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Introduction to the Volume

STR Editor

The current volume of *STR* continues the theme of the previous volume, *STR* 4/2 (2013), which centered upon "Theological Interpretation of Scripture" (hereafter "TIS"). In the previous editorial, I noted that Gordon McConville has dubbed the discipline of biblical theology as a "somewhat slippery creature," a designation which could be applied to TIS as well![1] In that edition, I highlighted some reasons for its slipperiness:

1. It is not terribly new.
2. It is not distinctive methodologically.
3. It is not biblical (enough).
4. It is not theological (enough).

Nonetheless, critiques against TIS may derive from those who quibble over the unapologetic nature of its practitioners to engage in *biblical* interpretation, which is *theological*, which informs *the whole of life*, as *the Church* listens *for God's voice in Scripture*. In various ways, practitioners of TIS attempt to hear and "hearken unto" God's voice in Holy Scripture.

Each of the essays in this volume carry forward this program, though in different ways. If theological interpretation is interested in the interconnections in Scripture, how should one understand typology in particular? David Schrock asks this methodological and hermeneutical question. Schrock explores typology from exegetical-historical, covenantal, and theological basis. Schrock limits his study to persons who are "types" of Jesus Christ. He argues that a "valid Christological type must be *textual* in its origin, *covenantal* as to its theological import, and *Christotelic* in its teleological fulfillment." Following upon Schrock, David Wenkel assesses the significance of possessions (expressly "food" and "clothing") in the life of the people of God. Wenkel uses a "whole-Bible" kind of biblical theology as a way to frame his study. Using this approach, he is able to determine a salvation-historical narrative structure to Scripture and he argues that "God's people have always been pilgrims

[1] J. Gordon McConville, "Biblical Theology: Canon and Plain Sense (Finlayson Memorial Lecture 2001)," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 19/2(2001): pp. 134–57 (134).

on this earth; this identity is the basis for the simple provision of food and clothing." Grenville Kent provides techniques to read aloud Holy Scripture in the context of worship. As TIS is always interested in the link between Scripture and its ecclesial home, this essay is of interest in a practical theology of worship. Kent provocatively titles his approach to the public Scripture reading as "vocal exegesis." Richard Briggs' piece interacts thoroughly with Kevin Vanhoozer's *Remythologizing Theology*, which was the topic of a previous edition of the journal: *STR* 4/1(2013). Briggs' concern is theological and hermeneutical through and through, asking what it means to hear (or see!) God speak in biblical narrative, and then what that might mean for modern Christian practice today. Following upon Briggs are two articles by Christoph Stenschke, the one dealing with spiritual formation of Christian leaders and the other dealing with how Paul portrays people prior to their conversions in his letter to the Ephesians. His two essays ask historical questions but then traverse to the present, linking the ancient text to the modern world because Stenschke takes seriously the New Testament text as Holy Scripture.

These essays, then, provide different examples of TIS in practice. If that is true, then these essays highlight the fact that TIS cannot be calibrated to a method, as if TIS is one of the many tools one can just pull out of the scholar's toolbox. Rather, TIS orients readers to hear Scripture for God's voice. It will have hermeneutical, theological, biblical, ecclesial, and contextual dimensions—any one of which should not be dismissed. But it will vary in terms of individual explorations.

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What Designates a Valid Type? A Christotelic, Covenantal Proposal

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Introduction

In the last decade a number of articles, chapters, and books have continued to debate the subject of typology.[1] In particular, they have sought to answer the question: "What makes a person, event, or institution a *type*?" Or more exactly, "What designates a type hermeneutically valid?" For instance, in *From Typology to Doxology: Paul's Use of Isaiah and Job in Romans 11:34–35,* Andrew Naselli laments the typological "abuses" some theologians have committed by "read[ing] a full-blown doctrine into earlier Scripture."[2] Against this anachronistic approach to typology, he gives four "clarifications" to secure a type's "hermeneutical warrant."[3] In his clarifica-

[1] See most recently the essays in *Heaven on Earth: Theological Interpretation in Ecumenical Dialogue* (ed. Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), as well as, G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), pp. 13-27; Benjamin J. Ribbens, "Typology of Types: Typology in Dialogue," *JTI* 5 (2011): pp. 81–95; James M. Hamilton, "The Typology of David's Rise to Power: Messianic Patterns in the Book of Samuel," *SBJT* 16 (2012): pp. 4–25; A. B. Caneday, "Covenant Lineage Allegorically Prefigured: 'Which Things Are Written Allegorically' (Galatians 4:21-31)," *SBJT* 14 (2010): pp. 50–77; Andrew D. Naselli, *From Typology to Doxology: Paul's Use of Isaiah and Job in Romans 11:34-35* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012). For a history of interpretation related to typology, see Patrick Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956*),* 1:1–41; Richard Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical* TYPOS *Structures* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981), pp. 15-–114.

[2] Naselli, *From Typology to Doxology,* p. 125.

[3] Ibid., pp. 126-28. He argues that valid types are "textually rooted" and "differ from allegory because they arise from the "larger 'promise-fulfillment' framework extant in the canon. Second, types are prophetic "in the sense that the NT authors view the OT as pointing towards the future." Third, types have varying "degrees of similarities and dissimilarities." Fourth, types are usually recognized by New Testament authors, but should not be limited to the list of types mentioned by the apostles.

tions Naselli calls for methodological parameters for recognizing only those types which Scripture itself can validate.[4] Writing as theologian, I affirm his concerns and aim in this article to present another methodological control unmentioned by him and most other biblical scholars—the progression of covenants developed in Scripture.

Following Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum's approach that "the typological structures of Scripture are developed primarily through the covenants,"[5] I will argue that, in addition to other hermeneutical "tests," a type (e.g., person, place, institution, event, etc.) can only be verified when it is located in its covenantal context. Against a reading of Scripture that is satisfied with finding mere resemblances between type and antitype (i.e., "a doctrine of analogy"), I will argue that genuine types must arise from within the biblical text and be organically related to one another through the progressive covenants of the Bible.[6] Consequently, what follows is a constructive effort to improve the best practices of biblical interpretation by paying greater attention to the biblical covenants. At the same time, this article stands against the intentional conflation of typology and allegory, what Christopher Seitz labels a "figural reading," and what Hans Boersma, citing the "sacramental hermeneutic" of Henri DeLubac and Jean Daniélou, describes as a "return to mystery."[7]

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[4] Cf. Beale, *Handbook,* pp. 19–22.

[5] Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), p. 606.

[6] Hans Boersma, Nouvelle Théologie *and Sacramental Ontology: A Return to Mystery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 178–80. Though I appreciate much of Jean Daniélou's work on typology, especially his cautions against allegory and his insistence on the historicity of biblical types, his definition that types are fundamentally "analogies" is insufficient (Jean Daniélou, *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers,* trans. Dom Wulstan Hibberd [Westminster, MD: Newman, 1960]). The onus of this article is to show how the biblical covenants help situate and certify biblical types.

[7] Christopher Seitz, *Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001); Hans Boersma, Nouvelle Théologie *and Sacramental Ontology.* As to the historical ambiguity and overlap between allegory and typology in patristic interpreters, I am in basic agreement with Vanhoozer who argues that while the early church fathers may have conflated typology and allegory, there is today a need for "providing a better theological warrant" for discerning biblical types ("Ascending the Mountain, Singing the Rock," p. 217). Though space does not

More narrowly, this article will restrict its attention to typological persons who prefigure Jesus Christ.[8] My thesis is simple: To discern valid typological relationships we must consider how type and antitype relate to their respective covenantal contexts as elucidated in Scripture.[9] In other words, in between the "exegetical-historical" and "theological-canonical" horizons, there is a third horizon that must be considered in triangulating the reality of a type.[10] This third horizon is the epochal (or covenantal) horizon, which in the Bible is articulated by the progression of covenants that begin in Genesis and find their *telos* in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, in addition to Naselli's four clarifications and Beale's five criteria for a type (e.g., analogical correspondence, historicity, a pointing-forwardness, escalation, and retrospection as it concerns identifying types), I will argue that a valid Christological type must be *textual* in its origin*, covenantal* as to its theological import, and *Christotelic* in its teleological fulfillment.[11] As *textual*, the type must arise from the language, sequence, and storyline of the Bible itself. It cannot be imported from an "extratextual hermeneutical grid," but must be verified by the Bible's own language or imagery.[12] As *covenantal*, the type must not only arise within redemptive history in some generic fashion; rather, the interpreter must show from the text how the type corresponds to its covenantal context. In other words, types fill out the details of the covenants, and the covenants,

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permit a full engagement on the subject of allegory and typology, this essay's appeal to biblical covenants is of a piece with those scholars who require types to have textual warrant.

[8] The argument made in this essay is limited to persons, but since covenants arise from events and create institutions there is reason to believe that recognizing covenantal contexts would improve all kinds of biblical types.

[9] By covenantal backbone, I have in mind the covenantal framework of the Bible outlined by Gentry and Wellum.

[10] On the "exegetical-historical" and "theological-canonical" horizons, see Darrell Bock, "Single Meaning, Multiple Contexts and Referents," in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. Kenneth Berding and Jonathan Lunde; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), pp. 115–16.

[11] Beale, *Handbook,* p. 14. These three features (textual, covenantal, and Christotelic) do not replace the usual criteria for a type. Instead, they serve as crucial additions to the commonplace definition offered by the likes of Naselli, Beale, and Leonard Goppelt (*Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], pp. 17–18).

[12] Naselli, *From Typology to Doxology,* p. 126.

in turn, provide each type—I am thinking primarily in terms of persons here—the parameters in which they live, move, and have their being.[13] In this way, the Bible's typological and covenantal structures are interdependent. Together, they prepare the way for a superlative mediator of the new covenant, Jesus Christ.[14] Finally, by *Christotelic*, I am suggesting that typology is eminently eschatological. While every type has its place in history, its historical locus is insufficient for discerning its final significance.[15] Following Jesus' own hermeneutic, the apostles make this assertion regularly: Christ is the end of the law (Rom 10:4), the fulfillment of every promise (2 Cor 1:20), the fullness of wisdom (Col 2:3), and the substance of the shadow (Col 2:17; Heb 10:1).[16] In what follows, I will expound a textual, covenantal, Christological approach to discerning types in Scripture.

Linguistic Correspondence: Tethering Types to the Biblical Text

The first line of evidence for a type is textual. In contradistinction to allegory, biblical typology situates type and anti-type in the biblical narrative itself. It does not incorporate a philosophical ideology (e.g., platonic thought) or a "*this* (word) means *that* (concept)."[17] Rather, true typology, "as a subset of predictive prophecy," is the intratextual relationship between one historical figure in

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[13] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, pp. 602–11.

[14] Ibid., p. 604.

[15] See the discussion of time's effect on meaning in Peter Leithart, *Deep Exegesis: The Mystery of Reading Scripture* (Waco, TX: Baylor, 2009), pp. 40–44.

[16] David Dockery, "Typological Exegesis: Moving Beyond Abuse and Neglect," in *Reclaiming the Prophetic Mantle: Preaching the Old Testament Faithfully* (ed. George L. Klein; Nashville: Broadman, 1992), p. 174; see also George Smeaton, *The Apostle's Doctrine of the Atonement* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1870; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), pp. 4–7.

[17] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant,* p. 102. In *From Shadows to Reality,* Jean Daniélou shows how many in the early church veered into allegory when they followed the formal principles, and sometimes the material arguments, of Philo. Speaking of the difference between typology and allegory in the Garden of Eden, Daniélou observes, "Under the guise of allegory Philo is therefore introducing Greek philosophy" (p. 58). This is one of the key differences between typology and allegory: the former restrains itself to the persons, events, and institutions of the biblical corpus; the latter seeks to import moral and philosophical ideals through the use of biblical narratives.

one biblical epoch and another later, (usually) greater historical figure.[18]

The process of verifying biblical types begins with this commitment to the Bible and proceeds by discovering what God's Word reveals. The task is multi-layered, and there is no singular method to seeing a type.[19] However, if there is no singular way to see a type, there are a number of ways to prove the validity of a type.[20] The first of which is to consider the words used to describe the type and the sequential order of events related to the type's ontology and actions.

On this linguistic correspondence, James Hamilton has been most helpful. He suggests that Goppelt's criterion of significant correspondence can be improved by demonstrating "linguistic correspondence," "sequential event correspondence," and "redemptive historical import" between a type and its anti-type. Materially, he uses these three lines of evidence to show how the Davidic narratives (1–2 Samuel) build upon the life of Joseph, and from there, how Jesus is Joseph's ultimate antitype. Using these test cases, Hamilton successfully defends the relationship between Joseph, David, and Jesus.[21]

As to language and sequence, Hamilton provides a compelling argument for proving typological relationships. His final point, however, can be strengthened. Instead of determining a types' redemptive historical import in general, a covenantal approach relates the historical person (who is the potential type) to its immediate epochal context and covenantal setting. The cash value of this approach is that it compares the biblical type to the redemptive historical setting *as defined by the promises and stipulations of the covenant* before relating Old Testament types to the New Testament fulfill-

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[18] Ibid., p. 103.

[19] This diversity in methodology is not the same as saying that there are "multiple layers of meaning" in a given text, as Peter Enns does (Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005], p. 161). Rather, it is the recognition that in the hermeneutical spiral, awareness of a given type may be discerned at various points in the interpretive process.

[20] Rightly, Beale observes, "We must … remember that the conclusions of all biblical interpretations are a matter of degrees of possibility and probability; the conclusions of typology must be viewed in the same way" (*Handbook,* p. 24).

[21] James M. Hamilton, "Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah? Tracing the Typological Identification between Joseph, David, and Jesus," *SBJT* 12 (2008): pp. 52–77.

ment. Accordingly, the following section will summarize Hamilton's argument and show how a covenantal approach provides further textual evidence for the Joseph-Jesus typology. I will also show how this covenantal approach proves fruitful for other typological relationships that find their *telos* in Jesus Christ.

Language, Sequence, and Redemptive Import

Concerning linguistic correspondence, Hamilton appeals to the literary nature of the Bible,[22] postulating that "the authors of the biblical narratives … make significant choices about which events or aspects of events to record, and they make linguistic choices regarding how to describe those events."[23] In other words, typology in the Bible is a function of language. Failure to see typological structures is not simply a theological problem but a reading problem.[24]

In the case of Joseph and David, he finds "sixteen points of linguistic contact."[25] He uses these linguistic correspondences to support his case that Joseph was a type of David and therefore of Christ. In Hamilton's view, the likelihood of a person, event, or institution being a type increases with linguistic correspondence between the type and antitype. Speaking of the Joseph-David relationship, he writes, "Taken individually, these linguistic correspondences might seem threads too weak to tie up the case that the Joseph story was a formative influence on the author(s) of the narratives concerning David in Samuel. But taken all together we have a cord of far more than three strands … one not easily broken."[26]

Complementing linguistic correspondence, Hamilton adds "sequential event correspondence" and "redemptive historical import." Like linguistic correspondence, sequential event correspondence validates a type by means of literary detail. Whereas the for-

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[22] Concerning the Bible, Hamilton begins, "In this essay I will argue that earlier biblical narratives so impacted later biblical authors that their minds, their vocabulary, and their interpretive framework were all shaped by what they read in earlier biblical narratives, chiefly the Pentateuch" (ibid., p. 52).

[23] Ibid., p. 54.

[24] Ibid., p. 55. Beale has helpfully explained that recognizing types in the Old Testament often requires the light of later revelation (*Handbook,* pp. 22–25). However, such epistemological awareness, brought on by later parts of the canon, does not override the prophetic or "pointing-forwardness" of the Old Testament text.

[25] Hamilton, "Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah?": p. 57.

[26] Ibid.

mer makes contact on the basis of word selection, the latter makes a connection by means of sequential ordering. In this regard, sequential correspondence is both objective and necessary for proving that the type is in the text and not just in the imagination of the reader.[27]

Still, it is Hamilton's third point of consideration—redemptive historical import—on which this essay builds. What Hamilton argues about redemptive history in general, I will unite with the covenantal structures of the Bible in particular.[28] As E. Earl Ellis framed it,

> There is a pattern of correspondence between Old and New Covenants—the shadow and the true—so that the pattern outlines of the first may be imposed upon the second. NT typology does not, therefore, merely involve striking resemblances or analogies but points to a correspondence which inheres in the Divine economy of redemption. And this appears to be true not only in the Exodus typology, in which the two Covenants are so expressly contrasted, but in the other OT 'types' as well.[29]

Though he doesn't mention Daniélou, Ellis's point improves upon his method. Ellis elevates genuine correspondence set within the "Divine economy of redemption" above "striking resemblances or analogies" between biblical characters. Instead of determining relations at the level of words or events, Ellis's argument aims at the level of macro-structures.[30] Geerhardus Vos makes a similar appeal, saying "The bond that holds type and antitype together must be a bond of vital continuity in the progress of redemption. Where this is ignored, and in the place of this bond are put accidental resemblances, void of spiritual significance, all sorts of ab-

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[27] Hamilton's stated approach puts into theory what others often do often in practice. The benefit of tracing out "steps" for discerning types is that what earlier exegetes did on occasion, modern interpreters can and should do with intentionality and verification. Therefore, without casting aside the role of the Spirit to illumine the interpreter's mind, the hermeneutical spiral improves when reproducible methods replace inconsistent intuition.

[28] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant,* p. 107.

[29] E. Earl Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1957), p. 128.

[30] Cf. Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics,* pp. 253–56.

surdities will result."[31] Thus, the goal in typology must be to compare forest with forest, not just isolated trees within the forest; or to put it back in biblical language, we must see how the types relate to the covenantal structures in order to validate their meaning.

Along these lines, it is significant that Hamilton grounds his redemptive historical points to the larger story of salvation outlined in the Old Testament. For instance, he traces the covenantal promises of God when he recounts the Patriarchal history leading up to Joseph, yet he does not make explicit mention to the biblical covenants. Hamilton convincingly proves the relationship between Joseph, David, and Jesus. Yet, greater support for Joseph's status as a type of Christ can be found by relating Joseph and David to the covenantal structures of the Old Testament. Both figures, in different ways and at different times, carried on the Abrahamic promises of land, people, and blessing.

For example, Joseph lived, moved, and had his blessing under the stipulations of the Abrahamic covenant. His life preserved the nation of Israel and enabled the promises of Abraham to reach David—and later Jesus. The promises that "tested" Joseph as he suffered in prison were covenantal promises to Abraham (Ps 105:16–19). Upon his release and exaltation in Egypt, Joseph became the logistical means by which the covenant people of God entered Egypt. Providentially arranged, his life served to bridge the earlier covenant with Abraham and the latter covenant with Israel. In this way, Joseph's typological import is upheld by more than a loosely-connected set of redemptive historical correspondences. His life is nested into the covenantal structure of the Old Testament. Rightly, Hamilton asserts that Joseph proves to be a type because he resides in the "redemptive historical stream that flows through the Bible."[32] And not to be missed, this is a covenantal stream. In fact, Psalm 78:56–72 traces how the covenantal promises to Abraham move from Joseph to David. Due to the sin of the priests at Shiloh (1 Sam 1–4), the location of the covenant and the tribe who officiates the covenant are transferred.[33] Therefore, returning to Joseph's role as a type, he is both a reservoir that rests downhill from the headwaters of God's covenant with Abraham,

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[31] Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000), p. 146.

[32] Ibid., p. 53.

[33] Part of the transition from Joseph to David and Shiloh to Zion is the failure of the priests—Eli and his wicked sons (Ps 78:56–66).

and he is a tributary that runs into the later and greater streams of Moses and David—two other covenant mediators.[34]

In sum, genuine typology must find its origin in the covenantal structures of the Old Testament and New Testament. *Real* typological correspondence is necessarily related to the unifying framework of the Bible—the biblical covenants. Therefore, typology finds license to operate only in an organic connection to these larger covenantal structures.

Rahab: What Shall We Say?

A contested example demonstrates the usefulness of this approach to typology. Consider Rahab. Is her scarlet thread mentioned in Joshua 2:18 a type of Christ and his cross? Or, do exegetes misconstrue this scarlet thread and, thus, make it an allegory when they relate it to the blood of Christ? My answer: It depends. Certainly, there is a wrong way to connect the scarlet cord to Christ's cross, but there may also be a legitimate way to maintain it as a typological emblem of Christ as the Passover lamb. What makes the difference is covenantal context. Does the event, along with its specific details, have a genuine relationship to God's covenant with Israel?

Significantly, the typological relationship cannot be based on the superficial basis of color, although it certainly may play a part.[35] Rather, the organic relationship runs along the covenantal promise of salvation to Israel and the mighty act of God to save Israel by means of the Passover. In other words, the faithful interpreter must first place Rahab's act of faith—offered in response Israel's spies—to the historically antecedent Passover. Then, and only then, can the interpreter move to Christ, who is the greater Passover lamb (1 Cor 5:7).

In this hermeneutical two-step, the cautious interpreter can move from the details of Rahab's story (e.g., the scarlet thread in

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[34] This covenantal progression goes back to Adam, of whom Davidson says, "Like a hollow mold the OT representative man Adam is a *Nachbild* (of the divine design) which functions as a dynamic *Vorbild*, shaping the end (eschatological) product (Christ) so that it ineluctably (*devoir-être*) conforms to the (historical) contours of the *Vorbild* and surpasses it by fulfilling the (Christological-soteriological) purpose for which the *Vorbild* was designed" (*Typology in Scripture,* p. 311).

[35] Contrast this approach with Ronald L. Cammenga, who suggests that the "red of the rainbow points to and is a sign of the blood of Jesus Christ" ("The Covenant with Noah: Common Grace or Cosmic Grace?" *PRTJ* 40 [2007]: p. 24).

the window, the family in house, safety given during an hour of death) *back in time* to the details of the Passover (e.g., the blood sprinkled on the doorposts, the family taking refuge behind the blood, life given in an hour of death) before moving forward in time to the person and work of Jesus.[36] By tying Rahab's cord to the historical details of the Passover, it protects her experience from becoming a mystical encounter with Christ.[37] Instead, as Hebrews observes, she had faith in the promises of God, communicated to her by the Israelite spies. In principle then, the interpretive movement that emerges looks like a quarterback in football taking a three-, five-, or seven-step drop. Before he throws the ball down field, he must move into territory previously claimed by his team.[38] By analogy, the faithful interpreter must move backwards in the covenantal history of Israel, before moving forward to the true Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ. This is the kind of covenantal correspondence I will now argue.

Covenantal Correspondence: Grounding Typology in the Framework of the Bible

A primary argument against typology is that interpreters who are prone to finding types are too quick to claim God's divine authorship to validate the ostensible connection between type and antitype. On this matter, Andy Naselli offers wise caution. Describ-

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[36] Significantly, Hamilton's linguistic and sequential controls must also be considered. As to language, there are at least three linguistic connections relating Rahab to the Passover. First, the word "sign" (*oth*) is used in both passages to describe the blood (Exod 12:13) and the scarlet cord (Josh 2:12). Second, the verb "go out" (*ys'*) is used in both narratives, as the Israelites and Rahab are instructed to not "go out" of their houses (Exod 12:22; Josh 2:19). Third, the word "house" (*bayit*) is used in both accounts as the place or refuge for both delivered parties (Exod 12:22; Josh 2:19).

[37] For an account of some of the best and worst approaches to Rahab as a type, see Daniélou, *From Shadow to Reality,* pp. 244–60.

[38] Relying on Gerhard Von Rad, Beale makes a similar argument with Joshua and Noah (*Handbook,* pp. 20–21). He identifies both men as types of Christ on the basis of their respective relationships to Moses and Adam. He writes, "If it can be shown in the OT itself that a later person is seen as antitype of an earlier person, who is clearly viewed as a type of Christ by the NT, then this later OT person is also likely a good candidate to be considered to be a type of Christ" (ibid., p. 21). Beale's point is well made, and is only strengthened by considering the covenantal context in which these men are situated.

ing a canonical approach to interpreting the Old Testament, something that often accompanies and depends upon typology, Naselli observes,

> The canonical approach [to interpreting the Old Testament] … is easily abused by interpreters who hold that god is Scripture's ultimate authority. Such interpreters rightly insist on Scripture's unity, but they may hastily and anachronistically skip from exegesis to systematic theology without anchoring a canonical approach to biblical theology. The result is a flat reading of Scripture without sufficient methodological controls.[39]

The purpose of this article is to suggest a Christotelic, covenantal approach that interfaces with a thick exegesis of the text is a way forward in rightly discerning the hermeneutical warrant of a type. Therefore, the rest of this article will posit four foci to keep in mind when evaluating biblical types. They will follow a chronological trajectory that begins with the Old Testament text and moves to the person of Christ. In order, these steps consist of (1) determining the typological "mold," (2) relating the type to the appropriate covenantal structure(s), (3) tracing future installments of the type to see how later revelation develops earlier prefigurations, and (4) uniting every type to Christ.

A textual "mold" (*Vorbild*). In his discussion of typology, Geerhardus Vos stresses the necessity of determining the symbolic significance of a given type before making any sort of typological connection across the canon.[40] In other words, biblical interpreters must determine the "mold" of a biblical type from a grammatical-historical reading of the text *before* making any typological applications.[41] Other responsible interpreters have made similar suggestions.

For instance, Richard Davidson calls this typological "mold" a *Vorbild* (impression) and the later antitype a *Nachbild* (image). In fact, using this impression-image distinction, he develops a whole schema of relating typological molds and the impressions they make on their image-bearing successors.[42] While there are types that may not exactly 'fit' this mold (e.g., tropological examples and

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[39] Naselli, *From Typology to Doxology,* p. 125.

[40] Vos, *Biblical Theology,* pp. 144–46.

[41] This accords with Caneday's caution that typology is not a method of interpretation but a recognition of typology written in the original text ("Covenant Lineage Allegorically Prefigured," p. 66).

[42] Davidson, *Typology,* p. 131.

homological patterns), Christological types are well-suited for this kind of description.[43]

Using different vocabulary but similar concepts, Ribbens suggests that "ikonic *mimēsis* may offer a helpful category within which to think about typology, because typology can be conceived of as a 'correspondence, not just at the verbal level, but at the level of mimetic sign.'"[44] Following the work of Frances Young, he distinguishes between ikonic *mimēsis* and symbolic *mimēsis*. The latter ('symbolic *mimēsis*') approaches words as symbols which need to be "decoded" and lend themselves to allegory; the former discerns the contours of the type through a close reading of the text with its words, events, and actions.[45] Therefore, symbolic import (Geerhardus Vos),[46] *ikonic mimēsis* (Young, Treier, Ribbens), and *Nachbild-Vorbild* (Davidson) supply the exegete with conceptual tools to describe biblical types. The theological value is observed in an example given by Ribbens. He writes of the Day of Atonement,

> Hebrews describes the sacrifice of the sin offering on the Day of Atonement as a type of Christ's death, because there is a correspondence in both facts and significance (9:1–14). The blood of goats and bulls was spilled, just as Jesus' blood was spilled, in order to atone for the sins of the people (Lev 16; Heb 2:17; 9:14). A dual correspondence such as this between fact and significance can appropriately be called ikonic *mimēsis*, because it re-presents, through a genuine likeness, the drama of levitical sacrifice in order to form the religious life of NT believers. Ikonic *mimēsis* stays true to the narrative sense and to the "significance" or "spiritual meaning" derived from the narrative. That is, it "does not read into the text a different or higher sense, but draws out from it a different or higher application of the same sense."[47]

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[43] Ribbens, "Typology of Types," pp. 92–94.

[44] Ibid., p. 87.

[45] Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); cf. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "The Voice and the Actor: A Dramatic Proposal about the Ministry and Minstrelsy of Theology," in *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method* (ed. John Stackhouse; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000).

[46] "Symbolic" as employed by Vos (and Lints) is not the same as Young's "symbolic *mimēsis*." Therefore, I affirm the former and deny the latter (cf. Ribbens, "Typology of Types," p. 87).

[47] Ibid., pp. 88–89.

Observing the shape of biblical types *from within the text* is not optional or secondary; it is an essential part of reading the Bible and doing theology—especially Christology.

Richard Lints agrees, "To the extent modern readers have become oblivious to the theological significance of symbols, they have cut themselves off from a full understanding of individual texts."[48] Consequently, only a "thick" reading of the Bible will unearth its riches. Defining terms, recognizing syntax, and locating the text in its cultural setting are only the first step in biblical exegesis. To understand how a biblical type points to Christ, the full theological import of the symbol must be grasped. Readers must observe the "latent potential" and "open-ended" possibilities that are present at the textual level.[49] In other words, they must discern the symbolic, or literary, meaning of the historic type. While some interpreters can go too far—assigning too much symbolism to a given type—many more do not go far enough. As a rule, we need to recognize that the thought-world of the biblical authors is filled with types, shadows, metaphors, and word pictures and that their words are filled with "latent potential" for knowing God and his Christ.[50]

Covenantal correspondence. According to the New Testament, Christotelic typology began with Adam (Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:45; cf. 1 Tim 2:13–14).[51] Imbedded in his DNA, as the *Imago Dei* and the covenantal head of the human race, Adam contains traces of every type to come.[52] As many scholars have shown, Adam

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[48] Lints, *The Fabric of Theology,* p. 300.

[49] Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text,* pp. 303–35.

[50] A superb example of this sort of "thick exegesis" is Beale's analysis of Isaiah 22:22 (*Handbook,* pp. 135-38). Before making connections with Revelation 3:7, he thoroughly examines Isaiah's original context.

[51] For the protological and eschatological features of Gen 1–3, see J. V. Fesko, *Last Things First: Unlocking Genesis 1–3 with the Christ of Eschatology* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2007), and Warren Austin Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* (Winona Lake, IN: Carpenter, 1984).

[52] Looking back at the Old Testament through the eyes of Paul, Ellis describes the covenantal nature of typology: "In the Pauline writing two basic typological patterns appear—Adamic or Creation typology and Covenant typology. Each is related to a particular aspect of God's redemptive purpose in Christ, and over all, they unite to form one interrelated whole. Thus, becoming a Christian is spoken of as a new birth (Exodus typology) and a new creation (Adamic typology); sometimes (e.g., Rom. 6:3) both ideas are apparently joined in the figure of resurrection" (*Paul's Use of the*

functioned as God's vice-regent, exercising royal and priestly duties, dwelling in Yahweh's garden-temple, and enjoying the blessing of His presence.[53] Though he was dethroned by participation in a Satanic lie, Adam still functioned as the covenantal head of redemptive history.[54] He, along with Eve, received the promise that one day her seed would crush the head of the seed of the serpent, thus beginning a blessed hope in the human race (Gen 3:15). Suffice it to say, the way in which God would re-establish the rule of "man" (*adam)*, was to bring to earth a second Adam, one who would succeed where Adam failed—obeying the law, atoning for sin, and destroying the devil. Thus, woven into the fabric of the biblical narrative is a covenantal-typological relationship that develops over time. Redemptive history and progressive revelation show an interrelationship between the covenants and the covenantal mediators who typify the superlative mediator to come.

Consequently, when we look to establish a textual relationship between type and antitype we must not do so apart from covenantal structures. In fact, after assessing the textual mold, we must compare the person, event, or institution in question to the surrounding covenant(s) to discern significance. In the case of Rahab, her faith in the promises of made to Abraham and Israel; for Isaiah, the Immanuel should be understood in the context of the Davidic covenant. Problems occur when interpreters move directly from the type to Christ, without travelling along the path of covenantal progress. Such a hasty method, usually based on outward similarities or bare predictions, opens the door to allegory and unwarranted spiritualizing.

Edmund Clowney mandates something similar: "In developing the biblical-theological interpretation of a text, the aspects of epochal structure and continuity may be separately considered. The first step is to relate the text to its immediate theological horizon. The second step is to relate the event to the text, by way of its

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Old Testament, p. 134.). In other words, entering into a covenantal relationship with God, "becoming a Christian," rests on a whole series of typological expressions.

[53] Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), pp. 83–90; G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God,* (NSBT; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004); Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003).

[54] O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1980), pp. 93–107.

proper interpretation in its own period, to the whole structure of redemptive history."[55] Going a step beyond Clowney, this proposal seeks to let the structures of the covenant not just redemptive-history in general determine the significance of the type. This does not constrict typology to a rigid system. On the contrary, it merely serves as a conceptual tool to prove the validity of the type by comparing it to the covenantal structures of the type's place in time and space.

Later installments. As the covenantal-typological structures unfold over time, something more than a simple type-antitype develops. As with the serial installations of the covenants, where each covenant organically expands (or restricts) the previous one, biblical types functions in much the same way.[56] The typical pattern does move directly from type to antitype, like a non-stop flight from Washington, D.C. to Seattle, Washington. Instead, typological structures function with an archetype-ectype-antitype pattern, like an intercontinental railroad that makes many stops along the way. This pattern is based upon the covenantal heads as the archetypes and Jesus as the ultimate antitype, with other ectypes finding themselves as "little Adams" on the covenantal pathway to Christ.[57]

This idea of later installments finds support from Goldsworthy's macro-typology, where the archetype is revealed in salvation history, the ectype escalates the promise in later prophetic writings, and finally the antitypical fulfillment arrives in Christ.[58] Further attestation to this kind of typological structure is provided by Richard Davidson's lexicographical work on *typos* structures in

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[55] Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), p. 88.

[56] On this point, Wellum writes, "It is important to note how closely typological structures and biblical covenants are related… . to reflect upon typological structures and their development is simultaneously to unpack the biblical covenants across redemptive-history… . In all these covenant heads [i.e., Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David], the role of Adam is continued in the world, and each one of them points forward to the coming of the last Adam, who through his obedience accomplishes for us our redemption" (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant,* p. 107).

[57] Ibid., p. 106; cf. idem., "Baptism and the Relationship between the Covenants," in *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ* (ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright; Nashville: B & H Academic, 2006), pp. 126–32.

[58] Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics,* pp. 253–56. This typological development mirrors the progress of the covenants, as they progress in redemptive history.

the Bible, where Davidson posits a dynamic understanding of types and antitypes.[59] His suggestion is that an antitype (*Nachbild*) simultaneously functions as type (*Vorbild*), such that when the antitype consummates the typical expectation, it also points ahead to further installments or future antitypes. As a result, Davidson's point seems to be that there is a locomotive relationship between type and antitype, whereby later antitypes themselves serve as types and generate more antitypes to come. So then, typology is not a simple correlation of type to antitype (T_1 to T_2), but it is rather a series of escalating types, traveling on the covenantal path to prepare the way for Jesus (i.e., T_1 to T_2 to T_3 and so on, until it reaches T_{Christ}).

The end is Christ. Finally, in regards to the people and offices of the OT, every archetype in the OT that legitimately manifests covenantal prefigurations must find their *ultimate* consummation in Christ. This should not come as a surprise. Since the goal of human history is the person and work of Jesus Christ (Eph 1:10), it is appropriate that all Scripture be fulfilled in him (Luke 24:25–27; John 5:39). As Goppelt summarizes, "all that the Old Testament said and prophesied about the men of God and the messengers of God converge in him."[60] With Christ as the end of the line, the culminating *telos,* it is only appropriate that we compare and contrast this *Christotelic* approach with two other approaches.

Christotelic Typology: All Types Lead to Christ

A covenantal, Christotelic typology is a *via media* approach to typology. It aims to chasten the fruitful imaginations of those who see Christ everywhere, while also giving biblical parameters for identifying types that go beyond a list of types collected from the

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[59] Davidson, *Typology in Scripture,* pp. 115–90, esp. pp. 131–32.

