for example, as the Jewish Anointed One, or the resurrected Lord, or the incarnate Christ, or the agent of creation, or the Son of God, and do so under different aspects. Other confessions also refer to God, and describe him in different ways, for example, as the God of Scripture who reveals his will there, or the Creator whose agent is described as his Son or as the Lord through whom he sustains all creation. And we have encountered one confession which, in addition, refers to the work of the Spirit in Christ's vindication, a witness to the angels, and the successful preaching to the nations.

We have furthermore seen that this multiplicity of creeds performed different functions: As a means by which to accept preaching which leads to baptism, or confessing Christ in worship, or as traditional statements in theological disputes, or as a definition of the truth that is to be protected by the church, or as a means of identifying heresy and controlling access to the Christian community. Another function of the creed is to testify to the church's opponents, in the process proclaiming Christ while at the same time defining the church's unique character by virtue of its relationship to the One whom it confesses.

New Testament Creeds and Contemporary Restorationism

Now I rapidly and inadequately turn to the possible relevance of all this to Restorationism. If there is any merit to what I have so sketchily outlined, this lecture has focused on a problem at the heart of any program of the Restoration of New Testament Christianity, if by that is meant the repristination of a seamless whole. The problem is that of diversity within the New Testament. We have not time enough to explore the issue this evening, and in any case that may be the work of the hermeneutists among us, for whom this lecture is really intended. Nevertheless, allow me to comment on some options that present themselves as we seek to come to terms with this diversity.

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One approach we might adopt is simply to fudge the issue by denying that there is so much diversity, or, if diversity is admitted, to view it as inconsequential. The latter attitude is sometimes reflected in attempts to reduce the diversity to mere differences in wording and to draw a distinction between confessions, which are evidently less formal and therefore acceptable to us low-church types, and creeds, which are thought of as deliberate creations of the later church, and thus at best artifacts of interest to church historians. But that simply is not allowed by the New Testament evidence; diversity *is* there.

Another option is to acknowledge what I have sketched, but then simply to ignore it. After all, we have done so with other aspects of New Testament practice we have found inconvenient, such as ordination, for which there is ample evidence in the New Testament. Our native anticlericalism, however, has prevented us from incorporating ordination into our practice. There are a few exceptions: for example, we increasingly hear of the ordination of elders, but one seldom hears of the ordination of ministers of the Word. We are clearly selective in what we take from the New Testament, and perhaps we should admit that there are creeds which were used to different purposes, and also admit that we just do not wish to use them in our own practice. One hopes, of course, if that were our decision, that we make it on more rational grounds than our traditional anticreedalism, born of a desire not be like other churches with their creeds.

Were we to opt for the principle of selection, however, how would we differ from those who operate with a canon within a canon, whom we correctly criticize? Would we in principle be different, for example, from Ernst Kaesemann, who discovers a welter of competing theological claims in the New Testament, but insists that it is justification by faith, as heard in the preaching of Christ, that lies at the heart of the Christian message? That, then, allows Kaesemann to dismiss the developing New Testament church, with its offices and creeds, as expressions of early Catholic Christianity, which he considers an aberration of the earliest faith.

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Another option is to look at the end of the process, where it all ends up in the New Testament, and to hold out for the most mature and elaborate form of confession, and to insist on it as normative. This, however, would be problematic in the extreme. Which form of the creed is the most mature? There is no one confession that is obviously the one that captures all, or even most, of the elements, that we have come across. Furthermore, even were we to select one confession universally agreed to be the fullest, we would still be falling prey to the temptation of selecting what we wish, precisely what we criticize folk of other persuasions for doing.

We could cut the Gordian knot and do what we do in other matters: Collect all the material identified as confessions and combine them to form one so-called New Testament confession. The difficulties in doing so would be formidable. For one thing, this procedure would result in a homogenized product, its constituent parts forcefully extracted from their historical contexts, in the process losing all nuance. Then, too, even if we were successful in agreeing on what such a confession would be, it boggles the mind to contemplate how it would be used, and how its use could be justified. To identify those uses to which confessions were put in the New Testament and to use the composite confession accordingly will not do, for those uses were congruent with particular forms of confessions which we would have sacrificed in our homogenizations.

My own inclination is to take seriously the diversity of creedal form and function in the canon and to accept the challenge to come to terms with what that means for the church today. There certainly are many difficulties and temptations that will attend such an effort, which should not, however, deter us from adopting such an approach. Let me mention a major one.

It is the question whether, in the face of such diversity, what we learn is not that we should emulate the first-century church by formulating our own confessions to speak to our conditions as the New Testament writers did to theirs. In other words, is not what we discern in the New

Testament really a process, which in principle could or should continue as the church continues to discern ways in which to bear authentic witness to Christ? My answer is an emphatic no, for that would show insufficient understanding of or respect for the notion of canon, which sets a limit to such creative development. Canon requires that we deal with what has been given; it does not allow us to keep on adding or creating anew.

The problem is essentially what this diversity means for us if we commit ourselves to be guided by the canon. This poses a problem for Restorationism if what that program envisages is the restoration of a church uniform in appearance and practice, for such a church cannot be discerned in the pages of the New Testament. What we do encounter there is precisely what, upon reflection, one would expect: manifestations of the Christian faith which are striking for the degree to which they reflect the power with which the gospel reached people in their particularity.

That, it would seem to me, implies a worthy challenge as we face the twenty-first century: How to learn from the first century as we steer between the Scylla of an historical over-simplification and the Charybdis of an historical sophistication that leads to paralysis.

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Alexander Campbell and the Relationship Between the Testaments

R. Mark Shipp

When asked what the most profound difficulty was in biblical interpretation, one scholar has said "the relationship between the testaments: that's about everything." He was speaking of the difficulties which the church, biblical scholars, and theologians have always had in confessing a single canon and yet recognizing the problem of appropriating the Old Testament for the life of the church. The Restoration tradition has its own history of attempting to deal with this problem, beginning with Alexander Campbell and his "Sermon on the Law." Campbell's understanding of the role of the Old Testament in the Church is important because his views continue to exert a great deal of influence among Restoration churches down to the present.[1] This article, then, will explore Campbell's understanding of the relationship between the testaments in order that we in churches of Christ might benefit anew from his insights as well as learn from those areas of his thought which need revision.[2]

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[1]In my research, I have not discovered a single study relating to the early restorers' understanding of the relationship between the testaments. It is rather ironic that a topic this important should be so ignored; in general, Campbell's views on the Old Testament have been simply accepted without further comment. We have built upon their foundation, but have not been as critical or informed as our Restoration forebears were of the philosophical streams in which they waded.

[2]In this article I will draw heavily upon three of Campbell's writings: *The Christian System* (Pittsburgh: Forrester and Campbell, 1835); *Family Culture*, first appearing as a regular series in the *Millennial Harbinger* (London: Hall and Company, 1850); "Sermon on the Law," first delivered in 1816, in *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union* (Chicago: Christian Century, 1904).

Campbell was in every sense a child of his age.[3] To fault him for reflecting the general American ethos and philosophical milieu current on the American frontier in the early years of the nineteenth century would not only lack grace, but also the humility recommended to us by generations to come who will judge our blind spots from a clearer vantage point. On the other hand, to accept uncritically the Romanticism and Rationalism which inform his understanding is to freeze us 150 years in the past and not take into sufficient account the finite nature of all theological constructs.

I will present this paper in three sections: 1) Campbell's dispensationalism, or the discontinuity between the testaments; 2) Campbell and the continuity between the testaments; and 3) the tensions between what he thought he was doing and what he actually did.

Campbell's Dispensationalism: The Discontinuity Between the Testaments

Campbell's dispensationalism was extremely important in the development of his understanding of the restoration of the ancient order.[4] In a recent issue of *Restoration Quarterly*, Bill Howden has suggested the following format as reflective of Campbell's understanding of the extent and duration of the "dispensations": 1) the Patriarchal dispensation, ending with the giving of the 10 commandments on Sinai in Exodus 20; 2) the Mosaic dispensation, from Exodus 20 to Acts 2:38; and 3) the Christian dispensation, ending at the eschaton.[5] Illustrative of the importance this

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[3]Recently, a number of writers have placed Campbell within the philosophical framework of Baconian Empiricism, Scottish Common Sense Realism, and Romantic Primitivism. See, in particular, Hughes, Richard T. and Allen, C. Leonard, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630-1875* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988) 156-160.

[4]Campbell seemed to use the term "dispensation" in contradictory ways. He calls the various ages dispensations, but then rejects the term when applied to a viewpoint which accepted more than one dispensation of God's grace as currently having validity. He uses the term covenant much more often. Cf. *The Christian System*, 116. But cf. *Family Culture*, 168, in which he states that the two promises to Abraham prefigure the two testaments, dispensations, and wills of God for humanity. To Campbell, then, there were probably only two dispensations, but at least seven covenants.

[5]Howden, William, "The Kingdom of God in Alexander Campbell's Hermeneutics," *RQ* 32 (1990) 92-93.

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scheme held for Campbell is the opening section of Campbell's magnum opus *The Christian System*, which begins not with a discussion of the Trinity but with a discussion of the status and interpretation of the Bible. He lists "establishing the correct dispensation" as rule no. 2 in his list of seven rules of biblical interpretation.[6] Howden suggests that this move is related to Campbell's understanding that each dispensation is a manifestation of the kingdom of God, and that a kingdom may not function without a statute book or constitution.[7] Thus, the constitution of the Mosaic age is the law. One might assume that the Christian dispensation would begin with Matthew and so forth, but not so: the ministry of Jesus to Campbell is reduced to a sort of ecclesiastical *preparatio*, setting the scene for the dispensation of the Church beginning with Acts 2:

> These laws and usages of the apostles must be learned from what the apostles published to the world, after the ascension and coronation of the king, as they are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles...They are not to be sought after in Genesis...Neither are the statutes and laws of the Christian kingdom to be sought for in the Jewish scriptures...[8]

When one considers that to Campbell the Bible in four-fifths of its contents is composed of factual, chronological history, it is not surprising that the final period of biblical history exercises authority over the church in a way that the preceding dispensations do not. This posture would have to be maintained even over the Gospels, as they are a part of a prior dispensation.

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[6]*The Christian System*, 4.

[7]Howden, 89, 101. Howden's argument for Campbell's use of the term "constitution" is no doubt correct. Campbell understood that the constitution of the kingdom of God existed before the world began. The New Testament makes allusion to this constitution, but the New Testament itself, or rather the epistles, are more aptly characterized as the "law book" of the kingdom (cf. *Christian System*, 128-133). Still, Campbell is inconsistent in his use of the term, often referring to the New Testament as the constitution of the Church. It seems to me that Howden is on the right track when he says that Campbell is inconsistent in his use of this term.

[8]*The Christian System*, 163-164.

It is important to clarify that, for Campbell, the Bible is a record of facts. He defines fact as a deed or an action, and distinguishes truth from fact on the grounds that truth is not acted out, but all facts are. In his view, the Bible is largely a compendium of facts, and not theological treatise or philosophical speculation. Note the following:

> Men had better have a written, than an unwritten, standard of orthodoxy, if they will abandon speculation and abstract notions as any part of Christian faith or duty... With us revelation has nothing to do with opinions or abstract reasonings; for it is founded wholly and entirely upon facts. There is not one abstract opinion, not one speculative view, asserted or communicated in Old Testament or New... Facts are the Alpha and Omega of both Jewish and Christian revelations...[9]

It is necessary to view Campbell's comments in their context. He insists that scripture is predominantly a record of God's deeds within history, not primarily written to be grist for the speculative or systematic theologian's mill. But when one views the Old Testament as primarily a record of historical acts, superseded by a later dispensation, then its value for theology and ethics is greatly diminished.[10]

One must also raise the question of "historical facts" here: is the type of history which the Bible exhibits the sort of "textbook history" which Campbell seems to have supposed? If it is theological history, then Campbell's dichotomy between words and deeds breaks down. Theology is composed of exactly those words and definitions which Campbell eschews.

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[9] *The Christian System*, 89-90.

[10] The "facts" as Campbell understood them, however, were subject to historical and literary inquiry. They were not necessarily self-evident, nor were they "scientific facts," but rather historical (rule 1 of his "seven rules" *Christian System* 16) and literary facts (rules 5 and 6, *Christian System* 17). Rule 3 is particularly telling: in order to understand the Bible, it is important to use the same linguistic and philological principles one would use to interpret any writing. Thus he opens the door for historical and literary study and implies that biblical facts are not self-evident, but require interpretation. My only difficulty with this scheme it that he is not sufficiently cognizant of the theological nature of all of Scripture, which alters the way one reads history and literature, although he comes close to saying this in rule 7: that with respect to God, we must come within the "understanding distance." He means by this that only the true believer can understand the things of God (*Christian System* 17-18).

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It is highly significant that one finds the quote cited above in the "Foundation of Christian Union" section of the *Christian System.*[11] Herein lies one of the greatest tensions in Campbell's understanding of the relationship between the testaments. Campbell does not suggest that the Old Testament is now without value for Christians. He was not a Marcionite. He believed strongly in a single canon and in the divine origin of both Testaments. His primary concern, however, was not for how Old Testament conceptions of God and the cosmos might be recovered for Christians, but rather with the question, "On what basis is it possible for the various Christian sects to unite?" Campbell states this priority clearly:

> 1st. The testimony of the apostles is the only and all-sufficient means of uniting all Christians.
>
> 2nd. The union of Christians with the Apostles' testimony is all-sufficient and alone sufficient to the conversion of the world.[12]

Implicit in these propositions is the assumption that only the Apostles' teachings may be admitted as evidence in the construction of the foundation of Christian unity. As a corollary to this, Christian unity based upon this conception of the Apostles' teaching is essential for the conversion of the world.

