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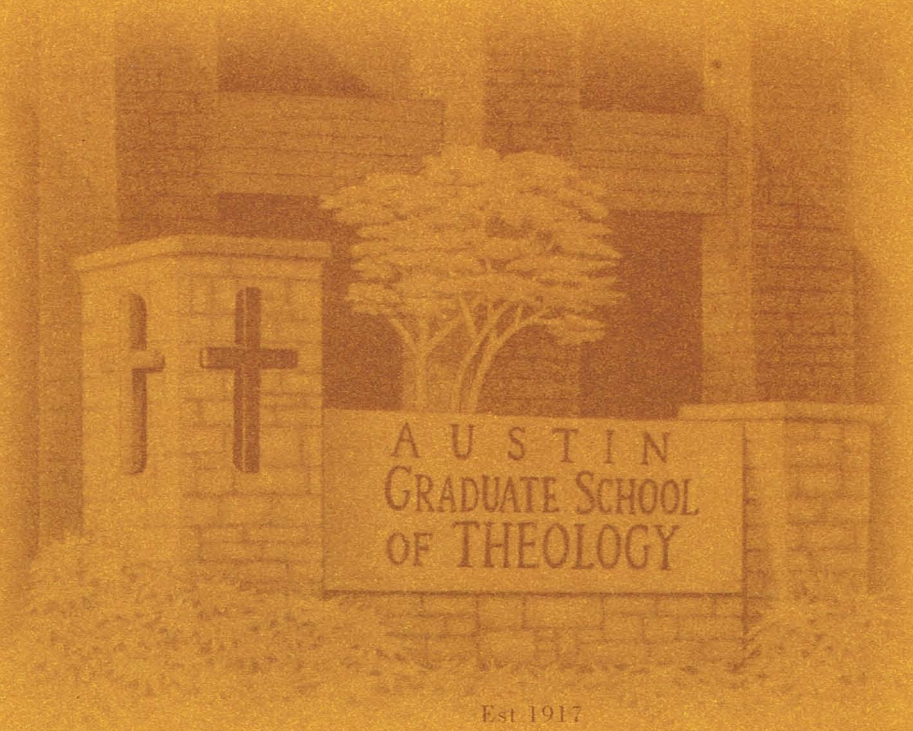

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CHRISTIAN STUDIES
SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE CHURCH

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Foreword

Christian Studies first appeared in April of 1980 as the *Faculty Bulletin* of the Institute for Christian Studies. Since that time not only the name of the publication changed but also that of the school, now Austin Graduate School of Theology. What has not changed is the intent of the publication. Some readers commented on the subtitle on the last issue of *Christian Studies*, "Scholarship for the Church." The subtitle was new, the intent was not. From the outset, our intention has been to bring research and reflection to bear on matters of interest and concern to the life of the church and the lives of individual believers.

In this issue President Reid commends the importance of traditions as resources equipping Christians to navigate the winds of change responsibly. Allan McNicol urges recovery and renewal of restoration commitments. Mark Shipp reminds readers that the Old Testament is not "nailed to the cross," rather the cross is grounded in the Old Testament. Jeff Peterson, in conversation with Richard Hays, N.T. Wright, and others, explores the relationship between love and justice, individually and corporately.

Guest contributor Tom Olbricht, longtime friend of AGST, provides a fascinating glimpse of a restoration impulse beginning in 19th century Czarist Russia. Todd Hall recommends a recent book calling preachers and their audiences to spend more time with classic texts in order to understand and communicate their faith in a distracted age. Michael Weed encourages reflection on historic Pietism, pieties, and the modern world.

Michael R. Weed
Editor

Making the Handoff*

Stan Reid

> *Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed* (NRSV).[1]

In high school, I was known for my deceptive speed—I ran much slower than it looked. During track season, I ran distance races and not sprint events. However, I was fascinated with the timing required for the handoffs of the relay teams. Precise baton exchanges were critical. Precious seconds could be lost, or the baton dropped.

My sophomore year, our sprint relay team was holding first place at the district meet. On the last leg of the race, the baton was dropped. The team was disqualified. Hopes for a state title fell with the baton as it bounced on the track. The next year, our relay team spent more time practicing its handoffs than running sprints. The number of steps required for the runner

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* Portions of this essay were part of a chapel homily first presented at Austin Graduate School of Theology on September 8, 2008. It was subsequently preached as a Sunday sermon before being adapted for publication.

[1] All scripture citations are from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.

receiving the baton to reach full speed and remain within the handoff zone at the exchange were measured and marked on the track.

The importance of making handoffs was dramatically illustrated in the 2008 Summer Olympics. The USA men's and women's 4x100 meter relay teams entered the games as contenders for gold medals. However, on the last handoff of their preliminary heats, the men failed to make the exchange and the women dropped their baton. The importance of practicing the handoff cannot be exaggerated. The image of relay runners smoothly handing off the baton aptly fits Luke's prologue.

Luke's Intent to Hand on the Christian Tradition

The first four verses of the Gospel of Luke serve as a prologue and have been compared to the publicity blurbs written on the modern book jacket, its table of contents, and the title page.[2] This prologue indicates the care with which Luke, a second or third generation Christian, took up his pen in order to preserve and hand down the gospel.[3] According to R. Allan Culpepper, "[E]very detail [of the prologue] creates the impression of an educated, informed writer who is concerned to provide his readers a lucid, informed, and reliable report of significant events."[4]

Luke's word in verse 2 is significant. *Paradidōmi* may be translated "deliver," "hand down," or "hand over." The word conveys the idea of giving over someone or something from one's hand to someone else. As a legal

[2] Joel B. Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995), 17. "For writers in antiquity, where the first column of writing, even the first sentence, performed much of the purpose of the modern book-jacket blurb, table of contents, and title page, a literary work's opening sentence is crucial for alerting those who either read it or heard it to what could be expected in the work as a whole."

[3] The name of the author is not identified in the third gospel. However, the earliest traditions of the church identified Luke, the traveling companion of Paul in Acts, as the one who penned this work.

[4] R. Alan Culpepper, "Luke" in *New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander Keck, vol. 9 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 41.

term it described a person being passed along in the judicial process (e.g., Mark 15:1; Acts 28:17). As a religious term, as in our passage, *paradidōmi* meant delivering authoritative decisions (cf. Acts 16:4), conveying tradition (1 Cor 11:2), or passing along teachings (1 Cor 15:3).

Luke knew the importance of handing off the gospel to a new generation.[5] Although Luke does not use the word gospel[6] in his prologue, surely he is referring to it when he straightforwardly tells Theophilus that he wants him to "know the truth concerning the things about which [he has] been instructed" (v. 4). "The events that have been fulfilled among us" (v. 1), in Luke's eyes, are nothing other than the fulfillment of all God's redemptive purposes for Israel.[7]

Surely part of Luke's concern to write an orderly account is driven by his awareness that the gospel had been carried in all directions. Following the agenda for the church set out by its risen Lord in Acts 1:8, the gospel spread

[5] Luke's composition is dedicated to a certain Theophilus, whom he addresses as "most excellent," perhaps indicating that he may have been a Roman official (cf. Acts 23:26, where Claudius Lysias addresses his letter to "his Excellency Governor Felix"). Some speculate that Theophilus was inquiring about Christianity or was possibly a Christian neophyte. If Theophilus was a Roman official, we could assume Luke is making a formal defense of the Christian faith. If he was an inquirer, we could think Luke is making a case for Theophilus to come to faith. If he was a new Christian, we could conclude that he needs assurance (*asphaleia*) about his faith decision. Variously translated as "truth" (NRSV), "certainty (NIV, KJV) or "well founded" (NJB), a*sphaleia* literally means being safe from falling; i.e., being secure or on a solid foundation. As a legal term, it denoted keeping a prisoner securely guarded. Figuratively, the word was used in reference to authentic instruction that was reliable and truthful. As such, it provided certainty, as in Paul's statement to the Philippians, "To write to you what I have already written before is no trouble to me and to you will be a *protection*" (Phil 3:1 NRSV, NIV, emphasis added; "safeguard," NJB).

[6] In verse 1, Luke uses the word *diēgēsis* which referred to a discourse providing an orderly account of stories and events in the form of a narrative.

[7] Throughout his gospel, Luke references this fulfillment motif (cf. 1:20; 4:21; 9:31; 24:44)

geographically across the Roman Empire. However, Luke must have known that the gospel was also being taken in all directions theologically.[8]

Oral delivery was the earliest and most prevalent form of spreading the gospel in the first century. Stories about Jesus were told by those who had witnessed his life, death, and resurrection and believed his claim to be Messiah and Lord. Others who heard and believed it would in turn pass the story on.

We should not be surprised that some who told the story passed it on incorrectly. I'm reminded of the old parlor game of "Gossip" or "Telephone," where one within a group writes down some statement. That person whispers the statement into another person's ear. The statement passes from person to person in the same manner. The last person receiving the message tells the entire group what he has heard. If the group is sufficiently large, the last word heard is oftentimes far removed from the original message. Oral narrative has liabilities and requires some means of evaluation for accuracy.[9]

Luke knew that the church of his generation needed an accurate account of the gospel. The church of Luke's time, in its second or third generation, faced the danger of an inaccurate dissemination of the gospel. It appears that garbled, muddled, and possibly misleading versions were arising.[10] Luke knew the handoff was critical and the baton was in danger of being dropped.

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[8] E.g., we witness the attempt to add Jewish legal requirements early in the life of the church. (cf. Acts 15 and Galatians). This continues to be a threat later in the first century (cf. 1 Tim 1:3–7). Although Christian Gnosticism is not fully shaped until the second century, incipient forms of the heresy can be detected in Colossians. As another example, the doctrine of the resurrection likewise came under attack and had to be addressed (cf. 1 Cor 15 and 2 Tim 2:17–18).

[9] In effect, this is exactly what Luke praised the Jews in Berea for. "These Jews were more receptive than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the message very eagerly and examined the scriptures every day to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

[10] Tom Wright, *Luke for Everyone* (Louisville: W/JKP, 2004), 3.

He knew the church had a tremendous responsibility to pass on the gospel faithfully.

Learning from Luke's Methodology

Today we are not in the same position as those who first wrote the history of Jesus. However, some of us must join the ranks of those interpreting the meaning of that history for the church. The church does well to give attention to the prologue of Luke's gospel. Luke knew that he was not only a recipient of the gospel tradition, but also a steward of that tradition.

The noun form of the verb translated "handed on" (*paradidōmi*) in verse 1 is *paradōsis*.[11] In the New Testament, *paradōsis* is variously translated as teaching, instruction, or tradition. In the modern world, tradition is often disparaged. This perspective is partially based on the gospel accounts that depict Jesus in heated debate with Jewish authorities and his censure of their traditions. For example, the Pharisees and scribes criticized Jesus' disciples for breaking the traditions of the elders. Jesus replied, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? … You make void the word of God" (Matt 15:1-11). In Mark's account, Jesus says, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition!" (Mark 7:1-16).

This wholly negative view is unfortunate since tradition is also held in a positive light elsewhere in the New Testament, in reference to the Christian faith being passed on to another person, group or generation. For example, Paul and Silas went from church to church and "delivered (*paradidōmi;* i.e., "handed on") to them the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and

[11] In Classical Greek, the word was used in the theater in reference to an actor/poet on the stage "speaking from above" the audience. He was "handing down" the message. The word was also used in Greek religion to describe "the delivery of holy tradition." The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) used the word for "that which is handed down."

elders who were in Jerusalem" (Acts 16:4). In other words, a decision made by the leaders of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15) carried apostolic authority and was "handed on" (the verb form of the word for *tradition*) to the churches who were expected to accept and follow their decisions.

Paul also stressed tradition when he addressed the practice of the Lord's Supper and referenced the basic content of Christian proclamation (1 Cor 11:2 and 15:3). A similar outlook is expressed in 2 Thessalonians 2:15: "So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the *traditions* that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter." Another relevant passage is Jude 3: "I find it necessary to write an appeal to you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted [*paradidōmi*; i.e., "handed on"] to the saints." This verse regrettably is used by some to justify contentious attitudes and legalistic interpretations of the faith. However, it is to our detriment if we take these to justify a contemptuous attitude toward tradition. Pelikan's distinction between *traditionalism* as "the dead faith of the living" and *tradition* as "the living faith of the dead is helpful."[12] A church that neglects to hand on the gospel tradition is limiting, if not harming, its future.

Looking back over twenty centuries of church history, we can see why Luke was concerned about passing on the Christian tradition from generation to generation. Faithfully *living* the Christian story requires *knowing* the tradition. In other words, content inherently shapes conduct and practice.

Church history is filled with stories of botched handoffs of the faith and the tragic consequences. Yet, God is faithful to the gospel and gracious to the church. Therefore, church history is also full of accounts of corrections made and reforms led by later generations. However, generations who fail to

[12] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)*, vol. 1 of *The Christian Tradition: The Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 9.

receive the tradition—for whatever reasons—inevitably suffer consequences.[13] A botched handoff by one generation can adversely affect the future, with ensuing generations failing to grasp and experience the blessings of the faith.

Recognizing Our Vulnerability

Like the church of Luke's day, the contemporary church also risks going in all directions theologically. We find evidence of this when listening to Christian radio, watching televangelists, viewing documentaries or dramas regarding Christianity, or browsing the Religion section of bookstores. This is not to suggest that no value can be found in these venues. However, careful listeners, astute viewers, and thoughtful readers will recognize confused claims about Christianity. Those less informed are vulnerable to ideas that at best will not strengthen their faith and at worst could wreck it.

There is a growing fascination with anything mysterious or unorthodox in Western society. The Christianity section of most major bookstore chains teem with volumes sympathetic to the Gnostic gospels, which the ancient church rejected as heresy. Yet neo-Gnosticism is gaining new audiences and promoted by some as the true representation of Christianity. Also, volumes about spiritual warfare and the end times have become popular. Many of these are based on questionable interpretation and dubious theological assumptions. Too often Christians, as well as the general public, uncritically

[13] The challenge of passing the faith from generation to generation is deeply rooted in the biblical story as well. Succeeding generations of Israelites struggled with remaining faithful to their covenant calling and identity. "While the failure of a specific generation to seek its identity in the covenant did not shake God's purposes, it did have an impact on that generation. … When a generation failed to live for [God], it suffered the loss of blessings and a deterioration of life. But when it affirmed its identity as [God's] people and lived in responsive obedience, God graciously permitted it to experience in space and time the blessings promised for eternity." See Lawrence O. Richards and Gibb Martin, *A Theology of Personal Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 16.

accept the doctrines presented. Dan Brown's best-seller *The Da Vinci Code* revived a medieval tale of Jesus fathering a child with Mary Magdalene. Many accepted this fiction as historical fact. Although Brown's revisionist history has been thoroughly refuted, the uninformed are vulnerable to his fanciful narrative.[14]

Beyond its vulnerability to competing worldviews, the church is also threatened by uncritical tolerance. The modern obsession with tolerance is an understandable reaction to bigotry, ignorance, and the growing militancy of religious fanaticism of all stripes.

However, we should not forget that showing respect for persons holding different beliefs and practices can be done without consenting to those beliefs and practices. Alexander Campbell is reputed to have conducted his debates in this spirit.[15] Regrettably, not everyone in the Stone-Campbell tradition has upheld this irenic spirit in debate. Much has been done to correct judgmental and mean-spirited interchanges inside and outside the church. However, the proverbial pendulum has swung in the other direction. Are we in danger of forgetting that there is an appropriate time for respectful disagreement about matters of faith and practice? If so, we are vulnerable to the relativistic implications of uncritical tolerance of all beliefs and practices.

Young Christians pursuing college educations are particularly vulnerable. A Christian friend, a bright and thoughtful college student, recently

[14] My wife witnessed this when a co-worker who had been baptized as a child, attends church infrequently, but considers herself a Christian readily embraced Brown's viewpoint.

[15] Commenting on Campbell's 1837 debate with Bishop Purcell of the Roman Catholic Church, Leroy Garret states, "But whatever merits the debate had otherwise, the disputants came out of it with a high opinion of one another. While Campbell viewed Purcell as a gentleman and as one of the fairest men he had debated, Purcell described Campbell as 'a most lovable character who treated me in every way and on all occasions like a brother.'" *The Stone-Campbell Movement* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1981), 348.

spent a semester studying in Europe. There he encountered the postmodern viewpoint that history is written by the winners and that the losers, more often than not, actually held the truth which was suppressed. He returned from Europe asking questions about the formation of the Christian canon and the dependability of the Bible. Who will make the handoff to students like him?

Making the Handoff Today

In his essay, "Gone the Way of the Street-corner Preacher," Paul Williams challenges the leadership of the church to get serious about studying theology. He recalls wandering the halls of a Midwestern church. In a large classroom, he noticed five people huddled in a corner. Near the door was a sign—"Great Themes in Theology." The next classroom was as full as the other was empty. The sign by the door announced—"Summer Mission Trip to Southeast Asia." Williams mused, "What if the group has a great time on their mission trip, but ultimately has nothing to say?"[16] It is a crucial question for all of us to ask.

From its inception, the church entrusted ministers of the word with the task of handing on its faith. As one of these, Luke's goal was to lead his audience to certainty regarding the truth of the Christian story. This must arise from careful investigation of the gospel narrative, which he then set down in an orderly account making it accessible to the Christian and inquirer alike. As Wallace Alston has memorably said, "Every meeting between min-

[16] Paul S. Williams, "Gone the Way of the Street-corner Preacher," *Christian Standard*, http://www.christianstandard.com/andsoitgoes.asp?id=667, (accessed July 20, 2009). According to Williams, "The church of the Enlightenment went to seed on theology. Christian maturity was sometimes wrongly equated with theological understanding. But as is always the case with those frustrating pendulums, we have swung to the other extreme. … Change will occur only if the leadership of the church gets serious about studying theology again. Until the senior minister and the elders start considering open theism, the sacraments, the nature of truth, and a plethora of other critical subjects, the rest of the church cannot be expected to follow." I'm indebted to Chris Frizzell for alerting me to this essay.

ister and people is a pastoral occasion, and every pastoral occasion a theological opportunity."[17] Luke's pastoral occasion led to careful theological interpretation based on the historic Christian faith. The church depends on and is nurtured by those who pursue the necessary training to fulfill this ministry on its behalf.[18]

The last time I visited with my mother before her death, she spoke with me about the old oak dining table that my father's aunt had passed on to our family. The table is over 100 years old. Along with the food shared there with my parents and brother, I also remember the parental instruction that graced the table, including conversations that shaped my faith.