[60] Goppelt, *Typos,* p. 97. Admittedly, there are types which do not resolve in Christ. For instance, Babel/Babylon (Gen 11:1–9; Isa 13:1–14:23; Rev 17–18) and Judas' betrayal (cf. Ps 41:9 cited in John 13:18; Pss 69:25; 109:8 cited in Acts 1:20) are both presented as typological, and both deny Christ. Nevertheless, it should be observed that both of these types find their significance in the way they oppose God's anointed one. They are not types of Christ *per se,* but their significance is found in their negative relationship to him. Still, acknowledging the existence of this other set of types, most types in the Bible will find their *telos* in Jesus, because all Scripture points to him (John 5:39). Accordingly, in regards to typology, it is important to see how the figures in redemptive history—make that covenantal history—prefigure the Son of God come to earth, the Lord Jesus Christ. Ultimately, he is the goal of the Bible and the *telos* of typology.

New Testament.[61] Respectively, these two approaches might be labeled typological maximalism and typological minimalism. To conclude this study, I will argue that there are strengths and weaknesses in each of these positions, and that a view of typology that arises from the text and follows the contours of the biblical covenants must also await its eschatological fulfillment in Christ and not hurry the typological development by importing Christ back into the Old Testament.

Typological Maximalism

In his "Introductory Notes on Typology," Gordon Hugenberger writes, "Evangelical scholars appear distrustful of typology largely because of the apparent subjectivism of this approach, its unfalsifiable and contradictory results, and the indisputable record of interpretive excess."[62] To this last plaint, he gives an example of James Jordan's "interpretive 'maximalism,' which leads him to identify the attempted Sodomite rape of the Levite in Judges as a type of Christ's sufferings."[63] Typology of this sort, often associated with Origen and medieval allegory, has given typology a bad name. It therefore behooves the advocate of typology, to carefully explain what a type is and is not.

One who has done that, who might be described as a more sensible maximalist is Graeme Goldsworthy. An apologist for biblical

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[61] Kevin Vanhoozer rightly indicates that the hermeneutical divide also stands between Evangelicals and Catholics ("Ascending the Mountain, Singing the Rock: Biblical Interpretation Earthed, Typed, and Transfigured," in *Heaven on Earth: Theological Interpretation in Ecumenical Dialogue,* ed. Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), p. 207). In fact, part of the groundswell within the TIS movement comes from the way some biblical scholars have engaged with and adopted from Patristic theologians (e.g., Irenaeus of Lyons, Gregory of Nyssa, etc.) and Catholic interpreters (e.g., Henri DeLubac, Jean Danielou, etc.). As biblical scholars have escaped from the stranglehold of higher criticism, allegorical approaches and figural readings have been re-employed by many in the TIS movement (e.g., Matthew Levering, Christopher Seitz, Hans Boersma, Stephen Fowl, etc.). In this section, however, I will limit my interaction to those Evangelicals who are debating how to rightly discern biblical "types." Space does not permit a full discussion on historical distinctions between typology and allegory.

[62] Hugenberger, "Introductory Notes on Typlogy," p. 335.

[63] Ibid. Other maximalists in the history of interpretation would include Origen, Coccieus, and Benjamin Keach. More recently, Peter Leithart and many within the TIS movement would qualify as typological maximalists.

theology, Goldsworthy has proposed a macro-typology "that goes beyond the usually identified elements of typology explicit in the New Testament application of the Old."[64] In *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics,* Goldsworthy discusses the relationship between the Testaments, listing a plethora of "thematic polarities"[65] before concluding that, "macro-typology is the underlying principle of theological structure and biblical unity that makes possible all the various perspectives on the relationship of the Testaments."[66] He lists eighteen typological structures and posits that "all" biblical texts (which he defines as "a meaningful portion of any given book understood as part of that book and its overall message") speak about "God, human beings, or the created order, or they speak about some combination of these."[67] Jesus Christ as the touchstone for each of these things—God, humanity, and creation—gives meaning to every portion of Scripture.

Typological Minimalism

In contrast to Goldsworthy, typological minimalists reduce the role that typology plays between the Testaments. For instance, Paul Feinberg writes, "While types and analogies are appropriate ways of understanding the relationship between the two Testaments, typical and analogical hermeneutics are not… . The sense of any OT prediction must be determined through the application of historical-grammatical hermeneutics to that text."[68] Though Feinberg will make room for types in his grammatical-historical exegesis, they require an undefined set of "special rules [for] interpretation."[69] Typology is permitted but only under house arrest. Moreover, as recent hermeneutical works have shown, Feinberg's radical distinction between text and typology is not necessary, nor ultimately helpful in discerning meaning.[70] Instead, it reflects vestiges of critical scholarship that muzzles the divine author.

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[64] Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics,* p. 251.

[65] These include "salvation history and eschatological consummation," "type and antitype," "promise and fulfillment," "*sensus literalis* and *sensus plenior*," "old covenants and new covenant," "law and gospel," "Israel and the church" (ibid., pp. 241–45).

[66] Ibid., p. 251.

[67] Ibid., pp. 251, 256.

[68] Paul Feinberg, "Hermeneutics of Discontinuity," in *The Right Doctrine for the Wrong Texts?,* pp. 122–23.

[69] Ibid., p. 123.

[70] Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There Mean-*

How should we adjudicate these two positions? On the one hand, minimalists ground meaning in the text of Scripture and look for analogy and eternal principles that can be gleaned for Christian use.[71] On the other hand, the maximalist, appealing to an apostolic hermeneutic, aims to unite all the Old Testament with Jesus Christ. In truth, both approaches need qualification. While Goldsworthy's Christocentric hermeneutic has earned him the reputation as one who turns everything into a type,[72] it is a needed corrective to those interpreters who merely moralize the text with exemplary principles for living.[73] Goldsworthy is correct when he argues that typology plays an integral part of the biblical testimony and needs to inform

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ing in this Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), esp. pp. 303–35; Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), pp. 325–409; Dennis Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007), pp. 198–271.

[71] For example, see Walter Kaiser, "Single Meaning, Unified Referents: Accurate and Authoritative Citations of the Old Testament by the New Testament," in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. Kenneth Berding and Jonathan Lunde; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), pp. 45–89.

[72] "Despite the qualities of [Goldworthy's] work, not all will agree with the different threads that are weaved into it. One of them is that the New Testament authors all shared the gospel-centered hermeneutics described by Goldsworthy. After all, when Jesus explains all things in the Scriptures that concerned him (if Luke 24:27 is referred to on p. 252), it does not necessarily mean that every text of the Scriptures talks about him" (Erwin Ochsenmeier, "Review of Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation*," *RBL* 11 (2007) [on-line]; accessed 13 January 2013; available from http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/5878_6224.pdf; Internet).

[73] David Baker's essay on typology is a case in point. After limiting the prospects of predictive typology, he discusses the value of typology for the believer: "Is not the Lord Jesus Christ the supreme 'example' and 'pattern' for Christians (Matt. 11:29; John 13:15; Phil. 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:21)? Perhaps those interested in typology should concern themselves less with looking for types *of* Christ and more with presenting Christ *himself* as the supreme 'type' for Christians and the world" ("Typology and the Christian Use of Scripture," p. 330). Baker's point is not without merit; it simply misses the main point, the finished and accomplished work of Jesus. His conclusion demonstrates how minimalistic approaches to typology can result in appeals to moralism, instead of standing in awe of what God has done in Christ.

the way that we read the Scriptures and understand the gospel preached beforehand (cf. Gal 3:8).

Christotelic Typology

A *via media* is needed, one that takes the best of both approaches. This approach affirms an apostolic model of interpretation, one that takes its cues from the hermeneutical methods of the New Testament.[74] Yet, it also upholds the literary context and epochal situation of a given type so that unwarranted speculation is minimized. This textual priority accords with the history of redemption and progress of revelation, so that Jesus of Nazareth is not unwittingly transported back in time. Consequently, this approach reads the Old Testament at the textual, epochal, and canonical levels,[75] allowing each to inform the other in a way that finds its completion in Jesus Christ.[76] In the end, this mediating approach is closer to the "Christotelic" model of G. K. Beale and Peter Enns than the "Christocentric" presuppositionalism of Goldsworthy.[77] It seeks to read the biblical first text in its grammatical-historical sense, but not without also recognizing how the Bible, unlike any other literature, "requires us to expand our notions of historical context, recognizing that later readers also figure among the divine address-

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[74] For a recent survey of the New Testament methods for interpretation, see Beale, *Handbook,* pp. 55–93.

[75] See Lints, *The Fabric of Theology,* pp. 293–309.

[76] Much has been written on this in recent years, two "multi-view" books survey the landscape well: Gundry, *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament;* Gary Meadors, ed., *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009).

[77] Though I take issue with Enns' aberrant view of Scripture, the eschatological hermeneutic which leads him to see Christ as the end of the OT witness is helpful because of the way it holds in tension textual and canonical horizons. For a thorough critique of Enns' doctrine of Scripture, see G. K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008). Remarkably, Beale agrees with Enns in regard to his Christotelic definition. Beale speaks positively: "I like this term *christotelic* better than *christocentric,* since it refers more explicitly to approaching Old Testament texts without attempting to read Christ into every passage—something which some wrongly construe to be a Christocentric reading. The goal of the whole Old Testament is to point to the eschatological coming of Christ, and, therefore, I think Enns has made a very helpful improvement on a Christian approach to the Old Testament" (p. 86).

ees."[78] In short, typology is literal interpretation at the canonical level.[79]

An example will help at this point. In the case of priestly typology, Jesus fulfills all the types and shadows of the biblical office (see Heb 5-10). Yet the shape of his priestly office is not defined by New Testament testimony but Old Testament typology. For instance, nowhere in the Gospels is Jesus labeled a "priest," but as a few scholars have begun to observe Jesus performs priestly functions during his earthly ministry.[80] This is not evident from a linguistic word-study, but it is evident from a close comparison between Mosaic Law and the Gospels (cp. Lev 13:1–14:57 and Matt 8:1–4). More broadly, biblical types find their shape by the textual propositions, stipulations, and requirements in the Old Testament. Since the priesthood goes back to creation and is developed through the canon, it is possible to discern continuity and discontinuity, reinforcement and deviation, as the type moves toward its *telos* in Christ. This inner-canonical development helps us to discern how Christ fulfills the priestly type and even provides a rubric for evaluating theological models of Christ's priesthood.

To reiterate what was argued above, biblical types provide divinely designed "molds" for all future types. As ectypes (intermediate types that stand between the original type and Christ) adhere to the mold, they are judged to be good and true. When such ectypes deviate from the original, however, they can also be condemned on the basis of the earlier model. Christ ultimately "breaks the mold," as he becomes the final instantiation of the typological pattern. Upon his arrival all previous types and shadows can be reevaluated on the basis of his perfect substance. This is the point Beale makes about seeing types retrospectively.[81]

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[78] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Ascending the Mountain, Singing the Rock," p. 214. Significantly, Vanhoozer reminds us that biblical typology is a matter of "special rather than general hermeneutic[s]" because of "the divine authorial discourse and [the Bible's] organic unity" (ibid.).

[79] Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 2.

[80] Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1," *JHSJ* 4 (2006): pp. 155–58; idem, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," *JHSJ* 5 (2007): pp. 57–79; cf. J. P. Heil, "Jesus as the Unique High Priest in the Gospel of John," *CBQ* 57 (1995): pp. 729–45; André Feuillet, *The Priesthood of Christ and His Ministers,* trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975).

[81] Beale, *Handbook,* pp. 15–16.

Still, such epistemological commerce between the testaments is not enough. Because of the way typology has been abused in the past, it is vital to ground types in more than the superficial features of the text. Valid types must possess linguistic *and* covenantal correspondences.[82] While Goppelt and others have argued that valid types require significant correspondence, it has been argued here that significant correspondence can be achieved by looking at type's linguistic correspondence, sequential order, and covenantal context. When the antitype is Christ himself, it is possible to see a long line of mini-types proceeding from the first historical type to Christ himself. Such a process does not arise randomly, however. It follows the trajectory of the biblical covenants, which also move from Adam to the Second Adam. Thus, just as the biblical covenants are intended to lead to Christ and his new covenant, so the biblical types are instantiated to point to Christ, the goal of creation.[83] As Vanhoozer puts it, "the original meaning" of the Old Testament type "has finally achieved its Christological *telos*."[84]

Summary

In the end, discerning and defining types in Scripture continues to be an art and a science. As Graham Cole wisely observes about typology, reason and imagination are both necessary for faithful interpretation.[85] Biblical caution should be exercised when making typological connections, but not at the expense of vision. And of course, biblical vision comes from a reading of the text that pays close attention to the textual, epochal, and canonical horizons. Therefore, in pursuit of rightly dividing the word of truth, this essay has suggested biblical covenants are an essential element for discerning biblical types.

I have argued that situated between typological maximalism and typological minimalism, a *Christotelic* approach understands 'types' first in their historical period and then following the temporal contours of biblical storyline to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

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[82] Louis Berkhof wisely cautions, "Accidental similarity between an Old and New Testament person or event does not constitute the one a type of the other. There must be some Scriptural evidence that it was so designed by God" (*Principles of Biblical Interpretation: Sacred Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952], p. 145).

[83] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant,* pp. 21–26.

[84] Vanhoozer, "Ascending the Mountain, Singing the Rock," p. 218.

[85] Graham A. Cole, *The God Became Human: A Biblical Theology of Incarnation* (NSBT; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), pp. 91–92.

In this approach, I have affirmed the original intention of the biblical author, but I have also argued that the author's original intention could only be fully perceived at the final revelation of God (Heb 1:1–3). Due to the progressive nature of biblical revelation and the fact that behind the individual human authors stand a single divine Author, it is appropriate to speak of typology in terms of Christotelic trajectories that would have exceeded the expectations of the original author and audience. In the Old Testament Christ was both hidden and revealed by the prophetic witness.[86] Therefore, only in partnership with the New Testament do we behold the glory of Christ in the Old Testament. But with the New Testament witness in place, it is "magnificently obvious" that Israel's persons, events, and institutions are divinely designed types of Christ—types that we should be aware of as we read and preach the Old Testament.[87]

On this point, the covenantal framework of the Bible aids our ability to understand what information the biblical authors had and when. In other words, by relating types to the biblical covenants, biblical interpreters are better able to understand the amount of antecedent knowledge each biblical authors had. Moreover, because the Scriptures are framed by multiple, escalating covenants, the textual correspondence that is necessary to affirm a connection between type and antitype is improved. That is to say, by including the biblical covenants in our consideration of any given type, the biblical interpreter has more data to examine. His conclusions about Rahab can be based on more than what is found in Joshua, for instance. By paying closer attention to the covenantal framework of the Bible, he can evaluate the plausibility of a type that might otherwise be dismissed as only a superficial similarity.

In conclusion, adding covenantal correspondence to the battery of tests for hermeneutical warrant is desirable for three reasons: (1) because of the prevalence of covenants in the Bible (e.g., they inform every period of redemptive history), (2) because of the way persons, events, and institutions are organically related to these biblical structures (e.g., every Old Testament saint and New Testament disciple is in a covenantal relationship with God), and (3) because of the way the covenants mediate blessing and cursing in the lives of God's people. The enduring value of relating types to

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[86] D. A. Carson, *Jesus the Son of God: A Christological Title Often Overlooked, Sometimes Misunderstood, and Currently Disputed* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), p. 82.

[87] Ibid.

covenants is that instead of settling for some general redemptive connection between type and antitype, the biblical covenants give greater specificity. They function like infrared vision in the darkness of the Old Testament. To say it another way, because biblical covenants unify the canon without reducing Scripture's epochal diversity, they form an appropriate biblical backdrop for testing the validity of any typological relationship. Therefore, as more articles, chapters, and books are written on the subject of typology, they need to include discussion of how types relate to the biblical covenants, and how types and their respective covenants foreshadow Jesus Christ, the substance to which all types point. This will not only improve our interpretive methods; it will also increase our passion for the Christ to whom all Scripture speaks (John 5:39).

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Provision of Food and Clothing for the Wandering People of God: A Canonical and Salvation-Historical Study

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1. Introduction

"You will never see a hearse with a U-Haul behind it." This is a colloquial way of saying that no one can take their earthly riches with them when they die. That is easy enough for most people to understand and it closely approximates this pastoral saying: "we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world" (1 Tim 6:7). But the next statement from Paul is a much more difficult statement: "but if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content" (1 Tim 6:8).[1] This "we" carries the force of a command that applies to all Christians.[2] This is similar to the extra-biblical writer Sirach who stated: "The basic necessities of human life are water and fire and iron and salt and wheat flour and milk and honey, the blood of the grape and oil and clothing" (NRSV, Ecclus 39:26).[3] What is surprising is the absence of shelter, which one expects to be connected with food and clothing.[4] As

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[1] I assume Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. The literature on the matter is voluminous. According to Raymond F. Collins, the Pastoral Epistles should be considered "double pseudonymous" because the recipient and the author are "literary fictions" in *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary* (Louisville: WJKP, 2002), 10. For a study on the implications of one's position see Stanley E. Porter, "Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: Implications for Canon," *BBR* 5 (1995): 105-123. For a rejoinder to Porter see Robert W. Wall "Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: A Response to S.E. Porter." *BBR* 5 (1995): 125-128.

[2] William D. Mounce comments "By saying 'we,' Paul generalizes the truth to all believers… it carries the force of a command," in *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Dallas: Word, 2000), 343.

[3] For a brief note on Ecclus 39:26 and a broader discussion of the Israelite diet see Nathan McDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 61.

[4] For a reference to food, clothing, and shelter in *Digesta Iustianiani* (Digest of Justinian) see Willi Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric in Luke 14* (SNTSMS 85; New York/Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995),

Craig Bartholomew explains, "To be stable and inhabit a place, humans must build to make sure of stable inhabitation."[5] For Paul, it is only the most basic elements of life—food and clothing alone—that constitute the condition upon which a Christian should be content. Why these items (food and clothing) alone? Where do these conditions in 1 Tim 6:8 come from? Is there an over-arching narrative in which this proverb can be placed or is it simply an isolated pastoral maxim?

1.1 Why This Study?

Most commentaries attempt to answer these questions in two problematic ways. First, some read the reference to being content with "food and clothing" in an *atomistic* fashion—the saying is removed from over-arching issues and narratives. These often note that there are parallels between Paul's call to be content with such simplicity and the teachings of Jesus and Stoic teachers. In the area of the Old Testament, studies of food rarely interact with the combination of "food and clothing" together.[6] Second, some read the section about material possessions in 1 Tim 6:1-10 as having a certain metanarrative or eschatology behind it but they are not *consistent* in their application of an eschatological perspective. For example Phillip H. Towner views 1 Tim 6:8 as a pastoral maxim that endorses "a simple lifestyle."[7] Yet more than a simple life is entailed in the "eschatological understanding of human life" that Towner states is present in the context.[8] Likewise, Thomas C. Oden's pastoral commentary is unusual in that he places the whole

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86. Braun also provides notes on urban homelessness in Ancient Greek cities on pg 87.

[5] Craig G. Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell: A Christian View of Place for Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 40.

[6] Recent monographs on food in the ancient near east only interact a handful of times with wandering, clothing, or shelter. See Nathan McDonald, *Not Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), passim; Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Acumen Publishing, 2012), passim. Likewise, monographs on food and theology also do not interact with the combination of food and clothing (or shelter). See Norman Wirzba, *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), passim.

[7] Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 401.

[8] Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 400.

pericope of 1 Tim 6:7-10 in the context of "pilgrimage."[9] Again, the relationship between "food and clothing" is not clear or developed. The authors are not necessarily to blame because a commentary is simply not suitable for drawing out larger themes. The problems of *atomistic* readings and *inconsistency* leave a lacuna in the literature on contentment with food and clothing.

1.2 Methodology

With respect to methodology, we will argue that contentment with "food and clothing" alone is a sub-theme or minor theme that is part of an even larger theme about the identity of God's people in the OT and the NT. Identity is in turn connected to sin, redemption, and the whole panoply of God's grace and judgment. By referring to "God's people" we establish continuity across Israel and the church while respecting the diversity of the covenants and their elements of discontinuity. Thus, the scope of this study intends to go beyond 1 Timothy and tie together threads that run through the canon's narrative plot of salvation-history.[10] This study will only trace references that explicitly tie the provision of food and clothing together. Only a few instances go beyond this to include conceptual references or inferences (i.e. nakedness infers a lack of clothing). Space prohibits a study of feasting, table fellowship, and the role Jesus' body (Eucharist/Holy Communion); these will have to be left for another day.

1.3 The Central Argument

The central thesis of this study is: *God's people have always been pilgrims on this earth; this identity is the basis for the simple provision of food and clothing*. In order to support this thesis we will make two broad moves that will seek to cover the sweep of the canon of Christian scripture with an eye to events of covenantal significance. First, we will briefly articulate the larger matter of identity under which the matter of "food and clothing" can be traced. Specifically, we will argue that ever since the Fall, the people of God are defined as pilgrims or wanderers. The second part will receive the bulk of our attention as we seek to defend our thesis throughout the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and New covenants. The second part will demonstrate

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[9] Thomas C. Oden, *First and Second Timothy and Titus* (Interpretation series; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989), 105.

[10] For an argument that the canonical plot of salvation-history can be reduced to: 1) creation, 2) Fall, 3) redemption, and 4) consummation see David H. Wenkel, "The Most Simple and Comprehensive Script for the Theo-Drama of Scripture: Three Acts or Four?" *SBET* 30:1 (2012) 78-90.

that the two things that God's provides his people with throughout all covenantal relationships is food and clothing.

The Wandering People of God

In this section we will establish a foundational part of our thesis: *God's people have had a pilgrim identity ever since the Fall in the Garden of Eden*. By briefly examining highlights from the contours of salvation-history, we will demonstrate that God's people identified themselves as wanderers. Traveling without arriving at a final destination is so important that the patriarchs and their progeny cannot describe themselves without referring to it.

2.1 Wandering Out of the Garden

After Yahweh discovers Adam and Eve hiding in the trees of the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:8), he queries them until they confess to their sin. After this, Yahweh speaks to each party: the serpent, the woman, and to Adam. Each divine discourse from Yahweh in Gen 3:14-19 is a (covenantal?) curse of some kind. The last consequence for gaining the knowledge of good and evil is that Adam and Eve are cast out. Yahweh "drove out the man" from the Garden (Gen 3:24).

After this act of judgment comes the first reference to the provision of food and clothing. Instead of sewn leaves (Gen 3:7), Yahweh provides clothing of animal skins for Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21). Although Adam and Eve cannot eat from the "tree of life," they are sent out specifically to "work the ground" for food (Gen 3:23-24). Interestingly, there is no provision made for shelter or a home. This first reference to food and clothing in the canon is significant because it demonstrates that when Adam and Eve's covenantal relationship with Yahweh changed, the concern for providing food and clothing appears.

The reason why this study begins with Genesis 3 is that Adam and Eve's covenantal relationship to Yahweh changed when sin was introduced into the Garden. Before sin was introduced clothing was not needed because there was no shame associated with nakedness. Sin also caused a disconnect between *place* and *identity*.[11] Previously Adam and Eve had a permanent and special place in the Garden of Eden. This garden was a special place with boundaries

[11] Here I use the word "place" in a technical sense. According to Bartholomew, a "place" is a concept that includes geographic, concrete, relational, cultural, and social boundaries (*Where Mortals Dwell*, 1-3, also 31).

within the whole inhabitable earth.[12] Before sin, Adam and Eve always had a permanent place or home in the Garden.

Genesis 3 defines Adam and his progeny, both righteous and unrighteous, as those who live "east of Eden." With the advent of the righteous line of Abel and the rebellious line of Cain, the death of Abel results in the punishment that Cain "shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth" (Gen 4:12). Cain is the epitome of one who truly lives "east of Eden" (Gen 3:16). His wandering or displacement is pronounced and permanent.

In sum, the narratives of Genesis 1-4 define all of humanity as "wanderers" from Eden. Once sin enters into the world, the identity of those possessing eternal life can no longer assume they have a place to call home.[13] In cases such as Cain, there is a pronounced and permanent life of wandering. *Wandering arises because place and identity are divided by sin and covenantal judgment.*

2.2 Wandering Out of Ur

As the narrative of Genesis continues, wandering is used by Yahweh not only for judgment as in the case of Cain, but for redemption. The first words that Yahweh says to Abram are "go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you" (Gen 12:1). From this moment on, Abram's (later Abraham) is identified as one who wanders. For example, the covenant that Yahweh makes with Abram promises (1) a great nation, (2) a land, and (3) a seed.[14] What is important to note is that this land—the land of Canaan—is the "land of your *sojournings*" (Gen 17:8). Of even more significance is Abraham's own self-identification as a wanderer. In Abraham's explanation to Abimelech about calling Sarah his sister, he notes "God caused me to *wander* from my father's house" (Gen 20:13).[15]

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[12] Whereas Genesis 1 could be construed as a "place story" over and against an "earth story" so that the whole earth is understood as habitable, it is clear that even before the Fall, the creation of the Garden of Eden provided a "home" or an especially inhabitable place within the sphere of the whole earth. For a discussion of "space" and "displacement" as it relates to Genesis 1-3 see Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell*, 10, 24, 29.

[13] "Displacement is at the heart of God's judgment" in Genesis 3 according to Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell*, 29.

[14] Jason S. DeRouchie and Jason C. Meyer, "Christ or Family as the 'Seed' of Promise? An Evaluation of N.T. Wright on Galatians 3:16," *SBJT* 14:3 (2010): 36-48.

[15] It is possible that Abraham is speaking at an "all-time religious low" by using a plural Hebrew phrase in Gen 20:13 with reference to Elohim

2.3 Wandering Out of Egypt

From the patriarch Abraham comes the covenantal people of God who follow in the pattern of wandering. As Abraham's progeny grows into the great nation of Israel in Egypt, they are delivered by the "finger of God" (Exo 8:19) who works through Moses and Aaron. Israel's identity in Egypt is bound up in the language of slavery and wandering. Even Pharaoh views the nation as wanderers (Exo 14:3). An important text that connects food and clothing together is found in the instructions for the Passover (Exo 12:7-13). These instructions include blood on the doorposts as well as a meal eaten with clothes on. This meal was to be eaten "in haste" as a preparation for leaving Egypt (Exo 12:11). The Passover is a memorial about God's grace on the place or home of Israel (Exo 12:27). But it is also a time of preparation for those about to leave their home with only a full stomach and clothes on their backs.[16]

After being delivered from Egypt, this great nation then enters a covenant at Mount Sinai. As Moses delivers the laws of this covenant, he encourages the nation to reflect upon their identity as wanderers: "you shall make response before the Lord your God, 'A *wandering* Aramean was my father…" (Deut 26:5). Not surprisingly, this indicative is the basis for an imperative that follows: "you shall rejoice in all the good that the Lord your God has given you… and the *sojourner* who is among you" (Deut 26:11). Once Israel is "home" in the land of milk and honey, they must honor those who wander among them because they were (and are) wanderers themselves.

2.4 Wandering Out of the Wilderness

Israel is going home… or so it seems. The progeny of Abraham have grown into a great nation that has been delivered from Egypt. It is now time to possess the homeland of Canaan. The book of Numbers records how Israel comes right up to the border of Ca-

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(e.g., "the gods caused me to wander from my father's house"). For a detailed exegetical study see Andrew J. Schmutzer, "Did the Gods Cause Abraham's Wandering? An Examination of התעו אתי אלהים in Genesis 20:13," *JSOT* 35:2 (2012), 149-166.

[16] "Thus the entire meal and its manner and posture of consumption were to indicate faithful readiness for a speedy departure." Stuart Douglas, *Exodus* (NAC; Nashville: B&H, 2006), 278. For a contrary position see R.A. Cole who denies that the unleavened bread was for nomads or travelers anticipating a "desert march" in: *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1973), 116.

naan and then refuses to obey and take possession of it. The result is that Yahweh's anger is kindled against the nation so much that they are disciplined: "he made them *wander* in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was gone" (Num 32:13). What is significant about this passage is that wandering both defines Israel's identity and is used to change their identity. In other words, the very act of continuing to wander in the desert will chasten them so that a wicked generation is removed. The threat of further wandering remains in Num 32:15 as the Lord says to Israel: "For if you turn away from following him, he will again abandon them in the wilderness." In the end, Israel does possess the land. They do come home but this is never truly *home*. Israel is never completely successful in removing the evil people of the land or establishing the borders.

2.5 Wandering Out of Jerusalem

The identity of God's people as wanderers or sojourners on the earth is a concept that carries into the New covenant community which is established through the death and resurrection of Christ. According to Hebrews 11, the members of the New covenant (the church) have elements of *continuity* and *discontinuity* with those were under the covenants of Abraham and Moses. With respect to continuity, the people of God may wander on this world without a homeland in "deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb 11:38), but this is done through *faith*. The crucial element of discontinuity is that those who wandered by faith under the old covenant did not ever see the final *fulfillment* of what God promised (Heb 11:39). Wandering in the New covenant era is not based on the fact that they do not have a homeland. On the contrary, through Christ they see that they already possess a homeland that cannot be taken away. As the disciples carried the gospel of out Jerusalem, Judea, to the ends of the earth they share the news that anyone may share in the New Jerusalem that will come down from heaven (Revelation 21). This New covenant reality may be explained in terms of inaugurated eschatology: God's people already possess the homeland that they do not yet live in.

2.6 Summary

The arc of the large contours of salvation-history across the canon begins with wandering out of Eden and ends with God's

people receiving the eternal city of the New Jerusalem.[17] First, humankind is forced to wander away from the homeland of the Garden of Eden. Yet, Yahweh's gracious election and call of Abraham directs him to an unknown land of milk and honey. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's identity can largely be described as "dwelling in tents" (Heb 11:9, cf. 1 Ch 16:20, 2 Ki 21:8). Although Abraham and his progeny never receive the promise, they continually looked for an eternal city "whose designer and builder is God" (Heb 11:10). Canonically speaking, this eternal city is clarified as the New Jerusalem where God's people will eternally be identified as "home."

The Provision of Food and Clothing Alone

We have just established that God's people have consistently identified themselves as wanderers. In instances such as Deut 26:11, this status is the basis for the command to welcome the stranger or sojourner who visits Israel. In other words, the indicative is the foundation for the imperative. In this section we interact with this relationship. We will establish that the salvation-historical storyline repeatedly urges and commands that because God's people are pilgrims or wanderers, they should be content with food and clothing alone. When we trace "contentment" with food and clothing through the canon we will be evaluating vocabulary and concepts that refer to the necessities of life. The evidence we are interested in must be the pairing of bodily sustenance (food) and some sort of wearable protection (clothing).

It is not uncommon to find the two ideas of food and clothing joined together in extra-biblical and secular literature (cf. Diogenes Laertius 6.104; 10.131).[18] When it comes to the context of the NT, this raises the question of whether the biblical writers drew from Stoic sources. For example, the Greek word *autarkes* (contentment) that is used in 1 Tim 6:8 is also used by Stoics for self-sufficiency. Some have attempted to answer this issue by referring to a "Christian sense" of contentment that is not based on circumstances.[19]

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[17] G.H. Guthrie notes that "the wandering people of God are travelling toward the heavenly kingdom and city," in "Old Testament in Hebrews," *Dictionary of Later New Testament & Its Developments* (eds. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 841-850.

[18] William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC vol. 46; Dallas: Word, 2000), 344.

[19] Walter L. Liefeld, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 204.

But this does not seem to make sense of the command to consider one's circumstance of having food and clothing. Perhaps it is better to state that the Stoics differ on the *object* of their contentment.

Next, we must acknowledge that the presuppositions and larger issues of canonicity, authorship, and divine inspiration will influence how one deals with canonical data about contentment.[20] While acknowledging these presuppositions, there is also an objective element: the text. The NT writers testify through echoes, allusions, and citations that they were influenced mostly the OT and the teaching of Jesus and not by Stoic philosophy.[21] Having clarified our key terms, we will consider this pattern through the (1) Abrahamic covenant, (2) Mosaic covenant, and (3) New covenant.

3.1 The Abrahamic Covenant

The Abrahamic covenant demonstrates that food and clothing are the essential elements required for the wandering patriarchs. Abraham's three-fold covenant promises from Yahweh include: 1) innumerable descendants, 2) the land, and 3) blessing the nations. The promise of "the land of Canaan" is repeated in the call to Abram in Gen 12:1-9 and 15:1-21.[22] At first glance, this promise of a "place" or Promised Land would seem to negate our thesis that the patriarchs were largely identified as wanderers who saw shelter as secondary to food and clothing.

Is Abraham a nomad or a man-with-a-place? Perhaps the best answer is "yes." There are several reasons to understand the Promised Land as a place that is home but not home. It is a land of and for shelter that only provides temporary relief. First, the "Promised Land is a place with ever-expanding frontiers" that encompasses the whole world.[23] Abraham and his family do not control the whole land or remove the former inhabitants. Second, even within the Promised Land, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are journeying

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[20] To say that the author of the PE [pastoral epistles] must be drawing more from the secular Greek than from the Christian background (Brox) is to make a judgment based more on one's general approach to the PE than on the text. Throughout the PE Paul has drawn on imagery from both sources." Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 343.

[21] Thomas Lea states, "Although his [Paul's] statements would resemble the teachings of the Stoics, he was clearly influenced more by the Old Testament and the teaching of Jesus than by Stoic philosophy," in *1 & 2 Timothy* (NAC Vol. 34; Nashville: B&H Publishing, 1992), 169.

[22] For example see Gen 12:7 "Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said 'To your offspring I will give this land'."

[23] Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell*, 46.

(Gen 12:4-9).[24] Bartholomew states, "Abraham remains a resident alien (Gen 21:34) in Canaan."[25] Abraham's family (besides Lot) lived in tents (Gen 13:18; 18:1, 6). There are plenty of references to water throughout the Abraham narratives but no direct references to "food and clothing." It is only when the Abrahamic covenant is connected with Jacob that we see such a reference.

When Yahweh speaks to Jacob in his dream of the ladder connecting heaven and earth he reminds Jacob that: "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south (Gen 28:13-14). Yahweh identifies himself as the God of Abraham and then immediately proceeds to the promise inherent in the covenant established with Abraham: he will have innumerable descendants. When Jacob awakes from the vision of the "gate of heaven" he makes a vow:

> If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone, which I have setup for a pillar, shall be God's house. (Gen 28:20-22)

It is not clear if this vow was made in faith. On the one hand, Jacob's character is still characterized by craftiness at this point. On the other hand, he really speaks in awe of Yahweh's power and glory (Gen 28:16-17) and offers a tithe back to God (Gen 28:22).[26]

Jacob's vow is based on his current and anticipated state as a wanderer who wants to return to his father's house (Gen 28:21). His situation of distress is so dire that he predicates Yahweh's covenant faithfulness upon (1) the end of wandering, and (2) provision of food and clothing. The point must not be missed, Jacob will only be content and will only declare "the Lord is my God" if these conditions are met. Of course, the narrative immediately pictures Jacob lifting his eyes and seeing a well with three flocks of sheep beside it (Gen 29:1-2). The rest, they say, is history. Yahweh's provision is gracious and abundance flows into Jacob's hand through

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[24] Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell*, 47.

[25] Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell*, 49.