The point is this: for Campbell, the canon is one, and yet its oneness is such that the Apostles' teaching is the only basis for Christian unity and the conversion of the world. When one combines these propositions with Campbell's view that the Bible is a compendium of historical fact and not theological treatise, it is not difficult to perceive the outcome. First, the Old Testament is a record of acts, and acts of God prior to the dispensation of the Apostles (for this is, in effect, the Christian dispensation for Campbell) are historically interesting, but are not binding on Christians. Second, the Christian dispensation in which we find

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[11]*The Christian System*, 85-106.
[12]*The Christian System*, 87.

ourselves is constituted on the basis of the New Testament, more specifically the Acts and the Epistles. Tension is therefore apparent at the heart of Campbell's formulation: he advocated a single inspired canon, yet disallowed two-thirds of it for the formation of an assured theological minimum around which all believers could unite. For the purposes of establishing the bounds of the constitution of the "Kingdom of Heaven," therefore, Campbell had a very limited canon.

Campbell had another way of accounting for the discontinuity between the Testaments. In the *Christian System* he suggests that the "Constitution of Israel," the Mosaic dispensation, is discontinuous with the New Covenant, and that it was added to the Patriarchal dispensation of family worship for a limited time and for a specific people.[13] The Patriarchal dispensation Campbell felt conformed to the canons of nature and reason. It was instituted by God in the beginning and its system of hierarchy and family worship are still in effect. The Law of Moses for Campbell, on the other hand, was a temporary addition to the Patriarchal dispensation and was fatally flawed for these reasons: 1) it was too holy, in its expectation of radical obedience; 2) it was too weak and material, in its reliance upon outward form and ritual; and 3) it was too parochial, in its application to one particular people, as opposed to the universality of the Patriarchal and Christian dispensations.

Beyond question, Campbell has taken his cue from Paul in Romans 3: 19-31 and 7: 7-12 in assigning holiness and weakness to the law. Furthermore, from Romans 4 he has taken the notion that in every dispensation there have been faithful children of the promise who understood God's plans. These were children of the faith and Spirit, not of the law, who looked forward to the coming of the Messiah based upon the prophecy in Genesis 3. But this continuity of faith reflected in the Old Testament can only be understood through the lens of the New Testament.

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[13] See, in this regard, John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 396.

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In this sense, "testament" ought to be understood more in the sense of "dispensation" or "covenant":

> The scriptures called the "Old Testament," said to be done away, is that described by Paul which came from Mt. Sinai in Arabia. That was the covenant of Jewish peculiarities. It was an episode or digression from the patriarchal institution.[14]

That part of the Abrahamic covenant which dealt strictly with family blessing, as well as the entire Mosaic dispensation, were discontinuous with, and superseded by, the new covenant. I must add here that I think Campbell softened his view somewhat between 1816 (the "Sermon on the Law") and the 1830's and 40's (The *Christian System*). In the Sermon on the Law, he unequivocally associates the Old Testament with "law" and the New Testament with "grace."[15] He says that the authority of the Law and the Prophets, or the entire Old Testament corpus, was necessarily terminated with the ministry of Jesus.[16]

Campbell, therefore, seems to have had two different approaches to the notion of discontinuity between the testaments which I will label constitutional and theological. On the one hand he draws his line in Acts 2, allowing nothing prior to this to contaminate the Church's constitutional ordinances. On the other, he suggests that there has always been a principle of faith operative throughout biblical history, allowing for theological continuity and expanding the usable limits of the canon. He discounts the Old Testament and much of the New procedurally for the purpose of addressing the question, "What shall we restore of the outward manifestations of the Church, which all believers can, or should, agree on?" In other words, if we are discussing the Church, let us limit ourselves to that body of literature which treats the Church, the New Testament. However, that part of the Old Testament which was of universal applicability (Gen. 1-

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[14] *Family Culture*, 136.
[15] "Sermon on the Law," 250.
[16] "Sermon on the Law," 247.

11) had not been superseded, nor had the spiritual promise to Abraham of "blessing to all nations," based upon his faith. This literature was of paramount importance for all humanity, whether in the Church or not, and for family culture and worship.

Nature, Prophecy, Typology, and Example: The Continuity Between the Testaments

I have already mentioned something about Campbell's understanding of the continuity between the Testaments. I will now address this issue in four parts: Nature and Old Testament faith; Old Testament prophecy and the New Testament; and typology and example, or what you do with what's left over.

In their book *Illusions of Innocence*, Richard Hughes and Leonard Allen have suggested that to Campbell the Old Testament might be understood as continuous with the New only as far as it conforms to the universal standards of Nature and Reason or is brought over, and therefore "baptized," into the New.[17] While their characterization is essentially correct, Campbell's understanding of the relationship between the Testaments was more subtle than this would suggest.

To Campbell, there was a reciprocal relationship between the Testaments which I find difficult to square with his rule no. 2, "determining the correct dispensation." Note the following from *The Christian System*:

> Every one...who would accurately understand the Christian must approach it through the Mosaic; and he who would be a proficient in the Jewish must make Paul his commentator... All the leading words and phrases of the New Testament are to be explained and understood by the history of the Jewish nation and God's government of them.[18]

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[17]Hughes and Allen, *Illusions of Innocence*, 117, 164, and Allen and Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: the Ancestry of Churches of Christ* (Abilene: ACU, 1988) 77-78. See also Allen, *The Cruciform Church* (Abilene: Abilene Christian University, 1990) 52-57.

[18]*The Christian System*, 146-147.

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If the Old can only be understood in light of the New, the reverse is also true, that the New in all of its particulars can only be understood in light of the Old. This at least allows for the theoretical possibility that the Old Testament can inform our understanding of the New quite as much as the reverse.

Besides this literary relationship, however, to Campbell there are definite lines of continuity. As Hughes and Allen have suggested, the chief of these lines of continuity is provided by the "Book of Nature" (natural law perceived by reason) which is in harmony with the "Book of Scripture." The Patriarchal Age provides the clearest example of the continuity provided by Nature. To Campbell it was as clear as it could be that both Nature and Scripture attested to the Patriarchal family arrangement:

> Family worship was, then, the first social worship....Though other institutions have since been added, this has never been superseded. Having its foundation in the matrimonial compact, the most ancient of all religious and political institutions, and this being founded on nature itself, it can never be superseded.[19]

In this arrangement, the *pater familias* is the benevolent dictator who is also the High Priest at the family altar.[20] He grounds his understanding of this family arrangement in Adam, the first priest at the family altar and head of the first family.[21] This arrangement to Campbell would proceed uninterrupted until the restoration of all things in the last day.

There are other aspects of the Old Testament which might also be classified as continuous with the Book of Nature and the New Testament. Of particular interest in this regard is his study of Genesis in the "Family

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[19]*The Christian System*, 133-134.

[20]*The Christian System*, 123. Campbell suggests that monarchy is the natural form of government. The Republican form of government, he says, is horrendously inefficient, but for want of benevolent monarchs is necessary for the time being. He disagrees on this point with John Calvin, who said that an aristocracy, "pure or modified by popular government," "greatly surpassed" other forms of government (Calvin, *Institutes* , 656-657).

[21]*The Christian System*, 135. This family altar dispensation corresponds to the inception of the practice of religion, unneeded before the Fall. The Patriarchal arrangement, therefore, is not grounded in creation, but rather in human sin.

Culture" section of the *Millennial Harbinger.* Campbell sets forth in Socratic style the first twenty-two chapters of Genesis, in which details of every narrative are shown to be in harmony with science, nature, and the New Testament. Concerning the ark, he says,

> Our most accomplished mathematical calculators say, that no vessel could have been more rationally and scientifically arranged and constructed...Can any one then doubt the capacity of a vessel of 42,500 tons, to stow away the live stock of the earth, and provisions for one year!![22]

For Campbell it would be unthinkable for Scripture and the Book of Nature to be in discord, because both were creations of the same perfect and rational deity.

Campbell accepted much of the Old Testament as prophetic on the basis of what the New Testament writings considered to be Messianic prophecy. Continuity between the testaments would in this sense be provided by a "prophecy/fulfillment" scheme. There is no question that to the writer of Matthew much of the prophetic literature in the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Campbell, likewise, sees Old Testament prophecy functioning in this manner, regardless of the original intent of the prophet. The "Sermon on the Law" is unequivocal about the temporary and prophetic nature of the *whole* of the Old Testament: "'The Law and the Prophets prophesied until John' -- then they give place to a greater Prophet and a more glorious Law."[23] Again, this is a case of the Old Testament being filtered through the New. To Campbell, Old Testament prophecy is continuous with its New Testament fulfillment in the sense that the fulfillment cannot be understood without its prophetic counterpart. That Old Testament books might make their own theological claims which present-day churches would do well to hear, however, is a concept not explored by Campbell.

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[22] *Family Culture*, 87-88.
[23] "Sermon on the Law," 247-248.

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Similar to the prophecy/fulfillment scheme is typology. Much of the Mosaic dispensation for Campbell is only recoverable for Christians as types for which the New Testament provides the anti type. In fact, a good deal of the Old Testament exists primarily in order to provide types for the New:

> Another object [of the Jewish Institution] was, to picture out in appropriate types the spiritual worship of the kingdom of heaven...by picturesque images, ingeniously devised to adumbrate the whole doctrine of reconciliation and sanctification to God...The Jewish institution is not to be regarded only in its political, moral, and religious aspects, but especially in its figurative and prospective character.[24]

Typology therefore provides continuity between the testaments to Campbell. The type is necessarily deficient and partial, however. As Christ's is the true sacrifice for which animal sacrifices in the Old Testament were but poor shadows, so Old Testament types were fulfilled and explained by their New Testament antitypes. Note, for example, the typological recovery of the tabernacle and its cult, derived from Hebrews 9:

> The same great commentator on this institution not only presents the history of its subjects as instructive to the citizens of the new institution, but of the tabernacle he says, "it was a figurative representation for the time then present," and the furniture thereof "the patterns of things in the heavens."[25]

To Campbell, typology is the means whereby Old testament ordinances and institutions may be recovered for the Christian. These are filtered through the lens of the New Testament antitypes, intended to provide the controlling interpretation of the earlier literature.

There is one more sense in which the Old Testament may be recovered for Campbell: that of analogy or example. Besides the history of

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[24]*The Christian System*, 117.
[25]*The Christian System*, 118.

Israel existing for our instruction, he cites numerous Old Testament passages which are instructive for us in analogous settings, or are examples for us to emulate or avoid:

> [The Hebrews] confessed that they were pilgrims...in the land of promise. By dwelling in tents in their own land, they lived as foreigners or as persons on a journey. So ought Christians to live as pilgrims here.[26]

Notice that here also the controlling aspect of the example is provided by a New Testament reference, in this case Hebrews 11.

One may question justifiably to what extent the various continuities I have mentioned function authoritatively for the Church in Campbell's thought. Particularly in the case of prophecy and typology, the prophetic utterance and the type are in a sense superseded by the fulfillment/anti type. In this sense, Hughes' and Allen's assessment is correct: only that which has been baptized in the New Testament remains authoritative for the Christian. When one speaks of binding authority for Christian ordinances, very little remains of the Old Testament, except that which has been reinterpreted in the New and that which still has authority by virtue of reason and universal application. When one speaks of what may be of moral and theological value for the Christian, Campbell's writings are replete with various ways in which the bulk of Old Testament writings may be recovered.

Tensions in Campbell's Understanding of the Relationship Between the Testaments

I return now to the question of the tension between Campbell's strong dispensationalism and his equally strong desire to recover the Old Testament for the Church. Is there an inherent contradiction here? What Campbell says is that only the New Testament, and specifically the

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[26] *Family Culture*, 126.

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Epistles and Acts, have authority to bind doctrine and practice on the Church. What he actually does is to provide many--and often subtle--ways in which the Old Testament is recoverable for the Christian, if not authoritative for Church government and Christian ordinances.

But is it legitimate to distinguish between what is authoritative as a constitution for the Church and what is appropriatable ethically and theologically for the individual Christian? To Campbell, a kingdom without a constitution was impossible. The Acts and the Epistles provided just such a constitution for Campbell, but in identifying it as such he made certain elements of the New Testament writings which he understood to be *constitutive* of the New Testament Church the new canon within the canon.

Conclusion

Campbell reflects a complex array of ways in which the Testaments are both continuous and discontinuous with each other. They are discontinuous in that he saw definite and clear ways in which the three main economies were distinguished. The Mosaic dispensation in particular was discontinuous with the Christian on the basis of its temporary nature and that it was both too mundane and too holy to provide salvation. They are continuous in those elements which Reason and the Book of Nature demonstrate to be true of all people everywhere in every time, in prophecy leading to fulfillment, and in types which are fully understood only in their antitypes. Even Old Testament passages which might not be recoverable on the basis of these principles might be used as positive or negative examples for us in analogous circumstances.

Perhaps the greatest weakness in Campbell's understanding is that he greatly diminished the importance of the Old Testament's own theological witness to God and his relationship to His people as creator, redeemer, and Lord. To Campbell, even those passages which are true of all people everywhere and conform to the canons of reason are limited primarily to the Patriarchal narratives in Genesis and the primeval history of

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Genesis 1-11. The vast bulk of the Old Testament is recoverable only through the interpretive grid which the New Testament provides: prophecy, typology, and example. I would insist that the Old Testament contains unfathomable depths in its conceptions of the nature of God, humanity, creation, and redemption, by no means fully incorporated or appropriated in the New Testament. Campbell diminishes the theological witness of the Old Testament to the detriment of both testaments.

On the other hand, I am hard put to come up with a better rule of thumb for structuring the Church than an appeal to that body of literature which deals most specifically with the Church, the Acts and the Epistles. Furthermore, while an appeal to Reason or the Book of Nature may seem quaint now, the Primeval History in Genesis does make claims of universal applicability. I am convinced that an appeal to Reason, common sense, empirical evidence, and scriptural authority is better than an appeal to personal taste and subjective opinion.

To return to my comments at the beginning, perhaps once the philosophical presuppositions of Common Sense Rationalism, Romantic Primitivism, and Baconian Empiricism have been bracketed, we can more easily appreciate some of the true value of his work: the strong belief in the reciprocal relationship between the testaments, a high regard for the historical basis of Scripture and historical inquiry, a nuanced understanding of the recoverability of Old Testament texts for Christians, and an insistence upon scientific rigor in biblical exegesis. Perhaps the greatest legacy he has bequeathed to us in the Restoration Movement is his conviction that all scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for the Christian. I think Campbell would say a hearty "amen" to the proposition in Hebrews 1: 1: "God, who in times past spoke to our fathers through the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us through a Son."