I vividly recall the day I came home from grade school and proudly displayed my expanding vocabulary at the old oak table. Unfortunately, the words I used had been learned on the playground at recess and not in the classroom. My parents gasped, my brother laughed, and I was promptly corrected and instructed that we did not use such words in our family.

In our last conversation, my mother sought assurance that one of my daughters would want the old oak table and in turn pass it on to future generations. The furniture was only the tangible part of what she wished to pass on. Her main concern was that my daughters would value the family heritage

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[17] Wallace M. Alston, Jr., "The Ministry of Christian Theology," in *Theology in the Service of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 25.

[18] Pelikan notes that from "the years 100–600 most theologians were bishops; from 600–1500 in the West, they were monks; since 1500, they have been university professors. Gregory I, who died in 604, was a bishop who had been a monk; Martin Luther, who died in 1546, was a monk who became a university professor. Each of these life styles has left its mark on the job description of the theologian, but also on the way doctrine has continued to develop back and forth between believing, teaching, and confessing" (5). As one who has ministered in the church for nearly 30 years, I have faced many pastoral occasions. I am indebted to biblical scholars and theologians who, like Luke, taught and wrote for the faith of the church. Their dedicated efforts helped me think through the theological implications of pastoral occasions.

symbolized by the furniture. She and Dad were concerned not only to pass on a family heirloom to future generations, but the family tradition which had been shaped at that table including Christian instruction. This memory reminds me that Christians, especially Christian leaders, are responsible to follow Luke's lead and pass on the precious gift of faith to future generations.

Conclusion

Like runners on a relay team, care and deliberation are required if the church is to faithfully pass on its tradition. It is crucial that we get it right. In this essay, we've noted that tradition is viewed in both a positive and negative light in the New Testament. Unfortunately, in some quarters today, anti-tradition sentiments are prevalent. Pelikan's memorable distinction is helpful here: "Tradition is the living faith of the dead and traditionalism is the dead faith of the living." In Luke 1:1-4, a second-generation Christian offers us an example of the church passing on the knowledge, understanding and practice of the faith.

We face these questions and dilemmas daily. These pastoral occasions are theological opportunities for handing on the faith. We have the responsibility to secure our grip on what has been passed to us and ensure that we are in position to hand it off to those who will come after us.

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Number 23

One Lord and One Body: Implications for the Common Faith of the Church

Allan J. McNicol

Honoring the 200th anniversary of the *Declaration and Address*

> That the Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else; as none else can be truly and properly called Christians.[1]

It remains a wonderful unknown in my life why certain phrases or incidents, many from earliest experience, continue to come to mind with some frequency. One particular early personal experience occurred while reading a journal article highlighting the importance of the church. The writer ventured that he was not bothered by the occasional insults directed his way because he was a Christian. It was a different matter when critics would assault the

[1] Thomas Campbell, *Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington: Proposition One* (Washington, PA: Brown & Sample, 1809). This quote is found in Thomas H. Olbricht and Hans Rollman, ed., *The Quest for Christian Unity, Peace, and Purity in Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address* Text and Studies 46 (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2000), 18. The same text, with slight differences in punctuation, is available in Frederick D. Kershner, *The Christian Union Overture: An Interpretation of the Declaration and Address of Thomas Campbell* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1923), 81. Also worthy of note is Glenn Thomas Carson, Douglas A. Foster and Clinton J. Holloway, *One Church: A Bicentennial Celebration of Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address* (Abilene: ACU Press, 2008).

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church. "Why," he wrote, "don't people realize that Christ loved the church and gave his life for her to make her holy and without blemish?"[2] Today when I listen with some frequency to issues people have concerning the church, more often than not this comment comes to mind. I think it represents intentional teachings nourished within Churches of Christ. One cannot separate loving Christ from loving the church.

The church matters! Or, with apologies to our cultural origins among the plain folks of European heritage, somewhat paradoxically, we have maintained what others would describe as a "high" doctrine of the Church.[3] Thus we arrive at Thomas Campbell's famous proposition, which marks the origin of much of this theology. If we ignore the dismissive asides that Campbell's *Declaration* emerged in the rudimentary setting of American frontier religion, and its initial modest impact,[4] we may appreciate its fundamental theological insight. There is only one church. We draw attention to the key sentence in the *Declaration and Address*: "The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one." Such a claim must have seemed odd on the Western frontier plagued with a plethora of sectarian Christian groups. If such a claim is taken seriously then this statement has

[2] Cf. Ephesians 5:25–27.

[3] I note a similar point made by Everett Ferguson in, "Churches of Christ: Who We Are and What We Ought To Be," *Christian Studies* 18 (2000/2001), 46, where he echoes his article eventually published as "Church, Doctrine of The," in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Douglas A. Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 209. Ferguson concludes that by balancing the movement's strong emphasis on personal liberty we have sought to maintain a "high" doctrine of the church.

[4] Henry E. Webb, *In Search of Christian Unity: A History of the Restoration Movement,* rev. ed. (Abilene: ACU Press, 2003), 92, states what happened after the publication of the *Declaration and Address* in December 1809, "They published their document, built a meeting house, and waited for things to happen. Nothing did." This would not be the first or last time an important theological insight would go unnoticed. In this case the will to survive among the multiple sects of the frontier temporarily choked out Campbell's message.

significant implications for our theological thinking. Despite the fact that the theological heirs of the Campbells have shown the same propensity for rancor and division that was present in the religion of the frontier they encountered, the human weaknesses and shortcomings of later followers should not nullify this key insight.

We need to remember that as we live in the time of the transition from the old to the new creation, the imperfections of believers are readily apparent. From the humble circumstances of first-century Christianity, the New Testament epistles make this point clear. We should not concede the high ground of our theological claims to the cynics. Let us examine the implications of Thomas Campbell's claim more closely.

Restoration or Unity: Are they Incompatible?

Broadly speaking the theological heirs of the Campbells (Thomas and his son, Alexander) have steered their ecclesiology by one of two dominant pole stars: either unity or restoration. Echoing Thomas Campbell's painful encounter with sectarian frontier religion, they considered divisions among believers to be shameful. Division is an open wound reflecting blatant disregard for the prayer of our Lord for the unity of his disciples (John 17:6–26). Careful reading of John 17 did not allow them to conclude that Jesus prayed only for some hypothetical spiritual unity. As Jesus of Nazareth was the visible incarnate word of God, so must his followers reflect openly their unity, not only spiritually with the Son, but materially, in visible fellowship with one another (John 1:14, 18; 17:20–26). This often translates into viewing our fellowship as an ecumenical movement seeking to heal the divisions within Christendom.

Historically, this is the context in which much of the theological activity of the Disciples of Christ has occurred. It is no accident that they have distinguished themselves disproportionately in the Protestant ecumenical

movements of the twentieth-century. Yet these ecumenical ventures have produced few instances of working unity among the denominations that continue to proliferate.

The second motif playing a dominant role in the ecclesiology of Thomas Campbell's theological heirs is restoration. This image was implicit in many of the appeals to scripture in the *Declaration and Address*. Campbell presumed that a reasonable person following conventional standards of analyzing an historical document could determine the faith and practice of the early church by reading the New Testament. This perspicuous reading of scripture became foundational in our movement. It continued through most of the past two centuries. Later developments in ecclesiology and theology beyond the New Testament were viewed with suspicion. In good Enlightenment fashion, after the process of "clearing the way … by removing the stumbling blocks—the rubbish of the ages,"[5] all that was necessary to be a faithful Christian was to follow the presumed pattern of Christianity in the New Testament. This would result in the original Church being restored. Supposedly, this would be the basis for the unification of all Christians. Although Thomas Campbell's son Alexander referred to this movement as the "New Reformation," the "Restoration Movement" became preferred.

There is much commendable here. It is a sound principle to seek the purest forms of a tradition in its origins; but it is clear that problems have emerged. At the heart of the enterprise rests the issue of resolving the thorny combination of rigorous historical research of scripture and a serviceable interpretation of the text among ordinary people that provides authoritative guidance for the community. Fortunately, this juggernaut is not the topic of

[5] Kershner, *The Christian Union Overture*, 96–97. The language is taken from Campbell's *Declaration and Address*.

this essay. Nevertheless, the wreckage which has spilled forth from this enterprise is strewn across the landscape.

Anticipation of what was about to happen can be seen in the fruits of Thomas Campbell's own work. His reconstruction of the faith and practice of early Christianity along the lines of viewing the New Testament as a blueprint for the constitution of the Church convinced few. His followers were soon absorbed into a Baptist Association. Even on the frontier, other Christian groups produced different outcomes as they sought to recover "first-century Christianity" through the lenses of their inherited presuppositions.

Among the theological heirs of Thomas Campbell, Churches of Christ and conservative Christian churches embraced restoration most avidly. Visiting Churches of Christ around the world, I am struck by the fact that it is the plea to restore New Testament Christianity that attracted most of our intellectual leaders in the first place. I, too, am formally committed to the principle of restorationism, in the form of patternism it is not fruitful. Historical research has its limits too![6] But it has shown, conclusively, that the New Testament writings were never meant to function as a blueprint for organizing the church. The fashionable maxim "It is not a salvation issue" is a case in point. Often a Trojan horse in the cause of ecclesiastical freedom, it is only

[6] After surveying the textual evidence of the Bible emerging from the earliest Christian centuries, D. C. Parker comments, "I am struck by how little we know (certainly I know) about almost everything I have written about. Given the tiny number of manuscripts to have survived from antiquity, our theories can be no more than provisional attempts to understand these fragments of the textual tradition" (*An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 348). Parker's remarks are pertinent not only to the study of the New Testament text, but also a study of the form, structure, and life of the early church. Unfortunately, reading the New Testament as the constitution for the church has often led interpreters to universalize what may have been only occasional beliefs and practices. There are many things we know about the ancient church. Let us admit there is a lot we don't know.

the latest misuse that presumes the blueprint model.[7] This approach promotes division in the body of Christ.[8] It is time to re-assess what we are seeking in attempting "to restore New Testament Christianity."

We have observed that heirs of Thomas Campbell have usually centered their vision on one of two motifs: unity or restorationism. In the past two hundred years the two have had their particular problems.[9] Yet, neither motif captures Campbell's intuition about the ancient church's common faith. At the core, he presumed, "The church is one." It is time that we returned to this fundamental theological principle, reexamining its basic shape, and determining its implications for ecclesiology today.

A Proposal

The church is a community owing its existence to God's faithfulness in the history of Israel and the ministry, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Shaped by this revelation, as God's new creation in the time between the times, the first and second coming of Christ, and as a contrast-society to the powers of the age, its existence is sustained by the word of its living Lord.

This is a comprehensive definition. Often we confine our understanding of church to the activities of a congregation in one place, a particular

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[7] That is, because a teaching or practice cannot be documented within the pages of the New Testament as essential for salvation it must be placed in an area of total liberty. The next step is as Richard Neuhaus has famously noted, "Any orthodox doctrine that is regarded as optional will soon be proscribed" (*First Things* 191 [March 2009]: 63).

[8] An even more negative assessment of restorationism with respect to the journey of the Disciples of Christ can be found in M. Eugene Boring, *Disciples and the Bible: A History of Disciples Biblical Interpretation in North America* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1997) 412–413.

[9] My critique of the blueprint model of restorationism was delivered at the Christian Scholars Conference at Pepperdine University in 1989. The paper, entitled "Theological Method on the Bible Among Churches of Christ: A Proposal," is available at http://www.austingrad.edu/academics_mcnicol_resource.html.

communion, or the totality of the various fellowships we encounter. But these may be nothing more than expressions of contemporary religiosity rather than what the Bible means by church.

This essay underscores Thomas Campbell's Scriptural claim that, "the Church of Christ on earth is essentially one." Or, "the body of Christ is one." Although this insight is often disregarded by Campbell's theological heirs, it has not been entirely forgotten. We should keep our eyes on this prize rather than focus on peripheral themes. When people grasp its centrality, some call it "high church doctrine." In terms of current ecclesiological discussion, it can be viewed as a "third way" between Evangelicals, who hardly have a doctrine of the church, and Catholicism, which has its own concerns.

We believe that Campbell's insight that "the body of Christ is one" is constitutive for the common faith of Christians. Stated simply, the gospel provides the account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for our salvation and demands we claim salvation by entering into the one body in baptism and maintaining communion with other believers and the Lord at his Table. This should be the focus of restoration.

Procedurally, we will look at a cross-section of texts in Matthew, Ephesians, and Justin Martyr. Then we will point out that neither Evangelical nor Catholic ecclesiology is consistent with these mainstream propositions of the ancient church. A "third way" needs to be affirmed. We conclude by exploring the implications for the Stone-Campbell movement.

Matthew's Doctrine of the Church

The word *ekklēsia*, usually translated "church," appears only two times in the Gospels, both in Matthew (16:18; 18:17). This is an appropriate place to begin our discussion.[10]

[10] In Matthew the term "kingdom of heaven/God" occurs frequently. The terminology seems to overlap similar subject matter that usually incorporates concerns

Matthew 16:18 occurs in a critical section of the Gospel. It introduces a unit concerned with discipleship (16:13—20:34). Here, Jesus instructs his disciples about the conduct he demands from his followers. As in other Matthean texts[11], Peter is the spokesman for the disciples, inquiring of and receiving instructions from Jesus. Matthew 16:18 is the central verse in a triad (16:17–19) where Jesus responds to Peter's confession of him as Messiah. Although Peter's primary role is to function as representative of both the twelve and all later disciples, the fact that he is first to do so will turn out to be important for the ancient Church.

After Peter is told that the confession that Jesus is Messiah is a matter of divine revelation (16:17), the spotlight is thrown on the second statement to Peter in 16:18. Jesus tells Peter that "upon this rock (*petra*) I will build my church."[12] Although a multitude of interpretations flow from the *Petros/petra* word play, the simplest reading is that in 16:16 Peter declares who Jesus is and in 16:18, on the basis of the confession of messiahship, Jesus declares who Peter is.[13] Reference to "this rock" echoes the idea of the cosmic rock thought to be under the sanctuary in Jerusalem holding at bay the netherworld raging below ("the gates of Hades").[14] Jesus, the builder of the church,

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involving the people of God and their destiny. But a distinction should be maintained. Hans Kvalbein states: "The kingdom is the specific area or realm of God's end-time salvation that emerges with Jesus' ministry (cf. Matt 11:11–12)" ("The Authorization of Peter in Matthew 16:17–19: A Reconsideration of the Power to Bind and Loose," in *The Formation of the Early Church*, ed. Jostein Adna, WUNT 183 [Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2005], 150–151). On the other hand, the church is the community that lives within this realm.

[11] Cf. 15:15; 18:21; 19:27–30; 26:33–34.

[12] In the Greek text there is an obvious word play Jesus makes between *Petros* (Peter) and *petra* (rock). As far back as Matthew 4:18 we learn that Simon was this disciple's first name and Peter was a second name. *Kephas*, the Greek form of the Aramaic, appears frequently in Paul.

[13] Kvalbein, "The Authorization of Peter," 153.

[14] Ben Meyer, *Christus Faber: The Master Builder and the House of God* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1992) 259.

God's assembly of the last days (the new temple), selects Peter, the fisherman, as the kind of rock on which his church is built.[15]

Peter is the rock because, as spokesman, he is the beginning of a line of disciples being called to embody the faith.[16] Jesus views his followers as a community or assembly of the faithful of the last days. It is not an institution or a corporation, but a dynamic entity, a family with one Father (Matt 23:8–12), a school with one teacher, Jesus (Matt 10:24–25).[17]

This is in keeping with the third response of Jesus to Peter in Matthew 16:19. Here Peter is promised the keys to the kingdom of Heaven.[18] Whatever is bound or loosed on earth also stands confirmed in the heavenly realm.

The interpretation of Matthew 16:19 must be governed by the repetition of the terminology in Matthew 18:18 which is part of a wider context in 18:15–35. In keeping with the context in Matthew Jesus is giving instruction to his community. The topic under discussion is what to do if a brother sins.

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[15] The later idea of the investiture of Peter as the progenitor of a line of ecclesiastical officers resident in Rome (apostolic succession) is totally foreign to the text. This notion develops later in church history, reaching its zenith in Catholic Counter-Reformation exegesis.

[16] Kvalbein, "The Authorization of Peter," 167, notes that in Matthew Peter is the first called to follow Jesus (4:18); the first to confess him as Messiah (16:18); and later he is said by Paul to be the first to see the risen Lord (1 Cor 15:5); and in Acts he is the first to proclaim the gospel to the people of Jerusalem (Acts 2:14–40).

[17] Ulrich Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 80, states it well: "[For Matthew] to be a church means to assume the commission and the authority of Jesus, to live as he did, to suffer as he did. To be a church means discipleship. … Far from providing a doctrine of the church, Matthew says that there is no essence of the church apart from its practice and destiny, and hence no possibility of being a church apart from worldly action and suffering in conformity with its sole exemplar, Jesus."

[18] This is the source of the innumerable fanciful stories of Peter standing at the gates of heaven and dictating the conditions for entrance. The verse is often linked with Isaiah 22:15–25 where Eliakim is given the key to open and shut the gates of the house of David. That text becomes the basis for rabbinic discussions of "binding and loosing" on matters of rules for entrance and sanctions in a community. In our view that is not a fruitful direction to pursue. Cf. Donald Senior, *Matthew*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998) 191–192.