[26] Derek Kidner argues that Jacob's vow is primarily positive in *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 169. Gordon Wenham points out that Jacob's offering of a tithe imitates Abraham and sets a pattern for Israel to follow in *Genesis 16-50* (WBC 2: Dallas: Word Inc., 1998), 225.

multiplication of livestock. After this fulfillment, the "angel of God" (Gen 31:11) directs Jacob to arise and return to his father's house (Gen 31:13), thus completing Yahweh's faithfulness to the vow in Genesis 28. When Jacob finally arrives safely home in Shechem, in the land of Canaan, his sets up an altar and is faithful to his vow, calling it "El-Elohe-Israel" (God, the God of Israel) (Gen 33:18-20).

To summarize, we find that Abraham and Jacob are wanderers. We also see that Yahweh's provision of food and clothing constitute all the material possessions that Jacob believes will justify God or prove his faithfulness to the covenantal promises made with Abraham. During Jacob's wanderings outside of Canaan, there are only these things on his mind: food and clothing and a safe return home. Thus, early in the arc of salvation-history, we see a connection. God's people who are wandering away from home are provided with two essential things: food and clothing.

3.2 The Mosaic Covenant

Abraham's progeny follows Moses out of the land of Egypt and meets with Yahweh at Mount Sinai. A covenant relationship is established that builds upon the covenant with Abraham while adding an abundance of laws and stipulations. These external requirements should have flowed from an internal change of the heart toward God: "circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart" (Deut 10:16). In the NT, Paul argues that at least one important reason for these heavy requirements was to increase sin among Israel so that God's graciousness toward them would be all the more clear (Rom 5:20-21). In a pericope that relates to Yahweh's desire for Israel's obedience to flow from a circumcised heart, we find that the pilgrim identity of the nation is the foundation for how strangers and sojourners should be treated.

Before Yahweh dictates the character he wants to see in Israel, he details his owns actions in Deut 10:12-22. Yahweh reminds the people of his perfection: he is "God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty and the awesome God" (Deut 10:17). After Yahweh holds himself up as the most glorious being he states: "He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing" (Deut 10:18). The very next statement means that Israel is to imitate Yahweh's character based on (1) Yahweh's own nature, and (2) their own identity as a people born out of wandering. Thus, Israel should "love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt" (Deut 10:19). In this discussion of the very heart of the Mosaic

covenant is the truth that Yahweh himself provides for those who wander with the basic necessities of life: "food and clothing."

When Israel lives out their election by faith and by a circumcised heart, they too, should love those who wander. When Israel fails to live out this calling to love and obey Yahweh through a circumcised heart, they end up in exile. Isaiah warns that when Jerusalem falls because of sin, even those who are left will be without food and clothing (Isa 3:7). The dispersion of the exile is so devastating that it prevents Israel from wandering together. They must wander as those who are scattered until Yahweh's gracious hand gathers and restores them.

When John the Baptist appears in the wilderness of Judea as the last prophet of the Mosaic covenant era, he preaches that Israel must bear fruit as true children of Abraham (Luke 3:8).[27] The crowds who hear his preaching ask the question: "what then shall we do?" Luke records his answer as: "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to likewise" (Luke 3:11). By providing food and clothing to those who are in need, the people who truly repent will be bearing the fruit that God requires. John's demands echo the demands of the circumcised heart and the gracious nature of Yahweh in Deuteronomy 10. John's summary of the requirement of the Mosaic law is one of the strongest texts for our case because it demonstrates that the provision of food and clothing for those in need is not a trivial matter.

In sum, those who have a circumcised heart will love the stranger or wanderer by providing food and clothing. Israel, of all people, should be ready and willing to do this because her own identity is bound up in being rescued from being homeless in Egypt.

3.3 The New Covenant

The provision of food and clothing for those who wander is close to the heart of the Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic covenant, and as we shall see, the New Covenant. In this section we will examine the relationship between identity and contentment with food

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[27] O. Palmer Robertson argues that John the Baptist's function as a "voice crying in the wilderness" connects Israel's experience of wilderness wanderings. In the past, Israel needed to endure the wilderness in order to possess the promised land, now Israel must endure the wilderness if they are to receive the Messiah and his blessings in *God's People in the Wilderness: The Church in Hebrews* (Fearn, Christian Focus, 2009), 23.

and clothing in the teaching of (1) Jesus, (2) Paul, (3) James, and (4) Revelation.

3.3.1 The Teaching of Jesus

Jesus identifies himself and those who follow him as homeless wanderers most clearly in Matt 8:18-22. This should not be surprising because Jesus is the Israelite-par-excellence. As the embodiment of Israel, we should expect that Jesus has "nowhere to lay his head."[28] The irony of this is highlighted by Jesus' title of himself as the "Son of Man" (Matt 8:20). One would expect that the Danielic Son of Man is the ruler and judge of nations, not a wandering vagabond. Except and only, in Jesus, these are not mutually exclusive conditions. But this lack of permanent housing does not mean that Jesus and his followers will be starving. Jesus' teaching on not being anxious about "food and clothing" provides another example where food and clothing are conceptually tied together.[29] The long parallel passages from Jesus in Matt 6:25-33 and Luke 12:22-31 are almost completely dedicated to anxiety about food and clothing. This pair can be clearly seen in the Sermon on the Mount/Sermon on the Plain:

> And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. For life is more than food (τροφή), and the body more than clothing (ἔνδυμα). (ESV Matt 6:25-26 // Luke 12:22-23)

The people of God are set contrast to those who are outside of the New covenant community. In the context of the Sermon on the Mount, the "Gentiles" are those who are outside of the covenant community. The Gentiles are those who "seek after all these things," specifically food and clothing (Matt 6:32).[30] But God's

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[28] Robert H. Mounce states, "Jesus is simply pointing out that those who follow him will feel homeless" in *Matthew* (UBCS; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 77

[29] Walter L. Liefeld finds a strong parallel between 1 Tim 6:8 and Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount in *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 204.

[30] We find a very interesting parallel in the pseudepigraphical *Letter to Aristeas*: "Hence the leading Egyptian priests having looked carefully into many matters, and being cognizant with (our) affairs, call us 'men of God.' This is a title which does not belong to the rest of mankind but only to those who worship the true God. The rest are men *not of God* but of meats and drinks and clothing. For their whole disposition leads them to find solace in these things." (Let. Aris. 140) *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*

people are clothed by God himself, just as the fields and birds are fed by God. God's people are those who pray for and receive their "daily bread" (cf. "The Lord's Prayer" in Matt 6:11). And when the Seventy-Two go out on a mission for Jesus, the only things they need are food and clothing, the essential items for life.[31] Jesus arguably serves as a pattern that continues in Acts.[32]

Jesus' discourse about food and clothing also picks up the thread left dangling since Genesis 1-3. Jesus' statement that life is *more* (πολύς) than food and clothing (Matt 6:25) is of particular importance. Whereas food and clothing are the two vital requirements for wanderers, something else is necessary. Within the larger context of the meta-narrative of exile and wandering out of Eden, this suggests that the end is in sight. The presence of the Kingdom of God eclipses the needs of wanderers because this kingdom will eventually result in the restoration of God's people at the consummation of all things.

3.3.2 The Teaching of Paul

Paul's teaching about contentment with food and clothing in 1 Tim 6:1-10 is also based on pilgrimage and wandering. For example, Paul teaches in 1 Tim 6:8 "but if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content."[33] Some view 1 Tim 6:8 as a pastoral maxim or proverb that endorses "a simple lifestyle."[34] Yet, this does not likely account for literary elements surrounding the proverb. Thomas C. Oden's pastoral commentary is unusual in that he

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(ed. Robert Henry Charles; Bellingham: Logos Bible Software, 2004), 2:108.

[31] When the Seventy-Two went out on mission from Jesus, all the synoptists agree that they should not carry extra food or clothing. Louise Wells, *The Greek Language of Healing from Homer to New Testament Times* (BZNW 83; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), 212.

[32] David P. Moessner summarizes Luke's plot in Acts as "stories of the journeying of the people of God whose leaders imitate their Prophet Messiah in proclaiming the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God" in *Lord of the Banquet: The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 296.

[33] Walter L. Liefeld comments on 1 Tim 6:8: "This embodies Jesus' strong teaching against greed and regarding trust in God for material needs in Luke 12:13-34 (see also the prayer, 'Give us today our daily bread,' and other teaching in the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 6:9-13, 19-34" in *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 204.

[34] Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 401.

places the whole pericope of 1 Tim 6:7-10 in the context of "pilgrimage."[35] Paul also states in the preceding verse in 1 Tim 6:7 "for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world." This idea strongly echoes Job 1:21 and Eccl 5:15.[36] Indeed, the allusions near 1 Tim 6:8 from the LXX invoke the pilgrimage from nakedness to nakedness.[37] This passage in 1 Tim 6:8 parallels how 1 Tim 1:15-16 sets Christ's eternal life in contrast with "this present transient existence."[38] Howard Marshall's comments are also tantalizing as he notes that Paul's comments in 1 Tim 6:6-8 are about "our passage through" this world.[39]

This raises the question: how does this fit into the larger picture that spans the whole canon of Christian Scripture? Likewise, Gordon Fee notes that the statement about bringing "nothing into the world" is "primarily eschatological."[40] Again, due to fragmented nature of commentaries, we are left with a vignette but no story; a small eschatological scene but no meta-narrative. In the textual unit that spans from 1 Tim 6:1-10, Paul warns against false teaching and false views of material possessions. This unit reflects the two-fold relationship between indicative and imperative. First, Paul establishes the indicative or our identity in terms of our eschatological journey from nakedness to eternity: we brought nothing in and we take nothing out (1 Tim 6:7). The identity of every person, whether realized or not, is that of someone who truly possesses nothing. Eschatology is crucial to the entire thought process of the larger textual unity of 1 Tim 6:1-10 because it establishes identity.

On the basis of this identity as naked-possessors-of-nothing established in 1 Tim 6:7, Paul moves on to the pastoral imperative in

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[35] Thomas C. Oden, *First and Second Timothy and Titus* (Interpretation series; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989), 105.

[36] Donald Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary* (TNTC 14; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 127.

[37] For a discussion on the difficulty of defining the terms "echo" and "allusion" and the unlikely prospect that scholars will agree see Dennis L. Stamps, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament as a Rhetorical Device: A Methodological Proposal" in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament* (ed. Stanley Porter; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 12-14.

[38] George M. Wieland, *The Significance of Salvation: A Study of Salvation Language in the Pastoral Epistles* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 103.

[39] I. Howard Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 648.

[40] Gordon Fee, *1 and 1 Timothy, Titus* (UBCS; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 143.

1 Tim 6:8: "if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content." His pastoral indicatives about the love of money continue to build through this textual unit. For example, given the status of all people as naked-possessors-of-nothing, the "desire to be rich" is a "senseless... desire." By identifying the indicative and imperative relationship, one can see the logic of the senselessness or foolishness of the desire to be rich.

3.3.3 The Teaching of James

James opens his short epistle with an address to the "Twelve tribes in the Dispersion" Jam 1:1). Douglas Moo argues that the combination of the reference to the "Twelve tribes" in conjunction with the phrase "in the diaspora" or "scattered among the nations" was written to evoke continuity with the true people of God who are wandering apart from "their true, heavenly, 'homeland.'"[41] If the recipients are Gentile Christians, they are appropriating the story of Israel as their own; they are pursuing a heavenly promised land. But the early date of James suggests a literal meaning and not a figurative one. The recipients are most likely Jewish Christians who have been persecuted and forced out of Palestine. In either case, James identifies his first century reader as a wanderer.

In the second chapter James addresses the works that will demonstrate that a living faith has justified the believer. In other words, James describes the good deeds that will flow from the faith of those who call Abraham their father (Jam 2:21).

> What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly *clothed* (lit. "naked" γυμνός) and lacking in daily *food* (τροφή), and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (Jam 2:14-17)

The reference in Jam 2:15 to "daily food" likely envisions a person who is "habitually underfed" or consistently lacking in daily provision.[42] The nature of salvific faith will seek to meet these basic needs along with the gospel message. It is hard not to remember that James is writing to those in the dispersion. James is writing to wanderers to remind them to take care of those are lacking basic

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[41] Doug Moo, *The Letter of James* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 50.

[42] Moo, *The Letter of James*, 125.

provision—a state consistent with other wanderers. This may parallel the requirement to care for the stranger under the Mosaic covenant in Deut 10:12-22. In the Mosaic law, the kindness required for strangers is derived from Israel's own experience. So also in Jam 2:14-17, the requirement to provide food and clothes is close to the heart of faith. The faith that provides such basic needs to others will provide evidence that this faith is active, alive, and saving.

3.3.4 The Teaching of Revelation

The book of Revelation provides further evidence that food and clothing are the necessary requirements for wanderers because this book clarifies the end of the story. The most important text for our purposes is the apocalyptic scene before God's throne in Rev 7:15-17. This text finally unites all of God's people, from every tribe and nation, in worship to God and the Lamb (Rev 7:9-10). Out of this unity comes a question from the elders to the Seer: "who are these clothed in white robes, and from where have they come? (Rev 7:13). The answer to the Seer brings together the following conditions: 1) they will have robes washed in the blood of the Lamb, 2) God will shelter them with his presence, 3) they shall hunger and thirst no more (Rev 7:14-17). Space does not allow us to draw out of the intertextual relationships found here (Isa 4:5-6; Isa 49:10; Ps 121:6). The promises of shelter for God's people, including Israel find their culmination in the place before God's throne.

The New covenant relationship established through Jesus ultimately re-establishes what was lost. Specifically, identity and place are finally united in the New Heavens and the New Earth. The final consummation of all things results in a final destination where wandering and displacement ends. The inhabitants of the city that comes down from heaven dwell with God's presence as Jesus is the co-inhabitant of the city.[43] Revelation details the provision of a final destination for wanderers: the New Jerusalem, the New Heavens and the New Earth (Revelation 21).[44]

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[43] "Place is never fully place without God as co-inhabitant." Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell*, 31.

[44] Although Revelation makes many references to provision of food and clothing, they are found together.

3.4 Summary

To summarize, the New covenant community's identity finds great continuity with the salvation-history of Israel. Jesus, Paul, and James all view food and clothing as an important provision for those in the New covenant community. In each of the teachings about food and clothing, the imperatives are based on indicatives about the wandering status of the people of God. Jesus teaches on the Mount that his disciples possess something more than life, so they should not worry about the basic necessities of life. They possess a homeland by faith that they do not yet see. Of course, this provision is not guaranteed absolutely until the restoration of all things. Paul himself takes pains to describe his condition of being naked and hungry for the sake of the gospel (2 Cor 11:27). Perhaps we can conclude that God's provision of food and clothing is not guaranteed in this life, but it is normative. In addition, there is no difficulty in noting that faith in God's provision (Matt 6:25-26) does not exclude the means of people giving to those in need (Jam 2:14-17).

Conclusion

What is surprising about the results of this study is that the provision of food and clothing plays a minor of but significant role in the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and New Covenants. In Deuteronomy 10, Yahweh's own righteous character is based on his provision of such things for the wanderer. On the one hand, human needs are quite narrow and no provision for shelter or housing is given. While family units of Christians should view living in a house as normative, it should not be a surprise or shock when this is not the case. On the other hand, those who lack food and shelter may have grounds for a *holy* discontentment. This too must be qualified with the fact that Paul himself went naked and hungry for the sake of the gospel (2 Cor 11:27). Yet, there is a sense in which contentment is not purely spiritual. As William D. Mounce states, "1 Tim 6:8 limits human needs to food and clothing, and therein lies God's obligation."[45] And when we hear the message of James correctly, those who have a living faith will seek to act on God's behalf by providing food and clothing to those in need.

When we place the saying in 1 Tim 6:8 in the canonical context, we see a larger and more significant pattern at work. Yahweh's people have always been on the move—"wandering about in de-

[45] Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 366.

serts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb 11:38). The silence about shelter or housing for God's people is continually deafening. But the silence about such provision only highlights the tenor of texts such as Revelation 21 that describe the eternal city. The people of God possess no permanent home. But they move toward the New Jerusalem—their permanent city and homeland. Until they reach that destination they only need the basics: food and clothing. The wide canonical and salvation-historical pattern through the successive covenants of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus points to the idea that: *until the consummation of all things, God's people are pilgrims on this earth and their identity as wanderers is the basis for God's simple provision of food and clothing.*

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Vocal Exegesis: Reading Scripture Publicly without the Heresy of Boredom

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Introduction

> Churchgoers are used to lukewarm yoghurt, but the Bible is about sin, scandal, violence, about lousy authorities, sex, money—all the things life is about today. A lot of people think the church should be some sort of haven to protect the self, turning their backs on human degradation and suffering. But that's not the Bible.
>
> Daniel Berrigan[1]
>
> Remember that you are a human being with a soul and the divine gift of articulate speech: that your native language is the language of Shakespear and Milton and The Bible; and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon.
>
> Professor Henry Higgins to Eliza, *Pygmalion* (Act I, Scene 1, 117)

Waves crashed and disciples shouted desperately to the sleeping Jesus, but the story was being read in the dry, factual tone of radio news. Jesus' words brought "great calm" then two violently insane men screamed, but the reader's voice did not vary in pitch, pace or volume. It was when Jesus was given the same vocal characterisation as the demons that I realised that this reading was more than boring. It was heresy.

How well do church readers transmit the living word of God? Are rich, emotionally layered psalms flattened to the even blandness of a textbook? Are the fiery warnings, gracious appeals and compelling reasoning of apostles and prophets blurred by readers who barely notice the movements of the text, and may have read it for the first time five minutes before? If so, hearers are missing

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[1] Quoted in George W. Cornell, "Berrigan says guilt makes America sick," St Petersburg Times, Saturday 29 October 1977, p.9-D. http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=888&dat=19771029&id=H0QjAAAAIBAJ&sjid=GloDAAAAIBAJ&pg=3844,3625615, accessed 10 March 2013.

important ideas and are being shown that the Scriptures and the God they describe are drab and predictable. And that is heresy.

Crowds listened for hours as Ezra the scribe read God's *torah* with compelling clarity. The Levites "read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." (Neh 8:1–13) Ordinary people celebrated that they now understood, and they came back the next day for more, which led to a national revival. Moses read the book of the covenant in public with great effect (Exod 24:7). When the tribes crossed into the promised land, the blessings and curses of the law were dramatically recited from two mountains by two speaking choirs, a stereo of grace-based covenant theology, and then Joshua read the law (Josh 8:30–35; cf. Deut 11:29; 27:13ff). King Josiah was so powerfully affected by the old scroll read in his hearing that he called all the people together and personally read "all the words of the scroll," standing with them to make a new covenant (2 Ki 22, 23). With such a history of revival after hearing God's word, it is no wonder that Paul told the young pastor Timothy, "[D]evote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching" (1 Tim 4:13). Learning to read well is a first step for trainee preachers and teachers, just as it is for actors, and good public reading places a high value on the living words of a speaking God, bringing Yahweh's word within reach of real people today (Rom 10:8; Deut 30:14).

I have worked as a producer of radio and television. The voice-over artists who read commercials are usually trained actors from theatre or film and can play their voices like an instrument. They can make a car's upholstery sound sensual. They can pronounce a politician's name with fond respect, with a menacing shudder or with a dismissive half-chuckle. They can mix emotional colours from a vast palette, adding three or four different emotions in different phrases of one sentence, and still finishing the read in 29.5 seconds. Even as I admire and envy their vocal ability, I wish that the everlasting gospel were given as much respect as soft drink. Actors and Bible teachers are both transmitting a text. But as an actor once said to an archbishop, "We actors on the stage speak of things imaginary as if they were real, and you in the pulpit speak of things real as if they were imaginary."[2]

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[2] *The Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Science &c, for the Year 1828*: p. 89. At books.google.com.au. Accessed 10 March 2013.

It is important to read the Scriptures publicly in a way that reveals their literary beauty and theological richness. This paper will consider how to encourage this.

Challenges

When I ask theology students to read Scripture, I usually get flat readings (though drama students taking theology classes usually show a better way). When I probe a little, some students say they want to transmit only the Bible rather than themselves or their own opinion. I admire their humble respect for biblical authority, yet I remind them that the Bible is colourful literature in various styles and that a reading that fails to show this is in fact a distortion, while text-faithful reading can help audiences see things in Scripture that they may otherwise miss. One reason churches have the Bible read out—rather than simply letting audiences read it themselves—is because reading gives more information than mere words on the page. Our verbal performance is an interpretation, a vocal exegesis, and rather than being afraid of that, we can study to make sure we understand the text so that our interpretation is helpful.

Other students say they want to be real rather than theatrical and emotionally manipulative. Nobody wants fake acting, least of all in Christian teaching, and yet one does not need to go to the other extreme with a delivery so under-stated it is wooden. Most theology students I encounter are well on the flat side, and could add much more expression before becoming anything like over-acted. In class I encourage them to try giving 30% more emotional intensity than they are comfortable with at first. Most then instantly start raising the volume. Volume is one way to add intensity, but preachers often tend to over-utilise it. Shouting soon becomes monotonous, and can push an audience away and talk down to people rather than inviting them in close for respectful conversation between equals. I encourage students to play with adjusting pitch and pace as well. A fast pace can be exciting in places, but you will need to work hard on articulation and make sure you do not lose details, and you will need contrast with slower sections or the audience will struggle to follow. Excitement can be built if you inject plenty of appropriate colour into the details and actually take things slightly slower. A slower pace at times can allow an audience to relish the moment. Most students try these things and step up about 10% in energy, looking shy. I encourage them to try 30% and ask their classmates how it came across. They step up, most feeling strange and fake and a little exposed at first, and usually they see from their

classmates faces that it was an improvement and did not sound false. With encouragement, students begin to see that it is possible to be rehearsed and sincere at the same time.

I also sense that readers feel vulnerable. Speaking is very revealing because words not only come from the brain, revealing our thoughts, but are powered by muscles in the gut, where counsellors say our deepest emotions are felt, and words are expressed in breath, which is the word for the human spirit in both Hebrew and Greek. Words come through the mouth and face, and are affected by our facial expressions that reveal our emotions. Further, starting to speak can reveal our social class, our ethnicity, city/country origins, probably gender and general health and a number of other factors that people can place in various hierarchies. Many students cringe at the sound of their recorded voice and say, "Do I really sound like that?" Speaking is quite confronting to one's self-image, and most beginners withdraw into totally flat delivery so they risk no self-revelations and no mistakes. Here perhaps the teacher's first task is to encourage readers to be comfortable as themselves. This is an important personal growth challenge, involving important theological ideas of God's acceptance and gifting of all kinds of people. While there are principles of presentation, the aim is to develop the reader or speaker not as an off-the-rack newsreader indistinguishable from others, but as an individual.

Bible readers and preachers can learn a lot from actors and voice teachers. For one thing, I notice many preachers are pushing from their chests and tightening their throats rather than breathing correctly and powering the sound from their diaphragm muscles and letting it come through a relaxed, open throat. A few voice lessons or singing lessons can start to correct this and form new habits. As a beginner preacher I would have a sore throat after most sermons, but voice training helps you to breathe properly and to relax, avoiding the tension that in fact reduces vibration and sound. Breath work, diaphragmatic breathing, posture, articulation exercises, vocal warm-ups, pitch and pacing exercises, theatre games, improvisation exercises and the like are very useful, especially for those who sense preaching is their major gift and want to develop it. This paper will focus elsewhere[3] but these things should be part of basic training for preachers.

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[3] See Cicely Berry, *The Actor and the Text* (Virgin Books, London, 1992). Patsy Rodenburg, *The Need For Words: Voice and the Text* (London: Methuen Drama, 1993). Michael McCallion, *The Voice Book: For actors, public speakers, and everyone who wants to make the most of their voice* (London: Faber &

Key skills for public reading

1. Words

Carefully asking what words *mean* is an important part of exegesis, but a presenter will also consider the sensory and emotional responses produced by the words, and how they convey experience, thought and feeling. Think of King David's gut-wrenching cry after Absalom's death.

> O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son." "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"
>
> (2 Sam 18:32; again in 19:4)

These words do not give us new information—we already know Absalom is his son. Their function is to express emotion. Yet reading all these repetitions with just one emotion like simple sadness would soon become monotonous, so the skilled reader will see a range of emotions here—shock, grief, tenderness, anger, longing, regret, perhaps self-blame—and decide which fits best with each word. They would also plan which words deserve emphasis: for example, one time it might be "my *son*" and another time "*my* son."

It is in the vowels of a word that emotion is most clearly heard: think of how many ways one can say the word, "O!" Meanwhile the consonants of a word shape the logical and intellectual meaning, and need to be clear. I would suggest that thought and emotion work powerfully together: understanding David and his story and how he arguably is at fault in the loss of his son can then produce mixed emotions, which are the most powerful emotions. If an audience feels deeply, they may remember and reflect later on the story and its themes. David as a father has been compared to God (2 Sam 14:1–23). His attempts to blend justice and love look shabby compared to the way God does. David seems incapable of bringing his prodigal son home, while God works out ways by which his banished ones may be returned to him (14:13–14)—which is gospel good news today. And so great biblical literature stays in our thoughts and feelings, which may be why God chose to reveal His truth in this way as well as in simple, factual statements.

In preparation, actors will "mark-up" a text, poring over it and noticing the ideas and emotional colouring of the various parts, and how it fits together, then underlining and jotting down comments

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Faber, 1988). For practical workshop training on DVD, see Bill Pepper, "Voice In Action" (2006), available from billpepper.com.

in the margin. They will mark the keyword of each line or scene, and then their performance will make it stand out in some way. This can be done on a photocopy or printout of a biblical text.

2. Phrases

Good phrasing simply shows how words group together to form an idea, and how various parts of an idea fit together into an overall message.[4] Without clear phrasing, ideas and feelings run together and the meaning becomes smudged.

It can be helpful to pay attention to prepositions and conjunctions, the grammatical connectors. Yet over-emphasising them can sound dry and overly didactic: "The Prime Minister said **to** the US Foreign Minister, who is **at** the talks **in** London." Phrasing should be like the beam that holds up a roof: not visible itself, but carefully structured to support ideas and feelings, and to produce clarity and natural energy. Stress nouns more than adjectives and verbs more than adverbs. Don't over-stress adjectives, negatives ("not," "no") or personal pronouns ("I," "me," etc). Don't strain to over-explain, or the text will feel heavily didactic rather than accessible and enjoyable. A reader does not need to pretend that a complex argument from Paul or Ezekiel is easy, but can offer the first-time hearer a way into it and an initial reading that begins to open up the key ideas. In a psalm, the phrasing is often done for you, and the basic unit is the line or the pair of lines in parallelism. Yet even lines can have various parts and various emotional colours.

Some readers swallow the last few words of a phrase or line, but it is important to maintain energy and interest right to the end, and often in poetry the key idea is at the end. The end of the sentence or the line is often worthy of emphasis because a clever writer will often construct sentences so the peak at the end, with the key action or idea arriving last.

It is important to ask what each phrase or line is doing, and how they fit together. Actors are trained to assign an action to each line, then to each phrase. For example, a Shakespearian sonnet, number 18:

> Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
>
> [I think the writer is trying to catch attention, to make her curious, to tease her.]
>
> Thou art more lovely, and more temperate.

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[4] After Bill Pepper, "Guidelines on approaching a text," unpublished notes, n.d., p. 4.

[To flatter, perhaps to manipulate?]

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May.

[To shock, to frighten.]

And summer's lease hath all too short a date.

[To show urgency by hinting at death.]

And so on. This trick of asking what each phrase is trying to achieve can help you summarise the flow of arguments as well. Note Rom 8:1–4:

> Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, [To assure, to gospel, to relieve guilt.] because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. [To contrast two forces working in conflict.] For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, [To show my plight.] God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. [To show God's solution: the incarnation and the cross.] And so he condemned sin in sinful man, [To rebuke both sinfulness and self-righteousness.] in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, [To give hope, to promise sanctification as a free gift.] who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. [To motivate a choice to do just this.]

I do not pretend my brief notes have explained all Paul is doing in this passage. There are subtleties and connections with the wider context and the more we know of these the better we may read, as long as we are not lost in detail and can still introduce an audience to the big and basic ideas. The reader who can summarise for themselves the purpose of each line will read it with a well-defined purpose, and audiences will find their reading clearer. Try it and see.

3. Images

Pay attention to the striking images Bible writers use, anchoring an idea to a sensory experience so that it is remembered. In a screen age when so many people think visually, these are striking. The technique for the reader is Think—Feel—Say. In preparing the reading, think carefully about each image and the emotion it is intended to create. Then, while reading, visualise what is described. Try this visually rich passage from Psalm 58 describing the wicked: "Their venom is like the venom of a snake, like that of a cobra that has stopped its ears, that will not heed the tune of the charmer, however skilful the enchanter may be" (v. 5). Did you see the experienced snake charmer panicking because the cobra will not listen?

Note the powerful images vv. 6–7: "Break the teeth in their mouths, O God; tear out, O LORD, the fangs of the lions! Let them vanish like water that flows away; when they draw the bow, let their arrows be blunted." And here come hard-hitting images that express the writer's honest feelings about these enemies in v. 8: "Like a slug melting away as it moves along, like a stillborn child, may they not see the sun." A slug? A stillborn foetus in a bloody bucket? These are shocking images, but the writer intended them to be, and a reader who respects biblical authority should not try to soften them, but let them have full impact on the audience. They will not be easily forgotten by people struggling with similar feelings and bringing them to God.

4. Make interpretive choices

When Amaziah the apostate priest pulls rank and tells Amos to go away and stop prophesying, Amos responds with a heart-stopping prophecy:

> Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, your sons and daughters will fall by the sword. Your land will be divided… and you will die in a pagan country. And Israel will go into exile… (Amos 7:17).

How do you imagine Amos saying those lines? Harshly and loudly for maximum public embarrassment, enjoying the thought of vengeance on his opponent? Or is he shocked by this God-given vision, and saddened by the future of this man and his family and the nation? Does he speak gently, hoping that by kindness he can lead this priest to repentance to avert the disaster? Is his voice teary with compassion as he sees this vision? The text does not tell us. Yet our choice should be guided as much as possible by evidence in the text, and our imaginative reconstructions should be built around that.

I admit I sometimes change my mind on some reading choices when I come back to a text I have marked up earlier. I find that really knowing a text takes years and dozens of readings, but it is important to commit to a reading now as best you can, rather than staying in the bland middle.

5. Bring out the variety in the text

One of the enemies of good reading is monotony (which literally means "one tone"), so actors learn to bring out the feeling and meaning of each line, and then of each part of the line. Good variation not a sing-song change of tone imposed on the text, but simply tries to react to what is in the text.

For example, we will look briefly at Psalm 46. (I have chosen KJV this time for its timeless grandeur.) You may like to practise reading each verse aloud after reading the comments and suggestions below. The poem begins by stating its key idea of the assurance of faith, which should sound authoritative but also personal because this is "our" God. Help the listener feel the emotional difference between "help" (which has a warm colour) and "trouble" (colder and more threatening) in Ps 46:1: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." The next thought builds in intensity, falling into four natural steps which can be expressed by raising the energy in the delivery. Raising the energy does not necessarily mean raising the volume: if you were warning a friend that a lion was behind the nearest tree, you would whisper with great intensity. And raising the energy does not necessarily mean going faster. These step-ups in energy should not be rushed, as we want the reader to visualise this huge earthquake and tsunami and experience it in their imagination, and this takes a moment. For example, note Ps 46:2–3:

> Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,
>
> [Step up]
>
> and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; [Step up]
>
> Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
>
> [Step up]
>
> though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

The word "Selah" is usually understood as indicating an instrumental break in the music, so the reader could pause briefly. It appears three times in this psalm, forming sections that can be indicated by a brief pause.

In the next section there is no roiling sea, but the image of a river calmly gliding through paradise (cf. Rev 22:1–2). The audience will feel the difference between a reader who can picture images in their imagination and one who simply says the word. We are describing the peace in the city of God, so use the nice long vowels ("there," "streams") to express this calm emotion, and do not rush. You could legitimately lengthen the vowels in the words "glad" and "God," or could leave them short and let them bounce along lightly and happily for contrast, before the long vowels in the next line ("holy place," "most High") provide an opportunity for gravitas and awe. Note v. 4: "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the

most High." The next verse can be read to show the balance and symmetry of its two parts. Colour its phrases with solid, dependable assurance in crisis and even the hint of a carefree smile: "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early" (Ps 46:5).

Next comes another huge contrast in just two quick verses. The first verse is a dramatic and violent story told in four separate headlines. The words describing the actions of 'the heathen' could sound angry and shrill, but God's response is stronger but calmer. Verse seven comes with solid assurance, and also repeats the key idea with which the poem began. There, God is called the Lord of hosts or armies, or the NIV translates Lord Almighty: "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah" (Ps 46:6–7).

The next section requires imagination. We are being invited to admire God's judgments by leaving His city of safety and venturing out onto the earth after the Lord of armies has stopped a war - which can be understood as the final eschatological war of good and evil: "Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire" (Ps 46:8–9).[5] (Did you remember to visualise the broken weapons, and smouldering chariots?)

Next comes another contrast: total calm, and God speaking for the first time directly to the audience. How will you differentiate God's speech? Some readers drop their voices as deep as possible, since a deep voice can suggest authority. (Anthropologists say this is because a deep voice usually comes from a large body.) Others may represent God by a whisper, which has some biblical support (1 Ki 19:12). Your choice here will depend on whether you want to emphasise God's transcendence or immanence, but it is important to cue audiences that this is God speaking. In these verses we realise God is not only in His city of safety, but is Sovereign over all nature and all history, including nations that do not recognise Him.

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[5] "[T]he God who rules over nature and men is imagined eschatologically as overmastering all the world and bringing an end to war… God…exercises the power to end the era of violence and bring peace to humankind" [Robert Alter, *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2007), p. 164]. This has been seen at least since Hermann Gunkel, *Die Psalmen übersetzt und erklärt,* 4th Edition (Gottingen: Vendenhocek und Ruprecht, 1926).

God's power means his people have assurance of final victory, yet there should be no note of cheap boasting in the second half—God is well above that. Instead He is assuring His people: "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Ps 46:10). The next part is God's people—"us" speaking their enthusiastic faith in response to God: "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah" (Ps 46:11).

Noticing the structure like this means that it becomes clearer how each part should be read. This naturally brings variety into the reading, and helps an audience think and feel their way into the text.

6. Read characters

Characters in a biblical story should not all sound the same. Bible translators and other linguists speak of the "register" of language, which shows a character's social position.[6] For example, in 2 Kings 6–7 we hear a king speaking, perhaps in formal language and high register (something like the English spoken by Prince Charles). At the other end of the social scale are four lepers, rejects who are starving almost to death and keep mentioning death and dying. Bible translator Andy Warren-Rothlin points out that register is often ignored, even by Bible translators:

> RSV has the lepers uttering an absurdly unnatural high register 'Let us enter the city' (because everyone in RSV speaks like the Queen of England), whilst TEV has the king producing, equally unnaturally, a low-register, 'I'll tell you what the Syrians are planning!' (because everyone in TEV—and how much more *The Message*—speaks like a gangland teenager.)[7]

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[6] Andy Warren-Rothlin., "Sub-Cultural Texture in Bible Translation," in Warren-Rothlin, A. (ed.), *Studies in Bible Translation in Nigeria 2: Papers from the Bible Society of Nigeria's Annual Translation Workshop 2005* (Paper presented at UBS Afretcon, Nairobi, Kenya, 26 Apr 2005; Jos: Bible Society of Nigeria, 2006), pp. 83–91.