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Baptism Yesterday and Today

Allan J. McNicol

When a convert in the third century presented himself or herself as desirous of baptism, a definite sequence of events would occur. These took place in three stages: (1) preparation; (2) the conduct of the actual rite itself; (3) post baptismal activities. This sequence was designed to emphasize baptism as a transition from allegiance to one way of life to a new way which was oriented in a very different direction. Indeed, at the heart of the significance of baptism in the ancient church was an emphasis on the fact that a conscious personal choice to renounce one lord and take up allegiance to another was being effectuated. This can be seen in the three stages of the observance of the rite.

First, the actual preparation for baptism could be viewed from both long and short term perspectives. During this era, when becoming a Christian meant that one (as in China today) faced the prospect of martyrdom, it was wise for the community of faith to be sure that a prospective convert had genuinely repented; for one had to be ready to accept the consequences of living in an alternative community to the world of rampant idolatry and its closely intertwined culture of hedonistic lifestyles. Thus, besides asking a potential convert to undergo a considerable period of teaching, leaders of the church would often seek to determine whether his occupation may present a barrier to discipleship. He would also

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need to show evidence that his life was truly moving in a new direction by such actions as engaging in Christian charitable works.[1]

In the days prior to baptism, perhaps in imitation of Christ's own test before his ministry, the new believer would undergo an intensive period of prayer and fasting.[2] Often, especially if this were before Easter Sunday, the time of prayer and fasting would culminate in an lengthy vigil in readiness for the baptism to take place at dawn.[3]

The conduct of a baptism at first light was a point of considerable significance for the early Christians. The candidate first faced toward the West (the direction of the darkness) and renounced Satan and his control. Then he would turn toward the East (the direction of the coming light) and confess Christ.[4] What is highlighted in this action is the dramatic contrast between the past and the future. As the believer was lowered into the water the old life was, in actuality, being buried; and through the action of God in the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, the new Christian was about to emerge from the watery grave.[5]

The reality that ancient baptism functioned dramatically as a radical transition from one manner of life to another was also highlighted in the practices that took place immediately after baptism. The new Christian would be presented with a white tunic as a symbol of the moral and spiritual cleansing that marked the beginning of his or her new life. This image of cleansing was strengthened by the acknowledgment of the coming of the Holy Spirit either by some form of anointing of the new believer or by the laying on of hands by a leader of the church.

Thus, a common emphasis throughout the entire process of baptism in the ancient church was upon the radical difference which occurred in

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[1] Daniel D. Stevnick, "Baptism," *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship* ed. Peter E. Fink (Collegeville, Minnesota: Glazier/Liturgical Press, 1990) 93.

[2] Didache 1:7; Justin, *Apology* 1:61; Tertullian, *On Baptism* 19-20.

[3] Tertullian, *On Baptism* 19-20.

[4] Stevnick, "Baptism," 92; Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 21.

[5] Cf. E. Ferguson, "Baptism." *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1990) 131-134.

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one's outlook when one crossed the border between the old life and entered a new one. This was marked by the action of being buried in water and, through divine action, spiritually engrafted into Christ. Such an image still resonates in many communities today where the gospel is proclaimed and received by persons who had been untouched or unreached previously by the impact of its claim. A number of years ago this author lived in a very secular community in a large city in Australia. A family, who had only the barest acquaintance with Christianity, was taught the gospel by the minister of the church and became Christians. The very center of their house, the focal point of its architecture, was an entire room built to function as a large bar. It was noticeable in a visit to the house a month or so after the baptism of these people that the bar was gone. The room was totally renovated. In place of the large supply of liquor a number of bottles of fruit juices and similar items were tastefully visible. Baptism, then and now, can make a major difference in our live.

Analysis and Proposal

In Churches of Christ in contemporary America such stories are unusual. Most members of Churches of Christ live in a version of cultural Christianity. Indeed the preponderance of baptisms that take place in the church today are not of converts but the children of believers who, at a stage of maturing to adulthood, elect to be baptized as a sign that they are prepared to take on the full responsibilities of membership in the church. In these cases baptism is not the marking of a radical transition from one culture and lifestyle to another but a ritualizing of the culminating point of early childhood training and nurture within both the child's natural and spiritual family. Several issues arise as to whether this vastly different social situation, where baptism functions as a pledge of acceptance of the responsibilities of church membership rather than a reflection of the

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transition of loyalty from one lord to another, need to be explored.[6] However, that will not be the direction taken in this essay. Rather, some aspects of the theology of baptism in the New Testament will be examined; and then, some suggestions will be made about how our contemporary practice of baptism may be improved so that it may be carried out in keeping with the essence of biblical theology. Procedurally, first to be discussed will be the origins of baptism in the Christian movement highlighting why it plays such a pivotal role in New Testament theology. Following this overview a brief note will show how the importance of this reality has been appropriated by the Restoration Movement. In conclusion we will offer some brief suggestions as to how baptism ought to be observed in keeping with the central emphasis of scripture and tradition.

The thesis will be argued that intrinsic to baptism is the idea that it marks a point of transition from one way of life to another. As it emerged in the early church, baptism was the vehicle wherein one entered into the death of Christ and emerged from the watery grave to share the new life with and in Him. In an era in which some Churches of Christ are tempted to embrace many of the trappings of generic Evangelicalism in order to be in solidarity with a larger number of Christians in the wider ecumenical community, there has been a tendency to downplay the centrality of our witness on baptism. This study is designed to underscore that our traditional understanding of believers' baptism rests at the very heart of our communal

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[6] We have in mind such questions as whether the children of believers who have grown up always loyal to Christ are perceived to be in the same spiritual condition as those whom we have traditionally called "the alien sinner." Do these vastly different social realities mean anything as far as the way we ritualize baptisms? In generic Evangelicalism some of these issues are discussed by Marlin Jeschke, *Believer's Baptism for Children of the Church* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1983). In Churches of Christ James Thompson, "The Education of Children in the Early Church," *ICS Faculty Bulletin* 4 (November, 1983) 12-29, has reopened the modern discussion. Now a Doctor of ministry project at Abilene Christian University by Tommy King entitled, *Faith Decisions: Christian Initiation for Children of the Glenwood Church of Christ*, treats the subject with greater detail. King argues that children raised within the church should be viewed in the same way as catechumens were perceived within the church of the second and third centuries. That is, the catechumen was one who had already entered the pathway of discipleship and was viewed as being brought along to a more mature level of faith under the aegis of the church. Cf. G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) 373. As the ancient catechumens, so our children look to the time when their mature faith can be expressed in baptism, and they can enter fully into the life of Christ, as he exists corporally in his body—the church.

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identity. It should be maintained as one of the most important treasures we have to offer to the common faith of the church.

Baptism as Transition in the New Testament

Within Churches of Christ it is customary to turn to the book of Acts to understand the origins of baptism. Thus, our theological understanding of this rite is traced back through the conversion stories in Acts to Luke's account of the response to Peter's sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:37-42). However, this is an abrupt introduction to the subject and one must go back to some important earlier happenings.

The Mission of John of the Baptist

John the Baptist inaugurated the eschatological events of the New Testament era. He announced that a dramatic new day was about to dawn in Israel. Central to this day would be the re-gathering of Israel as the people or kingdom of God (Mt. 3:1-2).[7] What was needed was that there be some who would be prepared for this time. In face of the terrible judgment that the unprepared would face on this day the business-as-usual keeping of the temple observances and traditional aspects of covenant was not enough. John called for genuine repentance expressed in a baptism for the forgiveness of sins (Lk. 3:3).

Not only was this a slap at the religious leadership in Jerusalem (one needed to do more than go to the temple to be saved) it also had definite overtones of radical revision or re-constitution of Israel itself.[8] As Israel had passed through the waters in leaving Egypt (I Cor. 10:1-2) as a prelude to reception and ratification of the covenant at Sinai (Ex. 24:7-8), so John claimed that Israel must pass through the waters again to be ready for the time of the New Covenant. Thus, already in the baptism of John, the

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[7] Cf. G. Lohfink, *Jesus and Community: The Social Dimension of Christian Faith.* Trans. by J. P Galvin (New York: Paulist, 1984) 16-17.

[8] Ben Meyer, "Jesus Christ," *Anchor Bible* 3. ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 778.

concept of baptism as a transition is present. In order for Israel to be ready for the new era or covenant it too must pass through the waters of baptism.[9]

Jesus Inaugurates a New Covenant

For a while Jesus joined John and conducted a similar mission which involved baptism (John 3:22-24). Jesus himself was baptized and about that time John was imprisoned and eventually killed. Jesus would pick up where John left off and would not only anticipate but inaugurate the New Covenant.

The road to the inauguration of the New Covenant was the ministry of Jesus. One observation about his ministry is necessary for our purposes. As Jesus' ministry unfolded it became clear that a large segment of Israel would not receive his claim that the people of God must first be renewed and reconstituted in light of the dawn of a new era. Israel remained bent on following a rebellious course that Jesus considered would lead to the destruction of the nation (Lk. 13:3-9). As the Passover celebration came near and Jesus anticipated a visit to Jerusalem he began to be overwhelmed by the possibility of martyrdom. This concern is echoed in what has come to be called the Passion predictions (Mt. 16:21; Mk. 8:31; Mt. 17:22-23; Mk. 9:31-32; Lk. 9:44-48; Mt. 20:17-19; Mk. 10-33-34; Lk. 18:31-34). But this martyrdom would not be without value. In God's eyes he was a representative figure on behalf of Israel. In his death he would suffer, as a representative, the same fate that his people had suffered earlier in the exile and he would become the agent who would serve as the ransom to save others from undergoing destruction (Mt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45). Thus, at the last supper the sum of his words over the bread and the cup was to announce that in his death the New Covenant would be inaugurated; and in his

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[9] For a recent study on the antecedents to John's baptism see Bo Reicke, "The Historical Setting of John's Baptism," *Jesus, the Gospels, and the Church: Essays in Honor of W. R. Farmer*, ed. E. P. Sanders (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1987) 209-224.

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invitation to receive the bread and the cup, in an anticipatory sense, the disciples would be the first to receive the benefits.

And, so we return to baptism. In Jesus' death the blood and water came from his side (Jn. 19:34). Now baptism (i.e., the baptism of John) which functioned originally as the appropriate prelude to the reception of the blessings of the New Covenant, with the inauguration of the New Covenant is re-conceived as the vehicle by which one initially is brought into the restored people of God. Solidarity with the people of God results in the benefits of forgiveness of sins and a new life intrinsic to the covenant.[10] Baptism now is "into the name (or sphere) of Jesus' authority." It is precisely this understanding of baptism that Peter invokes on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38). Rebellious Israel, who only a few days earlier had been complicit in the crucifixion of the Messiah, was now invited to share the benefits of the New Covenant inaugurated by his death. Here again the theme of transition emerges as something of paramount importance. The Old Covenant has passed away and a new one has come. Israel is invited through baptism to enter into the blessings of a new life in Jesus.

Incorporation into Christ: The Centrality of Baptism for Paul

The benefits of the new life in Christ were not only made available to the people of Israel. Very soon the Gentiles were incorporated into the people of God (Acts 10:1-11:18). Of course it was Paul who became the great missionary of record to the Gentiles. He is remembered for his dogged determination to ensure that no unnecessary encumbrances would be placed upon any potential follower of Jesus with respect to what was needed to become a Christian. For him, baptism as the outward expression of obedient faith was the *sine qua non* occurrence in the process of becoming a Christian.

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[10] On how this connects with the rebirth of mission both to Israel and the Gentiles see Ben Meyer, "The Expiation Motif in the Eucharistic Words: A Key to the History of Jesus?" *Gregorianum* 69/3 (1988) 476-477.

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This is so because for Paul baptism was the pathway which led one to interface directly with the salvific actions of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Specifically, it was through baptism that one died with Christ and arose to live as a vital part of the new creation brought about by the impact of his life.

In 2 Corinthians 5:14 is a very important word. There Paul says bluntly, "because he (i.e. Christ) died 'on behalf of' all, as a consequence, all died." It is in this profound passage that Paul gives one of his most vivid lessons, in spelling out the significance of Christ's death. Paul is saying that, in some representative sense, in Jesus' death at Golgotha the whole of humanity died.[11] Here Paul echoes *both* the themes of the solidarity of the human in the two pivotal representative figures of Adam and Christ *and* the Old Testament Day of Atonement imagery wherein the sacrificial victim vicariously embodied the death of the people. But Paul does not leave the matter there. In 2 Corinthians 5:15 he recalls that Christ's death eventuated in his coming to a new life. And the new life was for the express purpose that the ones for whom Christ died may live with him (1 Thes. 5:10). Paul's point is that all those who share Christ's death in baptism are destined to share with him his transformed life. As when we were in the sphere of Adam we shared his fate so, in Christ, beginning with baptism, we share his status of a transformed life.[12] Literally, Paul is pointing to the reality of nothing less than a new creation which has been brought into effect through the death of Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 5:6-11; Eph. 2:14-18).

This brings us to Romans 6:3-6, the classic text of Paul on baptism. In this text there are three central themes that are to be stressed in every baptism. First, when one is lowered into the water we understand this to be a death. Paul refers to this as a burial of our old lives (Rom. 6:4). Assuming this is done with genuine repentance one can scarcely conceive of a more

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[11] Morna Hooker, *Not Ashamed of the Gospel: New Testament Interpretations of the Death of Christ* (Carlisle, Cumbria, United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, 1994) 36.
[12] Hooker, *Not Ashamed of the Gospel*, 38.

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vivid expression of the intent to change from allegiance to one set of ultimates for another.

Second, upon being buried in the waters of baptism, the converts in the first century were conceived as being engrafted into the domain of Christ, as he dwells corporately in his body the Church (Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 12:13). In a later Pauline letter it is called a "washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). By joining his or her death to Jesus' death the believer becomes one with him in both his faithfulness and ultimate destiny.