We learn in 18:15–17 that after one is wronged he gains a brother by convincing him to admit sin. This takes place in the presence of the one grieved before several witnesses or the whole assembly (*ekklēsia*). This is followed by teaching on forgiveness (18:21–35). In contrast to the scribes and Pharisees, who on these matters are accused of closing the kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 23:13), the disciples, following the example of Jesus, may gain a brother by showing forgiveness. Exclusion may be exercised only after agonizing decisions by the whole community.[19] This vocation, given to the whole community (church) in 18:17–18 was first extended to Peter, the community's first spokesman, in 16:19.[20] As a living fellowship, the church is a community of reconciliation showing humans the way to overcome their sins. This is true for the Twelve and all other believers.

Not only is reconciliation based on forgiveness, a major theme in Matthew 16–18, which centers on community discipline; it is a prominent motif throughout the Gospel. It is noteworthy that Matthew stresses forgiveness as a wider theme in Jesus' ministry, with implications for the central communal activities of the church (the assembly of the last days), such as baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Matthew begins his narrative by announcing the meaning of the name Jesus ("the Lord saves"), adding "from their sins" (Matt 1:21). This major theme is developed throughout the Gospel. No doubt Matthew knows that John baptized for the forgiveness of sins.[21] Out of respect for this, he records a dialogue between Jesus and John (Matt 3:14–15). The purpose of the dialogue is to address the fact that although Jesus was baptized by John, it

[19] Kvalbein, "The Authorization of Peter," 157–164.

[20] Ibid., 164. It is noteworthy that Peter has to learn the true impact of this demand for forgiveness. First, in Matt 18:21–22 Jesus instructs Peter that it is forgiveness which is the true coin of the kingdom, echoing Lamech's call for revenge in Gen 4:24. Second, after betraying Jesus, Peter learns the power of forgiveness.

[21] See Luke 3:3; Mark 1:4; cf. Matt 21:31–32.

seemed inappropriate for him to receive a baptism instituted for sinners.[22] Ordinarily, as with John's baptism, the one who became a disciple was baptized for the forgiveness of sins. At the end of Matthew this practice is confirmed in the wording of the Great Commission. Here, baptism is affirmed as the universal rite for all peoples (Jew and Gentile) initiating the Christian walk (Matt 28:19). Thus at its beginning and ending Matthew stresses the importance of baptism for the messianic community.

In this life the disciple regularly prays the Lord's Prayer which highlights the need to forgive others as we have been forgiven.[23] This prayer was said regularly at the Table in the ancient church. Matthew's account of the Last Supper (Matt 26:26–29) stresses the importance of forgiveness. When the earliest Christians, during their assemblies, read Matthew's account of the passion of Jesus they were reminded that his life's blood was poured out for the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:28). As the reconfigured Passover sacrifice, Jesus' death was now reckoned to be the place of God's forgiveness. The bread and the cup sitting upon the table provided vital testimony to that reality. The rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper crown Jesus' royal teaching on forgiveness.

We are saying, essentially, that Matthew's narrative gives a dynamic account of the founding of Jesus' community (the church) and the processes (the common faith) that were to sustain it in the world. At first glance, Jesus' call to walk the path he chose to walk sounds more like a call to a lifestyle than the foundation of a doctrinal system. But this is not the whole story. Passing on this dynamic model of discipleship required regular teaching and the establishment of basic practices. For Matthew, Jesus walked this walk and, as the great teacher, commissioned his disciples to imitate him and teach

[22] Ibid.

[23] Allan J. McNicol, "The Lord's Prayer: The Touchstone of Christian Spirituality," *Christian Studies* 20 (2004): 17–18.

others (Matt 28:19–20). But what was implicit in Jesus' ministry became explicit in Paul's writings as he sets forth the implications for life in the common faith in this one universal community.

Paul Embraces the Common Faith of the One Church

In Galatians 1:6–8 Paul declares, "But if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you let him be eternally condemned." In 1 Corinthians 15:1–2 he addresses the Corinthian churches: "I preached to you the gospel which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast." Paul records that the churches in Judea, hearing of Paul's change from persecutor to believer said, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy" (Gal 1:23).

As we will see shortly Paul understands that this common faith finds visible expression in the life of one universal community, the church. When factions and parties appear in the church of Corinth, Paul is outraged (1 Cor 1:10–17). This should not be. Based on the presumption that each body has one head, Paul, seeing the body fracture, asks rhetorically, "Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor 1:13). In other words, if what exists at Corinth really is the body of Christ it cannot be divided since Christ is not divided.[24] Notably this is not an argument based on some metaphysical description of the essence of the church but on the nature of Christ himself as the one heavenly Lord and his vital connection with his spiritual body.

Although Paul's letters are earlier than Matthew, they display similar concern for the oneness of the body, and for baptism and the Lord's Supper

[24] Stig Hanson, *The Unity of the Church in the New Testament: Colossians and Ephesians* (Uppsala: Almquist & Wiksells, 1946), 75, states, "The unity of the Church is based on the fact that Christ is one. The condition of such an argumentation is however, that Christ is one with the Church, and on this relationship the unity of the Church is fundamentally founded."

as means of grace enhancing life in that body. This is clear in Ephesians 4:5, where Paul declares, "(There is) one Lord, one faith, one baptism."[25] What does Paul means by "one faith," the central term in this triad? Is it congruent with what we mean when we refer to the "common faith" of the one body?

Ephesians 4:5 is part of a wider unit affirming the unity of believers in the body of Christ (Eph 4:1–6). In Ephesians 1:18 Paul shows concern that his readers "may know what is the hope to which he has called you." From Ephesians 1:18–3:21 Paul expounds on that hope. In 4:1, he exhorts his readers to lead a life worthy of that hope and calling (cf. Eph 4:4b). As with Matthew, the life of the church (the new creation) centers around discipleship. It is marked by the cultivation of humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearance in love (Eph 4:2; cf. Col 3:12).

This call for humility is not just an appeal to manifest appropriate virtues. It connects with earlier argumentation in chapter three and is important for following the sequence of thought in the letter. Paul asserts that the goal of the reception of the Gentiles into the people of God was a divine secret, revealed in the establishment of the church. It is a cause for celebration with cosmic implications. In Ephesians 3:10 Paul asserts that this unification has stripped the unseen powers and forces that oppose God of their claim over the world (cf. Col 2:15). Nevertheless, this marvelous reality should never lead the church to be conceited, especially the Gentiles who outnumber Jews in their reception of the Gospel; thus the summons to humility and gentleness in Ephesians 4:2. Only a mode of life that opposes and denies the claims of

[25] Some raise the issue as to whether Ephesians is a genuine writing of Paul. My teacher Nils Dahl wrestled with this issue. For our purposes we accept the decision of the ancient church that included this letter in all of its collections of the Pauline writings. For Dahl's view of the authorship problem, see Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Studies in Ephesians: Introductory Questions, Text – & Edition - Critical Issues, Interpretation of Texts and Themes*, ed. David Hellholm, Vemund Blomkuist, and Tord Fornberg (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 48–72.

the hostile powers will, like Christ, be vindicated at the last day. Four times in Ephesians 2:13–17 Paul stresses that this newly minted unity between Gentile and Jew brings peace. In Ephesians 4:3 Paul asserts that this peace constitutes the bond that unites us in Christ through the Spirit (cf. 4:13).[26]

This brings us to the focus of our study in Ephesians: the sevenfold statement on oneness in Ephesians 4:4–6, especially the call to maintain the one faith.[27] Paul signals the importance of the "one body" by placing it first in his list. He again echoes that the church is the indivisible extension of Christ's lordship over a community that now has cosmic scope (Eph 1:19–23). Infused with the Holy Spirit, it is energized by maintaining hope in an eternal inheritance.[28] As at Corinth, Paul was aware of divisions afflicting churches in the province of Asia. Given that reality, he speaks of the more comprehensive unity of the body of Christ with its Lord, often drawing insights from popular terminology about the cosmos.[29]

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[26] The Greek word *henotēs* ("unity") is used only here and in Eph 4:13 in the New Testament. In 4:13 unity is the final goal of the giving of gifts from Christ for the building up of the body of Christ.

[27] Structurally the unit seems to be a welding of verse four with its triple statement of being called into "one body, one spirit and one hope" with verses five and six. The latter verses are neatly balanced with four substantives on oneness linked to four references to the word "all" (Dahl, *Studies in Ephesians*, 417). The emphasis on "being called" in Ephesians 4:4 echoes back to the first verse (Eph. 4:1). There is also a close connection in wording between Colossians 3:12–15 and Ephesians 4:2–4, which is usually explained by literary dependence of Ephesians upon Colossians. The pattern in Colossians of listing similar virtues (as in Ephesians 4:2–3) and the reference to peace followed by being "called into the body" is particularly striking.

[28] John Muddiman, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* in *Black's New Testament Commentaries* (London/New York: Continuum, 2001), 183.

[29] As if to highlight the significance of "one lord, one faith, and one baptism," the three substantives (being masculine, feminine and neuter) are each preceded by different Greek forms of the word for one. Even linguistically it is a beautiful demonstration of unity in its multiplicity. Dahl, *Studies in Ephesians*, 469, thinks that a group in the church, known to the original readers of Ephesians, housed an ascetic way of life by claiming access to the divine mysteries. They regularly used cosmic terminology to reinforce this belief. In Eph 5:21–33 Paul turns this approach on its

The essence of unity is disarmingly simple. It is found in one God who has united the cosmos as Creator and in one Lord. By the creation of the one body on the basis of "one faith" and "one baptism," the Lord Jesus duplicates the unity of the creation in the spiritual dimension, routing other claims to lordship.[30] What is this one faith? Some would suggest it is the faith and trust of believers. This has a noble usage in Ephesians (Eph 2:8; 3:12) but here it is implausible. More likely it refers to the key beliefs of the one body.[31] This set of beliefs (the common faith), expressive of the Gospel, likely was affirmed at the baptism of these converts.[32] We have noted Paul also refers earlier in Galatians 1:23 to this body of beliefs as "the faith" (cf. Rom 1:5; Gal 3:23–25).[33] A primary goal of Ephesians is to deepen "the unity of the faith" (Eph 3:13).

Ephesians is a reminder, primarily to Gentiles, that they are the beneficiaries of incredible blessings mediated in Christ's body, the church. They are now freed from various and sundry lords that could never deliver them from evil powers. They are also reminded that they should not surrender to those demeaning the common faith. Paul probably has schismatics in mind,

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head. Truly Gen 2:24 (a text under discussion) points to a great mystery: the union of Christ and the church. But this does not mean that our union with Christ in the one church is a totally esoteric matter only available to a few privileged persons who can penetrate this mystery. On the contrary, this exclusive union of Christ and the church is straightforward. It warrants the fidelity of the husband to his wife. Thus, it has profound practical implications.

[30] Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, Sacra Pagina, 17 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 288–289.

[31] Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 240. Also Hanson, *Unity of the Church*, 153–154.

[32] As we noted with Matthew, baptism into the proprietorship of Christ is one of the key elements of the common faith. The addressees are being reminded of the implications of this action when they first took on the responsibility of discipleship. Paul does not refer to the Lord's Supper in this text; but it is clear that elsewhere he names it as a matter of central significance to the faith (1 Cor 10:14–22; 11:17–34).

[33] The Pastorals regularly have this understanding of faith as a body of beliefs (1 Tim 1:2; 3:9; 4:1–6; 5:8; 2 Tim 4:7; Titus 3:15).

who claim special insight into divine mysteries. Paul exhorts his readers to hold steadily to the lordship of Christ and the common faith in the unity of the Spirit. The common faith of the ancient Church that there is one Lord and one body is strongly affirmed in the Pauline tradition. So it should be today.

Justin Martyr and the Common Faith[34]

In the second century, summaries of the common faith begin to appear. They are strong indicators of what the church really believed. Nowhere is this so true as with Justin, a major second century interpreter of the faith.

Justin takes for granted the unity of Christ and the one body, the one church, the depository of the received truth of the Christian tradition. For our purposes Justin's significance is his defense of the foundations of the common faith. Central to these foundations was the belief that Jesus in the flesh was the revelatory Word of God and the benefits of his life are appropriated in baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Justin left no doubt as to what he believed about Jesus. It was the faith which was taught from the time of the apostles. Explaining this belief to Trypho the Jew, among other things he states that Jesus is the true Son of God, born of a virgin, suffered and crucified under Pontius Pilate, and ascended into heaven after being raised from the dead.[35] On this basis the Father bestowed upon him the honor of Lord.[36] Numerous other passages reflect and expand upon this conviction.[37]

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[34] Justin Martyr was a major interpreter of the Christian faith. His writings came in the decades of the mid-second century. His major works were two *Apologies* to the Roman emperor on behalf of Christianity and a treatise (*Dialogue with Trypho*) attempting to show to a typical Jew that Christianity represented the appropriate closure to the story of the Hebrew Scriptures. He is one of the most significant figures of mainstream second-century Christianity.

[35] *Dialogue with Trypho* 85.1–2.

[36] *Dialogue with Trypho* 85.4.

[37] The revised collection of texts of August Hahn, *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der alten Kirche* (Georg Olms: Hildesheim, 1962), 4–5, list the fol-

What was entailed in the acceptance of Jesus as Lord was also central for Justin. With respect to what Justin wrote, Everett Ferguson states, "Faith, baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and the new life are what constitutes the Christian."[38] Justin's description of the rite of baptism corresponds to what we know took place in the ancient Church.[39] His theology stresses not only that baptism results in the forgiveness of sins but that it constitutes the new birth and an illumination of the Spirit leading to the reformed life.[40]

As was common in the ancient Church, the newly baptized believer was brought into the assembly to partake of the Lord's Supper for the first time.[41] Justin offers two descriptions of this practice in chapters 65–67 of his *First Apology*. Here the actual manner of observance (with the exception of the cup of water on the table) reflect the precedents of the biblical account. Justin's stress on the first day of the week as the time of observance is significant. Theologically, Justin explains that the bread and the cup consecrated to the Lord are no longer ordinary food (*First Apology* 66:2). In the ensuing explanation, Justin seems to draw an analogy between the incarnation and our participation in the bread and the cup. In the incarnation the divine *logos* cohered in Jesus' flesh and blood for our salvation. By analogy, those partak-

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lowing passages: *First Apology* 13, 21, 31, 42, 46, 61 and *Dialogue with Trypho* chapters 63, 126, 132.

[38] Everett Ferguson, *Baptism In The Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy In The First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 242. A full discussion of the many references to baptism in Justin is found in 227–244.

[39] For a recent readable description of this understanding of baptism that is given by a Harvard scholar in a Catholic magazine, see Kevin Madigan, "The Redeemed Life: Baptism and Resurrection in the Early Church," *Commonweal* 136/4 (February 27, 2009), 20–23. This is a scintillating summary of the function of baptism in the ancient church.

[40] Justin, *First Apology*, 61; 66:1 (cf. *Dialogue with Trypho* 138.1–3). The reference in 61.5 to John 3:5 is startling because this is one of the few echoes of the Gospel of John in all of Justin's writings.

[41] Justin refers to the Lord's Supper as "the Eucharist," the standard terminology of the second century.

ing of the consecrated bread and cup are also nourished unto salvation. In this way the one body is perpetuated and nourished by the one Lord.

For Justin, baptism and the Lord's Supper were "essential to the fullest Christian life."[42] Justin's understanding that the divine society founded by Christ and the apostles exists as God's light to illuminate a bleak world illustrates the spread of the common faith by the second century.

Between Evangelicalism and Catholicism

The importance of the key biblical insight that just as there is only one Christ, so there can be but one church—his body, is easily grasped. For example, it is inconceivable that in the first century there were believers in Jesus as the flesh and blood Son of God who died for their sins who were indifferent to identifying with a visible fellowship of those redeemed by Christ. Similarly, considering oneself a believer in good standing without being baptized would be preposterous. Rites were integral to the life of the earliest Christians. Baptism initiated believers into the new creation, the resurrected life of their Lord, and into the visible body of Christ, the place of forgiveness of sins. Moreover, this concept of what it means to be a believer was reinforced at the Lord's Table when the assembly feasted regularly in anticipation of the great banquet of God's new world. To affirm, as many contemporary Christians do, that salvation is by grace through faith in the atoning death of Christ, separate from those rites and a vital relationship with a faith community, would have struck the early believers as extraordinarily curious. Indeed, the view that a local fellowship functions primarily as a means to inner spiritual growth, hardly reflects the New Testament idea of church.

[42] The quote comes from Leslie William Barnard, "St. Justin Martyr: The First and Second Apologies," in *Ancient Christian Writers* 56 (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 20.

While there is much to admire in the missionary fervor of modern Evangelicalism, the same cannot be said for its understanding of the church.[43]

At the other extreme is Catholicism. In Catholic theology the visible body of Christ is understood to be holy and undivided, consisting of all those who are in communion with the bishop of Rome. Because the ecclesial body and eucharistic body are reckoned to be one, only those in fellowship with the Catholic church are welcome at the altar to receive communion from the priest, Christ's visible representative.

There is no question that this position represents a "high" doctrine of the church. Its inner consistency gives it considerable force. But on its face in practical reality it is hardly plausible. To view millions of believers as "separated brethren" who cannot come to this "altar" because they cannot in conscience accept a number of unbiblical teachings is sectarian. There are many hindrances to faith. Do we need to carry the additional burden of making the edifice of Roman Catholicism a necessary precondition?

As a third way, between Evangelicalism and Catholicism we need a recovery of biblical insights about the nature of the church and its common faith, expressed through its ordinances. In this essay we have underscored how Thomas Campbell pointed us in the right direction.

Conclusion

This essay has shown that Thomas Campbell identified a foundational theological principle when he stated that "the Church of Christ upon earth is … one." Our analysis of early Christian writings has demonstrated that major figures of the early church believed that there was one Lord (Jesus Christ) who had one body (the church).