[7] Warren-Rothlin, "Sub-Cultural Texture," pp. 84–85. He makes the case that register exists in the Hebrew: the King uses modal and grammatical particles which are optional, while "the lepers fail to use directional" *heh*, "fail to modalise their language (i.e. 'What are we doing sitting here?' rather than 'Why should we sit here?'…), and have a high proportion of stative utterances and deictic terms (distinctives of informal oral speech)" Warren-Rothlin, "Sub-Cultural Texture," p. 85.

This story also has the voices of Aramean soldiers (with foreign accents?) in panic about a larger army coming. We hear the polished prophetic oracles of Elisha (2 Ki 6:18–19), and the King's guard mocking with exaggerated images (2 Ki 7:18–19).

Readers also need to consider how each character feels at that time. For example, when a woman asks the king for help, he slams her with sarcastic comments (2 Ki 6:27). She does not reply, perhaps because he has made her look a fool, so he asks more kindly what the matter is. She tells a horrific tale of child murder and cannibalism. (Would she speak with shrill mania or in a catatonic monotone, or would the baby-boiling Mummy Dear be trying to sound ultra-sweet and reasonable?) The king's response is silent depression—tearing his robes and revealing the garments of mourning underneath. He perhaps suppresses his hopelessness and anger by taking a formal oath to kill Yahweh's prophet. We hear him publicly blaming Yahweh for disaster, which is terrible theology, completely opposite to the prophet's view.[8] Later we hear the king at night, just woken from his sleep and expressing fear and paranoia about enemy military trickery. In each case he would not sound the same, and a reader can consider the story context and the character's feelings.

It is in narrative that character is most obvious, but it is useful to consider character in other types of literature as well. In an epistle, who is Paul? To whom is he writing? What relationship does they have? What rhetorical tactics does he use with them? Not every church reader can give a full vocal characterisation in every Scripture reading, but there can be some recognition of who is talking.

These suggestions are not the Ten Commandments. A reader who has learned them and practiced them can break them occasionally, as long as they know what the effects of this will be.

Reading Scripture today

In some ways, ours is a visual age that distrusts words. The cultures of Ezra's time or Timothy's were arguably much more oral and aural—though the Greeks and Israel's neighbours certainly emphasised the image. Yet since television, Western culture has been increasingly visual. Drama teacher Patsy Rodenburg writes:

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[8] Warren-Rothlin, "Sub-Cultural Texture," p. 90: "Does not our tradition of presenting the Bible as linguistically homogeneous stem from a quite unbiblical fundamentalist principle which would like to present its theology as consistent? If so, is this not *unethical*?"

> Most of us, I think, no longer trust in words. We have forgotten and, in some instances, have lost forever language's ancient mesmerising power… Somewhere along the line we stopped being an oral society… Storytelling, discussion, debate or just the simple enjoyment of words and word games ceased to be part of our daily lives… [W]e have grown accustomed to thinking that government and media of every sort have done a great deal to corrupt the need for honest and accurate words in our lives… We live in an age of 'sound bites' where even our leading politicians can only speak in disconnected fragments and simplistic homilies. The 'great speech' is no longer in them.'[9]

Our cultural moment makes the task of reading Scripture more difficult, but it also makes it crucially important, theologically and culturally. God has chosen to communicate in words, and we must learn to transmit them well. Luther wrote:

> I am persuaded that without knowledge of literature pure theology cannot at all endure… I see that there has never been a great revelation of the Word of God unless he has first prepared the way by the rise and prosperity of languages and letters, as though they were John the Baptists… Certainly it is my desire that there shall be as many poets and rhetoricians as possible, because I see that by these studies, as by no other means, people are wonderfully fitted for the grasping of sacred truth and for handling it skilfully and happily.[10]

If we can read Scripture with an understanding of the aim of what we are doing, and a sense of its eternal importance, and can know ourselves and develop and control our communicative abilities, then people may hear God's word, and may even listen: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear" (Rev 1:3).[11]

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[9] Patsy Rodenburg, *The Need for Words: Voice and the Text* (Methuen Drama, London, 1993), pp. 4–5.

[10] Martin Luther, Letter to Eoban Hess, 29 March 1523. *Werke*, Weimar edition, *Luthers Briefwechsel*, III, 50. http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Page:Luther%27s_correspondence_and_other_contemporary_letters_1521-1530.djvu/179 accessed 13 January 2013.

[11] The writer thanks participants at the Australasian Academy of Homiletics for helpful feedback.

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On "Seeing" what God is "Saying": Rereading Biblical Narrative in Dialogue with Kevin Vanhoozer's *Remythologizing Theology*[1]

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Introduction

Large sections of the Old Testament might almost be read as a set of case studies in "How to do things with words … if you are the God of Israel." The first act described on the first day of creation is a divine speech-act, "Let there be light …" (Gen 1:3), and the first argument in scripture, instigated by the serpent, focuses on the question: "Did God say …?" (Gen 3:1). In chapter 1 alone God commands, commissions, and commends the components of creation, and then blesses its human inhabitants. In chapter 3 he calls, then critiques, and even curses the ground. Divine speech acts abound.[2] Indeed, so familiar an element of biblical narrative is this that remarkably little attention is given to it by biblical commentators. They generally follow the path that the biblical authors doubt-

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[1] This article was first presented as a paper at the Christian Literary Studies Group (CLSG) conference in Oxford, November 2010, to which I am indebted both for conversation on that occasion, and to Roger Kojecký for agreeing to its reuse here. It subsequently appeared in two separate pieces, as Richard S. Briggs, "On 'Seeing' what God is 'Saying': Rereading Biblical Narrative in Dialogue with Kevin Vanhoozer's *Remythologizing Theology*," in Roger Kojecký and Andrew Tate (eds.), *Visions and Revisions: The Word and the Text* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. 29–42; with substantial material extracted and published separately as a review in the CLSG journal *The Glass* 23 (2011): pp. 50–53. The present version is published with the permission of Cambridge Scholars Publishing, and is only lightly edited from its earlier form. I am grateful to Heath Thomas for facilitating presentation of the complete piece here.

[2] I discuss the centrality of "things done with words" in the biblical narrative in Richard S. Briggs, "Speech-Act Theory," in David G. Firth & Jamie A. Grant (eds.), *Words and the Word: Explorations in Biblical Interpretation and Literary Theory* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), pp. 75–110, esp. pp. 76–86.

less intended, by which the speaking God is read straightforwardly as a character in the narrative world.

In ages past, this assumption played its part in the notion of biblical narrative as, in Hans Frei's terms, realistic and ascriptive, under which rubric he subsumed without differentiation the historical and descriptive functions of such texts.[3] In this model, still in play in the epistle to the Hebrews for example, there is little need to distinguish between the voice of God encountered as a speaking part in the narrative, and the voice of God heard everywhere in the sacred text.[4] We today live, however, in the shadow of what Frei called the great modern "eclipse" of biblical narrative. What do *we* mean by talk of God's speaking, or, in particular, by reading biblical descriptions of the speaking God at face value?

How Does Scripture put God into Writing? – Some Proposals

This is mainly, although not entirely, an Old Testament issue. As often observed, God's discourse in the New Testament is so focused in and through the person of Jesus that the incarnation largely obscures the question of how God speaks face to face in the New Testament.[5] There are exceptions, such as the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism or at the transfiguration,[6] but these narratives depict this audible presence without a physical speaking presence in such a way that it is clearly intended to be unusual—i.e. not the usual manner in which the divine speaking voice is apprehended. My focus lies more with those kinds of narrative situation common to the Old Testament, and interestingly more common to

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[3] On Frei, see briefly my "Scripture in Christian Formation: Pedagogy, Reading Practice, and Scriptural Exemplars," *Theology* 114 (2011): pp. 83–90.

[4] On the absence of such a differentiation in Hebrews' handling of the OT see Ken Schenck, "God Has Spoken: Hebrews' Theology of the Scriptures," in Richard Bauckham, Daniel R. Driver, Trevor A. Hart and Nathan MacDonald (eds.), *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), pp. 321–36, esp. p. 322: "the author makes no distinction between scriptural and non-scriptural speakings of God," and pp. 323–24 on God's literal speaking.

[5] As noted by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology. Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship* (Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine 18; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 53.

[6] In all there are, I think, four such exceptions: the voice on the road to Damascus, and the voice from heaven in John 12:28 complete the list.

claims made in some parts of today's church, where God has a speaking part in interaction with human characters such as Moses. I shall restrict my attention to such examples in what follows.

When pressed to account for biblical texts of this kind, it is altogether less clear that today's interpreter has a coherent view of the matter which could also sit comfortably with anything like the traditional affirmations of Christian faith regarding the nature and identity of God. At which point several interpretative paths present themselves.

Some say "so much the worse for traditional affirmations"—and read God as a character in the narrative, pure and simple. W. Lee Humphrey's book *The Character of God in the Book of Genesis: A Narrative Appraisal* is a particularly clear example. As he expresses it: "we do not engage him [God] as someone in our world other than as we construct him from what we find in the story-world of the narrative."[7] This God turns out to be "complex and at points conflicted,"[8] but although this is a coherent (if contestable) account, it is a literary one only and can lead to no wider theological conclusions. It must be said that, freed from such wider concerns, Humphreys is at least able to take the scriptural account of God speaking as unproblematic. No metaphysical complications beset his reading, even to the point of an apparently complete lack of interest in what the phenomenon is that Genesis is describing. On a similarly literary-critical end of the spectrum, and with the same texts, Hugh White does at least address this issue head on in his *Narration and Discourse in the Book of Genesis*:

> The divine Voice is presented as the voice of a personage by the narrator, since the narrator speaks of "he" when referring to the instance of divine speech. But unlike a personage, the Voice does not speak from a recognizable position within the social structure or spatial/temporal register within which the characters exist.[9]

For White this is all part of the literary effect of the text, as characters are drawn into plot-defining dialogues with a character who, one might say, "refracts" the narratorial voice by standing (metaphorically) mid-way between the author and the human characters

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[7] W. Lee Humphreys, *The Character of God in the Book of Genesis: A Narrative Appraisal* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), p. 5.

[8] Humphreys, *Character of God*, p. 256.

[9] Hugh C. White, *Narration and Discourse in the Book of Genesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 101.

but playing a distinct but disembodied role.[10] My own view is that White's insights could be productively harnessed to more traditional metaphysical concerns, albeit that this would doubtless cause the author of the book to turn in his grave (presuming upon, as I think we might in this case, the death of the author).

What of those for whom the wider theological issues cannot be so easily circumvented? The primary route taken here, interestingly by those right across the theological spectrum, is to reconstrue accounts of divine speech as something else. This is essentially Bultmann's path of demythologisation, which hermeneutically has much in common with the other great modern account of biblical interpretation, the essentially conservative attempt to "recontextualise" the text (or to find in it "principles" for today). In either case, it seems to me, where the text has God saying X or Y, this claim is to be understood as a way of articulating whatever conviction Moses or others had about how the divine will should be expressed. Divine speech is human projection. Demythologizers think we have grown out of such perceptions. Recontextualizers may think it goes on today, in churches where people still offer the occasional word that "The LORD is saying…" or "God spoke to me." Unlike the literary-critical approach, this one seems to be metaphysically coherent at the expense of rather deflating the dynamics of the text. All these dramatic dialogues with the divine turn out to be something more akin to the long dark night of the sensitive soul, struggling to discern God's will in a verbal vacuum. And they make relatively little sense of texts where God is engaged in telling Moses matters of a more prosaic nature such as instructions on what to do next or reminders of all that He has done before.

The middle-ground of both biblical and ontological seriousness has on the whole been inhabited only by a few systematic theologians rather than biblical scholars. One thinks of course of Karl Barth's bracing account of "the speech of God as the act of God" at the start of the *Church Dogmatics*,[11] which is given some further conceptual sophistication in the much-cited work of Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*. Wolterstorff notes, perceptively, that

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[10] Of course there are one or two interesting counter-examples in Genesis to this disembodied divine voice, such as the discussion with Abraham in Gen 18, but this need not affect the general point made by White.

[11] This is the title of a section of Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics 1/1: The Doctrine of the Word of God* (tr. G.T. Thomson; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936), pp. 143–62, originally written in 1932.

despite his intentions Barth effectively switches the focus away from divine *speaking* to the broader category of divine revelation, which rather blunts the progress he might make with our topic.[12] Wolterstorff himself, in turn, offers "philosophical reflections on the claim that God speaks," by way of the speech-act conceptuality of divine illocutions being hosted by the human locutions of scripture. This however tends to result in reflection more on the ways in which today's reader hears scripture as divine discourse, rather than offering an account of what it means in scripture itself that God has a speaking part.

Into this somewhat under-populated territory, then, comes the mighty wake-up call of Kevin Vanhoozer's *Remythologising Theology*.[13] Here Vanhoozer sets out to do the conceptual theological heavy-lifting with which his own earlier hermeneutical works, by his own admission, had been insufficiently engaged. And a bold proposal it is too: that by conceptualising God as a God of communicative action, we might take seriously the biblical language of God's speaking, without falling back into taking it on a literalistic level as if God were a speaking agent just like Moses. In a key definition: "Remythologizing means taking seriously biblical texts that ascribe communicative actions and intentions to God." (p. 210) For Vanhoozer, Barth was right but did not go far enough: where Barth forecloses on God's communicative intentions by reading everything through the Christological matrix of the incarnation, Vanhoozer argues that Barth did not "show sufficient awareness that without Israel's Scripture we would lack the right interpretative framework with which to understand the event of Jesus Christ." (p. 203) Hence, Vanhoozer's framework is *canonical* in addition to being Christological. And with Wolterstorff, Vanhoozer also affirms what he dubs "the Rule of Saith": "no divine illocutions apart from locutions" (p. 216), and hence the speaking God is to be found in the specific words of scripture rather than just the experiences therein reported. But the heart of the remythologising project, for which Vanhoozer applauds Barth too, is that it "proceeds from the

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[12] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), cf. esp. pp. 63–74.

[13] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology. Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship* (Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine 18; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Page references to this book are in the text.

biblical accounts of divine communicative action to ontology rather than vice versa." (p. 207)

Vanhoozer rather implies that his book is exploring the "what if" possibility of Barth having read J.L. Austin. (p. 201, n. 81; p. 211) He also notes that no matter how conceptually sophisticated an account of divine action is, it "must pass muster vis-à-vis the biblical accounts of God's activity." (p. 236) He is well aware that Old Testament scholars have made considerable progress with reading the text within rather different ontological frameworks—he notes Brueggemann's celebrated exercise in reading the God of the Old Testament as a figure located solely in the rhetorical enterprise of ancient Israel (p. 218)[14]—but boldly sets out to say that the God of the text is the God of Jewish and Christian faith, and that He speaks.

My own concerns represent an attempt to close the circle on Vanhoozer's account, and ask what happens if one takes his theological view of divine communicative action and actually reads a biblical text—what exegetical and hermeneutical light might be shed? Vanhoozer's own work is set in motion with an invigorating and thought-provoking review of biblical exemplars of the very phenomenon he is seeking to account for, "the passages with which theologians must come to grips when formulating a doctrine of God in order to do justice to the biblical *mythos*." (p. 35) His "gallery of canonical exhibits" reviews a dozen examples over some 20 pages, and succeeds admirably in showing that there is indeed a question of divine verbal communication presented to us as readers of scripture. He returns to a brief biblical example at the end of the book—the account of divine action in the story of God's response to Hezekiah's prayer in Isa 38:1–5, although by this stage of the book (pp. 491–95) his concerns have moved on a little from the topic of communicative action *per se*. And in the midst of the proposal (found in chapter 4, from which all the above definitional quotes have been taken) there is a short, too short, but highly significant rumination on the case study of Exod 34:6–7 (p. 214), to

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[14] With reference to Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997). One may note that Brueggemann has subsequently allowed that this was probably a mistake, or at least that "I will concede that I might have been more careful and circumspect in my statement." See his "*Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* Revisited," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 74.1 (2012): pp. 28–38, here p. 32, talking about both historicity and ontology in his 1997 account.

which we shall return below. So it is not that Vanhoozer is indifferent to the exegetical questions in his discussion, but it is still true that the argument of the book does not turn full circle to show what this model might contribute in matters of exegesis. But before turning to that part of my account, it seems appropriate to offer a brief review of the full structure and dynamics of *Remythologising Theology*, so that we may balance our constructive concerns to move further with due deference to what is in fact achieved in the book.

Kevin Vanhoozer's "Remythologising Theology": Recovering the Speaking God

Vanhoozer proceeds in 9 chapters, in three "movements", with—let it be said immediately—an enviable ability to combine single-minded focus on the goal with comprehensive reference to all manner of competing and contrasting proposals. *Remythologizing Theology* is a tour-de-force which settles for nothing less than a "re-tooling of classical Christian orthodoxy" to meet the challenges of alternative proposals about the nature of God. At the heart of this topic lies the challenge to classical theism's view of the impassibility of God, a challenge overwhelmingly driven by reflection on the problem of evil and the extreme forms that that problem has taken in the 20th century. In effect, Vanhoozer wants to say that we have thrown over too quickly the traditional view, under the mistaken impression that it represented a failure to reckon with evil. The simplest path taken has been to say instead that God must suffer, and be open to the awful possibility that his creation will go in evil directions, with either the inability or perhaps the unwillingness to hold it to the path of truth and goodness. In short: God must be neither omnipotent nor unchanging if evil is to be taken seriously. To which Vanhoozer's response is: by no means! … albeit with full awareness of the need to meet the challenge in ways which do justice to God's light, life and love. How does the argument proceed?

An introduction frames the project in terms of the question, "What must God be like in order to do what the Bible depicts him as doing with words: creating, commanding, promising, consoling?" (p. 3) The remythologising project is set forth as an alternative to the most prominent modern options: whether they be in terms of Bultmann's demythologising, which translates the biblical language into existential categories, or the more thorough-going "projectionism" of Feuerbach where theology is construed as anthropology. For Vanhoozer, remythologising sets out to reverse the "great reversal" to which Frei drew attention (p. 29). To remythologise is to let scripture set the terms of enquiry.

Part I of the book then explores "'God' in Scripture and theology." Chapter 1, "Biblical representation," begins with the aforementioned review of biblical passages where the speaking God is central to the text, including such expected examples as Genesis 1, Exod 3:13–15 and Exodus 33–34 (esp. 34:5–7), Hebrews 1, and John 1, as well as several others. This chapter also surveys some theological issues thereby raised: if God cannot speak then the standard Christian understanding of God must be revised (p. 59). Further, *pace* most philosophers of religion, since speech is an action, it is unclear why a God who acts could not speak. (p. 59) Vanhoozer also identifies one key issue for his account: "the ascription of feelings or emotions, a mixture of activity and passivity, to God." (p. 77) Chapters 2 and 3 engage in hand-to-hand communicative combat with alternative theological models currently (or recently) in favor: in particular "open theism" ("God's love necessitates self-limitation," p. 123); panentheism (the view that the world is "in" ["*-en-*"] God, "affirming the interdependence of God and world,", pp. 124–25); and what Vanhoozer dubs "the new kenotic-perichoretic relational ontotheology," which so emphasizes relationality in the godhead that it risks losing sight of the persons who are the beings in the relationships. Vanhoozer is endlessly quotable: against ontotheology Vanhoozer wants to say "God's speech *faces* us" (after Levinas, p. 100); against some philosophers of religion he wants to say that while of course God is perfect, "everything depends on where one obtains one's concept of perfection" (p. 96); and on the need to let scripture set the agenda he affirms "*insofar as one's model of God fails to do justice to God as a personal divine agent, it revises what the Bible is primarily about*" (p. 134)—a claim at the heart of the remythologising project.

Part II of the book then sets out the positive thesis, under the heading "Communicative theism and the triune God." Chapter 4, "God's being is in communicating," is, as we have had cause to note, the heart of the argument. To remythologise is to rediscover the triune communicative God at the heart of the biblical narrative. Chapter 5 fills out the thesis with respect to participation in this God: Vanhoozer says that the main claim of his book is that "participating in God means participating in his triune being-in-communicative-activity." (p. 283) In this chapter he offers a simple schema for what the triune God is in the business of communicating: light, life, and love, since God is light, God is life, and God is love. Human vocation is thus understood in terms of participation in the Word of God (light), the Spirit of God (life), and "the fellowship of Father and Son in the Spirit" (love). One senses that

throughout this exposition, persistently rooted in scripture, Vanhoozer seeks nothing less than a broad-based reimagination of "what it means to be saved" that might move us away from narrow concerns about identifying those in and out. The mixture of grace, love, divine self-communication, and human participation is woven here into a suggestive "theodramatic" proposal. The multiple aspects of union with Christ are summed up with the claim that "right relatedness with God is ultimately a matter of theodramatic participation." (p. 293)[15]

Part III, "God and World: authorial action and interaction," takes up the now-proposed model to explore various questions of divine action in the world. Here we see the programmatic proposal put to work on a range of theological topics: divine sovereignty in the face of evil (ch. 7), divine suffering, especially in the cross, which brings Vanhoozer to the direct consideration of divine impassibility in the passion (ch. 8), and the right way to describe divine compassion in general: what it means, in other words, that God is love. (ch. 9) Perhaps of most interest for our purposes in this section, however, is chapter 6, which sets up the discussions to follow by mapping a new way of conceiving of divine interaction with the world in general. This is a fascinating account which, driven by the preceding concerns with God as fundamentally communicative, is focused around the notion of God as author. But the particular kind of authorship which Vanhoozer has in view is the dialogical notion famous from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin. This is a rich and challenging proposal, which will merit much further attention. In particular: "God completes or consummates the unfinished person-idea that is Abraham, Moses, David, etc., through an

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[15] In many ways, then, this book might be seen as the culmination of the arguments advanced in some of Vanhoozer's earlier works, most notably in his *The Drama of Doctrine. A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005) regarding the canonical-linguistic theodramatic vision; and in some of the essays in *First Theology. God, Scripture & Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2002) which sought to articulate the appropriate priority to be given to scripture in theological formulation. This further suggests that in the chapter of *Remythologizing Theology* discussed above Vanhoozer does have in view a wide-screen effort to define "salvation" in his new terms. On p. 291 he also revisits a claim made in his *Is There a Meaning in this Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 455–57, with the remark that the three aspects of the "economy of communication" parallel the three aspects of a speech act: Father—locution; Son—illocution; Spirit—perlocution.

active dialogical penetration into the depths of their being." (p. 333) Divine action in and through human persons, therefore, is conceptualized subtly in terms of human freedom to participate in the divinely authored dialogue. This dialogical model circumvents most of the problems so easily found with most ways of trying to describe God's authorship of the human life without making God accountable for every human action. In Vanhoozer's terms: "God's dialogical authorship, though in asymmetrical relation to its hero-interlocutors, is an entirely appropriate way of engaging human persons according to their rational, volitional, and emotional natures." (p. 333) Self-determination is redescribed in this model as the freedom (on the part of the character) to enter the "potentially infinite dialogue with the Author God" (p. 336)—everything hangs on the point that the kind of predetermination (or classically, "predestination") in view is dialogically constituted. "Genuine Christian freedom," says Vanhoozer, is "the freedom to say 'Yes' to the divine call." (p. 337) There is never going to be an easy way to articulate divine action alongside human action, but in Bakhtin's ability to characterise Authorship above and beyond the realm of monological discourse Vanhoozer offers as patient and sophisticated an account as one might hope for.[16] Later on, in his conclusion, Vanhoozer writes that "The one theodrama requires many canonical voices" (p. 473)—a comment which takes the Bible as Bakhtinian polyphony. Theology, in terms Vanhoozer borrows from OT scholar Dennis Olson, is then to be understood as "provisional monologization."[17]

And part of the proof of the argument lies in the three chapters which follow, as Vanhoozer explores some of the ways in which Bakhtin "has a 'good ear' for diverse canonical perspectives." (p. 348) These concluding chapters range far and wide over the theological landscape.[18] In particular Vanhoozer is careful to define

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[16] Interestingly, it resonates with the observations of well-known novelist and literary theorist David Lodge, reflecting on the role of the author as creator of the dialogic and polyphonic world of a novel: he reports that in Bakhtin he found that all the questions which had occurred to him were most satisfactorily answered; David Lodge, *Consciousness and the Novel. Connected Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. x.

[17] Vanhoozer takes this from Dennis T. Olson, "Biblical Theology as Provisional Monologization: A Dialogue with Childs, Brueggemann, and Bakhtin," *Biblical Interpretation* 6 (1998): pp. 162–80.

[18] Though space constraints apparently forced him to remove a section on community and mission, "the ecclesiological implications of my communicative Trinitarian theism," (p. 386, n. 158).

what it could mean for God to have emotions, namely in terms of "concern-based construals": and hence God's experience of emotions differs from human experience "because God construes the theodrama from the perspective of eternity, as a complete and unified whole." (p. 414) Likewise, he articulates "suffering" in terms of endurance (in "the middle voice," neither active nor passive, p. 427), which brings him to address the question of Jesus' suffering. Here Heb 2:18a remains his canonical watchword, "because he himself suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted," which for Vanhoozer means that one is not at liberty to explain away Jesus' suffering as a turn of phrase, but neither may one rush to massive ontological impositions on the question of whether God suffers. The path taken leads to the conclusion that Jesus' suffering actually demonstrates his impassibility. (pp. 431–33) In summary: "Divine impassibility means not that God is unfeeling—impervious to covenantally concerned theodramatic construals of what is happening—but that God is never overcome or overwhelmed by these feelings such that he 'forgets' his covenant." (pp. 432-33) Nothing less than the trustworthiness of God hangs on such an affirmation. Impassibility, remythologised, is taken up under "covenant faithfulness" (*hesed*, p. 457). God's steadfastness is to be experienced as endurance, not immobility. In these concluding chapters one sees Vanhoozer at work beyond the level of framework building, and arriving at the heart of theological claims about the God of Christian faith to whom scripture attests.

What sort of dialogue might a reader of *Remythologizing Theology* enter into with its author? One might contest the central claim that God is a God of communicative action, but here Vanhoozer seems on solid ground. Speech *is* a form of action, and if one is to take scripture seriously it is indeed difficult to see why a God who acts should not also be a God who speaks. "Speaking" may need to be understood differently, to anticipate a key point, but this has certainly been an option available to the theologian for some time, notably in Nicholas Wolterstorff's *Divine Discourse.*[19] Slightly less persuasive, at least to my mind, is Vanhoozer's claim that divine speech is the necessary clarification of what otherwise ambiguous divine action is about: "Without an event of divine speaking, we are unable to say either *who* is acting or *what* this person is up to." (p. 209) Broadly speaking that is a helpful point, but it cannot be a rule or requirement. Many kinds of actions are unambiguous (recall that it was the recognition of genuine non-verbal communication that,

[19] See note 12 above.

in part, reoriented much of Wittgenstein's later work), while many kinds of speech act can be ambiguous, some even by design, possibly including divine ones (e.g. Josh 5:14?). To describe God as communicative, and to insist that this is in and through words such as we find in the canon, need not entail the further claim that this is because only so could God communicate successfully. (We shall return to this claim below regarding the exodus.)

More broadly, the substantive theological claims concerning a Jesus who endures suffering but thereby demonstrates divine impassibility seem likely to provoke considerably more discussion. Vanhoozer himself recognizes the "counter-intuitive nature of this claim" (p. 415 n. 123), and while it does indeed offer a striking set of proposals for conceptualizing divine action, my own response to this claim relates more to whether it passes Vanhoozer's own "re-mythologising" test: is this in fact the way that the biblical *mythos* intends us to take language of divine emotion and/or suffering? Maybe so, but I suspect that more would need to be done with regard to this trope to demonstrate that such a reading is in fact "with the grain," as literary theorists like to say. There is some indication of how to proceed in the final test case about God's action in and in response to Hezekiah's prayer (Isa 38:1–5). Interestingly, Vanhoozer basically follows Calvin here, in suggesting that God's real communicative intention in having Hezekiah say to Isaiah "Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover" (Isa 38:1, NRSV) is to be understood as "working a change in his [Hezekiah's] heart," (p. 495) Thus "God dialogically determines Hezekiah … by soliciting his free consent to participate in communicative action." This is perhaps the familiar prophetic *topos* of God's seeking always a human turning (as described axiomatically in Jer 18:7–10, a passage unfortunately not noted in the book). Arguably this angle of approach to the matter of divine impassibility, via such biblical texts, might have been more appropriate to the spirit of remythologising theology than some of the concerns that do occupy Vanhoozer's account.

Which leads inevitably on to the question of how Vanhoozer construes particular scriptural passages. There is something of a long and dishonorable tradition in interaction with the works of theologians by biblical scholars to pick away at such matters in a rather negative tone, and it bears reflection that Vanhoozer is self-consciously attempting to go back to the point where the bifurcation between biblical studies and theology should not make sense in the first place. Only on a couple of occasions does the biblical scholar wonder if something not just more but actually different

might be said: the very first biblical exhibit is the notoriously recalcitrant case of creation from or amidst nothing (or chaos) in Gen 1:1–3 (pp. 36–37), and Vanhoozer boldly sets his own theodramatic account in some opposition to Jon Levenson's notion of the "Jewish drama of divine omnipotence."[20] I suspect this is because Levenson directly ties his concerns to the problematic status of divine impassibility. But in dissenting from Levenson on that point, does the dissent in fact invalidate the reading of Gen 1:1–3 as creation out of a nothing which is in some sense a substantive chaotic presence? In a later passage, Vanhoozer rehearses some aspects of Job in Bakhtinian perspective, with passing reference to Carol Newsom. In fact Newsom has developed a book-length analysis of this particular (theo-)drama,[21] to my mind one of the best accounts of Job there is, and this might have had some impact on Vanhoozer's description of Job's friends preaching "law, not gospel." (p. 345) But overall *Remythologizing Theology* is a work which models exactly the need for theology to engage with scripture, and one should point out that there are many biblical texts in view here which are taken *more* seriously than they often are in works of biblical scholarship which operate with what Ricoeur (or at least his translators) so memorably described as a "truncated ontology," whereby the theological conceptuality needed to do justice to biblical God-talk is sadly lacking.[22] In a nutshell: *Remythologizing Theology* should sound a call to biblical scholars to raise their game with respect to the categories of theological thought that they deploy in their own interpretations.

Finally, and in a related area, there is one aspect of the handling of the triune communicative action model which seems to me slightly more problematic when brought against the witness of scripture. This is related to the comments above about whether in

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[20] The subtitle of Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994 (orig 1987)).

[21] Carol A. Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Vanhoozer draws attention to her earlier article, "Bakhtin, the Bible, and Dialogic Truth" *Journal of Religion* 76 (1996): pp. 290–306.

[22] The phrase "truncated ontology" is used by Kathleen McClaughlin (Blamey) in her translation of Paul Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics," in his *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics* (Northwestern University Press Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy; Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), pp. 3–24; cf. pp. 19, 23. The French is "ontologie brisée."

fact it is always expounded here in sufficiently remythologised terms, and it is striking that Vanhoozer's attention to the question of how divine communicative action works in terms of actual words found in scripture is somewhat abbreviated. It is surprising that more is not said here. It is this aspect of the book that I take up below.

Remythologising and Biblical Interpretation

What would it mean to bring Vanhoozer's concerns back to the practice of reading scripture itself for those texts where God is a speaking character? Vanhoozer offers little by way of clarification of how the manner of God's speaking is to be understood. Clearly it is relatively straightforward in the case of what Wolterstorff helpfully called "deputised discourse":[23] the prophet speaks and thereby God speaks. Some such model of divine action is clearly in view in 2 Pet 1:20–21. But how does the voice of God work in direct conversation, as it were?

Vanhoozer appears to rest content with saying that there are a variety of ways God could do it, and he is not particularly exercised to account for them. William Alston is cited approvingly for suggesting that "If God wills, and hence brings it about, that certain thoughts form in my mind together with the conviction that these thoughts constitute His message to me at this moment, that is as full-blooded a case of direct divine action in the world as the miraculous production of audible voices." (p. 210)[24] But it is not entirely clear how one could work with such an account in terms of discerning what is in fact the voice of God. Four pages later Vanhoozer arrives at an example: he offers one paragraph relating to how the voice of God might have been heard in the account of his communication with Moses in Exod 34:6. (p. 214) The famous verse in question describes God as "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." Vanhoozer says, "It is difficult in the extreme to imagine Israel arriving at this idea apart from God communicating it," which is of course precisely the point at issue. Thus we come to the crux of the matter:

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[23] Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, pp. 38–51; cf. also his discussion of "appropriated discourse," pp. 51–54.

[24] Citing William Alston, "How to Think About Divine Action," in Brian Hebblethwaite and Edward Henderson (eds.), *Divine Action: Studies Inspired by the Philosophical Theology of Austin Farrer* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), pp. 51–70, here p. 57.

Vanhoozer thinks it is obvious that Israel did not learn this from anyone else (which may be granted); that they did not find it out about God with their own resources (although this would surely be the standard account offered by many biblical commentators); and that they did not infer it from events such as the Exodus, since "it would be impossible to make sense of the Exodus event as a mighty act of God apart from a divine interpretative word that explained it as such (as we have recorded in scripture)." (p. 214)

This seems far from self-evident, in part—as we discussed above—because it is not a general truth that people cannot or do not see events as furnishing them with quite specific understandings of God, and in this case one suspects that "the Exodus event" led to no little theologizing in Israel. So perhaps the final comment in brackets is intended to take the claim in a different direction, and say that scripture itself offers the divine interpretive word which is necessary. The discussion proceeds immediately on to taking Scripture as a whole as the "anchoring speech act" that allows access to YHWH's name and identity, but it is a little hard to see how this general point is related to the specifics in question in Exod 34:6, as "YHWH passed before him [Moses] and proclaimed." (34:6a, NRSV)

The issue may be clearer if we turn to an example which does not attain to the status of a creed regarding YHWH's character. Consider narratives such as the following:

> YHWH spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, "How long shall this wicked congregation complain against me … your dead bodies shall fall in this very wilderness …" (Num 14:26, 29)
>
> YHWH said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me, to show my holiness before the eyes of the Israelites, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them." (Num 20:12)

These two examples both relate to specific moments where the progress toward the promised land of first the Israelites in general, and then Moses and Aaron in particular, is halted in its tracks. The text is second-person direct address introduced by typical Hebrew markers of direct discourse: *le'mor*, with the verb of speaking (*dibber*) in the first instance; *'amar* in the second. The self-presentation of the text is clearly that YHWH has a speaking part. Although it would take too long to prove this by way of citation, my sense from commentaries on Numbers is that (a) most commentators work within this framework as the text presents it, and (b) they do

not stop to ask how this could have been so. To that extent, then, they operate, in Vanhoozer's terms, as remythologisers. However, pressed to explain matters, I think the consensus of OT scholarship would by and large be that this kind of narrative account represents the authorial attempt (be it of J or E or whatever unknown writer) to capture the dynamic of relationship with YHWH. Thus, to take the second example, it was the case that Moses died before entering the land, and this required some explanation, hence the narrative of Numbers is constructed to include some reflection of and on this.[25] In particular, it is notoriously difficult to see what Moses has in fact done wrong in Numbers 20, perhaps because the text has less interest in telling us that than in underlining that he is excluded from the land for lack of trust. What form that lack of trust took has exercised commentators ever since,[26] but from our present perspective the point is that the text expresses the prohibition in the words of YHWH. The question for the biblical scholar should then be: how should one rightly understand those words of YHWH in connection with the later reflection of the text's theologizing writers and redactors?