Third, the early Christian converts emerged from baptism having made the transition to a new life (Rom. 6:4). Paul was very careful to say that this was a new revitalized form of life; yet it was hidden in Christ, and was not the final state of glorification that will only come at the final resurrection (Rom. 6:5). Nevertheless, it is a concrete relationship where the renewed believer now lives as though one had made a total transition into an entire new family. In this family the believer has become a child of God. Without question, for Paul, at the heart of it all was the conviction that every believer would carry the belief that in baptism he has moved from a mode of earthly existence into participation in the divine life itself.

Baptism as Transition in the Restoration Tradition

We have substantiated the importance in both Scripture and the common faith of the early church of baptism as marking the transition of the believer into the sphere of Christ. It is not late breaking news to note that this also has been a central emphasis of the Campbell-Stone Restoration Movement. Three quotes from authors in this Tradition say it all.

Alexander Campbell struggled mightily throughout his life to arrive eventually at the position that the scriptures taught that biblical baptism

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consisted of the immersion of penitent believers for the remission of sins.[13] As an exegete who was always sensitive to types and shadows of the New Covenant found in the Old Testament, Campbell found the purpose of the baptism already foreshadowed in the cultic practices of the temple.

> That is, Christian immersion stands in relation to the same place in the Christian temple, or worship, that the laver or bath of purification stood in the Jewish temple; viz. between the sacrifice of Christ and acceptable worship.[14]

In other words, in order to make the transition from contact with the efficacious death to the way of acceptable worship one is called upon to pass through the waters of baptism. This point was also driven home in the standard text on biblical theology of the nineteenth-century Restoration Movement.

> A little reflection on the meaning and force of the preposition "into" will enable us to perceive and comprehend the force of the Apostles argument. It is a particle of *transition*, and always implies a change of state, and hence, also, a change of influences. Thus, for instance when a man, in order to avoid the violence of a storm, enters into a house, he is shielded and protected by the house; . . . just so the man who is, by the divine arrangement, baptized *into* the death of Christ is made to enjoy all the benefits of his death.[15]

Similar sentiments are expressed by the twentieth-century Australian Restorationist author E. Lyall Williams:

> When the phrase has been used "baptism unto remission of sins," it has always been an elliptic statement carrying with it the

[13] A very informative account of the Campbell odyssey on baptism is given by John Mark Hicks, "The Recovery of the ancient Gospel: Alexander Campbell and the design of Baptism," in *Baptism and the Remission of Sins: An Historical Perspective.* ed. David Fletcher (Joplin, Missouri: College Press, 1990) 111-170.

[14] A. Campbell, *Christian Baptist* 5 (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1955 reprint of the 1827-28 Periodical) 128-129.

[15] Robert Milligan, *An Exposition and Defense of the Scheme of Redemption as it is Revealed and Taught in the Holy Scriptures* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 11th edition of the 1868 work) 407.

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understanding that it is baptism *into Christ* which is unto the remission of sins.[16]

Without question the testimony of scripture, the common faith of the early church, and the Restoration Movement agree that baptism is *the point of transition* where the believer "puts on Christ" and takes upon himself or herself the beginning of the movement into the divine life.

Baptism and Contemporary Liturgy

Given this reality, the question may be raised as to the most appropriate way of observing baptism in the local church today.

First, it should be noted that the widespread practice of private baptisms ought to be discouraged. Such practices undermine the dimension of baptism as an entrance into the body of Christ. All baptisms, unless there is a compelling set of special circumstances, should be done during an assembly of the church.

The most appropriate time on Sunday morning is directly after the word has been proclaimed. Baptism is the response *par excellence* to the proclamation of the word. The candidate for baptism can respond to the invitation during a hymn, make a public confession of the Lordship of Jesus, and then be baptized.[17] Subsequently, the one baptized may return to the assembly and, after being welcomed by a leader of the congregation, participate in the Lord's Supper.[18]

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[16] E. L. Williams, *A Biblical Approach to Unity* (Melbourne: Austral Printing and Publishing Co., 1957) 152.

[17] In most Churches of Christ today the invitation is a practice seeking a rationale. In an overwhelming number of instances the minister of the local church knows ahead of time when someone is about to be baptized. Thus the response to the invitation should be ritualized as the culmination of a period of preparation for baptism rather than the revivalist mode of an immediate response to a particular message.

[18] An advantage of knowing ahead of time that there will be a baptism is that one can plan the liturgy so that the baptism takes place after the word has been proclaimed but before the Lord's Supper is taken. Throughout Christian history the observance of the Lord's Supper represents the apex of the liturgical movement of the service. There is no reason why this should not be so in our services. Immediately after the baptism an appropriate hymn followed by a short word or reading of Scripture should allow enough time for the one baptized to return to the assembly to share the Lord's Supper with the entire congregation.

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Procedurally, the ritualizing the baptism as transition may incorporate a brief statement by the candidate immediately prior to baptism. This statement would highlight the conviction that a practical reversal of commitments is being undertaken. This would be especiallysignificant with respect to converts.

Finally, after the baptism, when the believer is welcomed to the Lord's Table, it is important that acknowledgment be made that baptism is the occasion for the reception of God's promised gift of the Holy Spirit. This would not only echo an ancient practice in the church; it would be yet another opportunity to emphasize that baptism is the operation of God bringing one into the body of Christ where one is called to serve for the rest of one's days.

Conclusion

This essay has underscored the importance of baptism for the contemporary church. We have focused on baptism as the transition where one is infused by the Holy Spirit into the divine life of the Son. Our study of baptism in Scripture and Tradition (both in the ancient church and the Restoration Movement) confirms a strong connection between the salvific action of God in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the reception of the benefits of that death by the believer, in the waters of baptism.

Today, when the acids of generic Evangelicalism erode this central belief of Restorationists, it is time that our traditional ideas about baptism be rethought and reclaimed. A wise teacher once remarked that the heritage of one generation cannot be passed on to the next without there being some erosion to that heritage. A heritage, to remain vital and credible, must carry on fresh investigation of even its most cherished tenets. This study is offered to that end.

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Alexander Campbell on Education

Gary Holloway

> We must awaken to the cause of domestic education. There is no substitute for it. Public schools, private schools, Sunday school, are all good and useful; but none of them, nor all of them, afford a substitute for the family school and parental education.
>
> Alexander Campbell

Recently much attention has been given to the problems of education in America. In the media, Congress, state legislatures, and other public forums, citizens debate questions of curricula, textbooks, and funding. Perhaps the most perplexing issue is the overall goal of our education system. What kind of citizen do we want our schools to produce? How can we best teach the values necessary to preserve the republic?

For Christians these questions are overshadowed by a more important one: how can we best pass on the faith to our children? Is there a place for Christian faith in public schools? Are our schools at least neutral regarding religion or are they actually hostile to a living faith? What kind of school best trains our children to be salt and light to the world?

Our perspective on these questions will be broadened by a return to an earlier time in United States history when the idea of public education and the difficulties of implementing it were first discussed. Specifically we will look at the educational proposals of Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), who as an

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educator and a member of the Virginia constitutional convention discussed the issues of the control and direction of public schools.

Campbell's Education[1]

When Alexander Campbell was born in Ballymena, Ireland in 1788, his father Thomas was still a student at the University of Glasgow in Scotland where he received his degree in Theology in 1791. Thomas returned to Ireland to serve as a Presbyterian minister. Alexander thus entered a family that prized both religion and education.

Alexander's earliest schooling was from his father who supervised his study of English. For a while he did attend private academies (there was no government-sponsored schooling), first at Market Hill and later at Newry. At he age of nine, however, he returned home where his father was his sole teacher. His studies consisted of language acquisition: English, French, Latin, and Greek. Temperamentally, Alexander lacked self-discipline, preferring outdoor work to study. However, he did have a prodigious memory enabling him, even at a young age, perfectly to memorize sixty lines of blank verse in fifty-two minutes. Eventually Thomas exposed him to the analytical philosophical texts of the day. Alexander particularly appreciated the works of John Locke.

Sometime in Alexander's youth, Thomas began to include other young men in the studies and so formed his own academy. As one of the older boys, Alexander began to assist his father in teaching. Thus he was trained by formal education and apprenticeship to become a preacher and teacher. In 1807, when Thomas emigrated to America, he left the nineteen- year-old Alexander in sole charge of the Academy.

The departure of Thomas also indirectly led to Alexander's university education. In 1808, Alexander and the rest of the Campbell family set sail to join Thomas in America. On the second day of the voyage, they were shipwrecked off

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[1] For information on Alexander Campbell's education see Robert Richardson, *The Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, vol. 1 (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1897) 19-194 and Clarence R. Athearn, *The Religious Education of Alexander Campbell* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1928).

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the coast of Scotland. This misfortune allowed Alexander to spend almost a year at his father's alma mater, the University of Glasgow.

The University had a 400-year heritage and was originally organized, like all medieval universities, into the schools of Arts, Theology, Canon Law, and Medicine. By the time Alexander enrolled, these schools had been reorganized into thirteen departments or colleges. Alexander entered not the Divinity department (as might have been expected), but the department of Humanity, which included courses in Greek, logic, natural science, and moral philosophy.

Alexander's university education was thus a broad one, centered on the humanities. He learned the current techniques of literary criticism and applied them to English and Scottish literature. He also studied Science, especially the empirical method, which he would employ in many contexts throughout his life.

The subject of Moral Philosophy was most influential on Campbell's later proposals on education. The thought of Thomas Reid, a professor at Glasgow a generation earlier, was dominant in moral philosophy at this time. Reid's view of moral reasoning as a basis for ethics fit nicely with Alexander's interest in the scientific method. Both concepts became important in his later views on moral education.

The education of Alexander Campbell thus took place in the constructs of home, school, and church. At Glasgow he had his first encounter with another institution concerned with education: the State. For years Scottish education had been under the control of local parish ministers and had not been available to a large portion of the population. In Alexander's time at Glasgow there was a fierce debate on whether educational opportunities should be offered by the State to the larger public. Those opposed to popular education feared that an informed citizenry would rebel against the current authority. Those for increased educational opportunities insisted that an educated public would actually prevent revolution.

A new institution, the Sunday School, was embroiled in the controversy. In the twenty years from Alexander's birth until he entered Glasgow, around

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5000 of these schools had been started in local parishes. These were not Sunday Schools in the modern sense, but were designed to teach literacy to children and adults on Sunday evenings by studying the Bible, the catechism, and also secular subjects. Many leaders of the Sunday School movement lived in Glasgow. One of them, Greville Ewing, befriended Campbell and made him a teacher in his Sunday School. Campbell thus stood on the side of those who favored increased education for the public.

Since the Church of Scotland was a state church, the government became involved in the issue of control of the Sunday Schools. Would the Church of Scotland control all schools or would other religious sects have their own schools teaching their own particular doctrines? Campbell and others called for a third alternative: non-sectarian schools that taught a common Christianity. The State would insure that such schools remained non-sectarian.

To summarize, Alexander Campbell's earliest education took place in the home. The home was to be the primary locus for learning in his thought for the rest of his life. He also attended schools closely associated with the church. In spite of that close association, Campbell did not believe in a narrow sectarian education, but in an education based on a common acceptance of the Bible, moral reasoning, and secular truths. This common teaching was to be supervised by the State, but locally controlled by ministers and teachers. This constellation of educational institutions—home, school, church, and state— was formative of Campbell's later educational theory.

Campbell's Theology and the Role of Democracy

In 1809, Alexander and the family set sail again for America. this time their voyage was smooth, and they were reunited with Thomas in western Pennsylvania. Both Thomas and Alexander had separately become dissatisfied with the divided state of Christendom and had decided to work for unity among Christians. At first, both father and son led this unity movement, but eventually Alexander became the primary spokesman for the "Disciples" (his favorite name for the group).

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Alexander's hope for a unified Christianity centered on his goal of restoring the primitive, New Testament church. He believed if Christians would follow only the New Testament, and not their respective denominational creeds, the there could be unity in the essentials of faith, and plurality on non-essential "matters of opinion." Campbell also believed that a unified church would usher in a unified society which would be the beginning of the millennium. His envisioned a unification of both church and society.

Because of continuing doctrinal controversy among Christians and the increasing pluralism in American religion, Campbell later lost faith in the restoration of primitive Christianity as a means to societal unity. By the 1840's he was advocating a concept of civil religion as a unifying force. The American republic was based on religion, the Christian religion, and so all governmental and societal institutions must be Christian. This common American faith would spread until it encompassed all humanity.[2] By Christianizing America and then Americanizing the world, the millennium of peace would begin.

Campbell did not view this christianizing of America as an intrusion of something foreign into the American spirit, but rather as a recognition of the common faith that already pervaded the republic. Throughout his life he fought all attempts to make religion "sectarian," that is, to enforce one particular view of Christianity on the public. However, he believed there were certain doctrines—the reality of God, the work of Christ, the authority of the Scriptures—that all Christians held in common. Indeed all "men of good will" who objectively approached Christianity could not help but be convicted of these truths.

The basic problem with Campbell's "common Christianity" as a unifying force in society was that it was strictly a Protestant Christianity. Not only did it exclude atheists, Deists, and other unbelievers, but also Catholics and Jews. By 1860, the pluralism of religion in America and the obvious disunity of

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[2] Richard T. Hughes, "From Primitive Church to Civil Religion: The Millennial Odyssey of Alexander Campbell," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 44 (March 1976) 96-101.

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America over slavery led Campbell to abandon his scheme of achieving the millennium through a common American faith.

This dream of a Christian America, however, is crucial to Campbell's educational proposals. More than any other institution, the school must be Christian in a non-sectarian way if the American republic is to take its rightful place as world leader.