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[43] See, for example, Stanley J. Grenz, "An Evangelical Response to Ferguson, Holloway & Lowery: Restoring a Trinitarian Understanding of the Church in Practice," in *Evangelicalism and the Stone Campbell Movement*, ed. William R. Baker (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press 2002), 228-234.

The present polarization in contemporary Christianity between Evangelicals and Catholics on ecclesiology presents an opportunity for Campbell's proposal, a third way, to be heard. Beyond question, Campbell's heirs have a mixed record in terms of their faithfulness to this principle. On one side an intensive pursuit of the chimera of ecumenical unity among denominations has borne little fruit. On the other side a preoccupation with patternism has produced even more division. Yet, the light still shines. At this critical moment, will there be those among us who will provide clear biblical teaching and encourage its implementation? If so, the Stone-Campbell tradition may finally realize its true potential.

"Nailed to the Cross": The Continuing Relevance of the Old Testament

R. Mark Shipp

> He washed away the handwriting which was against us, with the decrees which were opposed to us, and he set them aside, having nailed them to the cross (Col. 2:14, author's trans.).

Growing up in churches where the Old Testament was most often read "backwards," through the lens of the New, the statement was sometimes made that the Old Testament served a purpose for a time, but has been abolished and superseded by a new dispensation of grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Proponents of this approach appealed to such passages as Colossians 2:14 and Ephesians 2:15, which seemed to verify the temporary, and largely negative, value of the Old Testament.

This approach, however, appeared to be at variance with other passages in the New Testament, such as 2 Timothy 3:15, which seemed to uphold the validity and ongoing usefulness of the Old Testament ("all scripture," manifestly the Old Testament for the writer!) in the life of the believer. In light of common perceptions of these passages, it is useful to look again at what exactly is nailed to the cross, what that means in the life of the believer, and the Church's relationship to the Old Testament. I will first look at where we have come from in Churches of Christ relative to the Old Testament, specifically Alexander Campbell's "Sermon on the Law," then at Colossians 2,

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and then end with recommendations for how Christians should look at the Old Testament.

Alexander Campbell's Sermon on the Law and the Old "Constitution"

Several have, in recent years, written on Campbell's Sermon on the Law and its impact on the American Restoration Movement.[1] It is not necessary, therefore, to cover the same territory again. It will suffice to note Campbell's understanding of the temporary nature of Old Testament authority, clearly articulated in the Sermon on the Law, foundational to the dispensational ideology of the American Restoration Movement.

The Old Testament as Law, or Constitution, of the Sinai Covenant. To Campbell, Christ was the king of a new kingdom and along with that kingdom came a new system of organization whereby it could be governed. Every government required a *constitution*, written principles and organization for that government. The Sinai covenant was the constitution for the majority of the Old Testament era. Because Campbell considered the church a new kingdom, with Christ as its head, it also had a constitution, specifically the documents of the New Testament.

Such a dispensational approach was foreign to most ways of understanding the Old Testament of the time. Protestants understood the continuing relevance of at least the moral, if not the ritual, law, as exemplified in the Ten Commandments. Campbell did not so understand the Law. *All* of the Law, which he understood to be not so much legal precepts, as a system constituting a previous government, had been replaced. He recognized that much

[1] See, for example, Everett Ferguson, "Alexander Campbell's 'Sermon on the Law': A Historical and Theological Examination" *RQ* 29 (1987): 71–85; Ferguson, "Sermon on the Law," in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Douglas Foster, Paul Blowers, Anthony Dunnavant, and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 680; Elmer Prout, "Alexander Campbell and the Old Testament, *RQ* 6 (1962) 131–142; and R. Mark Shipp, "Alexander Campbell and the Relationship Between the Testaments," *Christian Studies* 14 (1994): 19–32.

in the Old Testament was of enduring value, but those concepts and teachings with continuing validity were all repeated in the New Testament.

Campbell also believed in a "book of nature," natural revelation in which moral and religious truths were disclosed. The Law was given to corporate Israel. The Book of Nature was revealed to those outside of Israel. The "moral law" of the Old Testament which Protestants found still applicable, or the standards revealed by reason and nature, were both superseded by the new covenant in Jesus Christ, as revealed in the New Testament, the constitution of his kingdom.

Campbell has several presuppositions in his approach to the Old Testament which are by no means self-evident or obvious. First, it is curious that Campbell reduces the Old Testament text to a series of governmental "constitutions," remarkably modern in light of the political and religious realities of his day. Second, it is also by no means apparent that anything of lasting value from the Old Testament will always be found in the New. Campbell's position makes sense if the documents of the Old Testament were intended to record and/or constitute a theological or governmental system. On the other hand, if these documents are primarily the record of God's relationship with a people and the world he created and which reveal the nature of God to us in narrative form, they function in an entirely different manner.

It depends on what questions are being asked of the text. If the question is, "How does one determine the system appropriate to how a church or theocracy may be organized and governed," then the texts which relate to that era and community should be referenced. On the other hand, if the question is "How has the God who is finally manifested in Jesus Christ revealed himself to us," then all the counsel of scripture is important and continues to form us as the people of God today.

Colossians 2:14 and the Decrees "Nailed to the Cross"

Colossians 2:14 has sometimes been cited in support of a dispensational understanding of the Old Testament—that the decrees and the "handwriting" mentioned in the text are the legal texts in the Old Testament and, by extension, the entire Old Testament dispensation.[2] But are the "handwriting" and the "decrees" mentioned in the text a reference to the Old Testament scriptures or covenants?

The passage surrounding Colossians 2:14 is generally understood to be vv. 6 to 23,[3] though some subdivide the passage in vv. 6-7, 8-15, and 16-23. Chapter two deals with a Colossian heresy, the precise nature of which is unclear, but which held to a heterodox understanding of the nature of Christ.[4] Vv. 1-5 encourage the Colossians to persevere in faith and not to be mislead (v. 4). Vv. 6-7 again encourage the Colossians not to be mislead by philosophies, deceit, and "elemental things" (*stoicheia*, v. 8, see below), in regards to the nature of Christ and the new life in him. What they had received they were to hold firm, that Christ was the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form (v. 9) and he holds all life and authority (v. 10). Only in Christ does God reveal his wisdom and knowledge (vv. 2-3), that only in Christ are the disciples made alive through baptism (2:12-13), and that Christ has once for all de-

[2] Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 203–204 wants to have it both ways—Colossians 2 does not itself deal specifically with the Law, but he says it cannot be excluded from the "handwriting" of Colossians 2:14.

[3] David Hay, *Colossians*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 88; Peter O'Brien, *Colossians. Philemon,* Word Biblical Commentary, 44 (Waco: Word, 1982), 109; Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 92; Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke, *Colossians*, Anchor Bible 34b (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 298; Ralph Martin, *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon,* Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox, 1991), 113; Arthur Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon*, NIBCNT (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1990), 49-55.

[4] For a recent study on the false teaching at Colossae, see Jerry Sumney, *Colossians*, New Testament Library (Louisville: W/JKP, 2008), 11.

feated and canceled the guilty verdict or writ of debt (v. 15) and defeated "powers and principalities" (perhaps the "elemental things" and the thrones and dominions of 1:16). The section ends in 2:16-23 with a description of teachings and philosophies the Colossians were entertaining: regulations regarding food, drink, and special days (2:16), visions and worship of angels (2:18), and self-abasement and ascetic practices (2:18, 21-23). The exact nature of the Colossian heresy continues to be debated, but most likely had to do with a Judaic-influenced visionary movement which required an ascetic lifestyle and special experiences such as visions or worship of angels and "elemental things."[5] The false teaching condemned by the writer is not the Old Testament, nor the Laws of Moses, nor a "governmental dispensation," but a mystical and ascetic brand of Christianity which was on the verge of leading the Colossians astray.[6] Inasmuch as v. 14, with its mention of "handwriting" and "decrees" have led many Christian interpreters to see here a reference to the Old Testament or Mosaic legal system, it is important to look more closely at these terms.

The Old Testament is never referred to elsewhere as "handwriting" (*cheirographon*). This word occurs only here in the New Testament and only in the Apocryphal book of Tobit (5:3; 9:5) in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament, henceforth LXX), where it does not translate a Hebrew original. In Tobit, it refers to a written receipt of deposit, which enabled the owner of the deposit to recover it.[7] *Cheirographon* occurs often in

[5] Sumney, 131 suggests that *stoicheia* are simply "elements," and these might be word or sound exercises or interest in the Greek "elements"—fire, water, earth, air.

[6] Sumney, 11. Sumney suggests that the real problem with this movement was not that they experienced visions or practiced ascetic lifestyles, but that they mandated them.

[7] Carey Moore, *Tobit*, Anchor Bible 40a (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 182 refers to it as a "bond," or literally a "note of hand."

extra-biblical Greek texts, generally referring to a certificate of debt.[8]

Decree (*dogma*) occurs in the LXX only in Daniel 6:12 (where it refers to the law of the Medes and Persians), 3 Maccabees 1:3 (where it refers to traditions), and 4 Maccabees 4:23-24, 26 (where it refers to decrees of Antiochus IV) and 10:2 (where it refers to teachings or instructions). In the New Testament, the word dogma is also uncommon, occurring in Luke 2:1 and Acts 17:7 (decrees of Caesar), Acts 16:4 (the decisions of the elders at the Jerusalem conference), Ephesians 2:15 and Colossians 2:14. In all of these occurrences, *cheirographon* and *dogma* refer to written receipts or contracts, verdicts, instructions, directives, decrees, and the like. They may have the force of a legal demand, but they do not refer to an entire legal code, system, or "constitution."

Ephesians 2:14-15 is more reflective of common Old Testament terminology. "Law" (*nomos*) usually translates the Hebrew *torah*, "instruction," but also *huqqah*, "statute." *Entolē*, "commandment," usually translates the Hebrew *mitswah*, "commandment" (see Deut. 4:2, 40, 5:29, etc.). *Dogma* also occurs in this passage as in Colossians 2:14 earlier. The point of this language is not to abolish a legal system, much less Old Testament literature! It is to abolish the decrees which kept Gentiles from enjoying the benefits of God's covenant by means of the sacrifice of Christ. Much as with Colossians 2:14, the point is to nullify the "guilty verdict," the "certificate of debt," or the "decrees" which kept Gentiles from enjoying the presence of God in the covenant community.

The handwriting in Col 2:14 is a "record of sin, kept in heaven," producing the "decrees" (*dogmata*) leading to the punishment of the offender.[9] What Christ has done is to cancel the decree of punishment levied against

[8] See, for example, Egyptian papyrus *Oxy. XXXVIII* 2846 and many others.
[9] Sumney, 144–145.

us.[10] In Campbell's terms, the guilty verdict against us, whether legal/governmental or the law of nature, has been nullified. In any case, what has been set aside or nailed to the cross is not a legal system, much less the narrative of God's dealings with Israel in the Old Testament, but the legal verdict of guilt, or the debt incurred by the lawbreaker.

The Christian and the Old Testament

The relationship between the Christian and the Old Testament has been a continuing source of debate and division throughout Christian history, from the Marcionism of the second century to dispensationalists of today. Indeed, even the New Testament refers to an "old covenant" which is in some sense fulfilled or culminates in the new covenant in Christ (see 2 Cor 3:14, Heb 8:6, 14). Any interpretive system of the Old Testament by Christians must take into account that there are at least aspects of it which are "old," superseded, or at least now impossible to keep.[11] In a sense, Campbell was correct. The Old Testament chronicles a series of covenants—with all flesh through Noah, with Abraham, with Israel at Sinai—which in some sense were thought to supersede the previous covenant, at least as far as

[10] Oliva A. Blanchette ("Does the *Cheirographon* of Col 2,14 Represent Christ Himself?" *CBQ* 23 [1961]: 306–312) suggests that the handwriting is both a heavenly record of wrongs committed and the embodiment of that record, Christ himself. James Dunn (*The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996]), 166 and Sumney, 145, suggest that Christ embodies the record of sin, which "affirms unquestionably that the cross is the means by which God forgives sins" (Sumney, 145).

[11] For example, offering sacrifice at the temple in Jerusalem. Even contemporary Jews understand that such laws and rituals are now kept by the reading of the *torah*, replacing the sacrificial system. On the other hand, "old" has often been understood as "obsolete" or "irrelevant," leading some to discount the validity of the Old Testament for Christian theology and practice. Others have suggested that "first testament" or "Hebrew scriptures" is better nomenclature, because these do not prejudice the case for the continuing relevance of the first two-thirds of the Bible. On the use of such terminology relating to the Old Testament, see Jon Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism* (Louisville: W/JKP, 1993), 9–10.

God's elect people were concerned. These covenant agreements and rituals, on the other hand, did not invalidate the theology, the narrative, and the principles which undergirded those covenants and endued them with meaning.

As others have noted, Campbell's own use of the Old Testament was sometimes at odds with his principle of the disjunction between the Old and New Testaments:

> The neglect of the Old Testament engendered by this distinction among Campbell's followers was not true of Campbell's own practice. He recognized the Old Testament as part of inspired revelation useful for religious principles, edification, and moral instruction.[12]

As New Testament writers attest, Christians have always found the Old Testament to be the necessary prelude and foundation to the New. New Testament writers quote, allude, allegorize, typologize, find fulfillment of prophecy and stories of moral exhortation. As Campbell's work shows, Christians have always struggled with exactly how the Old Testament continues to function in communities of faith today, yet most Christians have also affirmed the positive, and not just the negative, functions of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament provides the "building blocks" for theology. It is the necessary foundation for both New Testament theology and exegesis and for dogmatic (church) theology. Without the New Testament, the Old is a torso, without the culmination of its messianic (royal) theology (Isaiah 11, Psalm 110, etc.) and the meaning and goal of Israel's history as a blessing or light to the nations (Gen 12:3; Isaiah 42:6, 49:6). Without the Old Testament, the New has no basis in history or literature for its historical and literary claims, quotations, and allusions. As one scholar says,

[12] Ferguson, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 680.

> In the Church, the Hebrew Bible, known as the "Old Testament," appears as the first of the two volumes of sacred scripture, the "Bible," and interpretation is not complete until volume 1 is related to volume 2, the Old Testament to the New, so as to proclaim together Jesus Christ.[13]

Perhaps it is easier to get at the importance of the Old Testament for Christian theology and practice if we ask the question, "What would we have if the Old Testament were *not* there, if all we had was the New?" The first thing that comes to mind is *creation theology*. The New Testament does incorporate elements of Old Testament creation theology, assuming and building upon the foundation of Old Testament creation accounts and theology. For example, "new creation" texts such as 2 Cor. 5:17, Gal 6:15, and even John 1 assume and build on creation passages such as Genesis 1 and 2, and even "re-creation" passages such as Isaiah 48:7 and 65:17, without reiterating them or unpacking their language and thought. Without the creation passages in the Old Testament, we lack the theology of what it means for male and female to be made in the image of God, what it means to be caretakers of God's creation, the connection of holiness, worship, and "Sabbath rest" to creation, and what it means for God to be both transcendent (Genesis 1) and imminent (Genesis 2). Without creation theology we lose all of the wisdom books of the Old Testament, which are intended to guide humans in the world God created.

Second, without the Old Testament we lose a vital aspect of *incarnational theology*. God has elected to reveal himself in all the ambiguities and foibles of human history, which means his will and presence have always been manifested in specific cultures, at specific times, in finite human languages with finite human conceptions of the divine. If we lose the Old Testament, we lose the narrative of God's revelation in human history, culminat-

[13] Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible*, 1.

ing in Christ. When we lose everything prior to the most significant chapter in human history, the meaning of that chapter is also lost. Likewise, metaphors, analogies, parables, teachings, and moral exhortations based upon those earlier chapters lose much of their meaning.

Third, and perhaps most important, the New Testament is the record of "God with us" in Jesus Christ. It reveals a *Christology*, disclosing God and his nature through Christ. What the New Testament does not do is reveal to us details about the nature and activity of God the Father of Jesus Christ. For all the manifold revelation of God as redeemer, creator, judge, king, covenant-maker, parent, warrior, and many other metaphors for God, we turn specifically to the Old Testament.

In a real sense, we cannot get beyond the New Testament's own assessment of the value of the Old Testament: the Old Testament still functions morally through principles laid down in creation and in covenant history, it functions as the necessary background narrative to the New Testament (prophecy and fulfillment), and as theological principles derived from Old Testament practices and beliefs (*theology* corresponding to the *Christology* of the New Testament).

The First and Second Tables of the Law in the New Testament*

Jeffrey Peterson

What is the relationship between knowing God and doing justice? The topic might seem more readily answered by a study of Old Testament texts than by the New Testament, with a text like Micah 6:8 most economically stating a recurrent theme. But to Micah 6:8 we find scarcely an allusion in the New Testament; the only text listed in the Nestle-Aland index of OT allusions is Matthew 23:23, where Jesus summarizes the weightier matters of the Torah as consisting of "justice and mercy and faith" (*tēn krisin kai to eleos kai tēn pistin*), this summary echoing the "doing justice and loving mercy" of the LXX of Micah 6:8 (*tou poiein krima kai agapan eleon*). Matthew 23:23 does develop a theme that is important in the Gospel according to Matthew, stating in a nuanced manner a point made more starkly earlier in the Gospel, in Jesus' two quotations of Hosea 6:6: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt 9:13; 12:7).

This same ranking of acts of kindness over performance above ritual is found also in Matthew 5:23–24, in the instruction to "leave your gift at the altar" if you recall that your brother "holds something against you." E. P. Sanders has observed that the gift referred to here is most likely the guilt of-

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fering, prescribed in Leviticus 6:1–7 (5:20–26 in MT and LXX) to restore fellowship between brothers when one defrauds the other in regard to a deposit, or commits robbery or coerces a brother, or finds lost property and keeps it wrongfully, as detailed in Leviticus 6:2–3. If the guilt offering of Leviticus 6 supplies the background of the Matthaean text, then the "something" that a brother has against a disciple in Matthew 5:23 is likely a money damage rather than the more nebulous sort of offense that interpreters often envision.[1] Leviticus 6:4–5 requires an Israelite to restore what he took wrongly to the rightful owner along with a 20% penalty before making a guilt offering as directed in vv. 6–7; Jesus endorses this and requires it of his disciples.