The heart of the matter, I want to suggest, is that what it means for God to speak, even as a triune communicative agent, is for humans in the theodrama to "see" or construe God's will in verbal form, and that this construal is itself understood in scripture as divinely authored. There is, in short, no historical moment of audible speech behind the narrative of the text in which actual words were heard by Moses in the desert, but to suppose that there would have been is precisely to *de*-mythologise the text before us, and try to get back to some putatively more "original" form of divine communication than the text itself. Such would be the case if a reader of the book of Numbers argued that God so engineered the thoughts and perceptions of Moses that Moses could express himself in no other way than to say "YHWH said." This might be what it meant for Moses to "see" what God "said," and in turn this tradition may have been passed down to the later writers and redactors. But this is to look for an explanation of events within the biblical text on the level of how we live as readers. It is not the kind of response to

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[25] For just one example among many see Diana Lipton, "Inevitability and Community in the Demise of Moses," *Journal of Progressive Judaism* 7 (1996): pp. 79–93.

[26] See the review of a dozen or so options in Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers* (JPS; Philadelphia & New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), pp. 448–56.

the text which helps us to read it. On the other hand, neither can the text itself be remythologised: it is instead the very myth in question, except that "myth" is such a notoriously slippery word that it is more or less useless unless carefully defined. Vanhoozer helpfully offers this: "To speak of *mythos*, then, is to call attention to the diverse ways in which dramatic forms render their dramatic matter, opening up aspects of reality—in particular, God's self-communicative activity—that would otherwise be sealed off from human inspection." (p. 12) In a wonderful aphorism, Vanhoozer continues: God is "Lord of projection." Scripture is projection, but it is divinely authored projection. (p. 27) *To see God rightly, then, is to "see" what God "says."* Let me offer briefly four points by way of an initial attempt to round out this thesis, addressing matters of canon, construal, the uniqueness of Moses, and thus in turn the relevance or otherwise of this Old Testament conceptuality for the task of hearing God's voice today.

First, the canon both is and is not a complicating mediate stage in this process. Returning to Vanhoozer's account of Exodus 34 where we left it, he is I think in part unduly conflating the processes whereby Israel's writers got from their experience of YHWH to the text of Exodus 34 with the processes whereby we as readers relate our experiences of God to the God now revealed in the canon.[27] Vanhoozer moves directly from Israel working out the claims of Exodus 34 to the parallel that the canon is divinely authorized communicative action. He even suggests that "the Law and Prophets present themselves" in these communicative terms, "not as some independently observed record of alleged divine activity" (pp. 214–15), but of course many texts in the Writings do exactly this, and it would be hard to read, say, Luke 1:1–4 any other way than as claiming that it is an independently researched record. But the fact that in some scriptural texts God is divinely communicating in direct form whereas in other scriptural texts the communication is indirectly mediated through independent research, as it were, is not a fact that should trouble Vanhoozer's account of divine communicative action, which is precisely fine-tuned to allow for just such authorial dialogical capacity. So in fact it is not necessary to have God speaking in character in precise words in the books of Exodus

[27] In honor of Vanhoozer's penchant for the well-judged aphorism let me offer: the writers of the canon construe divine illocutions in locutionary form, whereas readers of the canon are trying to construe divine locutions in illocutionary form. I am not sure, however, that this way of explicating the issues really gets to the theological heart of the matter.

and Numbers in order for these texts to serve as divine communicative acts. It is the texts as canon which do that, not the "reported speech" within them.

Secondly, this means, as should be expected, that there is no historicist short cut to unmediated access to the divine will, as if today's interpreter were to wish for a time machine and a video camera so that, suitably equipped, the word of God to Moses could be captured for all to see. What would our time-travelling film editor see? The canonically shaped answer, I suggest, is that it depends on what sort of eyes they have to see with, and that to see rightly the exchanges in the wilderness would be "seeing" in the sense of "discerning" rather than seeing in the sense of independently observing. If to see God rightly is to see what God is saying, then much depends on learning how to see rightly, for which the classical rubric of "discernment" seems still to be the best label. As to how one does this, this too is a matter of concern in the canonical accounts. Despite frequent attempts to reduce such matters to politics and rhetoric, scripture suggests that there are theological matters more determinative of right discernment. As Walter Moberly has argued, the right discernment of the ways and will of the unseen God is rooted in living the life of holiness and moral character known in the Old Testament as "standing in the presence of the LORD," and which may be evidenced by the visible criteria of the life lived by the person in question—the prophet being the archetypal OT example of such a person (and prophecy being in turn the OT norm for understanding divine speech), while the apostle is the corresponding NT exemplar.[28] I have argued elsewhere that those who read scripture in the church, which is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, should therefore pay particular attention to such scriptural exemplars of discernment as the prophets and the apostles themselves, whose ability to "see" what God "says" remains determinative for theological interpretation.[29] My point here is simply to draw attention to certain continuities between the "right seeing" that was relevant in the biblical account, as effected by the prophets and the apostles for instance, and the

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[28] R.W.L. Moberly, *Prophecy and Discernment* (CSCD 14; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[29] See my "Review Article: Christian Theological Interpretation of Scripture Built on the Foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets: The Contribution of R.W.L. Moberly's *Prophecy and Discernment*," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 4 (2010): pp. 309–18.

"right seeing" (or construal) relevant to our present reading of scripture.[30]

Thirdly, one should perhaps ask how this account of divine speech within scripture measures up to the scriptural portrait of divine speech, not because this could prove it right or wrong, but because there is merit in letting our own understanding be shaped by the canonical picture. Here one feature really does deserve its own separate study and I can do no more than outline the issue at stake: How significant is it that our examples have gravitated towards Moses and the cases of divine speech in the Pentateuchal narratives? A potentially very significant framing device used within the canon here is Deut 34:10, part of the closing words of the Torah: "Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom YHWH knew face to face (*panim 'el-panim*)."[31] Readers of Torah cannot but think back to Num 12:6–8 where Moses was singled out by YHWH (in direct speech!) as being unique among the prophets, since in comparison to the way they are spoken to in visions and dreams, says YHWH, "with him I speak face to face (*pe 'el-pe*)—clearly, not in riddles, and he beholds the form of YHWH." (12:8) Although the actual wording here is literally "mouth to mouth," the point could clearly be that this unique status as recipient of divine revelation is marked out in Deuteronomy 34 as never repeated in Israel—at least in the centuries between Moses and the closing of the Torah. Thus alerted to Moses' unique status the reader of the Old Testament might indeed then ponder that most of the examples we have singled out, as being cases of YHWH speaking in char-

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[30] If there were one topic on which I would have liked to see Vanhoozer's account in *Remythologizing Theology* developed it would have been on the nature and relevance of the construal which is always perforce operative in any communicative action. I have suggested elsewhere that construal is a key component of speech act theory (*Words in Action: Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark & New York: Continuum, 2001], pp. 118–43), and it is often under-explored in attempts to harness its concerns to biblical and theological matters. See further Richard S. Briggs, "Biblical Hermeneutics and Scriptural Responsibility," in Stanley E. Porter and Matthew R. Malcolm (eds.), *The Future of Biblical Interpretation: Responsible Plurality in Biblical Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), pp. 51–69.

[31] On the canonical (rather than original) significance of this text as a marker between sections see Stephen B. Chapman, *The Law and the Prophets* (FAT 27; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), pp. 113–31, who concludes that its canonical significance lies in affirming that "Moses was succeeded by faithful prophets who … *continued* his work." (p. 131)

acter in the narrative, do in fact occur in the Torah, with Moses. In later accounts we find the more typical phrasing to capture similar emphases is something like "the word of YHWH came to …"—Elijah, for instance (1 Ki 19:9), or Jonah (Jon 1:1). This sounds more like the kind of cognitive realization which is in view today when people say "God spoke to me …" It is further complicated by the increasing presence after Moses of angelic mediators. The Elijah story in 1 Kings 19 in fact switches between the interjections of the angel of YHWH and the phrasing "the word of YHWH came to." In many of the Writings even this last phrase is rare, and forms of deputized discourse predominate.

However, I would distinguish between the general drift of these observations, which seems undeniable, and any attempt to suggest that Moses is in a class of one with respect to receiving direct divine discourse. For one thing, characters in Genesis hear YHWH talk directly just as Moses does, and while there may be reasons why Genesis fits this Mosaic pattern rather than a later model, this still complicates the qualification of Moses as uniquely such a recipient. Equally, the more direct form of address does persist (e.g. Josh 1:1, 3:7, 4:1, 6:2 and many other cases). Finally, the canonical logic of Deuteronomy 34 combined with Numbers 12 seems to suggest not that no one else hears God, but rather that these Torah texts about Moses are intended in some sense to model the desired picture of reliance upon the word of YHWH of which Moses is the key exemplar.[32] For all these reasons I think one cannot in the end sustain the argument that one is to conceive of direct divine address to Moses in some uniquely more literalistic face-to-face or mouth-to-mouth form. Nevertheless, a study of how the mode of divine address changes across the canon would seem to be a worthwhile adjunct both to the present argument and, more broadly, to Vanhoozer's book.[33] For now, these observations lead to one final point.

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[32] Following Chapman, see previous note. I have explored this with reference to Numbers 12 in particular in *The Virtuous Reader: Old Testament Narrative and Interpretive Virtue* (Studies in Theological Interpretation; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), pp. 45–69, esp. pp. 62–63.

[33] Other worthwhile explorations which could clarify further details of the proposal might relate to how we are to interpret divine soliloquies (e.g. Gen 6:7; 8:21–22) or extreme expressions of the divine voice in the Psalms (89:35–38ff)—examples which might clarify how human projection of the divine voice actually works within the biblical *mythos*.

Thus fourthly, and in conclusion, the question of how far our proposal for construing divine discourse in scripture can aid us in understanding the triune communicative God today. Most Israelites were not Moses, or Joshua, or a prophet, or someone charged with the task of correctly construing divine action in verbal form. Even those who are part of this company presumably spent much of their lives engaging in other ways with YHWH than in reporting or writing the divine will in direct speech. And thus, in this more "normal" manner of proceeding, they are in a position more akin to that of today's reader of scripture. The Christian who prays, reflects, meditates, studies scripture, worships in communion with others, and seeks to be a disciple in the company of the church, will have a range of practices to hand for discerning the voice of God in and through all manner of situations. Clearly this will include scripture, liturgy, sermons, study, discussion, and so forth. At times, it will include direct apprehension of a form of words as coming from God in personal address. Presumably, if the scriptural portrait is to be taken as a guide, this is not to be expected frequently nor to be waited upon as the only source of divine illumination in the life of faith, since other texts and traditions continue to mediate the word of God to the believer at all times. But if we are right to suggest that to see God rightly is to see what God is saying, this is not to be understood as implying that at no point does God ever offer more direct forms of personalized divine address. There is every reason to think that God does in fact do this, even if scholars of scripture or systematic theology seem to discuss it rather rarely.[34] For the most part, however, readers of scripture are in the position of needing to construe the texts in front of them as bearers of divine discourse. Church history amply attests that this is not a practice that God has chosen to protect from error or misconstrual, while at the same time much scripture reading has indeed contributed to the sharing of light, life and love in God's world. It remains true, however, that the better one's grasp of who the God of scripture is, the more likely it is that one's reading of scripture will be attuned to the ways in which its divine author would have us understand it. In this respect, then, Kevin Vanhoozer's *Remythologising Theology* offers vision and energy for exactly the right task: reading

[34] For a lucid but rare example see chapter 14 of Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, on the entitlement to believe that God speaks: "What we really want to know is whether we—intelligent, educated, citizens of the modern West—are ever entitled to believe that God speaks?" (p. 273). His answer: yes.

the Bible to see God correctly, which is to say—reading it to see what God says.

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Spiritual Formation and Leadership in Paul's Address to the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20:17–35)

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1. Introduction

While most of the parenetical sections of the New Testament could be summarised under the heading "spiritual formation," relatively few passages particularly address issues regarding leadership within the Christian community.[1] Other fields of leadership—such as Christians as leaders of civic communities—are not directly in view.

One of these passages is Paul's so-called *Miletus speech* of Acts 20:17–35, delivered at Miletus to the elders of the Ephesian church when Paul was on his way back to Jerusalem at the end of his third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:16). In this speech Paul first describes his past ministry among the Ephesians (Acts 20:18–27). This section serves as a summary of Paul's ministry among the nations before his return to Jerusalem, the place where he was commissioned for this task by the risen Christ (Acts 22:21). Paul then outlines the task ahead for these elders (Acts 20:28–35). For good reasons these instructions have received much attention in quests for Christian ministry and leadership. Jacque Dupont's insightful study *Le discours de Milet* remains one of the classic expositions.[2]

Paul's instructions are particularly interesting when read against the notions of social status and leadership ideals in the Graeco-Roman world. In this essay, I want to examine how Paul challenges

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[1] For an excellent survey, see A.D. Clarke, *Serve the Community of the Church: Christians as Leaders and Ministers* (First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000); for a detailed analyses see also his *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1–6* (AGJU 18; Leiden: Brill, 1993); and S. Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle: The Portrait of Paul in the Miletus Speech and 1 Thessalonians* (SNTSMS 106; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[2] J. Dupont, *Le discours de Milet: Testament pastoral de Saint Paul (Acts 20,18–36)* (LeDiv 32; Paris: Cerf, 1962).

these notions and defines the task of Christian leadership against these all pervasive values.

This exercise indicates that the exercise of good leadership requires the spiritual formation of leaders so that Christian leaders are able to lead in Christ-like manner and not simply behave as would secular leaders in their society. It will also become clear that some of the particular challenges that Paul addressed in his own context (and that had to be overcome) are still very relevant to our day-and-age and analogously reflect the challenges of Christian leadership in a South African context: be it in the church, other Christian contexts or in society at large. These challenges, both ancient and modern, indicate that leadership among the people of God cannot simply follow the culturally dominant notions of leadership and lifestyle in whatever age.

2. The Challenges of Leadership in Paul's Miletus Speech

2.1. Paul's own ministry

At the beginning of his address, Paul recalls his own ministry among Gentiles: he *taught* in public and private (Acts 20:20), *proclaiming* and promoting not himself but *declaring* the whole purpose of God (Acts 20:27), *testifying* about repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus/the gospel of God's grace and *proclaiming* the kingdom (Acts 20:24–27). Paul served the Lord (and the Ephesians) with all humility (Acts 20:19), not with the attitudes elsewhere associated with Gentile leadership (Luke 22:25f; cf. the displays of Gentile pride and arrogance, e.g. Acts 12:23; 18:12–17). Paul's reference to *all humility* is striking in a context in which honour was one of the most prevalent values. As shepherds of the same flock, these Gentile Christian leaders are to continue this exemplary ministry. Roloff rightly observed the close relation of Paul's exhortation to the Jesus tradition.[3] The example and teaching of Jesus is the supreme standard for these Gentile Christian leaders.

2.2. Christian leadership in Ephesus

In the direct instruction of the elders in Acts 20:28 and 31, Paul's emphasis is on issues where the elders (Gentile Christians as

[3] J. Roloff, "Themen und Traditionen urchristlicher Amtsträgerparänese," in *Neues Testament und Ethik* (ed. H. Merklein; Freiburg: Herder, 1989), pp. 507–26 (507–508).

well as Jews living in a Gentile environment and value system), were specifically in danger of misusing, misunderstanding or neglecting their office. This applies irrespective of the social position of the elders. Even elders from lower social classes would be well acquainted with the model provided by their society as leadership was very much a public issue and likely to follow it. Six observations can be made from these warnings from vv. 28 and 31:

2.2.1. "Keep watch over yourselves"

To counter the danger of hypocrisy, superficiality and frivolity, the elders were first charged: "Keep watch over yourselves" (Acts 20:28).[4] Weiser notes that "the urgent call to 'keep watch over themselves' clearly indicates, that the impetus of this statement is not on a splendid emphasis on Spirit-initiated dignity and status, but on impression the great responsibility regarding office."[5] What they were to ensure and guard in others, they had to display and exercise themselves. This warning is directed against (and dismisses) Gentile notions of leadership, where office and personal conduct/commitment were less firmly linked.[6] Paul's warning reminds them that their own spiritual formation and their role as leaders are inseparably intertwined.

2.2.2. Guarding all the flock

The elders were to guard over *all* the flock. All Ephesian Christians were committed to all elders to the same extent and care. Their ministry was to exclude favouritism or partiality with the expectation of corresponding behaviour patterns of the beneficiaries as clients vis-à-vis their patrons. This charge is directed against the continuation or introduction of pagan ideas of patronage, clientele and benefaction into Christian leadership principles.[7] Even elders

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[4] Dupont discusses occurrences of this expression in Luke 12:1; 17:3; 20:46; 21:34, again relevant to leaders (*Le discours de Milet*, pp. 136–39).

[5] A. Weiser, *Die Apostelgeschichte: Kapitel 13–28* (ÖTBK V.2; GTBS 508; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn / Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1985), p. 324.

[6] See Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*, pp. 73–88.

[7] A technical term of these notions, *euergetes*, refers in Luke 22:25 to those in authority over Gentiles; cf. J. Nolland, *Luke 18:35–24:53* (WBC 35C; Dallas: Word, 1993), p. 1064; J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, 2nd Edition (ABC 28; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986), p. 1471; F.W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1982); H.R. Balz and G. Schneider, *Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, II* (Stuttgart: Kolhammer Verlag, 1992), pp. 191–93; B.

needed such exhortation, prone as they were to continue or re-establish these traditional unchristian notions. The patterns of Gentile leadership are incompatible with Christian values.

2.2.3. By divine appointment

The elders were reminded that the Holy Spirit had made them overseers. They had this task due to the Spirit's choice and supernatural equipment, not due to factors qualifying for offices in their Gentile society such as birth, relations, party-membership or financial means.[8] What was advantageous and/or considered crucial for office and leadership in Gentile society is dismissed for Christian service.

2.2.4. Shepherding the church of God

The elders were to shepherd the church of God. The church was God's flock entrusted to them, not their own and to be treated as such. They were to tenderly care, guard and feed God's flock, rather than to exploit it.[9] Paul also called the elders to be alert in fulfilling their task. They were to remember how Paul *constantly* warned *everyone*. Various threats to the church require such alertness, continuous concentration and dedication.[10]

Paul summoned the *elders* ("presbyters," Acts 20:17), but then addressed them as *overseers* ("bishops," Acts 20:28; Luke's only occurrence of the term). Benoit concludes his study of the differences between overseers and presbyters as follows:

Kötting, "Euergetes", *RAC 6*, (1966), pp. 848–60; L. Friedländer, *Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms in der Zeit von Augustus bis zum Ausgang der Antonine I* (10 ed.; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1922), pp. 225–35; H. Moxnes, "Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. J.H. Neyrey; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 241–68. For the transformation of Graeco-Roman civic institutions in the early church see B.W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994).

[8] For offices in ancient Ephesus, see D. Knibbe, "Ephesos," *RE S 12* (n.d.), pp. 248–97; 259–65.51, 271–76.19 and L. Birchner, "Ephesos", *RE 5* (n.d.), pp. 2795–97; pp. 2803ff.

[9] See Jer 23:1–4; Ezekiel 34; Mic 3:1–3; Zechariah 11; Dupont, *Le discours de Milet*, pp. 143–150; G. Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte, Kap. 9.1–28.31* (HThK V.2. Freiburg: Herder, 1982), p. 296; for Graeco-Roman material see F. Orth, "Schaf", *RE II A,* (373–99) 384–87.60, "Hirt und Weidegang", cols. 388.39–92.47, esp. col. 389.58–62.

[10] See Dupont, *Le discours de Milet*, p. 142; Roloff, "Themen und Traditionen," pp. 510–12. ("Unlimited commitment to the task at hand"), 524ff)

> ... les Presbytres sont des Notables, que leur âge, leur dignité de vie, leur fortune, leur ascendance familiale revêtent d'une autorité naturelle et imposent au respect des autres membres de la communauté. Ils sont investis d'une dignité officielle mais collective, et constituent un Conseil où chacun d'eux participe à l'administration de la communauté, d'une façon indirecte ... Il en va tout autrement des Épiscopes. *Ce sont moins des dignitaires que des fonctionnaires.* Leur activité n'est plus collective et anonyme comme celle des Presbytres, elle est personnelle et responsable. Ils sont chargés de quelque office précis, normalement d'inspection ou de surveillance, comme le suggère leur titre.... On voit la différence qui sépare ces deux titres: *l'un exprime une dignité, l'autre désigne un office.*[11]

Both commands contain a deliberate distinction from Gentile notions of authority and leadership: their office was not to be understood as an *honour* once acquired or bestowed. Gentile notions of acquisition and tenure of office were not to be imported. In contrast, the elders' office was not to be materially or status-wise profitable, rather it was a call to a function involving diligent hard work (Acts 20:31). Weiser comments:

> ... the designation *episkopoi* is not to be understood as a title of an office, rather in the context of the Old Testament shepherd metaphors for leadership serve as the designation of particular functions. ... Responsibility and the readiness for service are to determine the relationship of the presbyter-bishops towards the church. Bracketed by statements which are taken from the Old Testament metaphor of shepherd and flock [Acts 20:28]… they are told, that as overseers they are to guard the flock with proper care and are to protect it.[12]

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[11] P. Benoit, "Les Origines de l'Épiscopat dans le Nouveau Testament," *Exégèse et Théologie II* (Paris: Cerf, 196, 1961), pp. 232–46. Italics are from the present author. For Jewish and Greco-Roman usage see E. Nellessen, "Die Einsetzung von Presbytern durch Barnabas und Paulus (Apg 14:23)," in *Begegnung mit dem Wort* (ed. H.J. Zmijewski and E. Nellessen; BBB 53; Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1980), pp. 185–87; for Luke's motivation cf. G. Bornkamm, *ThWNT 6* (1959), p.665.

[12] Weiser, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, p. 320. All translations in this article derive from the author. Cf. Luke 17:7–10 and Roloff, "Themen und Traditionen urchristlicher Amtsträgerparänese," pp. 511–12.

In his monograph *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth,* Clarke describes the delicate interplay between secular and Christian leadership notions in Corinth. Clarke's conclusions regarding Corinth also apply to Ephesus:

> In addition to his identification and criticism of secular leadership in the church, Paul constructed for the Corinthians different parameters of leadership. This positive definition offered a stark contrast to the secular patterns of leadership. Paul focused not on status, but on task; the terminology used was specifically that of function; and the individuals whom he referred to as examples of good Christian leadership were specifically chosen for their commitment to service and not status.[13]

The elders' task was to be an active duty not limited to occasional civil or cultic occasions rife with publicity and honour. Their responsibility is emphasised by the high price that was paid for the flock entrusted to them (Acts 20:28): "they were to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own (Son)." The flock which the elders are to guard does not belong to them, but to God. It is entrusted to them and they are to guard it accordingly. It is noteworthy that the only direct statement in all of Luke-Acts regarding the saving significance of the death of Jesus occurs in the context of admonishing leaders.[14]

2.2.5. Leadership and material gain

Material benefit is directly addressed in the final part of Paul's speech. In the light of the close relation between financial interests and religious devotion previously displayed by pagan Ephesians (Acts 19:25–27) and the stunning amount of money involved in *one* aspect of the local pagan religion (books with magic spells worth fifty thousand silver coins, referred to in Acts 19:19; curiously only mentioned for Ephesus), Paul's disclaimer in Acts 20:33-36 is noteworthy: he himself did not covet anyone's possessions, but worked with his own hands to support himself and his companions. Paul did not share the material concerns of the silversmiths, but displayed true unselfishness. Weiser notes:

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[13] Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*, p. 131. Consult Clarke's sections on "Profile and practices of secular leaders in Corinth," "Secular practices of Christian leaders" and "Paul's principles of Christian leadership" (pp. 23–39, 59–88, 109–27).

[14] See U. Mittmann-Richert, *Der Sühnetod des Gottesknechts: Jesaja 53 im Lukasevangelium* (WUNT 220; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. 2008).

> According to Luke, unpretentiousness in dealing with material wealth and a high measure of social responsibility characterise the life of the Christians. This Lukan concern can be seen throughout all of Luke-Acts. He also emphasises the unpretentiousness of the messengers of Jesus and the bearers of service-offices in the Christian communities (see Luke 12:41–46; 17:7–10).[15]

In addition to serving as a distinguishing mark from false teachers of the future, Paul's attitude was to serve as a model for the elders. The money-mindedness displayed by Gentiles was to have no place in the church. The Gentiles' material preoccupation is a recurring Lukan theme (see: Luke 12:29f; 17:27f; Acts 16:19; 24:26). It is therefore not surprising that a Gospel directed to Gentile Christians should address this concern repeatedly.[16] Fitzmyer rightly observes that

> no other NT writer ... speaks out as emphatically as does Luke about the Christian disciple's use of material possessions, wealth and money. ... Obviously, he is not satisfied with what he has seen of the Christian use of wealth in his ecclesial community and makes use of sayings of Jesus to correct attitudes within it.[17]

Paul gave the church and its elders an example "that by such work we must support the weak" (Acts 20:35). This expression refers to manual labour to care for the *materially* poor or *socially* weak or to the teaching ministry mentioned previously for the spiritually weak,

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[15] Weiser, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, p. 321. R. Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte (Apg 13–28)* (EKK V.2; Zürich: Benzinger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1986), p. 205 comments: "Apparently this constitutes an important criterion of distinction over against heretics coming into the church from the outside … as also over against heretics from within the church … for whom selfish striving for material gain is characteristic," cf. also Roloff's treatment ("Themen und Traditionen urchristlicher Amtsträgerparänese," pp. 513–16) and illuminating reference to Luke 16:1–8; cf. pp. 520–24 for the relevance of Luke 12:35–38, 42–47; 22:24–27 for church leaders.

[16] For the readers of Luke-Acts see D.A. Carson and D.L. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), pp. 210–11, pp. 301–302.

[17] Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX)*, p. 247 and pp. 247–51. For a recent study of Lukan wealth ethics see C.M. Hays, *Luke's Wealth Ethics: A Study in Their Coherence and Character* (WUNT II, 275; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

though the former is usually understood.[18] Christians have to care for these weak people.

This charge is motivated by a maxim of Jesus ("remembering the words of the Lord Jesus"; cf. Luke 6:30). The elders are not to follow the values and practices prevalent in their society, but to implement fully in their lives the teaching of the Lord Jesus with whom they aligned themselves as Christians and whose authority they accept. This reminder of his Lordship divests this command of any optional character. That "it is more blessed to give than to receive" is the opposite of the attitude elsewhere ascribed to or displayed by Gentiles prior to faith. Jesus' words directly counter this Gentile agenda.

Luke does not indicate here how Gentiles usually treated the poor. An example is the dire treatment of the prodigal son by his Gentile "employer" (Luke 15:16; see the different picture in Acts 10:2 and also Luke's criticism of the greed of the Jewish leadership in Luke 11:37–41; 20:47).

That the poor are specifically mentioned in the Miletus speech suggests that Gentile elders, following the patterns of their society, were in danger of misusing them (in creating a clientele or other relationships of dependency which they could exploit for themselves rather than providing genuine charity), overlooking or deliberately neglecting the weak as or when they were no use to them. The Christian task is genuine support ("we must support the weak"; see Luke 1:54).

Paul previously defined "… such *work*" as *manual* labour in Acts 20:34: "I worked with my own hands." On this, Bruce comments: "These words occupy an emphatic position at the end of the sentence; they would be accompanied by the appropriate gesture."[19] This emphasis in Acts 20:34 and the previous reference to Paul's work and trade ("they worked together—by trade they were tent-

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[18] Cf. Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte, Kap. 9.1–28.31*, p. 299: "probably (predominantly) understood as socially weak people, as people in need"; Weiser, *Die Apostelgeschichte: Kapitel 13–28*, p. 321: "socially disadvantaged people"; W. Bauer, K. Aland, and B. Aland (eds.) *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur*, 6th Edition (Berlin: Walther de Gruyter, 1988), p. 231, list Acts 20:35 under "economically weak, lacking resources, being in need and metaphorically used to describe religious and moral weakness" (all translations are from the present author).

[19] F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd Edition (Leicester: Apollos; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), p. 436.

makers") in Acts 18:3 implicitly criticises the Greco-Roman evaluation of manual labour and economic structure: "Greek culture had a deep routed scorn for any occupation ... which involved working with the hands."[20] The description of "vulgar tasks" by the Roman upper class "gentleman" Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC) is representative and includes manual labour and work by artisans in workshops:

> Unbecoming to a gentleman, too, and vulgar are the means of livelihood of all hired workmen whom we pay for mere casual labour, not for artistic skill; for in their case the very wages they receive is a pledge of their slavery. ... And workers/artisans are engaged in vulgar trades; for no workshop can have anything honourable about it.[21]

These leaders were not to follow the values of their own society and despise manual labour, but Paul's example embodying and expressing different values. He did not exploit the flock but worked to provide for himself and for others. Barrett comments: "They would do well to follow Paul's example and work for their living, in order that, far from receiving payment for their work, they may be in a position to give money away to those who are in need."[22]

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[20] See Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 391ff. L.C.A. Alexander, "Luke's Preface in the Context of Greek Preface Writing," *NT* 28 (1986), p. 70, notes that "this attitude was not shared by the scientific writers, who though not craftsmen themselves, speak of the *technitai* with deep respect." As Alexander sees Luke in this scientific tradition, our conclusion should perhaps not be overvalued. See Alexander, "Luke's Preface," p. 70, and R. Strelan, *Paul, Artemis, and the Jews in Ephesus* (BZNW 80; Berlin: Walther de Gruyter, 1996), pp. 135ff, on the assessment of manual labour in Ephesus. See also F. Hauck, "Arbeit A. Nichtchristlich," *RAC 1* (1950), pp. 585–88 and K.H. Schelkle, "Arbeit.III.NT," *TRE 3* (1978), pp. 622–24.

[21] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis* I (42), p. 150. Another pertinent example is Plutarch's *Vita Periclis*, p. 2. Paul differs from these views and follows Jewish tradition which highly treasures manual labour. Genesis 2 even speaks of the "work that God had done in creation … out of the ground the Lord God formed [with his hands] every creature"; for the positive Jewish evaluation of work see the surveys of H.D. Preuss, "Arbeit. I. AT. 4," *TRE* 3 (1978), pp. 615–18 and M. Brocke, "Arbeit. II. Judentum," *TRE* 3 (1978), pp. 618–19.

[22] C.K. Barrett, *Church, Ministry and Sacraments in the New Testament*. The 1983 Didsbury Lectures (Exeter: Paternoster, 1985), p. 53. For a discussion of Paul's own references to his manual labour and the reasons for it see P.W. Barnett, "Tentmaking," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (ed.

2.2.6. Leadership and the lure of status

The reason for the elders' alertness (Acts 20:31: "therefore be alert") enforces the urgency of their task: in addition to detrimental outside influences, even from within the group of elders some will distort the truth—which Paul carefully taught and which was authenticated by God through tremendous signs and wonders (Acts 19:11–17)—in order to gain a following of their own (Acts 20:30).[23]

Such distortion and ambitious vainglory would occur even among the elders. Even the structures established to continue Paul's ministry are threatened by the human nature of those appointed to this office. The motivation for such a drastic step was to gain eminence in the new community (and over fellow-elders): "in order to entice the disciples to follow them" (Acts 20:30). This motivation again reflects Gentile notions of leadership and gaining personal status through gathering a clientele who in turn would support and enhance their patron-elder. This concept was still so engraved in the elders that in order to achieve it, some would not even shrink from distorting the truth which they had received. Again the deep entrenchment and longevity of Gentile concepts becomes apparent. Even elders would sacrifice truth for personal promotion according to Gentile schemes.

The danger of such endeavours lies in the fact that *other* Gentile Christians will follow such elders and their distortion of the truth. Even after the prolonged time of Paul's ceaseless ministry to everyone, apparently their understanding of Christian doctrine was either still insufficient to recognise these distortions of the truth as such, or their appreciation and commitment to recognised truth

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G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin, and D.G. Reid; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993), pp. 925–27.

[23] As to outside influences, Paul indicates "savage wolves" from outside will come into the church, not sparing the flock (Acts 20:29). As their appearance is linked to Paul's departure, this is probably *not* a reference to Gentile persecution (Gentile persecution is not linked to the presence or absence of Paul, it rather arose through Paul's presence and ministry), but refers to *false teachers*. They will not treat the flock as Paul did. The identity of these false teachers is not indicated; cf. J. Zmijewski, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (RNT; Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1994), pp. 744–45; Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte, Kap. 9.1–28.31*, p. 297 and Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte (Apg 13–28)*, p. 205; extensive discussion by G.W.H. Lampe, "'Grievous wolves' (Acts 20.29)," in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament* (ed. B. Lindars, S.S. Smalley; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 263–68. Acts 15:1; 21:21 could suggest Jewish origin.

was wanting. They will follow elders who teach according to their taste and identify with them to the extent of becoming *their* particular following, no longer following the "Way." This explain Paul's previous intensive ministry and the elders' commission to personal alertness and over the flock.

These six areas (2.2.1.–2.2.6.) contain Luke's re-definition of leadership against the background of practices of office bearers and leaders in the Hellenistic world.[24] Notions prevalent in Greco-Roman society were not to be continued or introduced into the church. These patterns and the values which they reflect were not suitable. In this regard Greco-Roman society has little suitable to offer for the kingdom.

This picture is confirmed by Luke's several direct critical references to Gentile leadership practices and misuse of power (Luke 3:19–20; 7:25?; 22:25; 23; Acts 12:1, 21, 23; 16:22–24). Paul spoke to Felix about righteousness and self-control, suggesting Felix's misuse of authority in these areas (Acts 24:25). Paul addressed what was needed to overcome this failure. The majority of Luke's references to Gentiles in authority are negative. Of the exceptions (e.g. Luke 2:1; 3:1; Acts 25:8, 10–12, 21, 25–27; 26:32; 27:3, 24; 28:7–9, 17–19) most only mention a Gentile ruler without any further comments.[25]

2.3. Divine equipment for the task ahead

Not surprising in the light of the previous charges and predictions, the elders are not referred back to themselves and their natural capacities, but commended to God and the message of his grace (Acts 20:32).[26] God's grace accomplishes what they themselves cannot achieve: it can build them up (cf. Acts 9:31) and give them an inheritance among all those who are sanctified by grace and not through their own efforts. For sanctification and perseverance the elders were dependent on God. Despite all of Paul's teaching, preparation for their task and pastoral care, the grace of God was still the determining factor.

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[24] Obviously Greek and Roman authors discuss how leaders ought to conduct themselves and commend appropriate behaviour, e.g. Aristotle argues that the king's task is doing good: "As a good man he provides for the well-being of his flock, as Homer understood when he called Agamemnon the 'shepherd of the people'. The love of a father for his children is also of this nature" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 8.11).

[25] For detailed treatment see C. Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith* (WUNT II, 108; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

[26] See Dupont, *Le discours de Milet*, pp. 326–42).

Though the Ephesian elders and the Christians under their care enjoyed all benefits of salvation (e.g, the presence of the empowering Spirit) and had received much instruction and pastoral care, their Christian existence was not to be taken for granted but threatened by adaptation to their pagan environment. Even under faith their position is endangered and possible only by God's gracious intervention.