Campbell's Educational Proposals

The primary responsibility of educating children falls on parents, said Campbell. Yet in a series of theses on education, he argued that schools were important tools that parents could use in that education. Two of his theses are:

> That it is the primary duty of all parents to educate their children in all useful knowledge; that for this especially the marriage covenant was instituted; and that christianity binds this upon christian parents by the authority and solemnity of its precepts and promises.
>
> That the schools, primary and secondary, or schools and colleges, are the most ancient and useful inventions for this purpose.[3]

Campbell thus proposes that education begin in the home and continue in the schools.[4]

All Americans agreed on home and school as centers of education. The difficult question was "What should be taught in the schools?" Should moral or religious teachings be allowed? If so, what texts should be followed? Campbell's unequivocal answer was that the Bible should be the central text in all schools in America, public or private. The purpose of this Bible teaching was not to enforce Christianity, but to provide a moral basis for society. In an address to a Virginia educational convention in 1841, Campbell argued:

> The philosopher, the statesman, the patriot, and the philanthropist, equally with the Christian, say intellectual without moral culture is a curse to each and every community. To educate the head and neglect

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[3] *Millennial Harbinger* (1836) 201.

[4] For more on the centrality of the family in education, see R. Edwin Groover, *The Well-Ordered Home* (Joplin: College Press, 1988) 85-110.

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> the heart, is only giving teeth to the lion, claws to the tiger, and talons to the eagle to seize and devour their prey. The ablest politicians and the most profound philosophers of France, England, and America, now affirm that education in universities, in high schools and common schools, without the Bible and moral training is a national calamity rather than a public benefaction.[5]

Only the Bible can provide moral training for youth, said Campbell, but because it can be a controversial book, he did not propose teaching all of it. Instead he divided the content of the Bible into four categories: history, doctrine, precepts, and promises. Of these four, it was the doctrine that was divisive, so only the precepts, promises, and especially the history of the Bible should be taught. Every school in America should have a class in Sacred History.[6]

Campbell's own school reflected his consistency in his matter. In 1840, Bethany College was founded with Campbell as its first President. The college was a religious school with the Bible as its primary text, yet a clause in its charter prohibited the establishment of a theological professorship.[7]

The Bible was not to be the only subject of study. Indeed, to best understand the Bible the best commentary is the work of God in human history. Geography, chronology, ancient history, languages, and government all shed light on the Bible.[8] Campbell thus proposed a broad education in the humanities.

What about Science? Was there any room for it in the curriculum? Yes, for although there are no theories of astronomy, geology, or chemistry in the Bible, such theories do not affect the truth of Scripture. Indeed, Science should be studied because it deals with nature and so glorifies God as the Creator.[9] Campbell particularly deplored the ignorance of young Americans on human

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[5] Cited in Sadie Bell, *The Church, the State, and Education in Virginia* (Philadelphia: Science Press, 1930) 347. For more on Campbell's education proposals for Virginia and the nation, see Harold L. Lunger, *The Political Ethics of Alexander Campbell* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954) 167-178.

[6] *Millennial Harbinger* (1845) 521.

[7] Bell, 315.

[8] *Millennial Harbinger* (1836) 202.

[9] *Ibid.*, 599-600.

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biology and proposed a course on "Anatomy, Physiology, and Hygeia" be required, along with Sacred History, in each school.

His proposals on teaching methods were part and parcel of his curricular proposals. Since Bible doctrines were not to be taught directly to students, they must come to conclusions about doctrine themselves. Campbell thus advocated the inductive method of Bible study based on the scientific method. The method has three parts: observation, in which the facts of Scripture are learned; arrangement of the facts into some order; and deduction of particular doctrines from the facts.[10] The teacher was not to force beliefs on the students, but rather to encourage their thinking by asking questions.

It is not surprising that some Americans objected to this proposal to put the Bible in public schools. Roman Catholic Bishop John Purcell spoke out against the idea as early as 1836, rejecting these proposals as an attempt to force the Protestant Bible and Protestant beliefs on all public school children.

Campbell branded Purcell and other critics as "ultra-republicans" who objected to any religious and moral teaching of children in public schools. Their ideal, he said, was to rear children free of any moral or religious bias in order to allow them to choose their own religion and morality as adults. Campbell's reply was that such a value-free individual "never appeared amongst the children of men."[11] The question was not if children would be taught moral principles, but which ones they should be taught.

But if the Bible is used as a moral text, doesn't this automatically make the public school religious or sectarian? No, argues Campbell, because the Bible is not a sectarian book; no sect created it, only God.[12]The Bible can, of course, be taught in a sectarian way, but if the teacher is careful not to inject personal opinion, this will not happen.

Isn't the Bible to be taught simply the Protestant Bible? Campbell's response is ambiguous. At times he argues for a truly catholic understanding of Scripture that would include all believers, but his usual understanding of the

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[10] *Millennial Harbinger* (1850) 171-172.
[11] *Millennial Harbinger* (1836) 597-598.
[12] *Millennial Harbinger* (1850) 170.

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common faith of Americans is that it is the Protestant faith. The "Romanists," were not true Christians nor yet true Americans. Only if these immigrants were properly educated could they become part of the common faith.[13]

To summarize, Campbell's far-reaching proposals for education grow out of his own educational background. Education begins in the home but continues in schools overseen by the State. The churches are to have no direct role in public education, such would be the "sectarian" education Campbell condemns, but they have an indirect role since the Bible is the primary textbook of public schools. The purpose of public education is to produce moral and religious citizens of a Christian nation that would lead the world into the Millennium.

Campbell and Current American Education

At first, there seems to be little in Campbell's proposals appropriate to our current situation. His dream of a Christian nation and Christian public schools has proven both unwise and not feasible. Instead the "ultra-republicans" have triumphed. Valueless education is the norm and we are reaping its results in a society increasingly without the civic virtues necessary to sustain a civilization. If Campbell were here, no doubt he would join those calling for the intentional teaching of values in public schools. However, the reality of our secular society would force him to more modest goals for this teaching: not the creation of a millennial Christian nation, but the establishment of minimal rules for social order.[14]

Campbell's proposals have more relevance as models for Christian schools. After his strong rhetoric against "sectarian" schools, it is hard to picture Campbell as an advocate of the contemporary Christian school movement. However, in light of the secularization of the public schools, he would be forced

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[13] Hughes, 99.

[14] One of the most eloquent contemporary appeals for the teaching of moral and religious values in schools is by African American law professor Stephen L. Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

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(like many of us who have been strong supporters of public schools) to rethink his opposition. As John Leith says:

> This is a very difficult decision for many Protestants who have, in some measure, identified public education with the kingdom of God. The secularization of public education, however, the teaching of courses in such a manner as not to leave open the possibility of faith, or to make faith in God an unnecessary hypothesis, endangers the faith at its fundamental roots. Therefore Protestant churches, if they are to survive, will have to face with all seriousness the question of church schools in such a way that has never been raised in American education until now.[15]

If Campbell were around today, I believe our changed circumstances would make him a proponent of both the home schooling movement and private Christian schools. He would support the home as the primary educational institution, where children are first taught. Christian parents should accept full responsibility for the education of their children. He also would see Christian schools as "a useful invention for this purpose."

Some of Campbell's curricular proposals would go far in improving the teaching of many Christian schools. Too many Christian school teachers unintentionally teach their subjects from a secular perspective, that is exactly as they would if teaching in public schools. Although personally dedicated, exemplary Christians, if they use the public school curriculum and textbooks, then they have inadvertently allowed their teaching to become secularized. Such schools believe themselves "Christian" because they have Bible classes and daily chapel. Yet if other subjects are taught in an "objective," secular way, then these schools lose their unifying vision and soon fall victim to the same disintegration as public schools. As Michael Weed has said, such schools are "Christian more by convention than by conviction." [16]

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[15] John H. Leith, *From Generation to Generation* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990) 135. One prominent opponent of Christian schools, William H. Willimon, has recently been forced by the failure of public schools to change his mind. See "I Was Wrong About Christian Schools," *Christianity Today* 37 (February 8, 1993) 30-32.

[16] Michael R. Weed, "Christian Education: Conviction or Commitment?" *ICS Faculty Bulletin* 9 (Fall 1988) 30.

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What can be done to give Christian schools that unity of vision? One can make the Bible the center of the curriculum, as Campbell suggested. This means that all subjects would be taught from a consciously Christian perspective. Instead of Bible instruction being segregated into one course, the Bible would be the primary text in all courses.

How would this work in a specific subject, Science, for example? It means much more than simply one form of "creation science" being substituted for evolution. It means Science would be taught with an understanding of both the religious and secular philosophical bases of modern scientific theory. Such Science would be a chastened Science, not claiming to answer questions of ultimate worth that are beyond its boundaries. As Campbell taught, since Science studies nature, then it is really a study of the God who made nature.

If Christian school administrators took this call for unity of vision seriously, they would work to help teachers develop a Christian perspective in every subject. This would entail a re-imagining of the entire curriculum to reflect the goals of the Christian school instead of the secular public school. And what would be the primary goal of such Christian schools? Not just a better education, but the only truly complete education.

> Education is not merely the development of man's powers and capabilities as an animal, intellectual, and moral being, viewed simply as a member of present society, but with reference to his ultimate position and destiny in the universe of God. [17]

Campbell's unified vision of a complete education was unworkable as a model for public schools, unworkable because the State is not the church. It will work as a model for church schools that serve as a bold witness to our society of what life and education look like lived under God.

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[17] Alexander Campbell, *Millennial Harbinger* (1845) 521.

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Academic Freedom and the Christian University*

Michael R. Weed

> [I]t is in light of their reasons for being—and without regard to the arrogant intrusions of the secular academy—that religious universities should frame their policies on academic freedom.
>
> James Nuechterlein

The concept of academic freedom has become almost sacrosanct in the American university.[1] In spite of its long history and prestigious status, however, the concept of academic freedom is by no means precise or unified. This is in part due to the complex set of interrelated interests involved (e.g., academic, legal, institutional, social, and personal).

Commonly, academic freedom is used to designate the personal autonomy of *homo academicus*—and to specify freedoms and rights often maintained to be protected by the Constitution.[2] These privileges generally include at least two dimensions. First, academic freedom entails a number of separate freedoms attributed to the individual teacher or instructor and closely linked to his or her role within the university. These include (a) the freedom to pursue research, expound unpopular ideas, and address controversial subjects

*This essay originated in response to an invitation to participate in a discussion on religion and academic freedom at the fall meeting of the Texas Conference of the American Association of University Professors in Austin, Texas in October of 1987. A later version was presented at the Christian Scholars Conference, July 1992, on the campus of Oklahoma Christian University of Science and Arts.

[1]Cf. David Fellman, "Academic Freedom," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968) 9. The predominant influence shaping the concept of academic freedom in the American university, however, may be traced to the German principle of *Lehrfreiheit* which was, however misinterpreted, brought to the American scene in the late nineteenth century by professors who had studied in Germany. Also see Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1970) 384.

[2]Mark G. Yudof, "Three Faces of Academic Freedom," *Loyola Law Review* 32:4 (Winter, 1987) 851.

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without ecclesiastical, government, or administrative interference or fear of reprisal; (b) tenure or some equivalent; and (c) the right to due process regarding discipline and dismissal.[3] Second, academic freedom has also been taken to encompass one's right to exercise his or her civil liberties outside the university.[4]

It is this face of academic freedom, the so-called personal autonomy model, originating in German universities (*Lehrfreiheit*), which is the reigning concept within American universities and among academics in general.[5] Contrary to popular opinion, however, the personal autonomy model of academic freedom does not designate a constitutional entitlement and may not be derived from the First Amendment and the right of free speech. While the courts have embraced academic freedom symbolically, the concept is in fact not relied on as a ground for rendering decisions.[6]

Mark Yudof, Dean of the University of Texas School of Law and strong advocate of academic freedom, contends that the rationale for academic freedom is not legal and that the so-called personal autonomy model of academic freedom cannot be rooted in First Amendment rights per se.

> The core difficulty is that it is one thing for the government to censor the private speech of individuals in the world at large, and quite another thing for public and private educational institutions to control the speech of those whom they pay to speak for them. . . . In a sense, the university accomplishes its legitimate mission by hiring the professor to speak for it, and without the ability to control his speech, the whole enterprise comes to nothing.[7]

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[3]This generally includes tenure or equivalent presumption of competence after seven years, the right to a substantive definition of adequate cause for dismissal, a statement of specific charges brought against one, the right to counsel, the right to produce witnesses on one's own behalf; the right to confront and to cross-examine witnesses against one, and the right to be heard before a tribunal or committee of one's academic peers.

[4]Veysey, 384. This last dimension is a considerable extension of (perhaps even departure from) the German *Lehrfreiheit* practice which has otherwise so influenced the American university. The German practice limited academic freedom rigidly to the classroom. It did not permit professors—civil servants—the right to engage in partisan politics.

[5]Surprisingly, the origin of academic freedom in the German universities is traced not to the Enlightenment but to the university at Halle and the influence of Lutheran pietist August Hermann Francke (1663-1727). See E. G. Ryan, "Francke, August Hermann," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 6.73-74.

[6]Yudof, 843.

[7]Yudof, 838.

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Yudof continues,

> Even from a pure speech perspective it is no more meaningful to speak of academic freedom as autonomy for the teacher than it is to speak of the freedom of the telephone operator at city hall to discuss sexual promiscuity with those who seek to speak with the mayor.[8]

Consequently, according to Yudof, academic freedom "is less a matter of law and courts as it is a matter of history, tradition, politics, and attitudes."[9] Academic freedom is ultimately rooted in its utility in the advancement of sound educational objectives. In other words, academic freedom has proven valuable because scholarship more nearly flourishes in an environment in which scholars are free to express themselves openly, exchange ideas, and pursue truth where data and imagination lead.[10] Nonetheless, while liberal policies no doubt generally serve the university best, restrictions and privileges remain a matter of policy and educational philosophy and are not constitutional entitlements. The public university must be capable of controlling and abridging the speech of those employed to speak for it. Those employed to teach history, for example, are not free to teach botany—nor do they even have a right to teach history in any manner they choose.

Ironically, still following Yudof, it is in the area of private institutions that we see another dimension of academic freedom, viz., the institutional face. Under the influence of British traditions, not German, the institutional face of academic freedom protects the private institution from the overreaching power of governmental authority. Not unlike the state university, private universities "may choose to afford the personal autonomy protections of academic freedom to their teachers, but the Constitution cannot plausibly be construed as requiring them to do so."[11] In what sense, then, can one speak of personal academic freedom within the context of the private religious university?

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[8] Yudof, 838.

[9] Yudof, 843; cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Idea of the University* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) 48,49.