Understood in this way, Matthew 5:23 relates strongly to our theme, as it insists that injustice between brothers is inconsistent with knowing or remaining in relationship with God, here indicated by honoring him properly in sacrifice. Jesus treats this theme from the other side in Matthew 18:15–17 and elaborates a procedure by which his disciples may seek reconciliation with those who have "sinned against" them. Also relevant here is the Lord's Prayer, which makes God's forgiveness of our debts to him contingent on our extending forgiveness to those in our debt (Matt 6:12, underscored by the explanation in vv. 14–15). On the surface, there appears to be some tension between this petition in Matthew 6:12 and the warning in Matthew 5:23–24 that Jesus' disciples should forgive debts so that their sacrificial offerings not be vitiated. The question that resolves this tension is whether the disciple finds himself in the position of creditor or debtor; Jesus' disciples seek reconciliation with their fellows, whether this requires us to extend restitution we owe to others or to forego restitution that others owe to us.

[1] E. P. Sanders, "Jesus and the First Table of the Jewish Law," in *Jews and Christians Speak of Jesus*, ed. Arthur E. Zannoni (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 61.

The allusion to Micah 6:8 in Matthew 23:23 has led us to recognize a significant development of our theme in the first Gospel, but this takes us only one book into the New Testament canon. If we look further, the results are not initially encouraging. We find a few references to "knowing God" (Rom 1:21; Gal 4:8–9; 1 Thess 4:5; 2 Thess 1:8; 1 John 4:6–8) as well as references to "justice" as a description of human duties (e.g., Matt 5:20; 6:1; Acts 10:35; Rom 6:19–20), but scarcely any explicit reflection on the relation between the two. The New Testament passage that most clearly brings knowledge of God and human conduct together is 1 John 4:7–8, though the term it uses for our obligations to one another is not justice but love: "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love." We return to this context below; I mention the text here only to note that this may seem like a meager result.

We should not despair yet, however, because Dale Allison and W. D. Davies observe that the Micah passage itself falls into the genre of summaries of the Law, a genre of which we have a number of New Testament examples.[2] If we turn to these summaries, we will find material to serve at least as kindling for theological reflection on the theme of "Knowing God and Doing Justice," and perhaps also as fuel.

Two-Point Summaries of the Law

The best-known summary of the Law in the New Testament is found in the Synoptic pericope on the Great Commandment(s). The passage reflects the early Jewish tradition of treating the two tables of the Ten Commandments as classifying the Law under the two headings of duties to God and duties to other people; this tradition reflects the broader Greco-Roman classi-

[2] W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, ICC 3 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), 294–95.

fication of human duties under the headings of piety (*eusebeia*) and justice (*dikaiosynē*), duties to the divine and duties to other people.[3] The most familiar version of the passage is found in Matthew 22:34–40.[4] Jesus is asked by a Pharisaic scribe which is the greatest (literally, "the great") commandment in the Law, and he responds by quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 as commanding the love of God and Leviticus 19:18 as commanding the love of neighbor. Comparable summaries of the two tables of the Law are found in Philo and other ancient Jewish writers, some employing the same Scripture passages. The most striking parallel to the Synoptic text appears in the *Testament of Issachar*: "you shall love the Lord and your neighbor" (*agapēsate ton kyrion kai ton plēsion*, 5:2), clearly alluding to both Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, just as Jesus does.[5]

Sanders is right to observe that in the Jewish tradition generally as in the Synoptic passage, the word "'love' does not describe only, or even primarily, an emotion"; rather, "love [of neighbor] is expressed by just and honest treatment."[6] In the first instance, love in the biblical tradition describes a behavior, not a feeling. Unique to Matthew is Jesus' statement in 22:39 that the second command to love the neighbor is "like" the first command to love God; as the question Jesus is answering is about the relative importance of

[3] Ibid., 237–238.

[4] I take the earliest version to be Mark 12:28–31, however, for reasons stated in my essay, "Order in the Double Tradition and the Existence of Q" in *Questioning Q*, ed. Mark S. Goodacre and Nicholas Perrin (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005), 28 n. 2.

[5] Cf. the other parallels cited by Davies and Allison (237): *Testament of Issachar* 7:6 "I loved the Lord and every man with the whole heart"; *Testament of Dan* 5.3, "Love the Lord with all your life and one another with a true heart"; Philo, *On the Virtues* 51 ("humanity" and "piety" as paired virtues), 95 ("piety" and "humanity" as the queens of the virtues); *Special Laws* 2.63 ("high above the others [i.e., truths inculcated in the Torah] [stand] two heads: one of duty to God as shown by piety and holiness, one of duty to men as shown by humanity and justice").

[6] Sanders, "Jesus and the First Table," 58.

the commandments, to say that the second is like the first presumably means that they are comparable in importance. This fits nicely with the teaching in Matthew noted earlier that our just treatment of others is inseparable from our relationship to God.

As part of an argument that "love cannot serve as a focal image for the synthetic task of New Testament ethics," Richard Hays has offered an interpretation of this Synoptic pericope, especially the Marcan version, that minimizes the importance of this two-point summary for the life of discipleship:

> In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus' promulgation of the double love commandment (Mark 12:28–34) stands as an isolated element, not supported by other references to love in the story. In its narrative context, this pericope, part of a cycle of controversy discourses (11:27–12:44), serves [only] to demonstrate that the Jewish religious authorities stood condemned by the norms that they themselves professed. … [But f]or Mark … the Torah has been eclipsed by the coming of Jesus; consequently, the call of Christian discipleship cannot be understood simply in terms of continuity with the commandments of the Law, even the greatest ones.[7]

When Hays comes to offer his principal categories for presenting the New Testament's ethical witness, he employs the images of cross, new creation, and community, intentionally omitting love as an organizing category because "[f]or a number of the major New Testament writers [and notably Luke in the book of Acts], love is not a central thematic emphasis."[8] Interestingly,

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[7] Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation, A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1996), 200. This interpretation, faintly and uncharacteristically redolent of Marcion, echoes John Howard Yoder's rejection of the common understanding "that the key concept of Jesus' ethic is the 'Golden Rule,'" which Yoder maintains Jesus offers "not as the sum of his own teaching but as the center of the law" (*The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster*, 2d ed. [Grand Rapids Eerdmans, 1994], 119).

[8] Hays, *Moral Vision*,197.

however, in elucidating the cross as a focal image for New Testament ethics, Hays says that "Jesus' death is consistently interpreted in the New Testament as an act of self-giving love."[9]

Hays's interpretation of the Greatest Commandments is called into question by the conclusion unique to Mark; Jesus tells the scribe who accepts Jesus' summary and recognizes love of God and love of neighbor as "greater than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mark 12:33) that he is "not far from the kingdom of God" (12:34), which is Mark's summary expression for the new divine order being revealed through the ministry of Jesus. This gives a much more central place to the two-point summary of the Law in terms of love than Hays suggests. The same is true of Matthew, who reports that Jesus came "not to abolish [the Law and the prophets] but to fulfill" them (Matt 5:17) and taught that "whoever does and teaches [the commandments, even the least] shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:19). The identification of the two commandments "on which all the Law and the prophets depend" (Matt 22:40) is hardly an insignificant matter for Jesus' disciples in Matthew.

Luke's version, the briefest in the Synoptics, appears in the Journey to Jerusalem (Luke 10:25–28), in which Luke details the responsibilities of discipleship.[10] In Luke, Jesus offers the two-point summary not in answer to the question which commandment of the law is greatest but in answer to a lawyer's question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"[11] In the parallel to this passage in Luke 18:18–24, Jesus refers to eternal life in 18:30 as the reward of those who have forsaken the comforts of home and family for the

[9] Ibid.

[10] Tony Ash provides a helpful topical survey of this section in *Directions for Disciples: Studies in the Gospel of Luke* (Abilene, TX: Hillcrest Publishing, 2002), 47–105, and his title concisely summarizes its major concern.

[11] The same question is put to Jesus by the rich young man in Mark 10:17.

sake of the kingdom of God, and so for Luke also the two-point summary would seem to have value beyond what Hays ascribes to it. And while we can grant the lexical point that the word "love" does not occur in Acts, we should note that Luke depicts the followers of Jesus repeatedly performing concrete acts of mercy on one another's behalf, beginning with those who in the wake of Pentecost "held all things in common and sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:44–45).

One-Point Summaries of the Law

We have seen that Jesus' two-point summary of the Law establishes a connection for his disciples between relationship with God and the just treatment of the neighbor. But even stronger evidence for this connection is supplied by the New Testament's one-point summaries of the Law as epitomized in the love of neighbor. Sanders notes that we also find such one-point summaries of the Law in Jewish writers. The negative summary "Do not do to anyone what you would hate that person to do to you" is found with minor variations in Tobit 4:15 (Tobit's testament to his son Tobias), in Philo's *Hypothetica* 7.6, and in the Babylonian Talmud (*Shabbat* 31a), where it is attributed to the first-century rabbi Hillel.[12] Sanders makes two important observations about this negative form of the Golden Rule, as it is sometimes called: first, it is phrased in general terms ("anyone"), alluding not only to Leviticus 19:18 ("you shall love your *neighbor* as yourself") but also to Leviticus 19:34, which enjoins loving "the *stranger* who sojourns among you … as yourself." Second, Sanders notes, "[t]he negative version follows naturally from Lev. 19, where 'love your neighbour' summarizes prohibitions, such as: do not deal fraudulently with your neighbor, do not rob him," rather

[12] Sanders, *Jewish Law From Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies* (London/Philadelphia: SCM/Trinity, 1990), 70–71; Sanders, "Jesus and the First Table," 56–58.

than being a weaker version of the Golden Rule than the positive formulation in the Gospels.[13]

This one-point summary understands the whole law to be epitomized in the second table, in our fulfillment of obligations towards other people. This does not imply that those who made such summaries regarded the first table of the law as dispensable. Rather, as Richard Bauckham observes, Leviticus 19 repeatedly offers as a basis for the conduct enjoined there the declaration, "I am the LORD."[14] It was by loving the neighbor as oneself that Israelites would confess that the LORD is God.

The Synoptics attribute a one-point summary of this sort to Jesus, in Matthew 7:12 and in the briefer version in Luke 6:31: "Just as you wish that people do to you, do likewise to them." This is stated in general terms ("people," as in the one-point summaries in Jewish writers, and so applicable to the treatment of all people). Paul and James both include one-point summaries of the law as fulfilled in Leviticus 19:18. Paul twice offers such a summary, in Gal 5:14 and Rom 13:8–10; and James refers to the command to love the neighbor as oneself as "the royal law" (2:8), perhaps in the sense of the Law laid down by the messianic king for his people.[15] These passages likely derive from a catechetical tradition based on Jesus' teaching about the Great Commandment. Such a traditional origin is explicit in the case of the command to "love one another" in the Johannine tradition; 1 John presents this as "the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (3:11). The phrase "from the beginning" should be

[13] Ibid., 70.

[14] Richard Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage* (London: Routledge), 143–45.

[15] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 37a (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 230: "the law articulated or ratified by Jesus 'the glorious Lord' whose name 'is invoked over them' (2:7)."

taken both in the sense of "stemming from the beginning" of the recipients' Christian experience, and also in the sense of 1:1, as originating in "that which was from the beginning," the word of life which appeared in the person of Jesus. An origin of the command to love one another in the teaching of Jesus is strongly suggested by 1 John 3:23 and explicit in the Gospel (John 13:34).

The "new commandment" to "love one another" is not explicitly offered in the Gospel and 1 John as a summary of the Law, but this is implicit in John's use of the word "commandment" (*entolē*, one of the provisions of the Law, which by synecdoche can stand for the whole, as in Rom 7:7–12). In 1 John 4:20–21, we move from a one-point summary of the Law to a two-point summary: "If any one says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also" (RSV). This passage, the conclusion to the exhortation quoted above (p. 49), makes explicit the logic involved in the one-point summaries generally: fulfillment of the second command demonstrates that one has fulfilled the first.

The one-point summaries that we find in Paul, James, and John are all stated in terms only of the "neighbor" (cf. Lev 19:18). Does this imply a retreat from the more expansive summary employing Leviticus 19:34 to "do to others as we would they do to us" in the teaching of Jesus, or "not to do to others that which we would not want them to do to us," as we find in Jewish writers? I think not, not even in the case of the Johannine literature, where such a retreat is often seen; its dualism notwithstanding, John's Gospel regards "the world" as the object of God's saving concern (John 3:16–17), and the First Epistle similarly regards the atonement as potentially universal in scope (1 John 2:2). The general early Christian attitude is captured in Paul's

statement in Galatians 6:10 (one chapter after his one-point summary of the Law in terms of Lev 19:18): "as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." Early Christians' most frequent opportunities to assist others involved other Christians, as we can see from Acts and from Paul's description of his efforts to assist the poor among the Judean saints (Gal 2:10; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8–9; Rom 15:25–28).

Love of Neighbor Today

Christians in modern Western countries like the US have greater resources and greater opportunities to do good than the Christians to whom the New Testament was originally addressed. We therefore have an increased responsibility to do so, but also a concomitant responsibility to ensure that our actions genuinely do good rather than merely salving our consciences. Many Christian teachers, especially those who have received our intellectual formation (and no small part of our spiritual formation) in the Western academic milieu, must overcome a degree of misinformation to see the world and our responsibilities clearly.[16]

In his widely read book *Simply Christian*, for example, N. T. Wright affirms that "Christians should campaign for" the elimination of "global debt" as an element of "the cry for justice in the world."[17] This appeal mani-

[16] David Bentley Hart supplies a bracing introduction to such a project of discernment in his *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

[17] N. T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2006), 227. Bishop Wright has contributed much to understanding the New Testament, but this book does not encourage confidence in his grasp of recent history. From his survey of the horrors marking the last century, one would conclude that there was greater oppression and loss of life in Armenia under the Turks, in South Africa under apartheid, or indeed among Native Americans on the frontier than in twentieth-century China or Russia, as he refers to neither (6–7). While appropriately critical of materialist capitalism (8), Wright fails to note the body count of materialist statism, in which ten million dead constitute a rounding

fests no recognition that the concrete effect of such an expression of concern in many cases would be to ease the economic pressure constraining the actions of corrupt third-world governments, rather than relieving the suffering of the people ruled by them. Christians seeking to aid those in the worst living conditions in the world can benefit from the sort of work that researchers contributing to the "Copenhagen Consensus" have undertaken to determine what actions would most help those in the poorest countries.[18] If love means action that helps another and not simply the feeling of concern for those with fewer resources, then Christians seeking our neighbor's good are obligated to familiarize ourselves with the real conditions our neighbors face and with the effects of our efforts to assist them, rather than simply taking actions that assuage our feelings of guilt because of our unmerited privilege and comfort.

For similar reasons, I am reluctant simply to contribute money to people begging on the street in the US, as the evidence suggests that most cash contributions to the homeless are used to sustain alcohol or other chemical abuse, which doesn't benefit those we seek to help.[19] A better practice is that of a friend who keeps lunch bags of non-perishable food in her car, as well as blankets in the winter, and offers these when asked for money. Even more

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error. One sentence late in the book mentions "eastern European Communism" as a (presumably harmful) ideology now abandoned, but the reader is left to infer that its collapse was to the good, and the magnitude of the carnage inflicted on the peoples who suffered is left unacknowledged (226). It is evident (e.g., from p. 5) that Wright has failed to appreciate Hayek; one is left to wonder if he has ever read Solzhenitsyn.

[18] See Bjorn Lomborg, ed., *Solutions for the World's Biggest Problems: Costs and Benefits* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), summarized in Lomborg, ed., *How to Spend $50 Billion to Make the World a Better Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Rather than debt relief, Lomborg and his colleagues prioritize the prevention of HIV/AIDS, the provision of micronutrients (notably iodine) to address malnutrition and hunger, the removal of barriers to trade, and the control of malaria.

[19] See for example Stephen J. Dubner, ed., "Freakonomics Quorum: The Economics of Street Charity," *New York Times*, 9 August 2007 (http:// freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/08/09/freakonomics-quorum-the-economics-of-street-charity/, accessed 19 August 2009).

helpful to those who have lost their way would be relationships with Christian communities organized to introduce (or re-introduce) the recipients of aid to structures of mutual responsibility and concern and to relationships that foster a recognition of the reality of others and of one's impact on them—a significant element of what Scripture means by "love."[20] Such ministries will be costly, in effort and time as well as money, but it is through such acts of genuine help for those in need that we can most truly express our love for God.

[20] Such relationships as a context for restoring persons to wholeness are explored in Marvin Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion* (Washington: Regnery, 1992); the impersonal structures of the nineteenth and twentieth century welfare state compare unfavorably in Olasky's judgment. For Christian love as "recognition of the reality of others," see Diogenes Allen, *The Path of Perfect Love* (Cambridge: Cowley, 1992), esp. 11–38.

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, 1852

Alexander Campbell

The psalmody and the public prayers of a Christian community are the most unequivocal and infallible exponents of its piety and spiritual intelligence. Indeed, the sacred song and the social prayer are but the express image and living form of the pious emotions, religious taste, spiritual discernment, than holy affections of those who unite in them. If the Christian can best exhibit his faith by his works, he can also most satisfactorily verbally demonstrate his piety and humanity in the praises which he sings, and in the prayers and thanksgivings which he offers.