3. Conclusions

Paul's charge to the Ephesian elders is not a timeless example of spiritual formation and leadership. Drawing on the Old Testament, early Judaism and the teaching of Jesus, Paul charges them against the particular backdrop of Greco-Roman notions of status and leadership to a different understanding *of Leadership and Lifestyle*, to play on Walton's well-chosen title.[27] An awareness of this backdrop indicates how relevant but also how radical Paul's call to leadership was for his audience. In some ways it was counter-cultural.

Some Greco-Roman leadership ideals (and other facets of Hellenistic moral philosophy, discussed by many ancient authors), such as personal integrity or generosity, Paul obviously would have valued as he elsewhere commends "whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, and if there is anything worthy of praise" (Phil 4:8). Mott observes regarding Paul's ethics:

> In Titus 2:12 the state to which people are brought in conversion is described by the Greek cardinal virtues. ... Paul recognises knowledge of genuine values by secular people. His followers are to take into consideration "that which is morally good in the judgement of all people" (Rom 12:17; cf. 2 Cor 8:21). The are to conduct themselves becomingly with outsiders (1 Thess 4:12; Rom 13:13). The term implies a common standard of what is decent, and traditional elements of morality are cited in both passages. Paul also conducted himself in a way which would commend him to every human conscience (2 Cor 4:2; cf. Tit 2:5,8–10).[28]

However, this was not the focus of this article.

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[27] Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle*.

[28] S.C. Mott, "Ethics," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, pp. 269–75 (272).

At the same time, some aspects of this ancient backdrop for Paul's charge are very much up-to-date and reflect contemporary notions and practices of gaining and maintaining status and/or exercising leadership. In view of these parallels, Paul's charges to the Ephesian elders directly applies to today's elders and other church leaders. In addition, they also present a challenge to all people in leadership positions in our society.

Martin Meredith's enlightening survey *The State of Africa* can also be read as an account of political leadership in post-colonial Africa.[29] Unfortunately, it is by and large an account of poor, at times extremely poor, leadership from which almost all of the peoples of the African continent have suffered and continue to suffer tremendously. In some cases, the record of leaders who confessed to be Christians was better, in other cases it was and is not noticeably better. An examination of the track record of leaders of churches or Christian organisations in Africa will be more encouraging but would also indicate areas for improvement.

Paul's insights in spiritual formation and leadership in his charge to the Ephesian elders can help in developing church leaders that are aware that the flock of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son is entrusted to them. This status of the people whom they lead requires leadership in attitude and deed in accordance with the Gospel of Christ, the humble Messianic king. Paul's charge also challenges other leaders to humility and selfless service, not to position, status and self-aggrandisement that is so often associated with leadership. For both task Christian leaders may draw on God and the message of his grace, a message that is able to build them up and give them an inheritance among all who are sanctified (Acts 20:32).

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[29] M. Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (Johannesburg, Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2005).

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The Portrait of the Readers Prior to Their Coming to Faith According to Ephesians

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1. Introduction

In recent academic study of Ephesians attention has been paid to issues of authorship and pseudonymity, to the particular historical situation for which the letter has been written, to the reconstruction of the relationship between Jewish Christian and Gentile Christians and how it is addressed in the letter, to the conceptual background of the head-body metaphor, to the religious background of the letter either in some form of Gnosticism or in the Old Testament and Hellenistic Judaism and to the portrayal of Paul in the letter and its implications for issues of authorship and the nature of the letter.[1] To some of these issues we shall return in this essay.

In current New Testament studies issues of identity have received a fair amount of attention.[2] Such studies primarily focus on the new identity of the believers and the new community which they constitute. Particular attention has been paid to the manner of *the construction of this new identity*. What constitutes the identity of early Christians vis-à-vis other religious and social groups in the ancient world such as Jewish synagogues or Hellenistic mystery religions or the ancient associations? What is their origin and ethos? In

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[1] For convenient surveys see Udo Schnelle, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (UTB; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007: pp. 355–57, D.A. Carson and D. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament,* 2nd Edition (Downers Grove, IL: Zondervan, 2005), pp. 492–94.

[2] See the two recent Scandinavian major research projects documented in: Bengt Holmberg (ed.) *Exploring Early Christian Identity*. (WUNT 226; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Bengt Holmberg and Mikael Winninge (ed.) *Identity Formation in the New Testament* (WUNT 227; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) and many other monographs on more defined aspects; a fine survey is Bengt Holmberg, "Understanding the First Hundred Years of Christian Identity," in Holmberg (ed.) *Exploring Christian Identity*, pp. p. 1–32.

such discussions, one significant aspect of identity has often been neglected, namely the *former* identity and behaviour that the new converts have left behind?

Issues of identity also play a major issue in Ephesians. Carson and Moo note that in the letter "in general there is an effort to give Paul's readers a distinctively Christian identity."[3] While not employing the concept and language of identity, Arnold describes three areas where Ephesians aims at constructing the new identity of the readers:

> Being converts from a Hellenistic religious environment—mystery religions, magic, astrology—these people needed a positive grounding in the Pauline gospel ... Their fear of evil spirits and cosmic powers was also a great concern, especially the question of where Christ stands in relation to these forces [1]. Because of their pagan past, they also needed help and admonishment in cultivating a lifestyle consistent with their salvation in Christ, a lifestyle free from drunkenness, sexual immorality, stealing and bitterness [2]. Although there were many Jewish Christians (and former God-fearers) in the churches of the region, the flood of new Gentile converts created some significant tensions. Their lack of appreciation for the Jewish heritage of their faith prompted some serious Jewish-Gentile tension in the churches [3].[4]

A particular emphasis in the construction of the believers' new identity in Ephesians is their new status "in Christ," an expression which occurs 34 times in the six chapters of the letter and describes the "corporate solidarity of believers with their resurrected and exalted Lord."[5]

A further noteworthy feature of Ephesians is the deliberate contrast between the former state with all its implications ("then") and the present state under faith with all its implications ("now"), although such contrasts also occur in other New Testament books.[6]

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[3] Carson and Moo, *An Introduction*, p. 491.

[4] Clinton E. Arnold, "Ephesians, Letter to the," in Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin (ed.) *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), pp. 238–49 (246).

[5] Arnold, "Ephesians," p. 247.

[6] For example, in Rom 6:12–14; 8:13; 1 Pet 1:18; 2:10; survey in Peter Tachau, *"Einst" und "Jetzt" im Neuen Testament: Beobachtungen zu einem urchristlichen Predigtschema in der neutestamentlichen Briefliteratur und zu*

Ephesians contains several statements regarding the former spiritual state of the readers (primarily in chapters 1–3) and regarding the behaviour that they have left behind or are admonished to do so (primarily in chapters 4–6). Ephesians can therefore be read as a two-pronged exercise in early Christian identity building: dissociation from the readers' pagan past and identification with their new Christian identity in status and conduct. Or, to use the language of construction: *de*-construction of their or past status and behaviour and construction or perhaps *re*-construction of their new identity in Christ.

Ernest has examined these contrasts in Ephesians and has identified "Two Types of Existence," so the title of his article.[7] He notes that "Both types are stated in absolute and relative terms, and this creates problems. The two types are described most clearly in Eph 4:17–21; 4:22–24; 5:8 and 5:15–18."[8] After surveying these passages which contrast *conduct* (pp. 140–43), Best briefly describes the statements on the former *spiritual status* of the readers: "The contrasts identified here are put elsewhere in the letter in quite another way without the discussion of actual details of conduct. Unbelievers are dead in sin (2:1, 5) and belong to the sphere of the devil (2:2); they are under the control of 'the powers' (6:12) and subject to the wrath of God (2:3)."[9]

The present article focuses on the *portrayal of Gentiles before coming to faith in Ephesians*. While obviously including the passages regarding *conduct* which Best examines, it argues a more comprehensive case.[10] What is said throughout the letter about the past that the readers left behind or are strongly urged to do so? A second quest is for the function of this portrait for shaping the identity of the readers now that they believe. Through the rhetorical device of dissociation, this "old identity," however negatively it is portrayed, functions in the construction of the new identity and the behaviour which it entails.

There is consensus that Ephesians addresses predominantly readers of Gentile Christian background (as such the readers are

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seiner Vorgeschichte (FRLANT 105; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972); see also E. Best, *Essays in Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), p. 140.

[7] Best, *Essays.*

[8] Best, *Essays,* p. 139.

[9] Best, 1997, p. 143?

[10] At the beginning of his article, Best places the descriptions mentioned above in the overall argument of the letter (*Essays,* p. 139).

directly addressed in 2:11; 3:1; 4:17).[11] Two comments on methodology are in order. Firstly, despite the several references to the former state and conduct of the readers, our quest is not obvious. The clear focus of Ephesians is *not* a description and evaluation of the former life of the readers (there is very little of this in the Bible) but on the change brought about by God's salvation in Christ and on the believers' new status and privileges and the required behaviour in view of the former. Their past does not appear for its own sake and does not receive nuanced appreciation. It only appears as the negative backdrop (the "plight") for their present existence (the "solution").

Secondly, how does the extensive portrayal of *Christians* in the letter contribute to our quest? Do all positive statements on the status, privileges and conduct of the readers imply that they were lacking all this prior to their conversion? Do all imperatives necessarily imply, that the behaviour demanded of the readers was lacking previously? For example, when the Christian children are called to obey their parents (6:1) does that suggest that this was not the case previously or that their present obedience has a new quality as it is "in the Lord?" The portrayal of the readers' past would become far more nuanced and complex if these indirect conclusions were included. I have not done so because of the constraints of space and in view of the methodological problems referred to.

2. The portrayal of Gentiles prior to faith in Ephesians

The former existence of the readers is described as a life "in trespasses" which need to be (and can be) forgiven through the redemption through the blood of Jesus (1:7). Eph 2:1 describes the spiritual consequences of such trespasses: the readers were once spiritually "dead through the trespasses and sins in which they once lived."[12] The verse combines a statement on the former state of the readers ("dead") with a statement on their behaviour or the consequences of that state. In this state, they were "following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit

[11] A helpful discussion of the author of Ephesians can be found in Carson & Moo, *An Introduction*, pp. 480–86 and in Arnold, "Ephesians," pp. 240–42. They survey the debate and list several persuasive arguments for Pauline authorship. For an assessment as deutero-Pauline see: Schnelle, *Theologie*, pp. 344–46. Following their arguments, I refer to the author as Paul. However, our quest is not dependent on issues of authorship.

[12] Repeated in 2:5: "we were dead through our trespasses"; see Best, *Essays*, pp. 69–85.

that is now at work among those who are disobedient."[13] The readers once lived among those who are disobedient (to God and his will) in the passions of their flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and they were by nature children of (God's) wrath, like everyone else (2:2–4). This is a sweeping statement on the state of people prior to coming to faith: disobedient in the passions of their flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses and by nature recipients of divine wrath and judgment.

Ephesians 2 contains a number of statements which define the Gentile readers negatively vis-à-vis Israel. They were Gentiles by birth ("nations according to the flesh") and therefore not born into the chosen and spiritually privileged community of Israel (2:11). They were called the "un-circumcision" by the Jews ("called the circumcision"). Due to this default, they did not participate in the covenants and promises given to the people of God. At one time they also were without Christ (2:12) and all the spiritual benefits derived from knowing him and believing in him, which the letter so amply describes. The promise of and actual coming and ministry of the Christ, Israel's Messiah, is—at least to start with—a particularly Jewish privilege (see Rom 1:16, "to the Jew first," 9:5: "from them by natural descent came the Messiah;" the words "having no hope" in 2:12 and the contrast in 2:13 "But now in Christ Jesus"—the Christ is identified as Jesus of Nazareth—might indicate that the promise of the Messiah is in view here).

The letter continues the former negative characterisation in view of Israel's status and privileges: being without Christ, they were "*aliens* from the commonwealth of Israel, and *strangers* to (in 4:18: "alienated from the life of God") the covenants of promise" (2:12; this is repeated positively in Eph 2:19: "your are no longer strangers and aliens"). The readers did not belong to the chosen people of God and did not know and share in the various covenants and the promises which this special relationship entailed for the present and the future. Therefore they "had no hope and were

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[13] Schnelle, *Theologie*, p. 348, notes that this emphasis is due to the particular religious-cultural situation in Ephesus: "The noteworthy emphasis on the power of God or Christ in Eph 1:15–23; 3:14–19,20–21; 6:10–20 becomes explicable against the background of this religious situation and points to a religious insecurity of many new church members. To them the letter proclaims: God's power surpasses all diabolic powers, the rulers of darkness and the spiritual beings of evilness in heavenly realms (see Eph 6:12)" (translation from the present author). This is also reflected in the "christology of exaltation and dominion" of the letter (Schnelle, *Theologie*, p. 353).

without God in the world" (2:12c). Recognition and veneration of the true God was impossible without sharing in the commonwealth of Israel, as strangers from the covenants of promise and without Christ.

Once the readers were far off from God and his people, now they have been brought near (2:13). This is repeated in Eph 2:17: once they were "far off" (2:17) while the Jews were near. Now there is reconciliation to one body. The hostility between the Gentiles and the Jews has been removed (2:14). Now enmity has been put to death by the cross (2:16). The readers' former life was characterised by alienation from God and his promises and by hostility to God's people (2:16).

After the concentration of statements on the former state and behaviour of the readers prior to faith in Ephesians 2, further direct statements occur in chapters 4 and 5 in the admonishing part of the letter. There they function repeatedly and extensively as the negative backdrop for the admonition addressed at the readers. What is said in Ephesians 4 builds on the previous characterisation of Gentiles. The ethical charge is clear: Now, being part of the people of God, *the readers must no longer live as the Gentiles live*. The argument starts with the spiritual state and attitudes and then moves on to concrete unacceptable behaviour:

Gentiles live in the futility of their minds (4:17; see "dead through trespasses" in 2:1, 5). They are darkened in their understanding and are alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and their hardness of heart (4:18, previously they were described as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and as strangers and aliens). Against this darkness divine enlightenment is necessary.[14] They have lost all spiritual sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to licentiousness and are eager to practice every kind of impurity. The contrast to the present state and required behaviour of the readers is clear: "That is not the way you learnt in Christ" (4:20).

The readers have been taught to put away their former way of life (4:22) which is characterised as the "their old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts" (4:22). The corrupted and deluded spirit of their minds needs to be divinely renewed (4:23). This "old self" needs to be replaced with a "new self," "created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (4:24). True righteousness and holiness was lacking previously.

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[14] Eph 1:18, "that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know"; see Carson and Moo, *An Introduction*, p. 495.

The following verses address virtues that are to replace their former behaviour: *falsehood* in words towards neighbours is to make place for truth (4:25, as the Christians are now members of one another in the one body). Previously their *anger* led them to sin (4:26; persisting in anger over longer periods). Formerly they made room for *the schemes of the devil* in their lives (4:26–27). At least some the readers were *thieves* (4:28), now they are to labour and work honestly with their hands.[15] Sharing with the needy, rather than *stealing*, is to be their ideal. *Evil talk* is no longer to come out of their mouth (4:29), rather edifying and graceful words. Now their behaviour is not to grieve the Holy Spirit (4:30, with which they have been sealed for the day of redemption, something which they lacked previously). To be removed is *all bitterness* and *wrath* and *anger* and *wrangling* and *slander*, together with all *malice* (4:31) which characterised their former life. Now there is to be mutual kindness, tender-heartedness and forgiveness.

What used to characterise their lives is again mentioned at the beginning of chapter 5 as the dark backdrop for the required present life: "But fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed must not even be mentioned, as it is proper among the saints. Entirely out of place is obscene, silly, and vulgar talk" (5:3). No fornicator, no impure person, or a greedy person (that is an idolater) will partake in the kingdom of Christ and of God (5:5). For such behaviour the wrath of God comes on those who are *disobedient* (5:6; an active state like "dead through trespasses," not mere ignorance). Therefore the believers are called not to be associated with them (5:7). Gentiles whose lives are characterised by fornication, impurity, greed and disobedience to God come under his wrath.

The theme of spiritual darkness recurs in Eph 5:8: "For once you were *in darkness*, but now in the Lord you are in the light." Darkness as a metaphor for the spiritual state of people in alienation from God is a recurrent biblical theme.[16] If the fruit of the light is "all that is good and right and true" (5:9), then darkness is to be associated with what is bad, wrong and false. This spiritual darkness is not without practical consequences, namely "the unfruitful works of darkness" (5:11) which are to be brought to the light. Gentile practices are so perverted that it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly (5:12). The readers are called to live not as unwise people (5:15; in the Old Testament sense in

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[15] See Best, *Essays*, pp. 179–88.

[16] See H. Conzelmann, *ThWNT VIII*, pp. 424–46 and H.C. Hahn, "Licht/Finsternis", *ThBLNT*, (1300–1318) 1307–1310.

which the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, Prov 1:7) and not to be foolish (5:17). They are not to get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery (5:18).

Also of significance is Eph 6:11. It places the Christian readers in a struggle against the devil. If Christians use the spiritual equipment that is at their disposal, they will be able to withstand this onslaught. By implication, those without the "spiritual armour" provided by God will be defenceless before the devil and unable to withstand him and will therefore be under his dominion. Christians find themselves in a struggle not against enemies of blood and flesh. Other people are under "the rulers, the authorities, cosmic powers of this present darkness under the dominion of spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (6:12). Other people are indirectly characterised as not able to withstand now and on that evil day and as unable to stand firm as they lack what is available to believers (6:13–18; i.e. the belt of truth around their waist, the breastplate of righteousness, the proclamation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God). They are exposed without protection to "all the flaming arrows of the evil one" and under his attack.

Carson and Moo observe on the cosmology of Ephesians that

> the cosmic conflict against "principalities and powers" for which only the whole armour of God is adequate, depicts a world of dangerous opponents, sweeping from pure abstractions through demonology to literary personification. The breath of the vision invests the nature of the Christian struggle with breath-taking significance, while offering assurance that God and his gospel provides the only solace and hope.[17]

This is what people prior to faith lack in this world of "dangerous opponents."

In view of the bleak portrayal of Gentiles prior to coming to faith in general, it is noteworthy that Ephesians does not contain direct references to literal idolatry or the former idolatry of the readers, as is the case, for example, in 1 Thess 1:9 ("how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God") or in Rom 1:21–23. In Eph 5:5, idolatry occurs metaphorically for greed.

Christians are admonished in Eph 6:11 to stand against the wiles of the devil. While it is mentioned that their struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, authori-

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[17] Carson and Moo, *An Introduction*, p. 494.

ties, cosmic powers of this present darkness and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places, nowhere in the letter is the bleak state of Gentiles prior to coming to faith directly attributed to the devil or superhuman powers. Yet there is no doubt that they were "following the ruler of the power of the air" (2:2). Christians are charged no longer to make room for the devil (4:27).

There are some noteworthy *exceptions* to this bleak picture of Gentiles prior to faith that need to be taken into account for a comprehensive understanding. Ernest Best has also noted that next to the *absolute* statements (surveyed above), there occur some "*relative*" statements on contemporary culture in Ephesians: "Indeed, part of what the author says shows that he recognized the existence of good in the world."[18] Best notes that when the author writes about behaviour, he employs some ethical terms drawn from contemporary non-Christian ethics (147f) and concludes: "This means that his image of pagan society and of the actual pre-Christian life of his readers cannot have been as dark as he says."[19]

In addition to these verbal parallels (however they are to be evaluated) there is further evidence. Despite all negative attributes, the readers are assured that they were *chosen by God in Christ even before the foundation of the world* and thus long before their eventual conversion (1:4). Even then they had been destined for adoption as God's children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will (1:5), apparently irrespective of their state prior to coming to faith. Despite their (still) being spiritually dead through

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[18] Best, *Essays*, p. 147. Best observes that this is also the case in Jewish writings on Gentiles: "Jewish authors were not consistent in employing dark colours. In so far as they recognized that God is the God of all peoples, who would in the end be gathered to God, their view of the Gentile world cannot have been entirely negative (Isa 45:22; 51:5; 56:7, Sir 1:9f, 1 En 10:21). Josephus, whose own associations in Judaism were with Pharisaism, compares Stoics and Pharisees with no intention of denigrating either (*Vita* 12), and so evaluates Stoicism positively" (*Essays*, p. 143). Best also notes that Ephesians is not consistent in how Christians are portrayed in the letter: "If its author asserts that believers are now light and not darkness, much that he writes shows that he realized that darkness still existed among them. ... there would have been no point in the author's warning the readers so strongly against these sins if some believers had not been committing them. ... In fact, every instruction the author offers in respect of what he considers true conduct and every warning against sinful conduct is an admission, that there are those who have failed in the community" (*Essays,* p. 146).

[19] Best, *Essays*, p. 148.

their trespasses, God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved them, was at work and saved them by his grace (2:4; see Rom 5:8). They had been saved by grace through faith and not their own doing, rather it was the gift of God (2:9). Therefore all human boasting is excluded (2:9). The readers are now what God has made them to be, created in Christ Jesus for good works (2:10), which God prepared *beforehand* to be their way of life in the present. Their life prior to coming to faith, however dark and displeasing to God it was, was already under his claim and salvific purpose and power.

In addition, Eph 3:15 introduces God as the "father from whom *every* family in heaven and on earth takes its name." The privilege of divine fatherhood applies not only to the Jewish people who are mentioned on several occasions in the letter (in Rom 9:4, "sonship" is a particular privilege of Jews).

To sum up: altogether Ephesians paints a bleak and absolute picture of Gentiles prior coming to faith. Firstly, their spiritual *state* is described as one of spiritual darkness (5:8, including the unfruitful works of darkness, 5:11) and of deadness in trespasses and sins (an expression that indicates that their state and conduct is closely linked). They live in the futility of their minds (4:17), are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart (4:18). They have lost all sensitivity (4:19), they are disobedient to God (2:2), live without God in the world (2:12), their old self is corrupted and deluded by its lusts and they are by nature under the wrath of God (2:3).

Secondly, their state is described in Ephesians 2 as one of deficiency vis-à-vis Israel. They belong to "the nations," not the privileged people of God. They do not bear the covenant sign and are alien from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise (2:12). They are far off (2:17) from God and his covenant people.

Thirdly, their state is described passively as under the dominion of forces other than themselves. They follow the course of this world and the ruler of the power of the air (2:2). They are exposed to the schemes of the devil (4:26) and exposed without protection to the onslaught of the devil (6:11–18). Some of these statements suggest an active contribution by the Gentiles to this situation (e.g. they have hardened hearts and are disobedient).[20]

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[20] This portrayal resembles that of Gentiles in Romans 1:18–32 [see R. Dabelstein, *Die Beurteilung der "Heiden" bei Paulus* (BbET; Frankfurt: Lang Verlag, 1981) and F. Matera, *God's Saving Grace: A Pauline Theology*

Fourthly, their *state* is closely linked to their behaviour. Best rightly observes: "The sins of the Gentile world condemned by ... Ephesians are principally sexual perversions ('licentiousness' in 4:19 should be given this wide sense and not restricted to fornication alone ...) and covetousness."[21] Gentiles are portrayed as following the passions of the flesh (2:3) and as greedy to practice every kind of impurity (4:19). Eph 5:3 mentions fornication and impurity of any kind and greed (see also 5:5, 12).

In addition to the two emphases identified by Best, they are characterised by falsehood and anger, as thieves, evil talkers, by obscene, silly and vulgar talk, by bitterness, wrath, wrangling, slander and all malice (4:31), by lack of wisdom, foolishness and drunkenness. Therefore, a third emphasis next to sexual perversions and greed, is on sins of the tongue.[22]

However, there are some unexpected exceptions to this portrayal: despite all negative characteristics, some Gentiles were chosen by God in Christ and come to faith (1:4). They had been destined for adoption as God's children according to the good pleasure of his will.[23] The merciful and loving God cared enough about them to save them by his grace (2:4; "But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ..."; see also 2:8). Salvation was God's gift to them, independent of their works or achievements (2:9).[24] Acceptable works, which the Gentiles obvi-

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(Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), pp. 88–102] and that of Luke-Acts [for a summary see C. Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith* (WUNT/II 108; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), pp. 379–82, according to Luke, Gentiles are characterised by ignorance, rejection of God's purpose and revelation in history, idolatry, materialism, moral-ethical sins, under the power of Satan and under divine judgement].

[21] Best, *Essays*, pp. 145ff.

[22] As, for example, in Jas 3:1–12; the New Testament follows the Old Testament wisdom tradition in this regard; for the background see William R. Baker, *Personal Speech-Ethics in the Epistle of James* (WUNT/II 68; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995).

[23] Eph 1:5; cf. Acts 18:10; see Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait*, p. 293.

[24] Often these key statements on the soteriology of Ephesians are read with *Jewish* readers in mind: these statements aim at excluding any form righteousness through the works of the Law and boasting of such righteousness (this understanding is influenced by Galatians and Romans, where righteousness through the law is explicitly addressed). The Jews had the law and righteousness through the law and went a long way in achieving this righteousness and therefore prone to boasting (see Phil 3:6).

ously did not have, are excluded, as is any human boasting (2:9). They had been created in Christ Jesus for good works which God had prepared beforehand to be their way of life in the present (2:10). God is the father from whom every family takes its name, including the families of the readers (3:15).

Other than these exceptional statements, Ephesians makes absolute statements on all Gentiles. There is no differentiation regarding state (all seem to be equally affected) or behaviour (all Gentiles seem to conduct themselves as described above).[25]

3. Function and significance

This portrayal of the readers prior to their coming to faith has several functions in the rhetoric of the letter:

1) The dark portrayal of their past reminds the readers to appreciate their new status and to implement the new conduct that the letter calls for in some detail. Their former plight is painted in dark colours so that the solution provided in the Gospel shines all the more brightly regarding their status and their new behaviour. In more detail:

Best rightly observes and asks: "An absolute position in respect either of the Christian life (that it is pure light [with reference to Eph 5:8]) or of the world outside the Christian community (that it is pure darkness) is impossible. What, then, led the author into the position where he appears to be making such absolute and impossible assertions?"[26] In order to find an answer, Best turns to ethical instruction in the New Testament in general.[27] Drawing on the well-known distinction between indicative and imperative, Best notes that "The author was required, then, to express in absolute terms the position of believers so that he could make that position

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These statements are all the more striking when it is kept in mind that they primarily address readers with *Gentile* background. What they were not even aware of (the Law) and could not practice (good works) is not required for salvation, as it is the gift of God.

[25] Ephesians does not mention God-fearers or proselytes as exceptional Gentiles. They constitute a significant aspect in the Lukan portrayal of Gentiles prior to their coming to faith; see Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait*. Luke notes exceptional Gentiles also apart from Diaspora Judaism, e.g. Acts 28:2.

[26] Best, *Essays*, p. 149).

[27] Best, *Essays*, p. 149.

into a springboard for his advocacy of good conduct."[28] This procedure can be seen in Eph 5:8: "For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light." Best concludes: "But whereas this shows that *there is a theological justification for the author's absolute statements in respect of believers*, there is no parallel in respect of *unbelievers*."[29] However, Best overlooks that the absolute negative portrayal of the readers' past ("unbelievers") serves to paint the present indicative of salvation, their new identity—from which the imperatives follow!—all the brighter.[30] In addition, the pre-Christian conduct appears as the negative backdrop for the new Christian conduct now required of the readers. The negative portrayal of previous conduct serves to motivate Christian conduct in the present.

Therefore this portrayal in Ephesians has a particular, but also *a limited function*. Paul Tachau has emphasised this repeatedly in his detailed treatment of Ephesians 2:

> Therefore *not the history of the Gentile Christian in general* is under discussion, but the old pagan and the new Christian existence of the addressees (1972: 140). … The contrast between then and now serves primarily to assure the addressees of their salvation. … Despite the detailed descriptions in Ephesians 2:1–3 and 11f, reference to the past is made for the sake of the contrast; but the past is not really the subject of reflection (142). … Rather, the references to the past serve exclusively to qualify the present existence. …. The "then-now" scheme employed here functions to emphasise

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[28] Best, *Essays*, p. 149. See, however, the recent criticism of the indicative or imperative concept, e.g. in Friedrich Wilhelm and Ruben Zimmermann (ed.) *Jenseits von Indikativ und Imperativ* (KNNTE/CNNTE I; WUNT 238; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

[29] Best, *Essays*, p. 150; italics are the present author's.

[30] Arnold, "Ephesians," p. 247, describes the ethical argument of Ephesians as follows: "behavioural change is not only possible, it is part of their divine calling and God's purpose for them (Eph 1:4; 2:10; 4:1). They have access to God's power which will enable them to resist temptation (Eph 6:10–18). They are enabled by the risen Christ himself who has endowed the church with gifted people who depend on him for leadership and provision (Eph 4:11–16). Finally, they have an example in Christ himself who modelled self-sacrificial love and service (Eph 5:2)."

> that the Christians have been taken out of the space of their origin.[31]

Ephesians therefore does not present a neutral, objective and generally applicable description of people before coming to faith.

Closely related to admonishment is an observation of Best regarding the danger of apostasy or the continuance of former behaviour: "Ephesians, then, evinces a great interest in the life of the community and little in that of the world outside, except to depict it in the darkest of colours. *The more darkly the picture is painted, the less likely the members are to fall back into its ways.*"[32]

In this way the portrayal of the reader's pre-conversion condition makes an important contribution to the construction of early Christian identity. Ephesians combines de-construction of the pre-conversion state and conduct and a re-construction of the new identity in Christ and its ensuing behaviour.

2) In view of the specific situation within the Christian communities addressed, the portrayal of Gentiles prior to their coming to faith in Ephesians also functions beyond implementing Christian ethics. Schnelle observes regarding the situation of the readers:

> The situation of the congregations addresses is apparently characterised by tensions between Jewish and Gentile Christians ... their relationship to the Jewish Christians is the sole content of the instructions in Ephesians 2:11–22 and at the same time one of the dominant themes of the letter. Ephesians sketches the concept of a church of Gentile and Jewish Christians who together constitute the body of Christ.[33] In doing so, the author reacts to a development in the opposite direction in the churches of Asia Minor: The Jewish Christians are already in a minority and the Gentile Christians no longer see them as equally entitled partners.[34]

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[31] Tachau, *"Einst" und "Jetzt"*, p.143; "once you were without Christ, now you are in Christ Jesus", italics and translation are the present author's.

[32] Best, *Essays*, p. 155; italics are the present author's.

[33] Arnold speaks of "the danger of the largely Gentile readership disowning their Jewish heritage" ("Ephesians," p. 245). He notes in his survey of research on the life setting and purpose of Ephesians: "Gentile believers are strongly in view ... and there is a need for the readers to receive teaching and admonishment on unity and a distinctively Christian lifestyle" ("Ephesians," p. 246).

[34] Schnelle, *Theologie,* p. 374. Carson and Moo are more cautious and merely note: "Some point to a possible tension between Jewish and Gen-

In order to address and alleviate such tensions between Gentile and Jewish Christians, Ephesians reminds the Gentile Christian readers of their dark past (their former position and former deplorable conduct) and their inferiority/deficiencies vis-à-vis Israel. Their past is deconstructed. In this way the Gentile Christian readers are put in their proper place vis-à-vis their fellow Jewish believers: they are to appreciate all that they are now (without any merits of their own, 2:8; there was nothing that they could contribute to this new status; through Christ they have what is described in 2:19) and are to appreciate their fellow Jewish believers into whose heritage they have been included. Although they probably have become a minority in the congregations of Asia Minor, the Jewish Christians are to be respected. Without this inclusion into the people of God, the Gentile readers would be "nothing." Schnelle expresses this concern and ensuing argumentation as follows:

> Against the backdrop of an increasing Gentile Christian anti-Judaism Ephesians stands up for an *equally entitled inheritance of the Jewish Christians in the body of Christ*. The thesis of Ephesians is clear and unambiguous: *Israel is the people of God and has her covenantal promises; the Gentiles have nothing. This is the point of departure*. But then the incomprehensible miracle happens: Christ tears down the wall between Gentiles and Jews, the Law with its commandments, and in this manner gives to the Gentiles access to God in the one church (2:11).[35]

On the function of this perspective, Tachau writes:

> The author endeavours to make clear the contrast between Gentile past and Christian present against the backdrop of Jewish terminology. In doing so, he obviously pursues particular intentions: *The Gentile Christian readers are warned to consider themselves privileged vis-à-vis their fellow Jewish Christians. For*

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tile Christians and think Paul is trying to secure unity" (*An Introduction,* p. 490). Later on they note: "Apparently Paul thought his readers needed to be *exhorted to pursue unity* and a distinctively Christian ethic" (*An Introduction,* p. 491; italics are from the present author). Says Arnold, "Ephesians," p. 246: "Although there were many Jewish Christians (and former God-fearers) in the churches of the region, the flood of new Gentile converts created some significant tensions. Their lack of appreciation for the Jewish heritage of their faith prompted some serious Jewish-Gentile tension in the churches."

[35] Schnelle, *Theologie*, p. 356. Translation and italics are from the present author. See Eph 2:11.

> *this purpose the letter refers to the Jewish Christians' past in contrast to the Gentile Christians.*[36]

This reminder of the Gentile readers of their own former state and implicitly of the privileges of Israel into which they have been included is particularly striking in view of the prevalent and often open and violent anti-Judaism of the ancient world.[37] This backdrop has not sufficiently been noted in the discussion of early Christian identity formation.

However, the exceptional statements noted above counterbalance the absolute portrayal. There is no room for contempt on the side of Jewish Christians either. They are reminded that despite their dark state, the Gentiles are under God's claim: Israel's God is the "father from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name" (Eph 3:15). This privilege is not limited to Abraham and his descendants. All the readers have been saved not through their own merits but exclusively by divine grace.

3) What is said here about the pre-conversion state of the readers implicitly applies to their present day neighbours and relatives and provides a *spiritual analysis* of the world in which the Christians continue to live (although they will have experienced it differently before their conversion) The environment characterised in this manner is likely to react with surprise and discrimination over against Christians. However, this is not directly addressed by Ephesians as Best rightly observed: "Although in almost all the other NT writings Christians are seen as subject to outside pressure, if not persecution, this is not reflected in any counsel Ephesians gives its readers."[38]

Related to the function of the portrayal as "spiritual analysis" is an observation by Best. He states:

> Another factor in the way the readers looked at their pre-Christian lives may have been the need to explain the failure of others to see the light as they themselves had done. Perhaps it resulted from the sinful and dark culture in which

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[36] Tachau, *"Einst" und "Jetzt"*, p. 137; translation and italics are from the present author.

[37] For a survey, see Gideon Bohak, "Gentile Attitudes toward Jews and Judaism," in J.J. Collins and D.C. Harlow (ed.). *Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), pp. 668–70.

[38] E. Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), p. 3.

> they were enmeshed was as well as from their own sinful and dark lives.[39]

4) Finally—and likewise not directly addressed—this dark portrayal of their own previous life serves to motivate the readers to share their faith with others. A number of recent studies have argued that Paul expected all Christians to be involved in sharing the Gospel.[40] That this is also in view in Ephesians despite the counsel in Ephesians 5:7 ("Therefore do not be associated with them") has been argued by Best, who says that "it would be wrong to say that Ephesians is uninterested in winning outsiders, for 3:1–13 has set out the revelation that the gospel should be taken to the Gentiles. ... The outside world is evil; *men and women must be won into the community from it*."[41]

The late South African missiologist David Bosch writes on Paul's own motivation:

> Paul sees humanity outside Christ as utterly lost, en route to perdition ... and in dire need of salvation (see also Eph 2:12). The idea of imminent judgment on those who "do not obey the truth" ... is a recurring theme in Paul. Precisely for this reason he allows himself no relaxation. He has to proclaim, to as many as possible, deliverance "from the wrath to come" ... He is Christ's ambassador; God makes his appeal to the lost through Paul and his fellow-workers.[42]

Bosch also notes that in the context of witness, Paul refers to non-Christians in fairly neutral terms:

> It is true ... that Paul often portrays non-members of the community in rather negative terms. I have already referred to some of the expressions he uses in this regard. Other

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[39] Best, *Essays*, p. 152.