[10] Yudof, 841.

[11] Yudof, 851.

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Clearly, the concept of personal academic freedom becomes extremely problematic when set in the context of a university connected to a particular religious denomination. Both the university and individual faculty—committed to free inquiry and the open pursuit of truth in research, classroom, and in publishing—may experience considerable constraint imposed by confessional and ecclesiastical standards upon their own understandings of the nature and shape of truth. Obviously, there is a dilemma if not an outright contradiction between the concerns of personal academic freedom and the restraints imposed by a religious confession.

In the following comments it will be argued that, although the difficulties are real, there is a way in which the concept of personal academic freedom may function within a religious school. For my purposes I take under consideration only those religiously affiliated schools that have met the standards necessary for accreditation by the appropriate accrediting and regulatory bodies. This delimitation has the value of narrowing the field of institutions under consideration. More important, such schools normally have been required to meet certain standards regarding governance, qualifications of faculty, terms of employment, and statement of purpose. Also, they will have been required to develop explicit statements regarding academic freedom. Consequently, while the concept and practice of academic freedom may be minimal, vague, or otherwise unsatisfactory as stated, these are schools whose governing bodies and faculties have at least stated commitments to some version of academic freedom. Regardless of whether such statements owe as much to accreditation requirements as to commitment to academic excellence, the question remains as to whether there is any way in which the concept of academic freedom can have any legitimate role or meaning in such institutions.

Obviously, a fundamental issue of academic freedom is raised when a faculty at a school affiliated with a particular denomination is required to acknowledge commitment to a statement of faith, a creed, or a denominational standard. Teachers entering contracts with such schools obviously accept limitations not shared by academics in secular universities. While such

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statements of faith are legal and—provided they are not deceptive—moral, do the abridgments they impose necessarily damage or invalidate academic freedom?

It seems conceivable that one could make a commitment to work—pursue research and reflection—within the framework of a particular intellectual tradition and (providing the intellectual fecundity or utility of that framework) be academically responsible. More specifically, commitment to certain types of confessional statements might function heuristically in a way analogous to Stephen Pepper's "root metaphors" and "world hypotheses" or Thomas Kuhn's intellectual "paradigms."[12] That is, those joining faculties at religious schools may be understood to be voluntarily aligning themselves with a community of scholars who share a constellation of beliefs and values which provide foundational categories, structures, and guiding concepts for organizing experience, investigating, and understanding reality as a whole.

Further, I think that it can be argued that the limitations such commitments impose upon scholarship do not differ in kind from those already present within the secular university. I would like to make three observations in this regard. First, it is inaccurate to assume that there are no significant encumbrances placed on personal academic freedom in secular schools and universities. We are presently in an era marked by skepticism, or "the faith of unfaith." In the university this has become more than merely a "neutral orientation"; it has become an all-pervasive presumption limiting and controlling investigation and learning as authoritatively as any ecclesiastical edict. This creed quite simply asserts "secularism equals neutrality, equals objectivity, equals truth." This faith, often unrecognized and seldom challenged, becomes the operative dogma within the academic community.

In this same regard, it should be noted that in addition to the pervasive secular stance, there are numerous other ideological and methodological

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[12]Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1970 enlarged edition; originally published 1962). Kuhn uses the term "paradigm" in at least two distinct senses. The relevant use for the present discussion is that designating "the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community" (175). See also Stephen C. Pepper, *World Hypotheses: A Study in Evidence* (Berkeley: University of California, 1942).

orthodoxies operating in highly restrictive fashion within the secular university. At both the departmental and administrative levels, these orthodoxies regularly influence hiring, promotion, salary, teaching assignments, and dismissal.

Second, one may raise the question whether there is an unacknowledged "confessional" basis presumed in the academy's commitment to and understanding of "personal academic freedom." Are there not implied interdictions necessitated by the commitments of academic freedom? Philip Rieff, Alasdair MacIntyre, and most recently Alan Bloom have all differently pointed to the erosion of the underlying presuppositions from which the secular academic community derives its meaning. (If they are correct, what does this erosion portend for such concepts as "academic freedom" once it is loosed from its moorings?)

Third, commitment to work within and accept the limitations imposed by commitment to a particular confessional tradition may be justified on the same basis the personal autonomy face of academic freedom has in fact developed, viz., utility. It is not automatically the case that commitment to a confessional standard and the accompanying abridgments of one's freedom necessarily constitute an abandonment of freedoms requisite for the academic task. True, such arrangements may render an educational institution merely an arm of ecclesiastical indoctrination, but this is not inevitable. In fact, many religious schools place high value on freedom of conscience, the open pursuit of truth, and freedom of inquiry precisely because of their confessional commitment.[13]

Further, it may be argued that the Judeo-Christian tradition has demonstrated its intellectual fecundity over several centuries. It has played a foundational role in the creation and development of Western civilization. Western art, music, politics, literature, philosophy, architecture, jurisprudence, science—and the university itself—all bear its influence—good and bad.

Likewise, the number of recognized scholars, active in professional societies, self-consciously working within confessional guidelines, and

[13]Russell Kirk, *Academic Freedom* (New York: Regnery, 1955) 18.

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contributing to the broader intellectual heritage, all evidence the intellectual fecundity of Christian scholarship.

In short, commitment to working within the broad framework provided by such an intellectual tradition may be argued to commend itself on the same basis academic freedom commends itself in the first place, viz., its academic/intellectual utility. Clearly such a commitment need not necessarily require a sacrifice of the intellect or retard the scholarly enterprise.

Having argued that a case may be made for the compatibility (theoretically, at least) of the interests of academic freedom with some form of abridgments of freedom required by confessional commitments, I do not thereby maintain that this is the normal state of affairs in most religious schools. The argument here is only that this is a theoretical possibility.[14]

In concluding, I would like to say a final word of clarification. I am not commending testing faculty regarding idiosyncratic shibboleths or flash points of current church politics. Rather, I am commending a scholarly commitment to the basic tenets and themes of the common faith (as reflected, for example, in the Apostle's Creed) as providing an intellectual paradigm capable of inspiring imagination, guiding research, and providing coherence to the entire educational enterprise.

The goal of Christian education and Christian scholarship should be to see life whole and to see it steadily through the eyes of faith. In the Christian university, research methodologies and techniques, lectures, and publications all reflect and explore the implications of Christian faith. I take this to mean that scholars should be working to construct a comprehensive view of reality—the marketplace, the laboratory, the courthouse, and the home—to enable the advancement of knowledge and the living of faithful lives in a complex and hostile world.

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[14]James Nuechterlein maintains that this whole question for religious universities provides opportunities "to define their own norms of academic freedom" and "positive occasions for affirmation of their distinctive visions and purposes. The religious university . . . sets its own rules of academic freedom not in order to restrict the pursuit of truth by those within its walls but to affirm those higher truths that determine its existence in the first place." See James Nuechterlein, "The Idol of Academic Freedom," *First Things,* December 1993, 16.

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Sex and the Secular Culture
A Review Essay

Jeffrey Peterson

E. Michael Jones. *Degenerate Moderns: Modernity as Rationalized Sexual Misbehavior*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993. Pp. 259. $17.95. (Cited as *DM*.)

__________. *Dionysos Rising: The Birth of Cultural Revolution out of the Spirit of Music*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994. Pp. 204. $16.95. (Cited as *DR*.)

Sexual sins, Michael Jones notes at the outset of *Degenerate Moderns*, are probably the most commonly committed throughout all eras of human history (*DM*, 12)—and so not only in recent decades, as conservative cultural critics sometimes suggest. On Jones's reading, what sets our era apart from the earlier history of the West is not the *fact* of promiscuity but the *rationalization* of it that leading modern thinkers have offered, and the dissemination of this hostile attitude to sexual mores through media of communication of unprecedented power. These two volumes make the case that the driving force of modern culture is the rationalization of the illicit sexual desires of secular moderns.

Jones's thesis covers both the intellectual culture taught at universities and published in books and journals and the popular culture embodied in magazines, newspapers, and music. *Degenerate Moderns* treats several "highbrow" writers whose sexual immorality has shaped their moral and ethical theories, and *Dionysos Rising* tells the story of how the sexual revolution conceived by one of these intellectuals, Friedrich Nietzsche, has become a dominant cultural influence in Europe and America through the

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entertainment and broadcasting industry. Jones sketches a picture of the moral environment in which the churches must bear their witness to the Gospel today that is not encouraging; indeed, it is arguable that, far from equipping their members with the moral resources to resist the openness to depravity that is part and parcel of the conventional wisdom, many churches have already accommodated it in their eagerness to embrace modernity. In any case, Jones's account of the cultural air we breathe is one that Christian teachers ignore at their own moral and spiritual peril, and that of their students.

Intellectuals and Their Vices

In *Degenerate Moderns*, Jones takes advantage of the new interest that biographers have shown in the past two decades towards the sexual histories of their subjects. Jones describes this revolution in biography as the silver lining of the sexual revolution, perhaps its one positive consequence. Describing the rise of the sexually explicit biography, Jones comments,

> Suddenly, the private lives of everyone, but especially the key figures of the modern age, were fair game for biographers. Before long, the reader had come to expect this sort of revelation, and, given the lives that virtually all the moderns lived, they were right to expect it (*DM*, 13).

So while the sexual revolution has brought "death, disease, and wrecked lives to most people who chose to participate and profits to the exploiters" (*DM*, 9), along with the cultivation of new outlets of sexual expression has come "hindsight on sexual matters" (*DM*, 9)—an opportunity to assess how the private lives of leading cultural figures have found expression in their public pronouncements. Recounting the sexual history of secular moderns is not just an exercise in gossip; there are lessons to be learned from the human wreckage strewn along the path of sexual revolution.

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Jones' predecessor in the harvest of this biographical crop is Paul Johnson. Johnson's book *Intellectuals*[1] was a study of the omnipresent class of secular experts in human affairs, whose rise over the past two centuries has coincided with the decline in influence of the Christian faith. Recalling that secular intellectuals have characteristically justified their position by pointing to the evils visited on humanity by the church, Johnson cast his gaze over the vices of these intellectuals themselves, and the harm that their alternatives to Christian teaching have visited on the world. The single most influential intellectual of the past two centuries is Karl Marx, of whom Johnson wrote, "The undertone of violence always present in Marxism and constantly exhibited by the actual behavior of Marxist regimes was a projection of the man himself."[2]

When one looks at Johnson's index under "intellectual characteristics," one finds the following sub-headings:

> anger, aggressiveness, violence, ... cowardice, ... cruelty, ... deceitfulness, dishonesty, ... egocentricity, egotism, ... genius for self-publicity, ... hypocrisy, ... ingratitute [*sic*], rudeness, ... intolerance, misanthropy, ... love of power, ... manipulativeness, exploitativeness, ... quarrelsomeness, ... self-deception, gullibility, ... selfishness, ruthlessness, ... self-pity, ... paranoia, ...self-righteousness, ... shiftlessness, spongeing, ... snobbery, ... vanity.[3]

The lesson that Johnson drew from his study was modest:

> [I]ntellectuals are no wiser as mentors, or worthier as exemplars, than the witch doctors or priests of old ... [I]ntellectuals, far from being highly individualistic and non-conformist people, follow certain regular patterns of behaviour. Taken as a group, they are often ultra-conformist within the circles formed by those whose approval they seek and value.[4]

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[1] Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals* (New York, et al.: Harper and Row, 1988).

[2] Johnson, *Intellectuals*, 69.

[3] Johnson, *Intellectuals*, 375–376. Consulting Johnson's references will provide a preacher in a college chapel with material for a multiyear series on the works of the flesh, illustrated from the lives of respected figures of the academy.

[4] Johnson, *Intellectuals*, 342.

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Morality, Intellect, and Truth

Michael Jones does not demur from Johnson's assessment, but he thinks a deeper lesson can be drawn. In every act of thought (whether that of a physicist, a novelist, or a preacher) one either subordinates the truth of the world to one's desires (for pleasure, wealth, fame), or one subordinates desire to the truth. Making desire subordinate to the truth—i.e., repenting, in traditional Christian terminology—is the prerequisite to genuine knowledge of the world, of oneself, and most especially of God (*DM*, 11–12).[5] Jones likens the mind to a window, transparent to the truth only when cleansed of the distortion brought about by desire. Thus, "the intellectual life turns out to be a function of the moral life of the thinker" (*DM*, 258). The moral advice characteristic of modern thinkers is then for Jones a function of their immorality, especially in regard to matters of sex.

Perhaps the most timely chapter in *Degenerate Moderns* is the first, devoted to Margaret Mead (*DM*, 19–41). Mead's 1928 book *Coming of Age in Samoa* is the tap root of cultural relativism, especially in respect of sexual morality. Its findings, including the claim that Samoan primitives "have no preference for reserving sex activity for important relationships,"[6] have been discredited as scientific ethnography.[7] In the memoir of Mead's daughter[8] and in Jane Howard's biography,[9] Jones finds the bias that accounts for Mead's misapprehension (or misrepresentation) of native life in Samoa: she entered into her field research while in the midst of two extramarital affairs, and on the sea voyage back from Samoa she began a third affair with a fellow anthropologist, whom she would leave her first husband to marry, and whom she would later leave for a third, Gregory Bateson. It

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[5] See also the brief but insightful remarks of Diogenes Allen, *The Path of Perfect Love* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cowley, 1992) xi–xiv.

[6] Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization* (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1928) 222.

[7] See Derek Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), and the summary of Freeman's critique of Mead in *DM*, 20–28.

[8] Mary Catherine Bateson, *With a Daughter's Eye: A Memoir of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson* (New York: Morrow, 1984).

[9] Jane Howard, *Margaret Mead: A Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

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was while she was in the process of dissolving her first marriage that Mead wrote her influential poetic account of a primitive culture in which adultery is not regarded as a serious offense; her anthropological work constituted a justification of her adultery.