The Christian Hymn Book, next to the Bible, moreover, wields the largest and mightiest formative influence upon the young and old, upon saint and sinner, than of any other book in the world. Poetry, and especially good religious and moral poetry, emanates as much from the heart as from the head, and partakes so much of the spirit of its author, that it insinuates itself into the soul with more subtlety and power than any other language of mortals, either pictured to the eye, or presented to the ear. "Allow me," said some one, "to write the ballads for a nation, and I care not who enacts its laws." Permit me, I also say, to dispense the psalmody of a community, and I care not who dictates its creed or writes out its catechism. If the hymn-book is daily sung in the family, and in the social meetings of the brethren, it must imbue their souls with its sentiments more than all the other labors of the pulpit or the press.

For these reasons, no book ought to be got up with more religious care and consideration than the volume of psalmody. No task requires a more cultivated spiritual taste—a more enlarged and comprehensive mind—a more intimate acquaintance with the spirit of the Bible and the hallowed breathings of its saints, than the psalmody of a Christian church (*Introduction*, 13–14).

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Pietism, Pieties, and the Contemporary Church: Promise and Peril

Michael R. Weed

"Piety," in this essay, designates a universal aspect of human existence. Human lives are shaped by interpretations of reality—which provide visions of life's intent and purpose and direct human hopes and aspirations. Further, in spite of piety's associations with religion,[1] there are many kinds of "pieties" shaped and driven by what individuals and communities take most seriously (respect or reverence[2]), i.e., preoccupations which, for good or ill, shape the direction and goal of human lives.

An illustration may help clarify this concept of piety and pieties: October 4, 1969, found my wife Libby, a University of Texas student, and me (a UT ex) sitting in the student section of UT's Memorial Stadium (where my father had taken me as a child). This early fall afternoon, Texas was playing Navy. The invocation was offered (they did that then), the national anthem was played by UT's marching band and sung by the crowd of over 65,000, followed by "The Eyes of Texas." After Navy had taken the field, the UT

[1] In popular usage, piety's association with religion is commonly negative, e.g., "pious hypocrite" as exemplified by Uriah Heep in Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*. Similarly, referring to someone as "pious" has come to carry negative connotations.

[2] English "piety" is derived from the Latin *pietas* meaning "ultimate respect, reverence." Cf. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P.G.W. Glare, (NewYork: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1378.

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Cowboys repeatedly fired Old Smokey and the Longhorns came onto the field through clouds of smoke as the crowd roared and broke into "Texas Fight."

This common experience illustrates the blending of a number of identifiable "pieties": family (memories of my father), patriotism (the flag and national anthem), regional loyalties ("The Eyes of Texas"), entertainment (band, competing teams, etc.), and religion (invocation).

While there are different religious pieties (e.g., Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, etc.), and even different Christian pieties (e.g., Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, etc.), pietism is commonly understood as a reforming impulse or tendency appearing in various forms in different Christian communions with the goal of recovering the affective or spiritual aspects of the Christian faith.[3] Consequently, pietism often appears as a renewal or reform movement where these aspects of religion are sensed to have been neglected or lost. In the study of church history, Pietism is used—capitalized and without modifier—to designate a significant religious development within the Lutheran state church following the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation and its tragic aftermath, the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648).

At least five factors contribute to the rise of Pietism: (1) Martin Luther's failure to develop a doctrine of the authority of scripture, (2) his reluctance to develop a doctrine of sanctification, (3) the inattention of Lutheran authorities to the role of laity in the life of the church,[4] and (4) a growing

[3] The Hasidic movement in Judaism (beginning in the 18th century) is considered an example of the "pietist impulse."

[4] Parenthetically, these three factors contributed to ongoing disputes within the Lutheran hierarchy and to a distancing between the church's leaders and its members. By the time of Luther's death in 1546, unresolved differences had become apparent between his own views and those of his colleague, Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560). Cf. Arthur Cushman M'Giffert, *Protestant Thought Before Kant* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 142f. M'Giffert observes that Luther's concept of saving faith, while of great practical importance, was insufficient as an effective

sense of the importance of the individual and of individual freedoms in the broader culture.

Finally (5), the emergence of Pietism cannot be understood apart from the devastation of the Thirty Years' War. Fighting over a combination of political and religious factors, armies from Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Bohemia, Spain, and France—including mercenaries and adventurers—ravaged Germany from 1618 until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. By the war's end, countless villages, cities, and churches had been destroyed. Torture, maiming, and murder of civilians and prisoners had become commonplace—cannibalism was even reported.[5] Disease and famine were widespread and an estimated fifteen million persons had been killed or displaced.

The cultural and spiritual damage of the war was equally devastating. Large numbers of the surviving population were left distrustful of all official religion. Germany, which felt the brunt of the war, was divided into over 300 territorial states controlled by regional princes to whom Luther and Melanchthon had turned for support.[6] In reaction to the war, two major alternatives to doctrinal disputation and religious conflict emerged. Many turned from the religious and theological disputes of revealed religion to Deism, preferring the seemingly rational objectivity of nature's God, accessible to reason and

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principle for organizing a dogmatic theology. Further, many disagreements between Luther and Melanchthon, while of little practical importance at the time, had significant theological implications. Over time, these festered into continuing theological controversies, strife, and division within the Lutheran movement. It was not until 1580 that the Formula of Concord and the Book of Concord provided some stability to Lutheranism.

[5] Cf. Will and Ariel Durant, *The Age of Reason Begins* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), 568.

[6] Luther and Melanchthon's call for assistance had, eventually, led to permanent control, commonly exercised through a "consistory," or commission of lawyers and clergymen appointed by and responsible to the ruler. See Theodore G. Tappert, "Introduction," *Pia Desideria* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 3.

science.[7] The other major religious alternative to rise from the ashes of the Thirty Years War was Pietism.

Philipp Jacob Spener: *Pia Desideria*

Though he was not without precursors, Pietism's founder is regarded as Philipp Jacob Spener (1635–1705).[8] In 1670, as a Lutheran pastor in Frankfurt, Spener became concerned with the moral climate and lack of spirituality in the city. He sought to raise the spiritual level of his parishioners by initiating meetings in his home. These gatherings, involving Bible study, prayer sessions, and conversations about the Christian faith became known as *Collegia Pietatis* and gave the movement its name.

In 1675 Spener called for reform of the German state church with the publication of *Pia Desideria*.[9] Before introducing six proposals for reconstituting the church, Spener observed that there were serious deficiencies in the church. *Pia Desideria* then proceeded to assess the civil authorities, the clergy, and the common people.

Spener charged that few authorities knew what Christianity was, much less practiced it. Those showing interest in religion frequently did so out of a

[7] Believing in a Creator accessible to all through human reason (rather than special revelation), Deism initially appeared in England and was widely influential in both Germany and France. Understandably, much of Deism's "rational content" reflected centuries of Christian influence upon European culture.

[8] As a youth, Spener was an avid reader of books in his father's library where he was influenced by works such as Johann Arndt's *True Christianity*, and the work of English Puritans such as Lewis Bayly's *The Practice of Piety* (1610?) and Richard Baxter's *The Necessary Teaching of the Denial of the Self* (ca. 1650), all critical of conventional Christianity. See Theodore G. Tappert, "Introduction: the Times, the Man, the Book" in Philipp Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria: Heartfelt Desire for a God-pleasing Reform of the True Evangelical Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 8f.

[9] See Philipp Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*. The alternate title of *Pia Desideria* may be translated *Heartfelt Desire for a God-pleasing Reform of the True Evangelical Church*. It was originally composed as a preface to a collection of Johann Arndt's sermons and is addressed to readers concerned with the state of the church and open to corrective changes.

factious spirit, or for political advantage.[10] He also insisted that ministers needed to reform as much as anyone, adding that when "the people are undisciplined, … their priests are not holy."[11] Additionally, Spener charged that sermons were often disputatious and intent on displaying preachers' intellectual abilities.

Spener ironically observed that

> … the highly enlightened apostle [Paul], if he came among us today, would probably understand only a little of what our slippery geniuses sometimes say in holy places. This means that he derived his knowledge not from human ingenuity but from the illumination of the Spirit, and these are as far removed from each other as heaven is from earth.[12]

For Spener, such sermons emphasized correct doctrine but ignored heartfelt faith and charity toward others.[13] He proceeded to offer six proposals for reforming the church and recovering the essence of the Christian faith. These proposals reflect the following concerns:

> 1. Attention must be given to a more extensive use of the Word of God among us. (87)
> 2. The establishment and diligent exercise of the spiritual priesthood … according to which … all Christians are made priests by their Savior [and] are anointed by the Holy Spirit, and are dedicated to perform spiritual-priestly acts. (92)
> 3. … [T]he people must have impressed upon them … that it is by no means enough to have knowledge of the Christian faith, for Christianity consists rather of practice. (95)
> 4. We must beware how we conduct ourselves in religious controversies … with unbelievers and heretics … disputing is not enough to maintain the truth … or to impart it to the erring. (97, 102)

[10] Ibid., 43.

[11] Ibid., 44. This condition is regarded by some as a consequence of Luther's ambivalence regarding a doctrine of sanctification.

[12] Ibid., 7.

[13] Ibid., 56.

> 5. It would be especially helpful if the professors would pay attention to the life as well as the studies of students [preparing for ministry] and … speak to those who need to be spoken to. (107)
> 6. The pulpit is not the place for ostentatious display of one's skill. … Preaching should be the divine means to save people, and … everything be directed to this end. (115)

Pia Desideria evoked different reactions. Government officials could not overlook Spener's criticism of their role in directing the church. And while the reaction of theology professors was also largely negative, that of ministers was mixed. Initially, it was only a small minority of Lutheran pastors and lay persons for whom *Pia Desideria* was formative. It was only with subsequent generations that Pietism became an international movement.

In 1686 Spener left Frankfurt and became court chaplain to John George III of Saxony in Dresden. Here he met August Herman Francke (1663–1727), an instructor at the University of Leipzig who would become Spener's successor as leader of the Pietist movement.[14] As Francke helped form devotional groups within the university of Leipzig, faculty opposition forced him from the university, and he accepted a pastoral role at Erfurt.

In 1691 Spener became rector of Nikolaikirche in Berlin where he attracted support from the elector of Brandenburg (who would become King Frederick I of Prussia in 1701).[15] Here, Spener was involved in planning a new university at Halle and helped Francke obtain an appointment in the University of Halle, where he remained for the rest of his life.[16]

Philipp Spener died in 1705. What Spener could not have envisioned was the broader influence that his reform would have–influence extending beyond Spener's church and beyond his homeland.

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[14] Tappert, 21.
[15] T. A. Burkill, *The Evolution of Christian Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 317.
[16] Ibid.

Pietism: From Europe to India and America

Francke, as a professor at the new university at Halle, proved to be a man of ability and vision. Within a decade, he established a school for children of the poor, an orphanage, a dispensary, a publishing house, and a Bible institute.[17] And it was through Francke's efforts that Halle became a center of foreign missions. King Frederick IV of Denmark, seeking to provide missionaries to the Danish settlement of Tranquebar on the southeast coast of India, turned to Halle for help. The result was the famous Tamil mission.[18]

It was, however, through the efforts of Francke's student at Halle (and a godson of Spener), Nikolaus Ludwig, Count von Zinzendorf (1700–1760), that Pietism would exercise its greatest influence outside of Germany. In the 1720s, the Moravian Brethren (remnants of the Hussite church), sought refuge from persecution in Austria.[19] Zinzendorf welcomed the Moravians on his estate (east of Dresden) and committed to nurturing the religious life of the growing settlement of Herrnut ("Watch of the Lord").[20] In time, Zinzendorf became interested in foreign missions, sending missionaries from Herrnut to the West Indies (1732), Greenland (1733) and Georgia (1735).[21] In London (1738) a religious society was founded which would influence

[17] As a result of visiting Francke's various foundations, King Frederick William I adopted some of Francke's ideas in his own efforts to reform Prussian education.

[18] Two students at Halle, Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Plutschau, arrived in Tranquebar in 1706 and founded what would become the Tamil mission. When Ziegenbalg died in 1719, the mission consisted of a community of over 350 persons, had produced a translation of the New Testament in Tamil, and had developed procedures for transferring leadership of the church to native converts. Many missiologists view the Tamil mission as the beginning of Protestant missions. Cf. Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), 227f.

[19] Burkill, 318.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

John Wesley.[22] In 1734 Lutheran authorities accused Zinzendorf of heresy and he was exiled from 1736 to 1747. During this time he became a Moravian bishop and established Moravian societies in the Baltics, Netherlands, England, West Indies, and the American colonies.[23]

As Spener, Francke, and later Zinzendorf were struggling against a sterile orthodoxy in Germany, similar impulses were appearing among English Christians.[24] Further, devotional groups (similar to Spener's) appeared among Anglican churches in the late seventeenth century.[25]

It was in part due to these stirrings, particularly Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, that John (1703–1791) and Charles Wesley (1707–1788) became leaders of a student group at Oxford which met for Bible study, communion, and visiting jails.

In 1735 John and Charles Wesley sailed to Georgia as missionaries. On their ship were Moravians who, during a storm at sea, demonstrated courageous faith which impressed John Wesley and evoked a sense of the weakness of his own faith. After a short and failed ministry in America, the Wesleys returned to England (1737) and in London renewed friendship with Peter Boehler, a Moravian missionary en route to the Americas, who had established a religious group in London.[26]

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[22] Ibid., 319.

[23] Ibid. In 1747 Zinzendorf was allowed to return to Herrnhut where—except for six years as a missionary in England—he worked until the time of his death in 1760.

[24] John Bunyon's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), Isaac Watts' *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1707) and *Psalms of David* (1719), and William Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1728) all sought a deeper and more heartfelt personal faith.

[25] Burkill, 319.

[26] Studies of Wesley variously describe his relationship with Boehler and Moravian Pietism. There are indications that Wesley met Boehler before going to America. Further, some descriptions of Wesley's Aldersgate experience suggest that it occurred in a Moravian meeting. Albert Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press,1964), 52.

Shortly afterward, on May 24, 1738, while attending a Moravian meeting, John Wesley received the spiritual confirmation he needed.[27] He records that while the preface of Luther's *Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans* was being read, his heart "was strangely warmed," and he received assurance that God, through Christ, had saved him from "the law of sin and death."[28] In time, Wesley would travel on horseback over 250,000 miles of British roads preaching to factory workers, farmers, and the people of the land.

Pietism in America and American Pietism

While Puritans, Moravians, and eventually Methodists brought Pietism to the American colonies in the early 18th century, the American experience contributed to a social and historical climate which fostered pietistic tendencies among most versions of Christianity imported from Europe. In 1835, touring French aristocrat, Alexis de Tocqueville, observed that Old World churches were refashioning themselves in America's democratic ethos.

> As men become more alike and equal, it is important that religions … not collide unnecessarily with the generally accepted ideas and permanent interests that reign among the mass; for common opinion appears more and more as the first and most irresistible of powers; there is no support outside of it strong enough to permit long resistance to its blows.[29]

Additionally, the scarcity of clergy to serve America's small and scattered congregations necessitated more lay involvement and independence among churches—regardless of tradition or church polity—than did their European counterparts. Significantly, Tocqueville also observed that both

[27] Cf. Burkill, 322.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 423.

Catholics and Protestants were forced to de-emphasize traditions, rites, and rituals.[30]

American churches inevitably reflected the effects of Europe's devastating religious wars. Ninety-five years after Tocqueville's visit, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (on his first visit to America), observed that American churches were characterized by concern with neither creedal statements nor theological truth.[31] He noted that the word "church" itself was associated with "arrogance and intolerance" and was commonly replaced by "denomination."[32] Bonhoeffer conjectured that in America, Christians fleeing persecution in Europe found themselves facing "an immense multiplicity of Christian communities" which the term "denomination" acknowledges while avoiding questions of the unity of America's fractured Christianity.[33] For Bonhoeffer, American Christianity was so marked by European memories that "the concept of tolerance becomes the basic principle of everything Christian."[34]

Within three years of Bonhoeffer's visit, Charles Fiske, Episcopal Bishop in New York State, recorded similar observations. After a tour of churches, Fiske lamented lack of interest in dogma and noted popular slogans such as "conduct, not creed," "faith saves, not doctrine or theology."[35] To-

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[30] Ibid., 421.

[31] *No Rusty Swords* (New York: Collins + World, 1965), 90.

[32] Ibid., Bonhoeffer observed that "For the first generation of fugitives the journey to America was a decision of faith for their whole lives. For them the renunciation of the confessional struggle was therefore a hard fought Christian possibility. A danger arises here, however, for the subsequent generations, who are born into this battle-free situation. … What was for their fathers a right of their Christian faith won at risk of their lives becomes for the sons a general Christian rule. … The struggle over the creed, for which their fathers took flight, has become for the sons something which is in itself unchristian."

[33] Ibid., 93.

[34] Ibid., 99.

[35] Charles Fiske, *From Skepticism to Faith* (New York: Harper & Bros. Publishers, 1934). "In religion, it has been said, it is faith that saves, not doctrine or the-

gether, Tocqueville, Bonhoeffer, and Fiske sensed what is now widely recognized: American churches are fertile soil for "generic pietism" and are now reflecting the deficiencies and vulnerabilities inherent in that designation.

Christian Piety and Pieties

As represented by Spener and others, Pietism brought needed renewal and redirection to Lutheran and other Protestant churches. Subordinating theology to Scripture, involving the laity in the disciplines of prayer and scripture reading, emphasizing the importance of "heartfelt faith" and charitable acts, offered new visions of Christianity in Europe and America. Undoubtedly, Pietism's emphases on mission and fuller involvement of women in the life of the church were important and needed changes in European churches.

Negatively, Pietism early on demonstrated that it also posed risks to orthodox faith—not only deterioration into subjectivism[36] but also elitism.[37] As pietistic impulses today abound in a broader anti-intellectual and anti-authoritarian environment, some intrinsic weaknesses of pietism are becoming evident. Also evident is the degree to which effective and lasting renewal efforts draw shape and direction from the dogma, doctrines, and practices of the very churches which they seek to "renew."

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ology. … None of your dogmas, we are told; we want a practical religion; character, conduct, not creed; the essential thing is to follow Christ, not to define him." 27, 28.