[40] See Robert L. Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* (PBM; Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2007) and Christoph Stenschke, "Paul and the Mission of the Church," *Missionalia* 39(2011): pp. 167–87.

[41] Best, *Essays*, p. 154; italics are from the present author. See also Andreas. J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (NSBT 11; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), p. 166.

[42] David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 16th Edition (ASMS 16; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001), p. 134.

> terms include "unrighteous", "nonbelievers", and "those who obey wickedness". And yet, it is not words like these, or others such as "adversaries" or "sinners", which become technical terms for non-Christians. There are ... really only two such technical terms in Pauline letters: *hoi loipoi* ("the others") and *hoi exo* ("outsiders"). Both of these carry a milder connotation than some of the other more emotive expressions Paul sporadically uses ... and a remarkably free from condemnation.[43]

Significance

A direct application of this portrayal and its functions might be simple in contexts where people convert in classical fashion from "heathendom" to Christianity and need to be reminded of their former status and of the conduct that they are now called to abandon in their pursuit of their new privileges.[44] However, instances of

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[43] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 137

[44] Paul addresses first generation Christians who have come from paganism, not readers or converts in the context of a long-standing Christian tradition or nominal Christians who experienced some kind of conversion or revival. More recent discussions of conversion have distinguished between conversion "from above" (understood theologically) and "from below" (sociologically). See: Scot McKnight, "Conversion," in John Corrie (ed.) *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), p. 71. McKnight briefly sketches the biblical understanding of fallen humanity ("Conversion," p. 71). In the section on "conversion from below," he emphasises context: "Each 'convert' has a context, for there are no 'generic' humans or Christians. … Each context shapes conversion: contexts involving one's social milieu, perceptions of the human selfhood, one's psychological and sociological health, as well as one's location in a social circle or trend" ("Conversion," p. 72). These different contexts "will inevitably shape how the gospel is heard, how the gospel can be presented and how the individual will respond" ("Conversion," p. 72). McKnight concludes: "A theologically-informed understanding of 'context' will emphasise that a universal 'context' is that humans are 'cracked icons'. The human condition is thus a non-negotiable and universal feature of Christian mission theology" ("Conversion," p. 72). However, how these different perspectives are to be related to each other and which perspective is to take precedence in case of disagreement is less clear; see also Scot McKnight, Missions and Conversion Theory. *Mission Studies* 20 (2003): pp. 118–39, and the important study of Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

this have become far and few in between and most missionaries and pastors of today would—like Ephesians—rather focus on the new life than on pre-conversion life and culture.

The theological assessment (and largely new appreciation!) of people outside of Christianity in the past five decades has become more positive than the portrayal of Ephesians.[45] Those trying to reach them look for and do find points of contact within the culture and religion of the addressees.[46] What are we to do in this cli-

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[45] For surveys of this new appreciation of non-Christians see H.A.G. Blocher and W.A. Dyrness, "Anthropology, Theological," in W.A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (ed.) *Global Dictionary of Theology: A Resource for the Worldwide Church* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), pp. 42–45; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 474–89; D.G. Burnett, "Anthropology," in J. Corrie (ed.) *Dictionary of Mission Theology*, pp. 20–22, and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "Religions, Theology of," in Dyrness and Kärkkäinen (ed.) *Global Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 745–53. Early prominent examples were the *Dogmatic Constitution regarding the Church Lumen Gentium* 16 oder die Declaration regarding the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate* 1f of the Second Vatican Council from the years 1964 und 1965.

[46] For the need, legitimacy and methods of contextualisation see Steven B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002); Timoteo D. Gener, "Contextualisation," in Dyrness and Kärkkäinen (ed.) *Global Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 192–96; Timoteo D. Gener, Lorenzo C. Bautista, and Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Theological Method," in Dyrness and Kärkkäinen (ed.) *Global Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 889–98; David Gilliland, "Contextualization," in A. Scott Moreau (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), pp. 225–27; Juan Francisco Martínez, "Acculturation," in Dyrness and Kärkkäinen (ed.) *Global Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 1–2; Sudhakar Mondithoka, "Incarnation," Corrie (ed.) *Dictionary of Mission Theology*, pp. 177–81; Roy Musasiwa, "Contextualization," in Corrie (ed.) *Dictionary of Mission Theology*, pp. 566–71; A. Neely, "Incarnational Mission," in Moreau (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions,* pp. 474–75; P. Solomon Raj, "Inculturation," in Corrie (ed.) *Dictionary of Mission Theology*, pp. 181–84, and Robert J. Schreiter, "Local Theologies," in Dyrness and Kärkkäinen (ed.) *Global Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 500–502. These surveys indicate that while many attempts have been made to contextualise or inculturate the Christology and soteriology of the New Testaments [for African christologies see Joseph D. Galgalo, "African Christology," in Corrie (ed.) *Dictionary of Mission Theology*, pp. 2–5, and Musasiwa, "Contextualization," p. 568], relatively few attempt have been made at contextualising New Testament anthropology. One reason

mate with the portrayal of Ephesians? What is its positive contribution? Is it a necessary—even if politically incorrect—reminder of why people need salvation and an affirmation that they definitely need it? Does this portrayal help Christians (and others) to explain the world in which they live?

In the African context the issue is also burning for other reasons. In many cases, the assessment by missionaries and by other Western Christians of the spiritual state of the local population and of its conduct was influenced—if not significantly shaped—by the biblical portrayals of "Gentiles," be they of non-Jews or of non-Christians.[47] This assessment was not only a mere "spiritual exercise" and was not limited to underlining the need of winning these "lost souls." It also was, at least at times, an essential ingredient of power discourses and concerned not only matters of religion but led to or included from the beginning misgivings or contempt for other or all aspects of indigenous cultures. People characterised by these portrayals were often not taken seriously and were treated accordingly—in mild cases as inferiors to be guided and trained

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for this lack is that it is more difficult to find functional substitutes, which happens "when a deeply rooted non-Christian cultural form is taken over and given new Christian content, meaning and purpose" (Musasiwa, "Contextualization," p. 569). Musasiwa notes that in Zimbabwe and other African countries, "Every critical function of African Traditional Religion has a substitute in those African Independent Churches. … This enables the followers of African Independent Churches to live holistic lives, thus avoiding the common phenomenon of African Christians having one foot in the church and another foot in African Traditional Religion" ("Contextualization," p. 569; see Stan W. Nussbaum, "African Initiated Churches," in Corrie (ed.) *Dictionary of Mission Theology*, pp. 5–7, and Victor R. Atta-Baffoe, "African Traditional Religion," in Corrie (ed.) *Dictionary of Mission Theology*, pp. 10–12.

[47] There some ambiguity in the following statement in the Lausanne Covenant of 1974: "Culture must always be tested and judged by Scripture. Because man is God's creature, some of his culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because he has fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic. The Gospel does not presuppose the superiority of any culture to another, but evaluates all cultures according to its own criteria of truth and righteousness, and insists on moral absolutes in every culture" (quoted according to Burnett 2007:21). Musasiwa ("Contextualization," p. 70) demands that "Contextualisation must respect the authority of the Bible as the primary source of theology. … It is therefore necessary that any form of contextualisation must be guided by the core of biblical doctrines as formulated and understood in the tradition of the church."

until they grow in knowledge and Christian conduct, in other cases they were treated as second-class people if not worse.[48]

What is the enduring significance of this portrayal of non-Christians in post-modern times? May we, must we repeat the portrayal and assessment of Ephesians without modification? The answer is "yes" and "no":

Yes, because for the community of faith this portrayal still has all or some of the functions which it had for the original readers. In many cases the functions described above are still very much on target. Furthermore, this portrayal helps to understand at least some of the world in which we live. While the absolute portrayal of Ephesians may not be directly applicable to all non-Christians, it does apply to some and explains their behaviour by which many others are affected and under which they suffer. Significant events from the Holocaust to the Rwandan genocide and the day to day living in a society with one of the highest crime rates in the world indicate all too clearly that something is fundamentally wrong with people that cannot be accounted for by positivistic anthropologies.

No, a mere repetition of the portrayal in Ephesians would be problematic if it led to contempt of non-Christians and feelings of superiority on the side of believers. However, this is not necessarily the case. The emphasis in Ephesians is on salvation: the people portrayed so darkly are not beyond hope and salvation. The letter says far more on the new status and conduct opened up by the Gospel than on the former life. Christians need to remember that many of those whom they encounter are chosen and predestined. The assessment of pre-conversion life must not impinge on the respect that is to be shown to all people. The vision of Ephesians is that people come to faith, independent of race, age, social status or

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[48] See Burnett, "Anthropology." More recent missiological thinking and practice, including many scholars from areas formerly evangelised by missionaries from the West, is characterised by a far more nuanced approach. Early expressions of inculturation were typified by "indigenisation theology" (Musasiwa, "Contextualization," p. 67): "Its religious thrust sought to rehabilitate African religious traditions by attempting to demonstrate their compatibility with the Christian faith" ("Contextualization," p. 67). For example, John Mbiti, who developed this inculturation theology further, suggested that "Christianity is already an African religion and therefore does not need to be indigenised as if it were a foreign religion in the first place. He sees African traditional religion as *praeparatio evangelica* and Christianity as fulfiller rather than destroyer of African traditions" ("Contextualization," p. 67).

whatever else. Those who experience salvation will remember that it was by grace only.

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Book Reviews

Patrick Gray. *Opening Paul's Letters: A Reader's Guide to Genre and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. x + 176 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801039225. $20.00 (Paperback).

There is no shortage of books on Paul and his letters, and introductions to interpreting his letters are just as plentiful. Far less common, however, are accessible books for beginning students that faithfully capture the complexities of issues in plain language that doesn't leave students in the dust. Patrick Gray's offering is one of these rare finds. Here, he introduces an interpretation of Paul that focuses on the literary genre of Paul's letters, comparing them to typical letters from ancient Greece and Rome. He writes as a seasoned scholar who is also an expert teacher, and this text will prove highly useful for undergraduates and seminary students, along with informal courses on biblical interpretation in churches.

In an introduction, Gray discusses the importance of genre. Modern readers must understand that they're reading someone else's mail. Each letter is an occasional document addressing a church situation rather than a systematic theological treatise in which Paul addresses abstract theological issues.

Gray's first full chapter discusses Paul's historical contexts, the Jewish and Roman worlds he inhabited. His chapter unfolds more fully the varieties of letter genre in the ancient world. His discussion is clear and complete with the provision of many examples. He then identifies each of Paul's letters according to the types of letter he has discussed.

In chapter 3, Gray explores how Paul writes his letters. He goes through the various parts of a letter, comparing them constantly with contemporary Greco-Roman letters. The conventions of first-century letter writing are important to keep in mind rather than reading the letters in terms of the chapter and verse divisions added over a millennium later (pp. 67-68). This chapter includes an insightful and helpful discussion of the usefulness of ancient rhetoric in interpreting Paul (pp. 84-89). Gray notes that there are indeed elements in Paul's letters that resonate strongly with the sorts of rhetoric spoken of in ancient handbooks. Rhetoric, however, was applied to speeches and not necessarily to letters. Further, scholars often vary widely as to labeling this or that passage according to the conventions of ancient rhetoric. Gray notes that students ought to

exercise caution when it appears that an interpreter has spent far more time than Paul in the precise organization of an individual letter (p. 89).

Gray discusses the audiences of Paul's letters in chapter 4. He treats each letter, briefly discussing the situation Paul addressed. While some letters have more information available about the occasion that elicited Paul's letter, this is not the case with all thirteen Pauline letters. Gray advises caution when little information is available, while also stressing that each letter must be interpreted, so far as is possible, within the historical context of its original situation (p. 115).

Chapter 5 focuses on Paul's use of the Old Testament. Gray covers the field very well, overviewing the basic approaches currently in use by scholars. He notes that Paul's exhortations and instructions to his churches were thoroughly shaped and saturated by Scripture. For Paul, "reading the Old Testament and writing letters are not fundamentally separate activities" (p. 135). In a final chapter, Gray discusses pseudonymity and does so in a way that is fair to each position. He does not finally weigh in on the issue, only presenting the logic and series of arguments employed by each side. The volume closes with an epilogue and two appendices.

At the close of each chapter Gray includes discussion questions and a bibliography. As I indicated above, this text is ideal for undergraduate and seminary courses on hermeneutics.

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Khaldoun A. Sweis and Chad V. Meister. *Christian Apologetics: An Anthology of Primary Sources*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 553 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0310325338. $44.99 (Hardback).

Among professional philosophers of religion, an increasingly popular criticism of apologetics is that it lacks intellectual integrity—that Christian apologists are interested in defending a particular set of received views rather than the critical pursuit of wisdom. The apologist has, in my view, two equally valid replies to this complaint. On one hand, acquiescence: The apologist never claimed to be a philosopher *per se*; philosophical reasoning is but one implement in a manifold of apologetic tools. On the other, a rigorous and purely philosophical inquiry happens to coalesce with tenets of the Christian faith (thus showing the 'apologetics v. philosophy' paradigm is rooted in a false dichotomy). A comprehensive apologetic can take each of these forms at various points—the former

perhaps in arguing for the historicity of Christ's bodily resurrection; the latter, for instance, in arguing for the existence of an uncaused Cause. In *Christian Apologetics*, Sweis and Meister present a collection of essays that exemplify each of these approaches across a wide range of subjects and historical epochs.

The text is divided by theme ("The Incarnation," "Christianity and Science," etc.) into eleven major parts, the first of which is addressed to the history and goals of the field. (The highlight of this initial section is Plantinga's *Advice to Christian Philosophers*, wherein he situates the aims of the Christian philosopher *qua* apologist within an overview of the Twentieth Century's relevant philosophical trends. This lecture is, in my view, a must-read for anyone interested in apologetics.) So the volume is easily navigable, and its very method of organization presents an instructive schematization of the field surveyed.

The second part of the anthology, from a purely philosophical standpoint, is perhaps its most impressive. It covers cosmological, teleological, ontological and moral arguments for God's existence (among others) from antiquity to the present. In terms of quality and scope, this is the most worthwhile array of such essays that I've seen presented in a single volume. Moreover, the entries here range from the novice-friendly (e.g., C.S. Lewis's "God and the Moral Law") to the almost inscrutably subtle (e.g., Plantinga's "A Recent Modal Ontological Argument"). Accordingly, it promises to engage beginners and veterans alike.

Part Eight is equally philosophical in tone, presenting two separate arguments (Aquinas and Descartes) for substance dualism, and a third (Moreland) that moves from substance dualism to theism. I'm not totally clear on the positive apologetic value of Descartes' argument on this particular point, since it's long been established that its conclusion is predicated upon an important equivocation (*viz.* that between epistemic possibility and possibility *per se*). That said, this stream of inquiry undoubtedly contains an important yet oft-overlooked cluster of arguments that point to a Divine Mind having pre-existed the physical universe.

Part Nine deals with the problem of evil. Its introduction offers a helpful taxonomy, delineating the various kinds of argument from evil and distinguishing among the varieties of theistic reply. The major strands of theistic approaches to the problem of evil are represented as well as can be expected in five entries on the subject.

Other sections present support for specifically Christian doctrines, such as the veracity and authority of Christian Scripture, the doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation of Christ, Christ's bodily

resurrection, miracles more generally, Christianity and science, and Christianity and culture. Overall, the editors draw from a pool of contributions that is historically diverse (ancient to the present) and suitably ecumenical (Calvin to Ratzinger). In short, as a comprehensive introduction to every important theme in Christian apologetics that ranges from basic arguments to cutting edge philosophy, this is a formidable collection.

From my perspective, the volume has only two drawbacks. First, aside from original contributions, most of its entries can be found online free of charge. That said, I found a new hardcover online for as little as $15.00 (which strikes me as quite sensible for a textbook of this size). Second, apart from respective contributors' standard presentations of (and replies to) objections to their own arguments, the anthology contains nothing in the way of arguments *against* Christianity or against theism in general—not even a non-theistic presentation of the argument from evil. Since an overview of apologetics at any level should involve the hearing of non-theistic interlocutors, you will need supplementary texts.

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Thomas B. Dozeman, Thomas Römer, and Konrad Schmid. *Pentateuch, Hexatuech, or Enneateuch? Identifying Literary Works in Genesis through Kings*. SBL, Ancient Israel and Its Literature. 8. Leiden: Brill, 2012. x + 313 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-9004202504. $166.00 (Hardback).

Anyone interested in current research on the Pentateuch and Former Prophets will find great value in this work. Since the collapse of the Documentary Hypothesis' dominance, one may justifiably say that the field has splintered.[1] If there is a discernible trend in the field, it seems that editors Dozeman, Römer, and Schmid have appropriately represented the discipline. One of the volume's contributors (Michael Konkel) even goes so far as to state that a consensus concerning the covered topic was within reach (p. 169).

[1] See Christoph Berner's comment regarding the status of the Documentary Hypothesis on p. 213 of the work. Among many other statements with possibly similar sentiment, see Reinhard Kratz, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament*, trans. John Bowden (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 249, who advocates abandoning the "straight jacket of the source hypothesis" for a modified fragmentary or supplementary approach.

Whether or not this is true, the fact that a scholar asserts it, demonstrates a growing tendency.

The title indicates the key investigation of the book, namely, what kind of literary unity, if any, exists between a so-called Pentateuch, Hexateuch, or Enneateuch and how one might discern such unity. The volume itself stems from papers presented during a two-year partnership between the Pentateuch and Former Prophets sections of the Society of Biblical Literature. It has two sections: First, four scholars present foundational methodological concerns when identifying the content and boundaries of different literary works. Second, seven other scholars analyze various biblical texts and related matters in order to demonstrate their own versions of the relationship between a Tetrateuch, Pentateuch, Hexateuch, or Enneateuch.

Positively, the editors and contributors to *Pentateuch, Hexateuch, or Enneateuch: Identifying Literary Works in Genesis through Kings* have done the reader a superb service. The authors each begin their work by indicating their own version of the history of research in the Pentateuch and Former Prophets and their variously putative sources, traditions, texts, and redactional profiles. This feature alone makes the volume useful to the student or young scholar seeking to go through the various theories and research efforts in the modern history of interpretation of the material. Because these brief reviews occur one after the other in these essays, the reader can easily discern areas of agreement in scholarship and other points at which there is disagreement.

Konrad Schmid opens up the book with a review of the "history of scholarship that led to the separation of the Pentateuch from the Deuteronomistic History in biblical studies" (p. 11). Thomas Römer also considers various proposals regarding the Pentateuch, Hexateuch, and Enneateuch, discussing the relationships between different passages and how scholars have used them to posit a resulting literary work. In a related article, Erhard Blum asks how one can recognize where a literary work begins and where it ends. Then David Carr attempts an "empirical" study into the relationship of the Former Prophets to the Pentateuch, doing so by analyzing the relationship between Chronicles and Samuel-Kings, and how unique material there may have been harmonized to the Pentateuch.

The remaining essays are case studies, "in which authors explore the literary relationship between the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets through the interpretation of specific texts" (p. 5). Susan Boorer attempts to discern the presence of an original priestly source in Joshua. Christoph Levin considers the development of

the Pentateuch and Former Prophets by investigating the manner in which the complexes were broken into books. Cynthia Edenburg's helpful essay compares structuring elements between Genesis 2 and Genesis 3–4. Michael Konkel examines the intercessions of Moses in Exodus 32–34 and their relationship to other passages in Genesis–Kings. Thomas Dozeman examines the beginning and end of the book of Joshua from a text critical and literary critical analysis. Christoph Berner examines the motif of forced labor that exists in the Exodus account and Solomon's reign in 1 Kings. Finally, Felipe Blanco Wißmann examines the literary features of the judgment formulas in 1 and 2 Kings in comparison to other biblical and non-biblical texts.

While the volume is extremely helpful in understanding the current status of Old Testament scholarship and how the guild arrived here, at times the vast number of proposals, counter-proposals, and varying hypotheses compel a rather dismal picture of the discipline. No doubt this picture stems from the consistent method of taking any thematic or linguistic shifts in texts as signs of redactional strata. Such need not be the case. Moreover, the oft-presumptive association between posited redactional strata and particular sociocultural environments bear too much weight in the case studies. Notwithstanding these critical observations, for anyone who desires to understand current research into the Pentateuch, the Former Prophets, and textual studies in Old Testament scholarship, the book should be at the top of the reading list.

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I. Howard Marshall, Volker Rabens, and Cornelis Bennema, eds. *The Spirit and Christ in the New Testament and Christian Theology: Essays in Honor of Max Turner*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. 387 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0802867537. $60.00 (Paperback).

Max Turner, respected New Testament scholar and longtime professor at London School of Theology, is honored in this 2012 *Festschrift*. Turner's research program has focused on Christology and pneumatology, and especially on their intersection, and the essays in this volume largely engage the biblical data (mostly Luke-Acts and John) on these topics. Turner is also an ordained Baptist minister, and so much of his scholarship and some of the essays in this volume are oriented towards church life.

The volume contains essays from some of the most important New Testament scholars in the English-speaking world, including James D. G. Dunn, Joel B. Green, D. A. Carson, and Richard Bauckham, as well as chapters from John R. Levinson, Christopher Tilling, and Robert Wall, among others. This collection of scholars in one volume alone makes the book worth the price. But the content of the essays is itself worthy of recommendation. Many of the chapters engage Turner's work specifically, especially his renowned *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (JPTS; London: T&T Clark, 1996); particularly stimulating in this regard is Levinson's essay, "The Spirit, Simeon, and the Songs of the Servant." In it, Levinson argues that, over against Turner's more charismatic and spontaneous understanding of Simeon's inspiration, Simeon was "inspired by the Spirit" in the sense that he knew and taught the Scriptures so well that he recognized Israel's hope when it arrived in the baby Jesus.

Also particularly helpful in respect to both careful exegesis and practical relevance is Robert Menzies' essay on the persecuted church in Luke-Acts. Menzies argues that, based on Luke 10:1–16 and Acts 2:17–21, Luke intended for his two part work to not only record the fact that the earliest church was persecuted but that Jesus and his earliest disciples ought to serve as motivation to and models for suffering well as the church in the present context. Additionally, Steve Walton's chapter on Luke 12:12 ought to be engaged, not necessarily because his conclusions are air tight but because the questions he asks are important and relatively unanswered in present scholarship. Walton's aim is to inquire into the background of Jesus' promise that the Spirit will give the apostles the right words to say in the midst of persecution. He concludes that there is no instance in the OT, Second Temple Judaism, or the NT where the Spirit is promised for such a specific reason and in such a specific context, but that this promise is unique to Luke and serves to link Jesus' work among the disciples in the Third Gospel and the Spirit's work among the church in Acts.

While edited volumes are always difficult to assess holistically, since so much depends on the quality of the individual essays, this volume is more consistently of a recommendable quality than others. This is partly due to the fact that so many of the authors are careful and erudite NT scholars, but the main topics are particularly engaging. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the relationship of Christology and pneumatology are important subjects, but many times lacking serious exegetical and theological engagement in the field of NT studies. Turner has labored in this area more than oth-

ers, and these essays by and large contribute to the field as well. Instead of merely reflecting and praising Turner's work, they are serious engagements with his work and with the topics themselves, and are beneficial in their own right. Of course as with any book, and especially an edited volume, the reader will not agree with every point made either in an individual essay or with all the essays taken together. But they are as a group incredibly stimulating, exegetically careful, and theologically engaging. What more could a reader ask from a *Festschrift*?

Matthew Y. Emerson
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Dwight J. Zscheile, ed. *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. 201 pp. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0802867278. $30.00 (Paperback).

Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation is another installment in Eerdmans's "Missional Church Series." It originated from presentations at the annual Missional Church Consultation at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 2010. Edited by Dwight J. Zscheile, Assistant Professor of Congregational Mission and Leadership at the school, the work features contributors predominantly from the Lutheran tradition. This volume focuses on the spiritual formation of missional communities, and explores how pastors can mobilize their congregations to participate in God's work in the world. The authors rightly contend that the 'doing' of the church emerges out of the spiritual 'being' of the church. Therefore, missional identity does not come naturally, but must be formed…and formed *spiritually*.

Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation is comprised of nine chapters by nine presenters at the Consultation. Zscheile begins the journey by addressing "Missional Theology of Spiritual Formation," which is his attempt to bring a corrective to the shallow 'moralistic therapeutic deism' in contemporary culture. The editor suggests that being Christian implies being both missional and spiritual in nature. He defines spiritual formation as the work of the Holy Spirit, "a communal process that unfolds over time, uniquely for each Christian and often in nonlinear patterns" (p. 7). It involves being conformed to Christ through various Christian practices like worship and prayer and leads to the creation of a community that "offers a living, visible alternative to a society rent by enmity, division, greed, injustice, and hopelessness" (p. 27). Building on this foundation, the remainder of the book contains

treatments of building connections between ministries of building up and sending (Richard Osmer), the value of short-term missions (Scott Hagley), living the biblical story (Allen Hilton), practices of dispossession (Christian Scharen), ministry in the first third of one's life (Nancy Going), practices of congregational discernment (David Hahn), missional formation in the Ethiopian Evangelical church (Dinku Bato), and the role of baptism in missional spiritual formation (Dirk Lange).

Cultivating Sent Communities is one of many books released in recent years sounding the clarion call for God's people to be *missional*. To live missionally in missional communities by joining God on his mission has become both popular and polarizing. The conversation has a variety of expressions that run the theological gamut from conservative to liberal and embrace a variety of missional concepts that include conversion, compassion and service. Amidst such a plethora and diversity of ideas, this book—and the Consultation from which it emerged—seeks to address the frequently neglected reality that all congregational life must be *spiritually* formed. The quality of spiritual formation—rooted in and directed by God's Spirit—is absolutely essential if the church is to be God's agent of kingdom advancement in this world. While the specific answers presented in it involve a breadth of theological understanding over which there certainly is disagreement, the contributors rightly seek to call the church to let go of everything that keeps it from loving God and loving people, and from moving out of insulated organizations into the messy streets and neighborhoods where God is at work in the world.

The highlight of the book is found in the chapter entitled "Living into the Big Story: The Missional Trajectory of Scripture in Congregational Life." Allen Hilton makes it clear that being missional does not come naturally for the people of God. Recounting Abraham and Sarah's apparent distraction from God's commission to be lights to the nations, as well as the Spirit-empowered early church's resistance to move beyond the walls of Jerusalem throughout the first seven chapters of Acts, this chapter illustrates the historical tendency of God's people to shy away from aggressively participating in his mission. Yet, under the consistent prodding and encouragement of God, the church ultimately moves forward in the advancement of the gospel. This chapter is a great reminder of the sovereignty of God in his mission and the grace he manifests in including his church in the work. As his people attend to the gospel story and live within it, they are able to participate in his ongoing work of spiritual formation for missional life. This, in

and of itself, becomes a great encouragement for God's people to participate in his work. Additionally, the chapter may serve to encourage churches to be more diligent in the study of God's Word and to its role in fostering spiritual readiness for his mission. It includes the author's personal and practical approach to using a simple but substantive "Bible for Dummies" class to empower and motivate his congregation to be more involved in Bible study.

A major limitation in the volume is the technical, vague and often ambiguous language, frequently found in the academy's conversations about missional church, as well as many other subjects related to practical theology. One would think that a project set on motivating and equipping pastors to envision and mobilize their congregations on God's mission would take great pains to 'put the cookies on the bottom shelf.' Yet *Cultivating Sent Communities*—like far too many discussions in the academic arena that seek to address the church at large—is laced with terminology that requires a specialized dictionary to read and understand. Such verbiage could keep the work—and the discussion—from ever reaching the front lines.

Given its theological breadth, *Cultivating Sent Communities* likely will find its greatest hearing among the mainline and liturgical segments of the spiritual community. Those affiliated with more theologically conservative groups and/or those who traditionally place greater emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit, probably will listen to other voices when it comes to mobilizing people for both spiritual formation and the involvement of God's people in his mission.

Jim Shaddix
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C. Richard Wells and Ray Van Neste, eds. *Forgotten Songs: Reclaiming the Psalms for Christian Worship*. Nashville: B&H, 2012. xiv + 242 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433671784. $19.99 (Paperback).

With so many books about the Psalms already available, one could ask why yet another should deserve a reading. This volume does more than deserve a reading; it demands and rewards careful scrutiny. Most of its thirteen papers originated in a 2008 lecture series held at Union University and funded by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, in which prominent biblical scholars joined forces with renowned leaders in worship. In this collaboration be-

tween academy and church, the riches of the Psalter and its potential for enriching contemporary worship were explored.

The book is divided into two sections of nearly equal length. The first section addresses biblical and historical foundations for the Psalms. From the perspective of worship, John Witvliet views the Psalms as formative speech which serve as models of faithful prayer. Douglas Bond discusses how the inspired poetry of the Psalms transcends all barriers that divide humanity, thus uniting the worshipers of the Lord. Ray Ortlund demonstrates that Psalm 1 as it opens the Psalter emphasizes that true worship begins with delighting in God's Word.

From the perspective of the academic study of the Psalms, C. John Collins emphasizes that the book of Psalms was the hymnbook of ancient Israel in its public worship, and that has important consequences governing how psalms are properly interpreted and appropriated today. Ray Van Neste surveys how the Psalms are featured in the New Testament texts as they are employed by Jesus and by the early Church, and he encourages churches to follow these biblical precedents. Craig Blaising also traces how the use of the psalms evident in the Scriptures is demonstrated in the early Christian writings up to the time of Augustine.

The second section of the book is devoted to the practice of integrating the Psalms into various aspects of contemporary church life. James Grant presents both a rationale for including psalm singing in the church and also a personal account of how he has introduced this to his congregation in a winsome way. Recognizing that the psalms are prayers, C. Richard Wells finds them as paradigmatic for creating a culture of prayer both in the pastor and in the congregation, and he shares his own story in doing that. Leland Ryken employs his literary prowess as he discloses how an appreciation of the characteristics of lyric poetry enables the reader to use the psalms as models for expressing her feelings to God. Calvin Seerveld decries the paucity of lament in contemporary worship, and he points the way to reclaiming this major psalmic emphasis in the church today. From his perspective as a musician, James Joiner urges the church to learn again to perform the psalms, both in singing and in living. C. Richard Wells addresses the often neglected topic of how the psalms can be used in pastoral care, and in particular he argues for their significance in the formation of the pastor who provides care for the people of God. Wells concludes the section with a powerful and lucid theological interpretation of Psalm 22.

The main body of the book is followed by three appendices which provide a wealth of additional resources for reclaiming the Psalms for various aspects of worship in the contemporary church.

This collection of essays delights on the first reading, but it also draws the reader back repeatedly to consider its many challenges. The closest parallel to it is John Witvliet's, *The Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), which is not surprising considering the involvement of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship in the preparation of both books. *Forgotten Songs* continues in the trail blazed by Witvliet as it explores how the psalms can enrich church ministry today. In a time when the worship of the church has too often become a rhetorical battlefield that dishonors the Lord, this collection of essays calls Christians to refocus their attention on the Lord whom they worship and the kind of worship and worshiper in which he delights.

Daniel J. Estes
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Thomas R. Schreiner, Luke Timothy Johnson, Douglas A. Campbell, and Mark D. Nanos, ed. Michael F. Bird. *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 236 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0310326953. $17.99 (Paperback).

Paul is perennially important and controversial. He embodies beliefs uniting all Christians but also sharply divides them. Modern scholarship only multiplies the controversies. *Four Views on the Apostle Paul* expounds different interpretations of Paul on: (1) salvation; (2) Christ; (3) the framework for understanding him; and (4) the church.

Presenting the "Evangelical View," Thomas Schreiner argues Paul's theology is Christocentric. Christ fulfils prophecy, inaugurating the new creation with his resurrection. Believers are no longer under the old covenant, as union with Christ, in the Spirit by faith, replaces circumcision. Because Jesus' Lordship includes his divinity, Paul has a "high" Christology. Jesus' work removes the curse of the Law upon all because of sin. The atonement is a penal substitution propitiating God's wrath for those who believe. Justification is a forensic declaration of rightness obtained by faith, not the Law. Good works accompany justification, not as causes but effects. Salvation is ultimately due to God's unconditional, free, electing grace. Christ's work is sufficient to infallibly save the elect. The church is the true Israel comprising the spiritually circumcised, described by Paul with multiple metaphors.

Criticisms of Schreiner by other contributors include that he perpetuates traditional Augustinian/Lutheran views on Paul, the Law and Judaism now questioned by modern scholarship; focuses almost exclusively on deliverance from sin, passing over other ways Paul describes salvation; and imposes a traditional Reformed theological framework on Paul instead of drawing conclusions from historically-based exegesis.

Offering the "Catholic View," Luke Timothy Johnson maintains that Greco-Roman and Jewish backgrounds are necessary for understanding Paul. With Schreiner, Johnson sees Jesus as central for Paul, especially his death and resurrection in an apocalyptic framework. Usually discussing Jesus in human terms, Paul evidences inklings of a "high" Christology. Salvation is essentially transformation from a negative to a positive state, described with multifarious social, not individual, metaphors. Paul apocalyptically views salvation as a divine, not a human, achievement, and the present time as an eschatological interim. Various proposed "centers" of Paul's theology fail evidentiary tests. Paul's churches were similar and dissimilar to Greco-Roman voluntary associations. Convictions that Gentile believers need not be circumcised or follow Torah underlie Paul's treatment of the Law. Paul's ethics are continuous, though, with Judaism, although the eschatological interim implicates tensions between utopian ideals and reality.

Other contributors fault Johnson for relying on the disputed epistles; minimizing justification by faith and individual sotieriology; handling Paul's ethics insufficiently; and misreading Paul on how the Law applies differently to Jewish and Gentile Christians.

Douglas Campbell offers a "Post-New Perspective View," judging the New Perspective as a halfway house toward remediating difficulties with the older "Lutheran" interpretation. He sees Trinitarian and missional dynamics in Paul: God's salvific acts in Christ, through the Spirit, reveal God's nature and bring humans into divine communion. Campbell also concludes Paul has a "high" Christology, and likewise sees a prominent apocalypticism: The present is danger-wrought and suffering-ridden, so Paul is concerned to assure believers of God's love and invincible power to save. Campbell criticizes the popular "Melanchthonian" reading of Paul, which begins with the sin problem and moves to Christ as the solution. For Paul, the problem is comprehensible only in light of the solution. Campbell identifies a virtue ethics in Paul, in which the modern dichotomy between causality and freedom does not obtain. The Church is a "community of brothers" called to kingdom ethics, above all love.

Others fault Campbell for focusing on Romans chapters 5–8; relying heavily on dogmatic theology, especially Barthianism; claiming his novel position is historical; treating sacraments and ecclesiology cursorily; intimating a universalism foreign to Paul; and not redressing the New Perspective's shortcomings.