As interesting as the origins of *Coming of Age in Samoa* is its reception by anthropologists and the reading public. Intelligent men and women accepted the claim, since falsified, that Samoans are free of Western-type hang-ups about free sex; they also received as gospel the dogma, deduced from this claim, that the sexual inhibitions cultivated through two millennia of Christian civilization can be casually disregarded. Jones observes that the practice of human sacrifice among the Aztecs or cannibalism among South Sea islanders has not led to the imitation of these practices, or to the dismissal of the Western belief in the sanctity of life as ethnocentric or culturally relative. Why, then, the enthusiastic reception of Mead's studies of sexual morality, and the advocacy of a new public sexual ethic based on Mead's observations? As Jones observes,

> The fact that the book proved to be a best-seller and was considered a classic in the [anthropological] profession only showed that the ... need for rationalization [of sexual license] permeated large segments of the culture it addressed. People read such books and chose such professions because of deep-seated moral and emotional needs. The intellectual project of cultural relativism was rooted in sexual guilt (*DM*, 33).

The best documented chapter in the book treats Sigmund Freud (*DM*, 153–233) and concludes that, like his follower Mead, Freud projected his own guilt over incest with his wife's sister onto the race as a whole; the Oedipal complex takes its place alongside Mead's project of cultural relativism as a rationalization of sexual misconduct. The chapter on Sir Anthony Blunt (*DM* 51–78), which argues for a connection between Blunt's homosexuality and his betrayal of British state secrets to the Soviet government, might more profitably have focused on the economist John Maynard Keynes; Jones notes the judgment of Keynes's second biographer

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(the first suppressed mention of Keynes's homosexuality) that the economist's short-term approach to the national economy bespeaks a "childless vision" (*DM*, 59).

The most controversial chapter for the Protestant reader is the last, which treats Martin Luther in the same light as the twentieth-century figures (*DM*, 235–254); here the biographical sources that Jones cites are colored, perhaps hopelessly, by Reformation and Counter-Reformation polemic, and one despairs of sorting the issue through. The other chapters are uneven; in particular, the brief treatment of Stanley Fish (*DM*, 79–86) lacks the depth of analysis that Jones brings to Freud and Mead and has the appearance of a settlement of a student's score with an instructor. The Epilogue (*DM*, 255–259) should give pause to any who see in Nietszche and his deconstructionist epigoni a new academic ally for the Christian faith.

Nietszche, Dionysos, and the Rolling Stones

The Epilogue of *Degenerate Moderns*, and the brief treatment given Nietzsche earlier in the book (*DM*, 45–46), adumbrate the argument of Jones's second volume. *Dionysos Rising* builds on the thesis of *Degenerate Moderns* and argues that it is Friedrich Nietzsche's rationalization of his sexual aberration that has come to dominate the culture of the twentieth century, both "high" and popular. The story, told in four chapters, is richly detailed, if occasionally repetitive, and quite troubling. A comprehensive assessment of Jones's account would require conversance with nineteenth-century German intellectual history, the theory and history of music, and contemporary literary criticism. The outlines of Jones's thesis will be sketched here; the index, an aid to the reader which *Degenerate Moderns* unfortunately lacks, facilitates closer examination of the argument by those who wish to pursue it.

As a university student, Nietzsche's Lutheran faith was assaulted by the skeptical biblical criticism embodied in Strauss's *Life of Jesus for the German People* (*DR*, 56), his virtue by Richard Wagner's "paean to

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impossible adulterous love," *Tristan und Isolde* (*DR*, 52). Inspired by *Tristan*, Nietzsche visited a brothel and there deliberately exposed himself to syphilis, which left him chronically ill to the end of his short life (*DR*, 56–57). Wagner had sought revolution (first political and then, after a failed experience with the Revolution of 1848, cultural) for the sake of sexual liberation; Nietzsche advocated sexual liberation as a means to social revolution, specifically the dissolution of Christian civilization (*DR*, 101–102)—the "transvaluation of all [traditional, i.e., Western Christian] values." In this connection he was eventually drawn to the music of Africa as a means to unleash the power of Dionysos, the Greek god patronizing sexual ecstasy; Dionysiac lust would dissolve the Christian social order which Nietzsche hated.

Nietzsche's influence has been enormous. His three principal intellectual heirs, according to Jones, are the Nazis, the engineers of the "global cultural revolution of 1968–1969," and American university faculties since the 1970s (*DR*, 66). Chapters 3 and 4 chronicle the descent of the tradition of classical music into the unlistenable cacophony of the twelve-tone system and the simultaneous emergence of jazz and rock, styles of popular music incorporating African rhythms and promoting the myth of the sexually potent and promiscuous black as an alternative to the image of the restrained, impotent European Christian man.[10]

The outcome of this cultural development Jones finds in the free concert given by the Rolling Stones at the abandoned Altamont racetrack in Livermore, California, in 1969. The Stones retained the California chapter of the Hell's Angels for security at the concert. Well into the concert, the band cranked up Mick Jagger's comeback single, "Sympathy for the Devil," and the fans responded by rushing the stage in their Dionysiac trance. The resulting violence is captured in the concert film *Gimme Shelter* and stands as

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[10] Jones points out the irony that blacks were on average more committed to Christianity than whites in the era when jazz was born; the image of the black man as a "paradigm of sexual liberation" was thus a distortion of the truth, created by white cultural elites who bribed black musicians with fame to embody their ideological construction (*DR*, 92–95).

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a chilling testimony to the power of Dionysos unleashed, the power with which Nietzsche proposed to build a post-Christian society.

Conclusion

The reader who makes his way through Jones' 460 pages may find himself in sympathy with Wilfred Sheed, who—upon hearing that Ayn Rand had introduced herself to William F. Buckley, Jr., with the declaration, "You ahrr too intelligent to beleef in Gott!"—remarked, "Well, that is an ice-breaker."[11] If one aspires to both learning and goodness, what is one to make of Jones's indictment of the culture in which, for better or worse, we live and move? The Christian scholar will agree with Michael Ramsey:

> The Wisdom of God is working through all created life, and far and wide is the sustainer and inspirer of the thought and the endeavour of men. The Church will therefore reverence every honest activity of the minds of men... But Wisdom cannot be thus learnt in all its fulness. The mind and the eye of man are distorted by sin and self-worship; and the Wisdom which the Spirit of God unfolds throughout the world can lead to blindness and to deceit unless men face the fact of sin and the need for redemption.[12]

The question Jones presses is to what extent the study of the humanities in the modern university constitutes the honest activity of the human mind, and to what extent it is an instance of sin and self-worship, blindness and deceit.

Jones may strike some readers as an alarmist; the question to be explored in light of his work is whether the current state of our culture justifies his sometimes shrill tones. A man crying, "Fire!" in a crowded theater likewise courts dismissal as an alarmist, and a threat to the safety of others—unless the fire is real. We must judge for ourselves, from evidence statistical and anecdotal, whether Jones exaggerates the enormity of the climate in which we must make our way and rear our children.

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[11] William F. Buckley, Jr., *Cruising Speed* (New York: Putnam, 1971) 147.

[12] Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (2d ed.; reprinted, Cambridge, Mass.: Cowley, 1994 [1956]) 125.

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Jones's two volumes invite us to scrutinize the attitude towards sexual morality that we find in the town square (traditional or electronic), in the church, and in ourselves. They also serve as a reminder that for the Christian church chastity and fidelity are not quaint relics of a past age of innocence; they are the hard way of the Gospel, which the apostles of Christ required from the outset of those who converted from a paganism that rivaled ours in its tolerance of promiscuity.

> For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from unchastity; that each one of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God; that no man transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we solemnly forewarned you. For God has not called us for uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.
>
> 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8

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Book Reviews

Judith A. Reisman, Ph.D. *"Soft Porn" Plays Hardball: Its Tragic Effects on Women, Children & the Family*. Lafayette, La.: Huntington House, 1990. Pp. 246.

Reviewed by William W. Stewart

In *"Soft Porn" Plays Hardball*, Judith Reisman provides the kind of ammunition decent people need to counter the influence of the magazines *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and *Hustler*. For forty years, these professionally slick magazines, with their appealing uptown covers, have appeared in places "hard-core porn" never could appear—the college barbershop, reputable book stores, convenience stores.

Carefully describing the strategy of the captains of these subtly seductive, slick magazines, Reisman treats soft porn as a pernicious and pervasive historical movement. Since the first issue of *Playboy* magazine in December 1953, its target has been to replace the Judeo-Christian morality of American boys and men with *Playboy's* morality (24). Examining scientific studies and letters to the *Playboy* editor from professional people and leaders of the country, Reisman says the data indicate that "this is a *Playboy* reared society" (13, 35).

The connection between soft porn and the destruction of the Judeo-Christian value of human life is never so clearly stated as in two quotations from *Playboy* magazine:

> Reisman's research "puts men's magazines on the endangered species list" (October 1988). "I would have taken a .357 Magnum, walked up to her and said, 'Judith, you're history'" (March 1991).

The *Playboy* way of life has produced much of the not-so-subtle violence of our times. Reisman's book is an important book for Christians in all walks of life.

Reisman shows that, from the beginning, the soft porn captains at *Playboy* had a strategy for controlling the American male, eliminating the nice girl, encouraging younger and younger consumers of soft porn, and attacking the American family, its greatest enemy. Infiltrating the media, this hard hitting strategy has spared no one.

The battle begins by damaging the individual. The air-brushed images of human flesh characteristic of soft porn cause the individual to want to flee or fight, as if attacked by an external enemy. Working as a drug on the male mind, rationality is numbed. Anxiety and shame resulting from the deception of the images yields to addiction characterized by fear, loneliness, and sadness. The repeated sexual stimuli of soft porn disorient the male's natural sexual responses in a living relationship with one woman and produce the same brain chemicals found in higher than normal levels in the brains of rapists and exhibitionists (17-20). The *Playboy* recommendation to use drugs, including alcohol, to overcome the impotency completes the recipe for disaster (83-84).

As normal, male sexual responses present in a life-long, loving, caring relationship with one woman are shifted to repeated, abnormal arousals stimulated by *Playboy's* paper dolls, *Playboy* gives step-by-step instructions on how to rob nice girls of their virginity (59). Fictitious letters written by the *Playboy* staff and altered photographs lead readers to believe that every nice girl wants to have sexual relations (64-65). Over time the deceitful, pervasive influence of soft porn has pressured young women into believing that recreational sex is normal.

Playboy's attack on the American family and children had its origins in new sexual theories from the fraudulent research of Dr. Albert Kinsey, from whom Hugh Hefner, *Playboy's* captain of soft porn, received his marching orders. Sex education curriculum in American schools today, largely drawn from the Kinsey/Hefner legacy, continues to affect perceptions of the family (66). Lawmakers and attorneys reared on the soft porn magazines have changed the very laws their great-grandfathers had made to protect women and the family

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(78). Hefner's battle with divorce laws struck down alimony in twenty years and ushered in no-fault divorce (75, 79). The legal resource of psychosexual battery came down too (62). Treated as sexual game, young women are given no quarter with the anti-woman, anti-marriage message of the sexual revolution (45, 81).

The most pernicious of Hefner's attacks on decency, target children. Cartoons and photographs, hand-picked by Hefner, not only suggest adult sexual relations with children but also attract the attention of children between three and eleven years of age, ensuring the *Playboy* way of life (101, 103, 105-106, 176).

With some sense of pride, those who fought in the world wars, especially World War II, can reflect on their efforts as a heroic and victorious struggle of good over evil during the first half of the Twentieth Century. Reisman clearly identifies the soft porn magazines *Playboy, Penthouse, and Hustler* as the major villains in the war between good and evil in the latter half of the Twentieth Century. Recalling the Judeo-Christian heritage of the Western World, she says it is a winnable struggle.

Leander E. Keck. *The Church Confident.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993. Pp. 128 (Paper).

Reviewed by Allan J. McNicol

Discussion about the form and structure of worship continues to proliferate within Churches of Christ. Our discussion, in the main, has been lively and some light has been shed on the subject. But it may be helpful to see how others outside of our tradition are wrestling with the same subject.

Leander Keck attempts both to diagnose the ailment of contemporary liberal Protestantism and give a prescription for its renewal. Liberal Protestantism, which finds denominational expression in such groups as the Presbyterians, Episcopalians, United Church of Christ, and Disciples, has suffered a devastating loss of membership and cultural influence since the sixties. The old mainline of Protestantism is now derisively referred to in many circles either as old-line or sideline. Battered and bruised from their loss of the sixties generation who have abandoned their churches, they now seek guidelines for renewal. Central to that renewal must be a rediscovery of the centrality of worship. As we overhear what Keck is saying we begin to notice that some things he says about the mainliners come very close to home for Churches of Christ as well. Indeed, I am becoming convinced that the constituency of Churches of Christ today is "mainline" even though the epistemology of the theological framework which we have inherited is "sectarian."

The book is not just for religious professionals—but for all those concerned about the decline of the churches in modern American culture. After a brief overview of how we arrived at the present situation, Keck gives four substantial chapters on worship, theology, ethos, and communication. In these he traces what went wrong for the mainliners and offers his own recipes for recovery.

The fourth chapter on communication appears to be something of an appendix to the first three. Basically, the mainliners are chided for letting the charismatics and allied groups become the lone voice of a religious view in

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American mass culture. Here Keck argues that the media per se should not be demonized. Radio and television remain the most effective way to reach large audiences. Instead of undercutting the charismatics, mainliners must learn to present the gospel with integrity by means of the media.

The first three chapters contain the argument of the book. They focus on central theological and cultural problems that beset the churches today.

According to Keck, the chief end of traditional Protestant worship is the praise of God. Here, Keck has some striking things to say. Especially notable is his observation that liberal Protestantism has allowed issues of meeting human needs to govern the liturgy (deification of the human) rather than making the exaltation of God its central focus. We know we are in trouble when the first words of the service are "good morning." The inescapable impression thus communicated is that we are present to talk with one another rather than gathering in an assembly for the purpose of entering into communal adoration of the God of Abraham and Jesus.

Keck asks, is it possible in today's narcissistic and self-absorbed society for there to be a constituency that exists only to praise God simply because of his qualities; because he is "there" not just "there for me" (p. 30)? Members of the Churches of Christ may well take note! Under the rubric of edification we have allowed utilitarian and therapeutic concerns to take precedent over the centrality of our appointment before the Holy One. Here, in some ways, Churches of Christ appear to be out to beat the liberal Protestants at their own game. It is no wonder that we have a crisis over worship as well.