[36] Cf. Fredrich Schleiermacher (d.1834), raised in a Pietist environment and one of the founders of liberal theology illustrates this point. Schleiermacher viewed all theological/doctrinal statements as attempts to verbalize the core of all religion, which he identified as the "feeling of absolute dependence." For Schleiermacher, conflicting confessions (e.g., Jewish, Muslim, Christian) are like different wrappings protecting the same gift–the feeling of absolute dependence on that greater than ourselves. Cf. Schleiermacher's *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958 (orig., 1799), 90f.

[37] While being a little church within the church ("*Ecclesiola in Ecclesia*") may have a leavening function, it may also give rise to intrigue and a sense of spiritual elitism.

As contemporary American churches attempt to market Christianity in a manner that is attractive to the broader culture, long-standing tendencies to de-emphasize doctrine and theology are intensified.[38] Countless numerically successful churches are altering traditional Christian pieties by diluting them—intentionally and unintentionally—with infusions from secular pieties of the surrounding post-Christian culture (e.g., common advertising techniques, established marketing and management strategies, and popular entertainment motifs).[39] Believers whose "hearts and minds" are molded in this syncretistic environment—attempting to combine non- and even anti-Christian aspirations and ideals with Christian faith—are inevitably drawn into "hybrid-pieties."[40] Their hyphenated-faiths mark them with spiritual anemia; they are restless and susceptible to the virus-like spread of contem-

[38] Frederick Sontag and John K. Roth, *The American Religious Experience: The Roots, Trends, and Future of Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 13f.

[39] Belief that these are "spiritually neutral" is a naive understanding of their influence on modern hearts and minds, viz., while not denying God, they make Him irrelevant "for all practical purposes."

[40] Cf. Edward Farley, *Requiem for a Lost Piety: The Contemporary Search for the Christian Life* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), 50–64. Farley describes three stages through which Christian piety mutates. The first stage occurs when the realities of the gospel are captured in certain feelings and experiences. For example, when guilt and forgiveness are viewed in terms of our experience, the transcendent reality of God beyond our emotions is minimized. The second stage is with our emotions becoming the center of our Christian lives. For example, when the goal of worship becomes the experience of worshipful feelings, our efforts are drawn toward inducing such experiences. Our worship services are "successful" only when certain feelings are produced. The final stage in this mutation of Christian piety flows from the first two. If my feelings and experiences are the goal of Christian life, the object of concern is not God but me. Once my feelings are central, the next step is to censor the emotions, allowing in only those which I find comforting or exciting. Following Farley, the difference between emerging "worship pieties" is that some of these pieties simply may not be Christian.

porary idolatries which attempt to combine non- and even anti-Christian aspirations and ideals with Christian faith.[41]

Corrective Vision

The solution to this problem can only be found in a return to the fundamental beliefs, teachings, and practices of the church. Sixty years ago Dorothy Sayers spoke to postwar (and becoming post-Christian) Britain:

> It is worse than useless for Christians to talk about the importance of Christian morality, unless they are prepared to take their stand upon the fundamentals of Christian theology. It is a lie to say that the dogma does not matter; it matters enormously. It is fatal to let people suppose that Christianity is only a mode of feeling; it is vitally necessary to insist that it is first and foremost a rational explanation of the universe.[42]

True Christian piety shapes hearts and minds immersed in the historic Christian faith—dogma, doctrine, and polity. In the first century, the Christian message of God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself broke the grip of pagan pieties: the aura of Rome, Greek philosophy, and other gods of the age.

Today, different forces may dominate modern hearts and minds, but they are no less attractive, powerful, and destructive. In a naively "secular" world, churches must become vigilant in identifying the elusive gods of the age and the diseases of heart and mind which they spawn. Over forty years ago, Edward Farley cautioned that renewal programs popular among American churches were not providing disciplines for the full life of faith but only

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[41] In this regard, Gene Veith observes: "The old paradigm taught that if you have the right teaching, you will experience God. The new paradigm says that if you experience God, you will have the right teaching. … [N]ot only is objective doctrine minimized in favor of subjective experience, experience actually becomes the criterion for evaluating doctrine." *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994), 211.

[42] Dorothy L. Sayers, "Creed or Chaos?" *Letters to a Post-Christian World*, ed. and introduced by Roderick Jellema (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 31.

Christian "activities." Farley warned that something else will fill the void and Christians "will be more or less at the mercy of whatever comes along, especially the loud voices of the secular pieties."[43]

I close by returning to the football game between the University of Texas and the U. S. Naval Academy which my wife and I attended forty years ago. Some time in the second quarter, a Navy player lay face down, writhing and grasping the grass turf with his hands. His teammates frantically waved toward the Navy bench in front of the UT student section. Navy trainers sprinted onto the field. A stretcher was called for. The ambulance in the south end zone drove along the cinder track toward the Navy bench. Light applause for the injured midshipman was quickly eclipsed by the roar of thousands of UT fans chanting, "Hit 'em again! Hit 'em again! Harder! Harder!"

Versions of this annual autumn pageant are reenacted throughout the land … Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. It is a grand spectacle, as American as apple pie, and only part of what Robert Bellah over four decades ago identified as "American Civil Religion"—which observes winter, spring, and summer rites as well.[44]

Some days after the UT–Navy game, I related the above incident to a Christian friend. After a few moments, he observed, "Sounds like all that was missing were the lions and Christians."

He was wrong. Christians *had* been there.

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[43] Farley, 116. Recently, in a class in which six or seven different Protestant traditions were represented, the writer inquired if anyone's church was *not* adapting their worship practices to an entertainment format. All confirmed, without hesitation, that their churches were doing precisely that.

[44] Robert Neelly Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 96:1 (1967), 1-21.

A Russian "Christians Only" Movement

Thomas H. Olbricht

Foreword by Allan J. McNicol

Anyone appraising the religious scene in Eastern Europe will appreciate that Orthodoxy and Catholicism are not without rivals. In fact, many other religious and ideological movements flourish throughout the area. In Christendom, at least since John Hus (ca. 1373-1415), reform movements have appeared in various quarters. Presently there is a small but determined effort among members of the Stone-Campbell tradition to establish New Testament Christianity in this vast area.

Stories about such movements fascinate and inform. In this essay, Tom Olbricht tells the story of developments of a restoration movement in Russia. This movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries established connections with some in the Stone-Campbell tradition despite differences to our plea. The story of this movement reminds us that many in Europe remain open to biblical faith.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century a movement began, at first among Russian nobility in St. Petersburg, to focus on simple, early Christianity. Although government officials in collaboration with the Russian Orthodox hierarchy imposed intermittent sanctions on the blossoming movement it entered upon a golden age from 1918 to 1928. At its peak these churches claimed over 300,000 adherents. After the revolution of 1917 the Bolsheviks launched their attacks against the Orthodox Church and permitted other religious groups to flourish. As Stalin became more powerful in 1928 he initiated

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severe restrictions against these evangelicals. American Christians of a restorationist disposition became aware of these efforts in Russia early in the second decade of the twentieth century.[1]

Lord Radstock

A key figure early in the movement was Radstock (Granville Waldegrave, the third Lord Radstock, 1833-1913) of England. A Bible reading awakening occurred among the St. Petersburg nobility in the 1870s. Lady Chertkoy was especially affected by the awakening. In order to seek additional instruction she traveled to Paris where she met Lord Radstock and was converted.[2] Radstock, though raised an Anglican was influenced by the Plymouth Brethren, a group in which John Nelson Darby was a key leader. The Plymouth Brethren set out to launch purified churches through a study of the Scriptures. Lady Chertkoy invited Lord Radstock to St. Petersburg in 1874. Radstock first preached at Lady Chertkoy's mansion then those of other nobility and later in a church building. His remarks were explicitly based upon the Scriptures. He was both praised and criticized, but his efforts took a turn when he was invited to speak at the palace of Lady Alexandra Pashkov. Her husband was a retired Colonel of the Tsar's army, Vasili A. Pashkov. At first the Colonel was not interested, but as a good host he listened and was soon captivated by Radstock's message. From that time on Pashkov became an aggressive leader of the movement and his palace the focal point for its activities. Other converts who soon became involved were Count Modest M. Korff, the Lord Chamberlain and Count Aleksey P. Bobrisky, Chief of Transportation. Those in St. Petersburg literary circles learned of the preach-

[1] The most extensive book on the movement is Geoffrey H. Ellis and L. Wesley Jones, *The Other Revolution: Russian Evangelical Awakenings* (Abilene: ACU Press, 1996).

[2] David Fountain, *Lord Radstock and the Russian Awakening* (Southampton: Mayflower Christian Books, 1988).

ing of Radstock. Among others he met Dostoevsky who liked Pashkov, but was not influenced by him.

Radstock gave special emphasis to a love for Christ and the Scriptures. He focused upon salvation and personal holiness, one faith, and the church. He baptized those he influenced, but did not assign baptism special priority. He stressed an allegiance to the Bible only and advocated that one be just a Christian. Opposition to the awakening soon arose. Russian Orthodox officials and others labeled it a blasphemous sect. Tolstoy, who himself advocated a purified Christianity, criticized its adherents. Radstock left St. Petersburg for Moscow but was forced to return to England in 1876.

Vasili A. Pashkov (1831-1902)

Pashkov, the first Russian leader of the evangelical awakening came from a wealthy family. He owned lands, factories and mines in Moscow, Nizhegorod, and Orenburg. His wife's sisters, also of considerable means, supported his efforts. He was past forty when converted, but he soon became passionately evangelistic and dedicated to organizational detail. He held open meetings at his palace, the results of which were published in the newspapers, in order to attract new members. He also preached among the commoners in courtyards, factories, and workshops. He and his adherents recognized the merit of addressing needs of various sorts as a means of attracting dedicated adherents. He opened a public cafeteria in a poorer section of St. Petersburg and offered meals for reasonable prices. He provided free eating-houses for workers and tea-houses for laborers who came into the city from the farms in the winter. When the farm laborers returned home in the spring he pressed upon them an abundance of printed materials to distribute. He founded a religious paper, *The Russian Worker* in 1875 under the editorship of M. G. Peiker. In 1876 he founded a Society for the Encouragement of

Spiritual-Moral Reading, which distributed tracts and books throughout Russia at low costs.

In the first two years the Pashkovites encountered little opposition because Pashkov sympathizers were in positions of power including A. P. Bobrihski who was Minister of Education, and A. E. Timashey, Minister of National Affairs. But in 1878 the Russian government prohibited the Pashkov evangelicals from meeting and admonished them to return to the Russian Orthodox Church. The Pashkovites, however, managed to continue various activities throughout Russia, and Pashkov himself traveled to different regions visiting with and giving assistance to Baptists, Molokans, Mennonite Brethren and Stundists. In 1884 Pashkov arranged for a meeting in St. Petersburg of leaders from all these groups providing lavish accommodations and meals. Government officials were aware of the gatherings and soon dispersed those who attended and arrested several of the delegates. In May of 1884 the Society for the Encouragement of Spiritual-Moral Reading was closed down. Pashkov and his associate Count Korff were told either to desist from distributing literature or face exile. Because of Pashkov's refusal to discontinue from distributing Bibles he was exiled and moved to Paris. He also lived some of his remaining years in London, Basel, and Rome. He continued to support the preaching of the evangelicals in various countries.

Evangelical Groups in Russia

By far the most Russians were Russian Orthodox ever since Christianity came in A.D. 988. A few splits had occurred, the most significant ones being the Old Believers (1667), and two factions from them, the Dukhobors and the Molokans early in the Nineteenth century. The word Molokan in Russian may be translated milk and these dissenters were so labeled because they drank milk during Lent. Immigrants from Western Europe also added to the complexion. Peter the Great attempted to make Russia into a secular state

and invited various people from the West to settle in the country. Especially Germanic peoples were encouraged to migrate to Russia by Catherine the Great late in the eighteenth century. These groups included Lutherans, Mennonites, and Mennonite Brethren. Revival of interest in the Bible occurred throughout Russia after the freeing of the serfs in 1861. One such interest developed among the pietistic Lutherans who commenced studying the Bible at stated hours, hence they were designated Stundists, derived from the German word for hour. Several of the Stundists later merged with the Baptists. The first Baptist congregation was founded in the Caucasus at Tiflis in 1867. A Baptist Union was formed in the Ukraine in 1884. An awakening also occurred among the Mennonites who were officially recognized in 1863. These various evangelical groups comprised the constituencies that Pashkov tried to bring together, but with little success in 1884. Pashkov, however, was a dedicated believer given to big dreams for the uniting of evangelicals in Russia and focusing upon the New Testament.

Ivan Stephanovitch Prokhanov (1869-1935)

The next highly effective leader of these evangelicals was I. S. Prokhanov. Prohkanov was born to Molokan parents in Tiflis in the Caucasus. He was baptized in 1886 at age seventeen. He soon began to preach and gave serious attention to how he would spend his life. He was unusually focused upon his goals and decided to take up engineering. When he took qualifying exams he ranked among the top five of those admitted at the Imperial Institute of Technology in St. Petersburg. Because of his religious commitment he soon made his way to a group of Pashkovites who met at the mansion of Princess Lieven. There he met J. B. Karge and William Feltner, leaders of the Russian Baptists. He was especially influenced by the views of Vladimir Solov'ev who stressed the unity of all believers and who by most religionists in Russia was considered a heretic. Even before he received his diploma in

1893 Prokhanov started a religious publication which he titled *Beseda*. He wrote in it under the pseudonym of Zacchaeus. He likely selected this name to emphasize the intensity of his Christian commitment, for he was a large man as compared with Zacchaeus.

After completing his engineering education Prokhanov returned to the region of his birth. On the way he visited with Leo Tolstoy who in later life embraced a life of servanthood to his workers and the cultivation of a simple gospel and pacifism, focusing on the moral teachings of Jesus. Tolstoy, however, was excommunicated by the Russian Orthodox Church because of his views on the nature of Christ and ministry. Prokhanov was deeply impressed by Tolstoy. After returning home, he heard his father was arrested for political activities. When he went to assist him he feared for his own imprisonment so he fled Russia through Finland. For the next several months he pursued theological studies in England, Berlin and Paris.

In 1898 Prokhanov heard of 1,150 Dukhobars being retained in Cyprus. He went to their assistance and worked with them as they made arrangements to move to Canada. Upon hearing that his father might be in Armenia he went there to find him. At the turn of the century he settled in Riga, Latvia, as an assistant railway manager. He was then approached about teaching at the Polytechnical Institute there. In 1901 he married Anne Kazakova and took a position with Westinghouse in St. Petersburg. Westinghouse was especially involved in manufacturing brakes for Russian trains. In order acquire further skills he was sent by the company to America in 1902 for study.

As his career developed Prokhanov continued his efforts among the Christian groups in St. Petersburg. Envisioning the need for a common hymnal he published 20,000 copies of a collection which he titled *Gusli*. In 1905 as the result of changes in the Russian government a toleration statute was

enacted. Prokhanov and others registered their congregation in St. Petersburg in 1908. Prohkanov encouraged those in his circles to work with the other non-Orthodox groups including Baptists and Mennonites. In 1910 he began publishing a religious newspaper, *The Morning Star*. Prokhanov was even more committed to linking together the dissident church groups than was Pashkov. He was also a highly motivated organizer and arranged for conferences in which union was proposed. He promoted a union of his Evangelicals groups with the Baptists in 1908. In 1909 he was instrumental in the forming of the All-Russia Union of Evangelical Christians. Several conferences of the Union were held until being banned by the Communists in 1928. That year the various Evangelical groups employed 500 missionaries for church plantings outside of Russia mostly in China and India.

By 1910 there were 10,000 Evangelical Christians and 11,000 Baptists in Russia. The Evangelicals did not possess either credal or covenantal documents, but professed to be guided by the New Testament alone. These peoples gave considerable attention to hymn singing unaccompanied as was characteristic of Russian Orthodoxy. In 1912 the Evangelicals approved plans to establish a Bible College. By now they knew of the Stone-Campbell Churches in America and perceived them to hold similar views of early Christianity and the need to be guided by the scriptures alone.

That year the Russian leaders Alexander Persianov and Martin Schmidt visited America and made contact with the Christian Churches of the American restoration movement. They attended the Louisville, Kentucky meetings of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1912, after which Z. T. Sweeney and Louis R. Patmont visited the Russian churches. They found 900 believers in St. Petersburg and 700 in Moscow. They reported more than a hundred thousand members throughout Russia. Sweeney set a goal $50,000 for the new Russian Bible School, but was unable to raise that

much and eventually the mission society sent $5000. The school was launched February 27, 1912 with 19 students. It was closed during World War I in 1914.

The Evangelicals came under attack in 1912 through the influence of Rasputin upon Tsar Nicholas II. Prokhanov's journal, *The Christian and Morning Star* was prohibited in 1914. Prokhanov stayed in St. Petersburg during the war. Religious persons especially those of Russian Orthodoxy suffered recriminations from the Bolsheviks, but the Bolsheviks were less interested in the Evangelical groups after 1918. Prokhanov's journal was revived and by 1927, 15,000 copies of each issue were published. The Russian Orthodox Church was disestablished in 1922 and that same year Prokhanov was invited to preach in an Orthodox cathedral in Moscow. With this new freedom Prokhanov again instituted the annual conferences. In 1923 there were 303 delegates. In 1926 the delegates numbered 503. That year the Union of Russian churches joined the World Baptist Union and Prokhanov obtained Baptist ordination in Prague.

In 1925 and 1926 Prokhanov spent considerable time in America raising money for 60,000 hymnals and other materials. He was successful in collecting $100,000. He approached both Disciples and Baptist churches. Prokhanov assessed his status and considered himself neither Baptist nor Disciple, but an evangelical within the Russian Union. Unlike the Disciples he did not consider that baptism was for the remission of sins, nor did he promote weekly observance of the Lord's Supper. The Prokhanov churches like many Baptists each had a single elder. Prokhanov had ties with emigrant Russian churches in America but in these years they withdrew from affiliation with the Disciples. He spent 1927 back in Russia visiting the evangelical churches that by now claimed over 300,000 members.