Mark Nanos offers the "Jewish View." He urges taking Paul seriously as a first-century Jew. Like Campbell, he says the New Perspective perpetuates mistakes it aims to overcome. Highlighting overlooked passages and re-interpreting well-worn texts, Nanos argues that in Paul's apocalyptic theology Gentiles become God's people alongside of Israel in the *eschaton*. Gentiles "live Jewishly," but must not become Jews through proselyte circumcision. Paul naturally expected Jewish Christ-followers to be circumcised and "under the Law." Nanos does concur with other aspects of Pauline scholarship, such as how Jews never construed the Law as a means to salvation in some mercantile way. Others respond with evidence that first-century Judaism was more heterogeneous than Nanos supposes; Paul was not Torah-observant; and Paul viewed the Law more negatively.

Four Views on the Apostle Paul commends itself as a superlative study in recent Pauline scholarship. The chief shortcoming is that at times contributors' *a priori* concerns drive interpretations. That notwithstanding, readers will find articulate cases for important contemporary interpretations of Paul, with treatments of numerous specific issues. Those seeking an introduction to modern Pauline scholarship will be amply rewarded, and seasoned Pauline scholars will expand their knowledge of the labyrinthine halls of this complex field.

Marc A. Pugliese
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W. Stephen Gunter. *Arminius and His "Declaration of Sentiments": An Annotated Translation with Introduction and Theological Commentary.* Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012. xiii + 213 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1602585676. $39.95 (Hardback).

Stephen Gunter is Associate Dean for Methodist Studies and Research Professor of Evangelism and Wesleyan Studies at Duke Divinity School. He has provided a new translation of Jacob Arminius' *Declaration of Sentiments*. His work is sure to become the definitive English translation for several reasons. First, previous English editions were translated from Latin versions. Arminius, however, delivered his *Declaration* orally to the Dutch authorities at The

Hague in their native language. Gunter's translation is the first English edition to be based on Arminius' original Dutch manuscript.

Second, Gunter's translation reads smoothly and provides a much-needed update to the stilted and dated earlier versions. Expositional footnotes accompany the text, which give background and context along with theological commentary. The annotations explain significant or obscure terms and references.

Third, Gunter gives a helpful introductory survey of the life and times of Arminius. The survey emphasizes several important points. Arminius lived in a volatile, dangerous time. As a teenager, his family was wiped out when the Spanish Catholic army massacred the residents of his hometown of Oudewater. Arminius survived because he was pursuing his studies in another city. The introduction makes clear that when Arminius developed his model of predestination he was reacting against a particularly virulent form of High Calvinism. Franciscus Gormarus, his supralapsarian nemesis, advocated a stark, strident version of predestination that contrasts with the infralapsarian version later espoused by the Synod of Dort. In many ways the Canons of Dort rejected both the positions of Arminius and of Gomarus. Gunter also demonstrates that Arminius was more "Calvinistic" than most of his Remonstrant followers. One can only wonder how history might have been different had Arminius not died from tuberculosis within a year of presenting his *Declaration.*

Arminius presented his arguments in three parts. He began with his version of the events that led up to and necessitated his appearance before the Dutch authorities, and he ended with a call for a national synod. But Arminius devoted the main body of *Declaration of Sentiments* to a thorough critique of Supralapsarianism and to a presentation of his own view of predestination (which was election according to foreknowledge). In its formulation of the decrees, he accused High Calvinism of failing to prioritize the place of Christ and of ignoring what God had ordained concerning the role of faith. He pointed out that no prior council or creed taught supralapsarianism. To the contrary, certain councils, such as the Second Council of Orange (AD 529) seemed explicitly to condemn the doctrine of reprobation. Arminius briefly assessed infralapsarianism and sublapsarianism, and he acknowledged that they "do a better job" of avoiding some of the moral quandaries created by the supralapsarian position. In the end he dismissed them also because he believed that, on a practical level, they offered no improvement over supralapsarianism.

Arminius presented his alternative *ordo salutis*, which is now a hallmark of the Arminian/Wesleyan tradition. He understood God to have decreed in four moments: to provide Christ as Savior, to save those who believe and damn those who do not, to provide sufficient grace for all to believe, and to elect and to damn particular individuals according to foreknowledge. He contended that his model was superior to the various forms of Calvinism because his position was more in keeping with the historic teaching of the Church and better reconciled the grace/free will conundrum. One does not have to embrace Arminius' model to be impressed with the force of his critique, particularly of supralapsarianism.

Gunter belongs to the Wesleyan tradition, and he presents Arminius in a sympathetic light. But regardless of one's place on the Calvinist-Arminian spectrum, the student of historical and systematic theology will find Gunter's translation an essential addition to his library.

Ken Keathley
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Donald A. Hagner. *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. xxiv + 872 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0801039317. $49.99 (Hardback).

In a video available on the Baker Publishing's website, Donald A. Hagner (George Eldon Ladd Professor Emeritus of New Testament and Senior Professor of New Testament, Fuller Theological Seminary) says this of his 896-page *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Introduction*: "One of the unique things about my New Testament introduction is I've placed it in the larger context of the grand narrative of the Bible." Hagner, using a salvation-history approach, does more than simply give his audience the standard information concerning who wrote what, to whom, when, and why. This book is far-reaching in its scope with whole chapters devoted to topics like the synoptic problem (pp. 131-153), historical Jesus (pp. 83-104), Paul's understanding of the Law and righteousness (pp. 366-379), and the formation of the Christian canon (pp. 803-823). It is nearly pure text with only eight figures (five of which deal with the synoptic problem) and two maps. Its chapters are balanced with helpful footnotes at the bottom of each page. And each chapter concludes with detailed bibliographies spanning thematic books, journal articles, and commentaries mostly following the year 1975.

The book is divided into eight parts. The first is introductory and covers background information relevant to the New Testament. What is most interesting is Hagner's coverage of the Old Testament, especially the biblical covenants. This is notable since New Testament introductions generally only reach far enough back to cover the Intertestamental Period. Hagner believes that God's covenant with Abraham is the beginning of "salvation history" (p. 14). A better beginning point really is Gen. 3:15 with the promise of the head-crusher and the heel-bruising he would receive. Parts 2 (eleven chapters) and 3 (two chapters) cover the Gospels and Acts. The fourth part consists of fifteen chapters, seven of which are explicitly devoted to nine of Paul's letters (Ephesians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, and Hebrews excluded). Part 5 groups Ephesians with the Pastorals. Part 6 discusses Hebrews and the non-Pauline letters. And Part 7 delves into the Apocalypse. The final two chapters in Part 8 extend the discussion about the New Testament from the writings themselves to how the Church received them and eventually formed them into the canon.

Hagner has a real knack for synthesizing information on major issues in New Testament studies with concise, easy-to-read language that's void of unnecessary jargon. There are a handful of differences between this introduction and others published over the years. Here are two. First, there are no outlines for the individual works of the New Testament in this book. As for why he opted for no outlines, Hagner writes, "I have never found other people's outlines very useful. It is far better to do one's own outlines because their real value is in the learning that comes in actually doing them" (p. xi). Most outlines are nearly identical with only minor variations anyway, and Hagner is absolutely correct—the value is in doing them. Second, Hagner's discussions on the theological emphases of the New Testament texts extend further than most introductions.

Readers should exercise some serious caution on certain matters presented by Hagner. As strong as the praise is for the book, with support coming from names like I. Howard Marshall (Univ. of Aberdeen), Darrell L. Bock (DTS), and Thomas R. Schreiner (SBTS), its flirtation with the critical method should raise some eyebrows. Here are just a couple of statements that jump out. First, "[A]ll historical knowledge is necessarily only probable rather than certain" (p. 9). Second, "[T]he critical method is indispensable to the study of Scripture. It is the sine qua non of responsible interpretation of God's Word" (p. 11). These statements have serious ramifications for the rest of the book. 2 Timothy 3:16 is clear that inspiration involves more than just the words (or ideas) having their origin in

God. The γραφή includes not only the words themselves but also, according to David Alan Black, the "tense, voice, mood, aspect, person, number, gender, case, word order, phrase, clause order, discourse structure, etc." ("Greek Grammar, NT," forthcoming essay in the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*). And the history each of these units of language works together to communicate is necessarily certain rather than probable.

Hagner's work is detailed, near-exhaustive in scope, and expansive in comparison to other New Testament introductions. There's little question whether or not this book will become a required textbook on many seminary-level syllabi. For the purpose of training up a generation of scholars, it probably will be. However, there are a number of reasons some of the other New Testament introductions might be better for preparing servants for a lifetime of ministry in the local church. Resources like Thomas D. Lea's and David Alan Black's *The New Testament: Its Background and Message* (2nd ed.; Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003), for example, provide more information about the social settings of the New Testament, while adequately covering each of the New Testament works.

Thomas W. Hudgins
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Jerram Barrs. *Echoes of Eden: Reflections on Christianity, Literature, and the Arts*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013. 205 pp. Paperback. ISBN: 978-1433535970. $17.99 (Paperback).

In this book, Jerram Barrs, founder and resident scholar of the Francis Schaeffer Institute at Covenant Theological Seminary, seeks to answer the question, "How are Christians to think about the arts?" (p. 11). He answers the question in two parts—the first five chapters providing theoretical answers, and the second five chapters giving practical examples of his reflections on works of literature by C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, J.K. Rowling, William Shakespeare, and Jane Austen.

Barrs begins in chapter one by grounding human creativity in the Creator-God who made us in his own image as creators (or, "sub-creators," as Tolkien has it). In this chapter, Barrs mounts a robust defense of the value of the created order as rationale enough for people to engage in the arts. He also argues for the necessity that we are to create art "before the face of God" (p. 21), *coram deo.*

In chapter two, "Imitation, the Heart of the Christian's Approach to Creativity," Barrs argues—contra most modern and postmodern theories of art, but in agreement with Lewis and Tol-

kien—that all art is imitative and that it should reflect the reality around us—a reality created, after all, by God himself. He also appeals for an attitude of humility in the arts, both on the part of those who create and those who receive.

Is there such a thing as "Christian art" or a "Christian artist"? With questions like these, chapter three wrestles with issues that many evangelicals may be struggling with. Barrs grounds his discussion in a robust understanding of the Second Commandment.

Chapter four dares to challenge the modern "secular" artistic establishment in proposing objective criteria by which we can judge the arts. In this chapter, Barrs outlines appropriate biblical principles—including the true, the beautiful, and the good—to help us understand and evaluate the arts.

In the book's fulcrum chapter, "Echoes of Eden: God's Testimony to the Truth," Barrs explores the creation-fall-redemption-restoration metanarrative of the Bible and the various ways in which God reveals himself to us (in general revelation as well as special revelation). The center of this chapter is his explanation of the "echoes of Eden" that we all experience (simply because we are human and created in the image of God), and that imaginative literature conveys.

In the remaining chapters, Barrs applies these principles to five British authors. The first two—Lewis and Tolkien—were both professing Christians who consciously worshiped God by writing imaginative literature; these chapters are delightful reads. In his comments on Shakespeare, Barrs defends the notion that his plays inhabit a "Christian universe" because they faithfully reflect the reality of the world that God created. The "surprise" author in this list is Rowling, author of the Harry Potter books. Barrs argues that the Harry Potter books are yet another example of the "echoes of Eden" that he finds in the first three writers. Finally, Barrs suggests that the increasing popularity of Austen's novels can be attributed to the fact that she taps into the same echoes of Eden that he has been considering throughout the whole book. Readers will find these practical examples of the echoes of Eden in literature stimulating and helpful.

Echoes of Eden is a refreshing read, revisiting essential Christian understandings of human creativity and providing a tonic to the misunderstandings that some Christians bring with them when they read a novel or watch a movie. In the early pages, there is a rather heavy reliance on Lewis to explain the basic arguments of the book, but it is difficult to avoid him on this subject, and, to be sure, Barrs contextualizes his discussion in a thoroughly biblical worldview.

The comments on the five authors "incarnate" Barrs' theory in practical terms.

Christians and non-Christians alike should read *Echoes of Eden*. Christians will find a robust rationale here for the arts, and non-Christians will find their secular, modernist assumptions challenged in a helpful way. Recommended highly.

Michael Travers
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Jeffrey P. Greenman and Timothy Larson, eds. *The Decalogue through the Centuries: From the Hebrew Scriptures to Benedict XVI*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012. xv + 239 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0664234904. $30 (Paperback).

This is a collection of essays that explores the reception history of the Ten Commandments, beginning with the Hebrew Bible and New Testament and continuing up to Pope Benedict XVI. The collection is selective, of course. It includes 'the usual suspects,' such as Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and John Wesley; but it also features some nice surprises. Here I am thinking especially of the essays on Moses Maimonides, Lancelot Andrewes, and Christina Rossetti. While the overall logic of the selections is not made clear, the aim of the collection is to offer a fair spectrum of the Decalogue's history of interpretation.

Laying the biblical foundation are essays by Daniel Block and Craig Evans. Block addresses the Decalogue in the Old Testament, and, for me, his essay is the best of the whole work. He examines the Decalogue in the Old Testament and shows how reception history in fact begins in the Pentateuch itself. The Decalogue in Exod 20:2–17, he argues, is increasingly expanded as the Pentateuch progresses: by the Book of the Covenant (Exod 20:22–23:19), the Holiness Code (Lev 17–26), and ultimately in the Deuteronomic Torah (Deut 12–16, 28). The picture, then, seems to be opposite of what is typically assumed. Instead of the Ten Words being the final and fixed version of the law, they rather are the seeds from which the rest of the legal material grows. It is the Deuteronomic Torah, not the Decalogue, which stands as the mature version of God's will for Israel. That is what Israel was to aspire to and embody, and what they bound themselves to in covenant on the plains of Moab: "the entire package—text and interpretation" (p. 21).

Evans then looks at the use of the Decalogue in the New Testament. His approach is different than Block's, being more tabular than theological, but it too raises key features. Most interesting is

Evans' observation that the first three commands, the so-called worship commands, are never quoted by Jesus or the New Testament writers. What we find instead is much more of an interest in the last six commands, the ones dealing with the social application of worship. This would seem to indicate that devotion to Yahweh was everywhere assumed, but the social application of this was quite debated.

In the chapters on well-known theologians, there is much of what we might expect. Essays on Luther and Calvin, for instance, do a fine job of outlining their views. But since most people are well acquainted with these figures, especially with their views of the law, the chapters will serve mostly as summaries. With that said, I think the essay on John Wesley is somewhat of an exception. To my mind, it highlights things that, outside of Wesleyan circles, are not commonly known. Examples include: Wesley's hermeneutic that links God's words at creation with his words in the Ten Commandments; his view that the commands are not so much restrictive as permissive, representing a portal into a religion of the heart; and his critique of enlightenment humanism, based on the Decalogue, that thought it possible to erect social ethics apart from proper worship.

Of the lesser-known figures, I found the essay on Lancelot Andrewes quite insightful. For whatever reason, Andrewes, an Anglican of the 1500s, has been largely overlooked in Christian writings, even though he was as brilliant and subtle as any. What the chapter brings to light is how Andrewes used the Decalogue in the so-called third way—as guidance in daily godly living. Shaped by Anglican practice, which used the Decalogue in liturgy to evoke confession and petition, Andrewes took it a step further: to shape holiness and virtue. Through his sermons and devotional writings, Andrewes provided "the first systematic exposition of the Christian moral life undertaken in the Anglican tradition" (p. 167). So while Luther and Calvin still seem to get most of the attention, this collection shows that the views of Lancelot Andrewes and John Wesley deserve more serious notice.

In the end, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this book? As for weaknesses, the book arose from a collection of conference papers, and, as such, it lacks an obvious niche. It cannot be considered a textbook or systematic account of the Decalogue, for its treatment is a little too selective for that. It is not a sustained and in-depth treatment either. Having said this, I find myself thankful, as a scholar, that such essays are published, and perhaps this is the

clue to its niche: to dwell in theological libraries for student and faculty use.

As for strengths, the collection offers a variety of unique and thoughtful discussions on the Ten Commandments. The essay by Block on the Old Testament is excellent, as are the ones on Lancelot Andrewes and John Wesley. What is more, the cumulative effect of the essays, especially those on Aquinas to Wesley, helps establish a robust portrait of the Decalogue's interpretive history. While I think the primary audience is students and scholars, the collection offers a good resource also to pastors interested in fleshing out their understanding of the Ten Commandments.

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David Dockery, ed. *Faith and Learning: A Handbook for Christian Higher Education*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2012. xii + 548 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1433673115. $28.26 (Hardback).

At a time in our nation's history when most academies lack both faith and learning, David Dockery, the Chancellor of Union University, presents his reader with a comprehensive blueprint for how a college can authentically integrate biblical truth and robust inquiry in disciplines typical of four-year colleges. For the most part the contributors to this curriculum design presentation are members of the Union faculty, which at first seemed potentially parochial to the reviewer. But after touring with Dockery the various intellectual and spiritual dimensions of this campus, he walked away with a deeper understanding of how all the disparate pieces of a large, 21st century university can be woven together by a single thread.

But this single thread has a multi-colored hue. Dockery explains in the Preface that his institution, as represented by the 22 contributors to this work, avoids the two extremes of "an unquestioning acceptance of the Christian tradition," on one hand, or "free inquiry, unanchored to faith and tradition," on the other (p. xi). Rather, Dockery concludes, "Our vision for the Christian university represents something other than this 'either/or' option. We believe that the calling of Christian higher education is to reflect the life of Christ and to shine the light of truth. Our distinctive mission must not be forced into inappropriate either/or choices. We have chosen another course: the calling to be 'both/and.' … We offer this volume as a representation of our commitment to the 'divine and'

grounded in Christ Jesus himself, who is both fully God and fully human and who is for us both light and life" (pp. xi-xii).

Following an overview of discussions on worldview and philosophical concerns, the reader is escorted to a wide variety of departments and disciplines that range from a traditional core of English, history, and philosophy to social sciences like political science and sociology. Next come the arts and music, followed by communications and media. The hard sciences of math, biology, physics, and engineering are presented late in the tour. The last stops include more practical pursuits—health care, business, and social work and counseling.

Space will not allow even the briefest explanation of each discipline's connection to Dockery's vision, so this reader selected the chapter on sociology for a closer review since it is in the larger arena of social sciences and receives less notice when Christian academics are under scrutiny. Roman Williams, a Ph.D. in sociology from Boston University, effectively articulates the value of his discipline in the Christian university and the Kingdom at large: "The concepts, skills, and insights of sociology are not only useful in explaining and evaluating the contemporary world in which we live, but these tools are foundational to transforming society and culture. It would be unsatisfying to identify a misrepresentation, distortion, falsehood, or problem in society and do nothing" (p. 272). Williams proposes that identification without an attempt to ameliorate the wrong is tantamount to being like the priest or Levite passing by the injured man prior to the Good Samaritan's intervention. "In a similar way, sociology compels people to go out of their way to make a difference in someone's life" (p. 272). (This reader/researcher calls attention to the monumental works of Notre Dame Sociologist Christian Smith as illustrative of scholarship that accomplishes both dimensions.)

Of particular interest to the reviewer, who focuses much of his research and writing in the area of the Christian philosophy of education, was how chapter 22, "Faith and Transformational Teaching," describes the process of teaching and learning. The chapter authors, Thomas Rosebrough and Ralph Leverett, did not disappoint. The visit to the Education Department begins with some refreshing honesty—teaching and learning is a complex, not simple, proposition; and few dare to tread the path of integration in this field. Alluding to Charles Dickens' character in *Hard Times*, the infamous school teacher Mr. Gradgrind, the authors present a compelling argument for education not being about the transfer of information from the instructor's mind to the learners' heads. Rather

they argue forcefully for active engagement in the teaching/learning process. The chapter includes two memorable statements related to transformational teaching and the role of Christian instructors: 1. Teachers have to reflect upon *why* they teach. We believe that *why* we teach equals *who* we teach. And, 2. Teachers have to know *how* students learn before they can teach. How our students learn should dictate how we teach (p. 479).

Rosebrough and Leverett's approach to teaching and learning serves as a double knot at the conclusion of this text to keep the thread of Dockery's Great Commission passion secure as it knits the Christian university together.

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C. Marvin Pate. *Romans*. Teach the Text Commentary Series. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. v + 345 pp. Hardback/eBook. ISBN – 978-0801092213. $39.99 (Hardback).

The new Teach the Text Commentary Series published by Baker Books attempts to straddle the uneasy gap between technically astute exegesis and practical proclamation in a local church. Each volume has the purpose to provide an accessible exposition of the text with a focus on the preaching and teaching process itself (pp. xvi-viii). The commentary divides the biblical text into smaller preaching units and each unit is discussed within six pages or less. Each preaching unit follows a fivefold structure: *Big Idea*, *Key Themes*, *Understanding the Text, Teaching the Text* and *Illustrating the Text*. The commentary is attractively designed with colorful pictures and callout boxes scattered throughout to highlight additional information relevant to the text or history. This volume on Paul's epistle to the Romans by C. Marvin Pate is the first NT commentary released in this series.

Pate writes with concise clarity and the use of the first person pronoun ("I") gives the impression of having a conversation with a learned professor. Although this commentary uses footnotes very sparingly, Pate demonstrates a comfortable familiarity with the secondary literature and current issues debated among Pauline scholars. He also includes a number of helpful ancient sources as illustrative material for background. His commentary typically summarizes many of the standard evangelical interpretations, but Pate also attempts to make a few of his own contributions. He argues that inaugurated eschatology is the "key to Paul's theology" so that much of Romans is shaped by "the already and not yet" of the time

between this present age and the age to come. A second guiding perspective for Pate is that Rom. 1:16-17, the theme of the letter, must be interpreted in light of the story of Israel—God's faithfulness, Israel's disobedience and exile, and Israel's promised restoration (Isaiah 40–66). Finally, Pate suggests that the genre and outline of Romans follows the fivefold covenantal structure of the Hittite suzerain-vassal treaties. Each of these perspectives tends to surface throughout his interpretation of the text.

Romans 1:16-17 represents the first point of contact with some major debates concerning the phrases "righteousness of God," "from faith to faith" and "the just will live by faith." He first argues that this passage represents Paul's reading of the restoration promises of Isaiah so that terms like "not ashamed," "gospel," "power," "salvation," "righteousness," "revealed" and "faith" must be understood from the story of Israel (p. 30). He takes a transformative, rather than forensic, view of the righteousness of God as God's saving act of fulfilling his promises to restore Israel (pp. 30-31). As such, this righteousness is "from the faithfulness of God to the faith of human beings." Justification by faith, then, refers to an individual's faith in the faithfulness of God. Faith in Christ is contrasted with the works of the law, which refers to Israel's attempt at salvation through obedience to the Mosaic Law. In Rom. 3:21-26, Pate argues that the atonement fulfills what was only anticipated in the OT sacrifices. It demonstrates the perfect balance of God's judging righteousness ("God is the just") and his saving righteousness ("and justifier"). He maintains that "faith of Jesus" means "faith in Jesus" (objective genitive) as opposed to "faithfulness of Jesus" (subjective genitive).

When interpreting Rom. 9:6-29, Pate sets it within the covenantal structure (Hittite suzerain-vassal treaties) as curses on Israel for unbelief and blessings on Gentiles and the Jewish remnant (p. 190). Pate discusses the Calvinist, Arminian, and the corporate views of election and reprobation, but he ultimately prefers a type of mediating position by stating "God sovereignly chooses individuals' destinies, but paradoxically humans have the power and responsibility to choose Christ for themselves" (pp. 194-95). Incidentally, he takes the reference to the salvation of all Israel (Rom. 11:26) as a future event when all ethnic Jews will believe in Jesus as the messiah and thereby join the rest of spiritual Israel—believing Jews and Gentiles (p. 225).

This commentary is intended for pastors to use as part of sermon preparation. It is a commentary written by an academic primarily for a non-academic audience. Those looking for a thorough

exegesis of the text may want to consult more technical commentaries. The "preaching units" are very manageable for use in a Sunday school or bible study setting although some of the divisions could be a bit forced. While there are a few places where one may want to quibble with the interpretation or critically examine some of the more novel suggestions, overall Pate offers a clear, judicious and informed interpretation of the biblical text. Anyone teaching the text of Romans, especially in a church, will want to keep this commentary close at hand.

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James A. Patterson. *James Robinson Graves: Staking the Boundaries of Baptist Identity*. Studies in Baptist Life and Thought, Michael A. G. Haykin, Series Editor. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012. xvii + 238 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433671661. $19.99 (Paperback).

Author. Editor. Controversialist. Preacher. Debater, par excellence. James Robinson Graves was all of these things and more as Graves' biographer, James A. Patterson, explains in *James Robinson Graves: Staking the Boundaries of Baptist Identity*. Most twenty-first century Southern Baptists have never heard of Graves—more's the pity. At a time when people demand relevance, what could be more relevant than the life of a person who perhaps more than anyone else shaped Southern Baptist identity? His lingering influence is beyond dispute.

Graves' path to Southern Baptist notoriety began in Vermont where he was born in 1820. He came to Nashville in 1845 after brief stints in Kentucky and Ohio. Graves became famous as editor of *The Tennessee Baptist*; he became infamous for the controversies he stirred in the newsprint he edited and the books he wrote. Never one to back down from a challenge, either real or imagined, Graves fired polemical broadsides at Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Disciples (or, "Campbellites") with equal passion. His newspaper featured a regular column titled, "And Still They Come…" where he reported conversion stories of those who had seen the error of their ways thanks to his ministry. And, not content to rile those merely outside the Baptist fold, Graves also challenged other Baptists over doctrine and polity when he believed it was necessary. He was particularly sensitive to situations in which he believed denominational structures like mission boards had over-stepped their authority with respect to local church au-

tonomy. When combined with his oratorical and editorial skills, Graves' feistiness made him one of the most beloved—or despised—ministers in the entire nineteenth century.

So, what made J. R. Graves such a polarizing figure? Graves believed that Baptist churches were the only legitimate expressions of ecclesiastical life. All others were merely "religious societies," and offspring of Roman Catholicism, to boot. He also insisted that in New Testament usage "ecclesia" only meant "congregation," and hence, there was no universal, invisible church of all believers. Finally, Graves maintained that "true churches" had existed in an unbroken chain from the first century. That is, Jesus had established His kind of churches during His earthly sojourn, and according to Matthew 16:18, the "gates of hell" had never prevailed against them. His detractors balked at the suggestion that they might not belong to a "legitimate church." His supporters rejoiced in the identity he built for them.

Graves died in 1893 and as Patterson observes, subsequent assessments of his contributions to Southern Baptist life proved less than kind. A self-taught man, Graves had endorsed and printed G. H. Orchard's *History of the Baptists*. Unfortunately for Graves, Orchard's *History* is rife with historical errors, inciting university/seminary trained historians to pounce on Graves' uncritical use of it. Others challenged his hermeneutics and understanding of the Greek New Testament. Meanwhile, some resisted the bureaucratizing tendencies of early-to-mid-twentieth-century Southern Baptist life only to find themselves increasingly marginalized. Ultimately, new denominational groups like the American Baptist Association and the Baptist Missionary Association appeared, each firmly committed to Graves and his teachings.

James Patterson tells Graves' story with fairness and the grace that his protagonist did not always reserve for his opponents. To be sure, Patterson's work is by no means hagiographic. Nonetheless, he correctly observes that Graves feared abusive power at the expense of personal liberty. He also notes that Landmarkism represents a synthesis of Graves' distinct ecclesiology, successionist history applied to Baptist churches, and mid-nineteenth-century American republicanism. Ironically, Graves' strict localism and suspicion of organizational hierarchialism is reminiscent of "3-selfism," a nineteenth century non-Baptist theory of missionary work that insisted churches should be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. Perhaps Baptists were not the only ones interested in articulating proper authority structures.

Between approximately 1979 and 1991, Southern Baptists were enmeshed in a period known as "the Controversy." Some blamed it on Landmarkism. Why not? Since Graves, practically any denominational kerfuffle has sparked the charge that someone somewhere was/is a Landmarker. Confused? Get James Patterson's book and read it carefully. It will go a long way in answering your questions.

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Steven Boyer and Christopher Hall, *The Mystery of God: Theology for Knowing the Unknowable*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 244 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801027734. $17.99 (Paperback).

In *The Mystery of God: Theology for Knowing the Unknowable* Steven Boyer and Christopher Hall seek to investigate the "notion of divine mystery … in a way that is explicitly theological" (p. xiv). As such, "to approach God is to approach an unfathomable depth of reality and truth that, like the sun in the sky, is too intense, too bright to look at, but that nevertheless brings meaning and coherence and beauty to everything else. God is a mystery" (p. xiv). Toward this end Boyer and Hall divide the volume into two parts. In the first part they explore the analogy of the sun and its implications for a proper understanding of mystery. In the second part they set out to apply their understanding of mystery to such loci as the Trinity (chapter five), incarnation (chapter six), salvation (chapter seven), and even the problem of pluralism (chapter nine). For the remaining portion of this review I will detail Boyer and Hall's account of mystery, and focus on one point of application, namely the implications of mystery on the problem of pluralism.

As Boyer and Hall note, the most common biblical use of mystery denotes a "marvelous plan or purpose that God has revealed for creation" (p. 5). In other words, Scripture portrays mystery as something that has been made known (e.g. the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2), yet with aspects that are not fully apprehended. On some accounts the notion of mystery resides in a paucity of information, but with God it can be the opposite—there is an excess of information (p. 7). The result of this "quantitative inexhaustibility" is our inability as finite knowers to "take it all in" (p. 7). As such, we could never fully apprehend what God gives in revelation, thus a purely rationalistic approach to knowing God is insufficient. Instead, Boyer and Hall suggest a model of mystery predicated on an analogy. Consider a two-dimensional man that lives in a two-dimensional world. Every form

of experience is two-dimensional, and every category of rationality is two-dimensional. Suppose he is presented with a sphere. Such a figure, it seems to him, is impossible. And yet it is given in his experience. The Flatlander can analyze the sphere and yet there will be more about the figure that "remains outside of his two-dimensional perception, namely, the third dimension, which makes this figure not just a circle, but a cylinder" (p. 11). Under this construal, human reason can and should be applied to God because "dimensional mystery" is a form of revelational mystery—something of God has been given to us in our experience. Accordingly, we should expect God to be both reasonable (and so we should not dispense with reason) and beyond reason (and so we should recognize that some theological truths will appear to us as irrational). Otherwise conceived, God is "not less than rational but more" (p. 17).

How does this apply to the relationship between Christianity and other faiths? If our knowledge of God is opaque, then must we accept, as the pluralist suggests, that each person's concept of God runs parallel and none is better than the other? To this Boyer and Hall exclaim, "our proposal is one that very happily grants priority and precedence to God's revelation in Christ" (p. 229). Why? Because the truth of God has been expressed by God himself in human terms. To borrow again from the Flatlander analogy, the three-dimensional God is more than a two-dimensional knower can comprehend. But simply because there is more to God does not mean that the aspects that we do possess are inaccurate. Instead, the portraits of God that we have revealed in His word and His Son are accurate "precisely to the extent that they point beyond themselves" (p. 227). To wit, we know "more than mere creatures have any right to know, because God himself has put the unspeakable reality of the Creator into the most adequate terms that creatureliness allows" (p. 214). Further, "are they adequate terms for our knowledge? Certainly, for God has chosen to reveal himself. Are they exhaustively adequate, so that they give complete, unqualified knowledge of the fullness of the divine? Certainly not, for God has revealed himself as the unfathomable Creator of heaven and earth, the transcendent One, who ever remains past finding out" (p. 214).

The Mystery of God is well worth the read for both its clarity and its breadth. Boyer and Hall expose some of the limitations of rationalism, yet avoid the blunders of content-less mysticism. They rightly emphasize that theology (and thus knowing God) cannot be

divorced from the worship of God. We know and learn through worship.

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Francis J. Moloney. *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. xviii + 398 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801048418. $32.99 (Paperback).

Francis J. Moloney opens his commentary covering the standard introductory material. Though briefer than many other modern Mark commentaries, the introduction covers all the major introductory issues. He accepts the current majority position in seeing Mark as the first Gospel, though he denies we can have certainty in this matter. He regards as hard facts that (1) "the author is familiar with the Roman world, its language, and its mode of government," (2) "the author and the community for whom he was writing were concerned about the mission to the Gentiles," (3) "the community is exposed to suffering and persecution," and (4) "the Gospel was written shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E." (p. 14).

Though this volume approaches the Gospel as a "unified, theologically driven narrative" (p. xvii), Moloney does not disregard important historical-critical questions that he says must be asked of any ancient text. So while focusing on the narrative and theological connections throughout the Gospel, Moloney makes historical-critical observations along the way.

According to Moloney, the Gospel of Mark is "a story of human failure: the apparent failure of Jesus, the failure of the disciples, and the failure of Israel" (p. 22). With this storyline, Mark is divided into four major sections. In Mark 1:1–13, the reader, who is well aware that Jesus ends up on the cross, is issued a challenge: "How does he [Jesus] live a life, preach a message, and die a death which restore God's original design and make the Father delight in him (1:11)?" (p. 40). Mark 1:14–8:30 details the rejection of Jesus by the religious leaders, the establishment of the new family of Jesus, and the failure of the disciples to fully understand. Mark 8:31–15:47 follows Jesus on his journey to and arrival in Jerusalem where he suffers, dies, and rises again. Moloney points out the irony of the cross: "The reader is made aware that it is only *on the cross* that Jesus can lay claim to be savior, Christ, the king of Israel, as his enemies demand that he comes down from the cross that they might see and believe (15:30, 32)" (p. 336). In Mark 16:1–8, the last section that Moloney believes was authentic, the story ends surprisingly, yet

fittingly within Mark's overall theological agenda: An empty tomb and the announcement of resurrection are met with terror and flight. The disciples' failure throughout the Gospel is carried through to the very end. However, the words of Jesus echoed by the angel in Mark 16:7 provide the reader "hope in the midst of ambiguity and failure" (p. 24). Though he does not view it as part of Mark's original narrative, Moloney includes an appendix with commentary on Mark 16:9–20.

The placement of the more technical discussions in the footnotes of this volume helps produce a readable prose. It does use Greek and Latin without transliteration, but it at times includes an English translation of the Greek. Moreover, the detailed footnotes attest to the breadth of Moloney's knowledge of secondary sources; these citations suggest that he is well versed in major recent and older commentaries.

Besides the invariable minor disagreements, I am left questioning a couple of recurrent practices in the commentary. While Moloney is critical of much of redaction criticism in his introduction, he regularly and confidently distinguishes between "Markan" and "pre-Markan" material. In these cases, he is almost entirely dependent on secondary works he cites in his footnotes, noting that investigating these matters further is not the concern of the present study (p. 57). Considering the likelihood that the situation leading to the synoptic problem was more complex than is sometimes suggested and because redaction criticism is often plagued by a lack of precise agreed-upon criteria, some will no doubt question Moloney's confidence in deciphering between redaction and tradition.

Furthermore, at times Moloney rejects the historicity of certain pericopes. For instance, he writes that "Mark has some glaring errors of fact" in his account of John the Baptist's death (6:17-29), insisting, for example, that Philip was not married to Herodias, but to her daughter, Salome and that it was incorrect to call Herod Antipas a "king." Various commentaries have explained these alleged "errors" in various ways, and while Moloney should be respected for his honesty, one would like to have seen him at least in dialogue with those who find Mark to be more reliable and are hesitant confidently to accuse him of error.

Despite the questions raised above, these issues do not detract from Moloney's narratival interpretation of the Gospel. This commentary is particularly strong in identifying intertextual links within Mark and in accurately describing the storyline, with Christology being linked to discipleship. In its hardback edition (2002), this

book was already fairly well received and should continue to serve well those who seek to understand the Gospel of Mark better.

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