What is Keck's answer to this situation? It may be summed up in one phrase: the cultivation in the church of a renewed sense of the greatness of God. Protestant churches need to hear "the greatness, the judgment and mercy, freedom and integrity of God brought to bear on the day-to-day" (p. 39). To put it simply, the church must be confronted with the affirmation that God is God. Only then can we be truthful with ourselves (p. 42).

This reviewer perceives that Keck seems to think that if the churches follow this prescription the contemporary cultured despisers of religion would at

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least take them more seriously. However, it may have the opposite effect. It may make the church even more marginalized given the contemporary infatuation with cultural pluralism.

The reviewer wonders whether Keck is ready for these consequences. In a later chapter Keck admits that the Church is not the dominant influence it once was. He now calls for Christians to become "influential participants" in the cultural and political establishments of our time (p. 79). Keck then goes on to give a typical Niebuhrian-type account of what this partnership would look like (pp. 79-88). But this sounds like more of the past—a call for the church to be a faint cheering section for cultural liberalism. It is time that there be chastened recognition that true adoration of the God of the Bible may inevitably result in irreconcilable conflicts with the establishments that wield power in modern America. Nevertheless, despite reservations, this is an evocative tract for our time.

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Obiter Dicta

These thought-provoking "other words" have been contributed by readers of *Christian Studies* and friends of the Institute. Our thanks for their efforts in calling them to our attention.

Against the Times

There has arisen in our time a most singular fancy: the fancy that when things go very wrong we need a practical man. It would be far truer to say, that when things go very wrong we need an unpractical man. Certainly, at least, we need a theorist. A practical man means a man accustomed to mere daily practice, to the way things commonly work. When things will not work, you must have a thinker, the man who has some doctrine about why they work at all. It is wrong to fiddle while Rome is burning; but it is quite right to study the theory of hydraulics while Rome is burning.

G. K. Chesterton, *What's Wrong With the World*

Atheism

The atheism that is the real enemy is the "Christianity" that professes faith in God very much as a matter of course, perhaps with great emphasis, and perhaps with righteous indignation at atheism wild or mild, while in its practical thinking and behaviour it carries on exactly as if there were no God.

Karl Barth, *Fragments Grave and Gay*

[T]he real cause of modern irreligion is not intellectual, nor is it due to the influence of Communism and dogmatic anti-Christianity. It is sheer indifference: the practical paganism of people who have never thought deeply on this subject, or perhaps on any subject, and who cannot see that Christianity has any relevance to their actual lives.

Christopher Dawson, *The Crisis of Western Education*

Atheism slips into the church where God really does not matter, as we go about building bigger and better congregations (church administration), confirming people's self-esteem (worship), enabling people to adjust to their anxieties brought on by their materialism (pastoral care), and making Christ a worthy subject for poetic reflection (preaching).

Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, *Resident Aliens*

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Boundaries

[A] center without a circumference is just a dot, nothing more. Without boundaries a circle could not be a circle. If the circle of faith is seeking to identify its center, it cannot do so without identifying its margins and perimeters.
Thomas C. Oden, in *Christian Century*

Children

One of the deepest sentimentalities of liberalism is the presumption that you can have children without having them suffer for their convictions. People are very upset by the idea that their children might have to suffer. . . . You want them to be Christians, don't you? If they are going to be Christians, they are going to suffer. That is what life is about. Life is not about freedom. Freedom . . . has absolutely no place in the Christian life. Christians are called to faithfulness and obedience so we can be free from the tyranny of those who would enslave us in the name of freedom.
Stanley Hauerwas, in *Christianity Today*

Are your children growing up in a "permissive society"? Not on your life! An "insistent" society is the word for it. Ours is a society that practically insists that teenagers (and now pre-teens) become "sexually active." . . . Ours is the only era in the entire history of human life on this planet in which the "elders" of the tribe ask its newer members what the tribal rules and standards of expected behavior should be.
Paul Ramsey, in *Theology Today*

Christ and Culture

[W]hile critical of some of its content, the church has a virtually uncritical attitude toward the form of popular culture. In fact, the church has adopted those forms without much resistance, in the alleged interest of promoting its message. But the message has thereby suffered, and so have its members. A Christianity presented as a "natural high," as a "rewarding lifestyle option," or as "the key to health and wealth" is not the faith once delivered to the saints. Our God is too small because our culture is too small. Popular culture's forms are not capable of sustaining the Christian conviction of a holy, judging God who demands repentance and promises the joy of obedience.
Kenneth A. Myers, in *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes*

Church and State

[T]he principle of the separation of Church and State is now interpreted so rigorously ... that the educational system inevitably favors the pagan and secularist minority against the Christian and Jewish elements who probably represent a large majority of the population.
Christopher Dawson, *The Crisis of Western Education*

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Counseling

[T]here has recently arisen an activity known as "counseling" or "pastoral counseling" . . . It seems mainly to be concerned with the immediate problems of practical life with an emphasis on those in trouble: broken marriages . . . and so on. It bases its advice on Christian teaching of a somewhat liberal kind, and makes much use of psychology and psychiatry. Its "counselors" include priests, doctors, and welfare workers . . . Now this kind of help . . . is charity in the real sense, and a good work for Christians to undertake. But it is plainly nothing whatever to do with the direction of souls, and my only quarrel with it is in its flagrant, and possibly very dangerous, misuse of terms. . . . I do not wish to attack brothers in Christ who are doing charitable work, nor to enter into a pedantic quibble over words. The fact remains that, to the uninitiated, "pastoral counseling" sounds very much as if it ought to be spiritual direction; guidance in prayer, . . . which is exactly what it is not.

Martin Thornton, *Christian Proficiency*

Evangelical Pragmatism

Reliance on methods has ... been lifted to new heights by the church-growth movement. From parking-lot theory to platform-dress style, everything in worship as well as evangelism can now be engineered and enhanced. Like a Disney theme park, many a megachurch has a fussbudget management system that dictates how employees must dress, talk, smile, and groom themselves...
The overall result of such different trends as prosperity piety, positive thinking, engineered revivalism, and the church-growth movement has been to stamp pragmatism indelibly on the evangelical soul. The concern "Will it work?" has long overshadowed "Is it true?" Theology has given way to technique... Serving God has subtly been deformed into servicing the self... [E]ven at is best, pragmatism results in an evangelicalism rich in ingenuity and organization but poor in spirituality and superficial, if not banal, in doctrine.

Os Guinness, *Fit Bodies, Fat Minds: Why Evangelicals Don't Think and What to Do About It*

Feel-Good Church

What many are looking for is a spiritual club, an institution that offers convivial relationships but certainly does not influence how people live or what they believe. Whenever the church does assert a historically orthodox position, one that might in some way restrict an individual's doing whatever he or she chooses, the church is accused of being "out of touch"—as if its beliefs are to be determined by majority vote or market surveys.

Charles Colson, *The Body*

By responding to market pressure, the church forfeits its authority to proclaim truth and loses its ability to call its members to account. In other words, it can no longer disciple and discipline. But as alien and archaic as the idea may seem, the task of the church is not to make men and women happy; it is to make them holy.

Charles Colson, *The Body*

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Feelings

Just as the Christian should not be constantly feeling his spiritual pulse, so, too, the Christian community has not been given to us by God for us to be constantly taking its temperature. The more thankfully we daily receive what is given to us, the more surely and steadily will fellowship increase and grow from day to day as God pleases.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

Simply to kneel and wait, "doing nothing," is a discipline Our Lord can use. It is as if we are God's secretary waiting outside his office door; he might ring through, or even open the door to speak, or he might not, but it is most important that we should be there. "Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh shall find watching." . . . it is remarkable how often God chooses to speak to us when we least expect it, and terrible to contemplate how much we miss by putting feeling before regularity . . . however bored, dull and distracted we are, however often we look at our watch and wish the time would pass, so many minutes on our knees are never wasted.

Martin Thornton, *Christian Proficiency*

The Gospel

The challenge of the gospel is not the intellectual dilemma of how to make an archaic system of belief compatible with modern belief systems. The challenge of Jesus is the political dilemma of how to be faithful to a strange community, which is shaped by a story of how God is with us.

Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, in *Resident Aliens*

Growth

In a time when there is much talk of the need for more organized and scientifically managed methods of church growth, our study of the conversions in Acts raises some tough questions for proponents of many of these methods. If the church is only about the wholesale "winning of souls" by whatever method is deemed most effective, then conversion has become the end of faith rather than its beginning. In Luke-Acts conversion is a by-product of the gospel, the result of one's encounter with the power of the Spirit, not the gospel. Luke has no interest in the utilitarian question of *how* people become converted or *how* the church ought to evangelize, what technique is most effective or what method yields the most certain results. These are stories about *God's* actions, not the church's programs.

William H. Willimon, *Acts*

Happiness

I didn't go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of Port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don't recommend Christianity.

C. S. Lewis, in *God in the Dock*

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Kindness

If kindness alone were enough, there would have been no cross. Jesus would have formed a sensitivity group and urged us to share our feelings, or a support group where we could affirm each other. Knowing full well the limits of humanity, the seriousness of our sin, and the depths of evil, he formed the church and charted a different way.

William Willimon, in *The Christian Century*

Our Right to Feel Good

Total sexual license, observed both G. K. Chesterton and Aldous Huxley, is the only freedom the totalitarian state offers its masses, because it is a cheap and effective method of reducing them to slavery. Give us pleasure without consequence, and in time our consciences will dull sufficiently that we will not protest as the state takes our property, our wives, and our children. We will not even notice, in our endless flight from suffering and our perpetual pursuit of the right to feel good, that the hands gradually tightening the irons around our ankles are our own.

Christopher Check, in *Chronicles*

Prayer

I am afraid the common case with those who do not pray about the little things of life is that they worry about them all the more. It's not a question of whether we *ought* to worry over these things, it's a question of whether we *do* worry over them. And I'm afraid we do worry over them terribly; we lie awake at night turning them over in our minds; they spoil our peace of soul; they make us grow old before our time. Well then, says Jesus, tell your worries to God. "Your heavenly Father knoweth"—He knows, but He wants you to tell Him. He wants you to keep nothing back from Him that is in your mind at all. In prayer there must be no reserve.

John Baillie, *Christian Devotion*

Preaching

When I was in seminary, someone told us in preaching class that the gospel must be translated into the thought forms of the modern world or we would not be heard. The preacher is the bridge between the world of the Bible and the world of the 20th century. I've decided that the traffic has been moving in only one direction on that bridge. Our task as preachers is not the hermeneutical one of making the gospel capable of being heard by modern people but the pastoral—political job of making a people who are capable of hearing the gospel.

William H. Willimon, in *Christian Century*.

Our [seminary's] curriculum is structured to produce people who can help the church continue to "save the world" by putting a vaguely Christian tint upon the world's ways of salvation.

Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, *Resident Aliens*

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Sin

The most persistent manifestation of sin is to obliterate the memory of sin. This is accomplished by blurring our connection with God. We avoid a detailed awareness of our sin not by claiming perfection or professing blamelessness but by disassociating whatever is wrong with us from a sense of God and renaming it as either ignorance or sickness. The act of renaming is, in fact, obfuscation: it is now no longer apparent that what is wrong with us has anything to do with God. If what is wrong is a matter of our minds (ignorance) or of our bodies (sickness), then we can do something about what is wrong . . . without ever having to deal with God.

Eugene H. Peterson, *Answering God*

Spontaneity

It may be possible to have a brief period of religious spontaneity in which the absence of [the forms and disciplines of worship] does not matter. The evangelism of the American frontier may have been such a period. But this spontaneity does not last forever. When it is gone a church without adequate conduits of traditional liturgy and theological learning and tradition is without the waters of life.

Reinhold Niebuhr, *Essays in Applied Christianity*

Teaching Religion

Soul is kindled only by soul. To "teach" religion, the first thing needful, and also the last and only thing, is finding of a man who *has* religion. All else follows from this, church-building, church-extension, whatever else is needful follows; without this nothing will follow.

Thomas Carlyle, *Selected Writings*

Tradition

Cultures come and cultures go, and even the most suspicious student of his culture is a product of that culture, blind to some of its greatest faults. The wise Christian will look to the Tradition, and particularly to that which Christians have together held across many times and cultures, to keep himself from being seduced by his own culture. As he descends into the dark cave of contemporary culture, the wise explorer will stay tied by a thick, strong line to the place from whence he came, which is lit by a long accumulated stock of candles and torches and lamps.

David Mills, *Touchstone*

Worship

By forcing churches to compete on the basis of their ability to titillate the instincts of their worshippers, vulgar pantheism compels the champions of organized religions to abandon their pretensions to superior truth and turns them into entrepreneurs of emotional stimulation. Once God becomes a commodity used for self-gratification, his fortunes depend on the vagaries of the emotional marketplace, and his claim to command allegiance on the basis of

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omnipotence or omniscience vanishes in a blaze of solipsism as his priests and shamans pander to the feeling, not the faith, of their customers.

Robert Pattison, *The Triumph of Vulgarity*

The recent emphasis on sensitivity, community, and getting to know each other, which certainly has its good qualities if developed within the limits of reason and common sense, has been carried too far in defining the Christian's relation to God. Suddenly, God is not longer "The Holy One of Israel"; He's just "of Israel." He is no longer the God of wrath and judgment, just our buddy, our pal, our friend. When you need "somebody to love"—He's there. When lonely and down—He's there. If you need a friend, Jesus is always available. These notions, while they contain some truth, have been so overworked and oversentamentalized in evangelical music, poetry, and publications that they border on blasphemy. When a group of singers can gyrate all over the stage and croon sentimental mush about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and people clap and shout and stomp their feet, then surely our religion has been reduced to the lowest level of commercial entertainment. There is no majesty nor dignity left in our relationship to God. He is no longer the King before whom we bow, but the teenager we placate with vulgar language and cheap symbols. The end result of this kind of familiarity is not relevance, but a loss of the awe and respect due God.

Robert Webber, *Common Roots: A Call for Evangelical Maturity*

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