In 1928, under the emerging power of Joseph Stalin, all the churches faced downsizing. Stalin forced the closing of schools and publications and in 1929 closed down the union of the Baptists and the Evangelicals. Prokhanov attended the gathering of the World Alliance of Baptists at Toronto in 1928. He was not permitted to return to Russia. He spent his remaining years in North America and Europe and died in Berlin in 1935 at age 65. Thus brought to a close a concentrated effort to live according to the dictates of the New Testament in Russia.

Prokhanov issued a call for restorationism when he wrote in 1928:

> It is firmly held by all believers in Christ, apart from any distinction of name or creed, that the church of the first century, the church of Christ and the Apostles, as it is revealed to us in the Acts and in the letters of the Apostles, is in its ideal aspect the model for the Church through all the future centuries and will ever remain so …
>
> Only the restoration of a Church which had its origin in the spirit of primitive Christianity, with its all-embracing and creative religious power, will be able to overcome the spirit of unbelief as manifested in atheism, materialism, and free-thinking, and to prevent the further growth among the people of the world …
>
> Take the Old and yet eternally New Gospel as the foundation of your life, to rebuild it in accord with the teaching of Jesus Christ, and then the earth and the heaven will be new.[3]

At various times and places in history movements have arisen to reestablish ancient moorings. Among these, Christian efforts to restore the first-century church have been the most prolific. Movements to this end have taken various forms and embraced differing sets of details, but they have all been premised upon the thesis that such a restoration must depend meticulously and solely upon the writings of the early Christians, that is, the New Testament.

[3] Ellis and Jones, 177.

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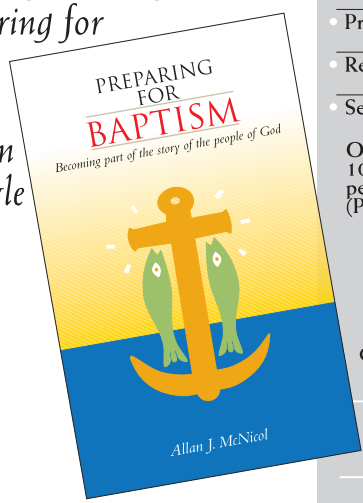

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Christian Community

By sheer grace, God will not permit us to live even for a brief period in a dream world. He does not abandon us to those rapturous experiences and lofty moods that come over us like a dream. God is not a God of the emotions but the God of truth.

There is probably no Christian to whom God has not given the uplifting experience of genuine Christian community at least once in his life. But in this world such experiences can be no more than a gracious extra beyond the daily bread of Christian community life. We have no claim upon such experiences, and we do not live with other Christians for the sake of acquiring them.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

Doctrine and "Specific" Christianity

There is no Christianity "in general." Faith in some experience devoid of theological or biblical content—no matter how powerful—is not New Testament Christianity. Those called to Christianity in general may believe nothing in particular. But faith resides in particulars.

Some churches seem to think that doctrine is a concern for those of a certain intellectual bent, but unnecessary for most Christians. Interest in doctrine amounts to something like an intellectual hobby. Others steer clear of doctrine for fear of argument or division in the church. Both factors indicate a lack of respect for the Christian believer and an abdication of the teaching function of the church.

Churches lacking an intentional and effective program of doctrinal instruction risk becoming the company of the confused. Charles Spurgeon told the painful story of the Irishman who attended a sectarian religious society meeting. Telling of the meeting, the man recounted: "Oh, it was lovely: none of us knew anything and we all taught each other."

Albert Mohler, *Why Doctrine Mattters*

It is the dogma that is the drama—not beautiful phrases, nor comforting sentiments, nor vague aspirations to loving-kindness and uplift, nor the promise of something nice after death—but the terrifying assertion that the same God who made the world and passed through the grave and gate of death. Show that to the heathen, and they may not believe it; but at least they may realize that here is something that a man might be glad to believe.

Dorothy Sayers, *Creed or Chaos*

The Lord's Supper and "Communion"

Like Passover, the Lord's Supper is not simply a recollection of past events or a fitting memorial to a dead hero. For it also includes the element of the present, with its communion (lit., "union with"). Here we are met by the living Lord of mercy at his table, and we sit at the table with his multitude of disciples down through the centuries. At this table, Luke reminds us, Jesus is a servant, outpouring his life and blood in our behalf. "For who is greater," Jesus asks, "the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves" (22:27).

"I am among you," says Jesus, promising his continued presence at the table. But it is not simply that he is among us as we gather for Communion; our living Lord is among us as the One who serves.

Michael Lodahl, *The Story of God*

Management as Ministry, Minister as Manager

Certainly the church is called to be successful and effective, but it is called to be those things in relation to the mission given by God, not by our culture. … The church's capitulation to the authority of the Manager is tied to the centrality of that character in our culture. … Seeking to recover or to maintain our perceived place in the culture, we in the church turn to the manager for guidance. So today, some of the most powerful leaders of the church are those who know how to manage public opinion and the political process in order to achieve success. If we examine the ends of that management, however, we may well question whether its success is directed toward making disciples.

Jonathan R. Wilson, *Living Faithfully in a Fragmented World*

Ministry and Technique

Spiritual problems cannot be solved by *administrative techniques*. The problem is not how to fill buildings but how to inspire the hearts. And this a problem to which techniques of commercial psychology can hardly be applied. The problem is not one of *synagogue attendance* but one of *spiritual attendance.*

There are some people who believe that the only to revitalize the synagogue is to minimize the importance of prayer and to convert the synagogue into a social center. … A synagogue in which men n o longer aspire to prayer is not a compromise but a defeat; a perversion, not a concession.

Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Man's Quest for God (1954)*

Rethinking Baptism

In the New Testament, conversion involves five integrally related components or aspects, all of which took place at the same time, usually on the same day. These five components are repentance, faith, and confession by the individual, regeneration, or the giving of the Holy Spirit by God, and baptism by representatives of the Christian community.

The cardinal problem with most views on baptism today is that the five components integrally associated with conversion in the New Testament are now separated in time. … [Roman Catholic theology] divorces baptism and regeneration from the human components of the conversion experience—repentance, faith, and confession. Thus it seriously deviates from the New Testament pattern.

Lutheran theology … deviates from the New Testament understanding because it divorces repentance and confession from the other components of conversion.

Reformed theology deviates even more significantly from the New Testament pattern in that it separates baptism from all the other components of conversion.

Baptist theology also deviates from the New Testament pattern. Although repentance, faith, confession, and regeneration are associated with baptism, baptism is separated in time from these four components. Thus baptism is an act which witnesses to a prior experience of repentance, faith, confession,

and regeneration. As a result such passages as Romans 6:4, 1 Peter 3:21, Titus 3:5, John 3:3ff., and others, which associate baptism with the experience of conversion, are embarrassing to many Baptists and often receive a strained exegesis at their hands.

> Robert H. Stein, "Baptism and Becoming a Christian in the New Testament," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, 2, Spr 1998, 6-17. Stein was Mildred Hogan Professor of New Testament interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. This article was first presented at a session on Baptism for the Baptist General Conference.

Baptism is not an offer made by man to God, but an offer made by Christ to man. It is grounded solely on the will of Jesus Christ, as expressed in his gracious call. Baptism is essentially passive—being baptized, suffering the call of Christ. In baptism man becomes Christ's own possession. When the name of Christ is spoken over the candidate, he becomes a partaker in this Name, and is baptized "into Jesus Christ. … From that moment he belongs to Jesus Christ. He is wrested from the dominion of the world, and passes into the ownership of Christ.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*

Transformative Christianity

The ancient Christian fathers spoke of the Christ event as the "recapitulation" of the entire human drama. In this one life, all lives are summed up; in the eternal present of this one life, the past is encompassed, the future is anticipated and the life of Everyman and Everywoman is most truly lived. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," he said. Not a way among other ways, not a truth among other truths, not a life among other lives, but the way of all ways, the truth of all truths and the life of all lives. Recapitulation. It means, quite simply and solemnly, that this is your life, this is my life and we have not come to our senses until we sense ourselves in the life, and death, of Christ.

Richard John Neuhaus, *Death on a Friday Afternoon*

The Christian view of human nature is wise precisely because it is so very extreme; it sees humanity, at once, as an image of the divine, fashioned for infinite love and imperishable glory, and as an almost inexhaustible wellspring of vindictiveness, cupidity, and brutality. Christians, indeed, have a special obligation not to forget how great and how inextinguishable the hu-

man proclivity for violence is, or how many victims it has claimed, for they worship a God who does not merely take the part of these victims, but who was himself one of them, murdered by the combined authority and moral prudence of the political, religious, and legal powers of human society.

Which is, incidentally, the most subversive claim ever made in the history of the human race.

David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions*

"The function of religion is not to make people feel good but to make them good."

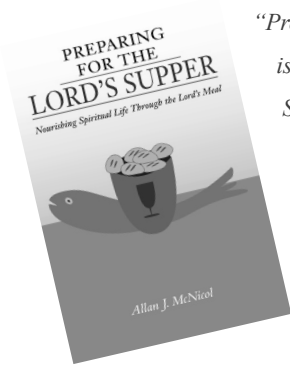
Eugene Peterson, *Run with the Horses*

Worship: Transcending "Relevance"

It is not an accident that when we think about making the church more relevant, we usually mean meaningful for one particular group. In North America, that usually means 20-somethings and young families. For one, 20-somethings are some of the hardest people to attract to church–we evangelicals love the challenge of reaching them. … It's a perfect "target audience" for a new church to aim at. Unfortunately, churches that perceive themselves as relevant often by their nature limit a full-bodied expression of the church. … [F]ew churches that consciously seek relevance want to clear the way to church for the poor, the homeless, welfare moms, drug-addicted men, or those tapped in nursing homes and convalescent hospitals. … This is one reason I thank God for the liturgy. The liturgy does not target any age or cultural subgroup. It does not even target this century. … Instead, the liturgy draws us into worship that transcends our time and place. … [I]t has not been shaped to meet a particular group's needs. It seeks only to enable people–people in general–to see God.

Mark Galli, "A Deeper Relevance," *Christianity Today*, May 2008

What does one expect to take place at the Lord's Table?



"Preparing for the Lord's Supper" is a new book by Austin Graduate School of Theology Professor Allan McNicol. The book explains the history and nuances of one of the most intriguing facets of the Christian faith - communion.

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Gordon, T. David. *Why Johnny Can't Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2009.
Reviewed by M. Todd Hall

Aldous Huxley's distopian novel *Brave New World* portrays a populace subjugated not through force, but instead through sensuous, mindless pleasure and entertainment. Unlike Orwell's vision in *1984* of book-banning committees and the like, Huxley portrays a society overrun by trivial "information" which crowds out any would-be subversive material—including the humanities, and of course the Bible. Ultimately, unrest in the population is controlled through a highly structured delivery of entertainment and a drug called "*soma*," which creates a mood of complete indifference. Writing in 1985, Neil Postman quoted Robert MacNeil's observation that "Television is the *soma* of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*," to which Postman adds "Big brother turns out to be Howdy Doody."[1]

Though not concerned with totalitarian rule, T. David Gordon's book *Why Johnny Can't Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers* provides further evidence that Huxley's vision of the West's future is correct. The sheer weight of triviality in modern American discourse—from so-called news programs to the vapid yet ubiquitous "reality" shows—has crushed the ability to address the deeper, more important questions of life. Unlike other books which simply address the problem, Gordon offers constructive advice for ministers hoping to speak a word of hope in a culture of indifference.

[1] Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 111. An excellent graphic representation comparing Orwell and Huxley is currently available at http://www. recombinantrecords.net /2009/05/24/amusing-ourselves-to-death/

Gordon wrote this book while undergoing treatment for stage III cancer, giving it a sense of urgency. He explains that, "Having been concerned about the state of preaching for three decades, I believed that it would be irresponsible to leave the world without expressing my thoughts about the matter, in the hope that better preaching might be the result" (9).

The book does not begin its work slowly. The first chapter of the book is titled "Johnny Can't Preach," and in it a preacher will find difficult but necessary words. "Preaching today is ordinarily poor," Gordon explains.

> … I have come to recognize that many, many individuals today have never been under a steady diet of competent preaching. As a consequence, they are satisfied with what they hear because they have nothing better with which to compare it. … As starving children in Manila sift through the landfill for food, Christians in many churches today have never experienced genuinely soul-nourishing preaching, and so they just pick away at what is available to them, trying to find a morsel of spiritual sustenance or helpful counsel here or there (17).

The evidence provided for this poor preaching is largely anecdotal, but is not an uncommon assessment. Ultimately, Gordon provides a compelling case that rings true regarding the quality (or lack thereof) of preaching today. Once this is established, Gordon provides two factors for why "Johnny can't preach": Johnny can't read (texts) and Johnny can't write.

Gordon begins his discussion of Johnny's inability to read by suggesting a "profound difference between reading information and reading texts" (43). Reading information—which is the universal practice of our "information society"—is content-driven, focusing on gleaning "information" from texts. Reading *texts*, however, is a slow and arduous process that requires great patience, focus, and attention to detail. It is the kind of reading required of poetry and narrative that takes the texts themselves seriously rather than simply sifting them for kernels of "useful information." Gordon suggests that most ministers read modern novels and other books, "but as a group they are

no more interested in texts than is the culture of which they are a part. They read for information and amusement, but they do not read because they cherish the aesthetic pleasure taken in something that is well written" (46). This affects the way preachers read *every* aspect of the Bible, according to Gordon.

> [Preachers] read the Bible the same way they read everything else: virtually speed-reading, scanning it for its most overt *content*. *What is this passage about?* they ask as they read, but they don't raise questions about how the passage is *constructed*. … They read John 3:16 the same way they read Romans 5:8; each is "about" the love of God, but they don't notice much more than that, and their sermon on God's love from John 3:16 is probably not different from their sermon on God's love from Romans 5:8. … All of their sermons are about Christian truth or theology in *general*, and the *particular* text they read ahead of time merely prompts their memory or calls their attention to one of Christianity's important realities … Their reading does not stimulate them to rethink anything, and since the text doesn't stimulate them particularly … their sermon is not particularly stimulating to their hearers (46-7).

By way of contrast, a close reading of texts is *required* to understand and appropriate *literature* (for instance, not a single line of a Shakespearean sonnet may be omitted without doing violence to the sonnet).

Equally as damaging to preaching today is the increasing inability to effectively communicate. Gordon begins by suggesting that technology—in this case, especially the telephone—has damaged interpersonal communication insofar as it has diminished our capacity for reading visual cues present within in-person communication. "[L]ack of visual response in conversation makes us literalists, whose capacity to see and interpret body language, gestures, and the language of the eyes atrophies because of comparatively infrequent use" (63). This has damaged preachers' ability to "read" their congregation during a sermon and adjust accordingly.

Technologies have also caused the atrophy of composition skills. Communication by letter requires thoughtful reflection, whereas (especially) telephone conversation may ebb and flow without any forethought whatsoever. The same can be said of emails, blogs, and other interactions of "Web 2.0." The communication which often occurs on the Internet is shallow and "stream-of-consciousness." It is not composed in as *deliberate* a process as a book, an article, or an essay, a process that is essential for a good sermon.

Following this chapter is a note on the content of the sermon. Here is where one might quibble with the book. Gordon calls for sermons to be *evangelical*, in the old sense of the word. Every sermon should bring its hearers into contact with the gospel. Gordon lists four common types of sermons which this evangelical focus confronts: Moralistic sermons, How-to sermons, "Introspection" sermons, and Social Gospel/So-Called Culture War sermons. "None of these false surrogates for real Christian proclamation nourishes the soul. They may inform or instruct about some aspects of religion, but they do not nourish *faith* …" (88-9).

Gordon is certainly right in responding to sermons which are devoid of Christian content—whether through legalism or pop-psychology or the "culture warrior" ethos—but there are questions which might be raised. For example, how does one preach Song of Solomon, or Ecclesiastes, or Proverbs *evangelically*, while taking the text itself seriously?[2] How is the Old Testament, when read and preached in this way, taken seriously in and of itself? Despite this quibble, Gordon's call is vital for a church which is less relevant due to—ironically—its constant attempts to be "relevant" in modern society.

[2] This is ironic, given Gordon's concerns in chapter two, explaining that Johnny can't preach, partly because Johnny doesn't know how to read texts for more than simply content. Reading Scripture canonically, and especially in light of the gospel is of course vital for the church. But some texts, especially wisdom literature, resist this, if they are to be taken seriously as texts themselves, with their own contexts and meanings.

Gordon's suggestions for teaching Johnny to preach are perhaps the most insightful thoughts of the book. The suggestion of an annual review for preachers, while perhaps initially disturbing to readers, would prove an excellent vehicle for improving preaching. It would remind both ministers and church leaders of the minister's primary calling—the proclamation of the word—and facilitate constructive communication regarding the preacher's work in the pulpit.

Gordon also suggests that preachers begin reading and writing. Preachers should read beyond the pop-literature and information on the hastily composed blogosphere. They should start interacting with the great literature of human history, of all sorts. In consuming elegant, well-composed literature, the preacher will begin to develop the skills necessary to craft elegant sermons which will truly impact the church. Likewise, the preacher should begin writing letters (and journal articles, etc!), in order to further develop his communication and composition skills.

Of all of the books to come through the library in the last year, I recommend this one for ministers. In an age when ministers are asked to fulfill many roles—program director, counselor, business manager, etc—Gordon reminds them of the most important role they have been given: *preacher*. In the course of doing so, Gordon provides a glimpse into the damage that the *soma* of our time is doing to the proclamation of the gospel. The book is a difficult word to hear, but ultimately, if given the chance, it will prove transformative for those called to *proclaim* things of ultimate importance in a culture obsessed with the trivial.

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